



Analysis Of The Economic And Social Dimensions Of Saudi Women's Driving

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Abstract:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is witnessing a development in the social and economic fields driven by 2030 vision. Considering women as a necessary partner in the continuous improvement journey, many changes were happening. We are taking the women's driving as a case study. Through a survey of 516 persons, this article attempts to identify the social and economic impact of the women's driving decision in Saudi Arabia. Results indicate that both economic and social aspects have significant impacts. The study ultimately provides a set of recommendations to support this decision.

Keywords: Driving; Economic impact; Saudi vision; Social dimension; Women.

1. Introduction

By the diktat issued by King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, effective from September 26, 2017, women in Saudi Arabia are allowed to drive the cars, making this dictate a momentous event, which is also mirrored within the economic and social life of the society in this country, at all levels. Somehow, despite the decision of His Majesty, women are still facing several hurdles in this allowance. Equally, the social and economic aspect of this context has been under scrutiny, and a lot of predictions and questions concerning the dimensions of this decision will be detailed. Both advocates and opponents in all dimensions have been ardently discussing this decision to allow women to drive. Meantime watching the tides revolving between the cultural and social circles between the supporter

and opponent, and became the subject of women's allowance towards driving the car is a routine talk between different classes in the counting of the pros and cons of this decision.

In this context, the emerging key question pertains to the economic and social impacts of Saudi women driving the car. In order to comprehensively explore this issue, there are two

questions to be addressed, as follows:

- What are the impacts and anticipated economic dimensions of wealth or deterioration, such as car prices, insurance companies, private drivers, delivery companies, taxis, labor market, income and expenditure levels ?
- What are the social dimension of this decision based on religion and moral with the women's education and status, the difference in the task performance, and the change that will take place within the family system and the overall society?

This research is aimed at reaching the following objectives:

- To analyse the dimensions of the decision of allowing women in Saudi Arabia to drive, socially and economically, as well as its implications.
- To ascertain the public opinion through the use of questionnaire and the findings are used as the first accurate study concerning the decision allowing the women in Saudi Arabi to drive.
- To comprehensively, impartially and obhectively assess the positive and negative aspects of this decision.

Accordingly, there are two secondary aims of this study as laid down below:

- To ascertain the expectations of the community concerning the dimensions of this decision, and provide the appropriate guidance to the public opinion with the application of the effects and the anticipated outcomes according to expert opinions and past works.
- To eradicate all the anticipated negative responses through the conveyance of data and findings to the parties accountable in the execution of the required procedures.

In Saudi Arabia, the historical decision made by King Salman bin Abdulaziz to allow women to drive the car is new. Relevantly, this study is the first one to examine this issue, therefore this study is significant to the extant literature.

Studies and statistics (e.g., the Statistics Authority on GDP) are illustrating the state economy which annually goes to employees particularly drivers. Conversely, the percentage of women in the national workforce remains lower than 16%. Accordingly, the present study attempts to explore the social and economic dimensions of this decision in the context of Saudi Arabia. The factors contributing to such significant manpower loss by the state, society family and the individual are examined. Furthermore, the fitting analysis of the projected social and economic dimensions of driving among women in Saudi Arabia are carried out.

2. Litterature reviw

A number of past works (e.g., researches, reports and articles) relevant to the topic of this study are highlighted in this section. Accordingly, the derived results and conclusions are scrutinized and compared.

Another research about the challenges faced by women leaders in government institutions in Saudi Arabia shows that the main problems are the lack of resources and the weak empowerment ranked with other structural challenges (Al-Ahmadi (2011)

Rajkhan (2014) examined women in Saudi Arabia in regards to status, rights and restrictions concerning driving. In 2012, a media survey was conducted by Al Arabiya among 1500 partakers, and the results are as follows: The majority of women (57%) were in support of women driving, while 32% were against it. The smallest percentage of the respondents (12%) indicated that the subject of women driving was not yet appropriate for discussion. The findings denote a strong opinion that women in Saudi Arabia can drive, as much as they can make transformation for the development of Saudi society.

Women driving and its effect on traffic safety was among the topics presented in the 7th Conference on Traffic Safety (2015) in Jordan. As stated by the presenters (Professor Mohammed Abu Jarada and others), the majority of men (75%) were in support to women behind the wheel. Meanwhile, 86% were expressing their disagreement over the restrictions imposed by the Saudi Arabia government, whereas more than half of the respondents (54%) were of the view that women affect traffic adversely. On the other hand, 81% of respondents were of the view that they are the best drivers. For the majority of men studied, they were of the view that women were less skillful on the road as opposed to men. Among women, 91% were in support to women driving, while 22% were of the view that women adversely affect traffic. Meanwhile, more than half (53%) were of the view that both women and men were no different (equal), whereas 40% of these women were of the view that men are the best drivers.

Yahya Al-Harith, Yousra Al-Harith, and Ibtisam Al-Dagheir (2006) studied Saudi Arabian women and society in the context of driving through a public opinion poll. The results obtained indicate that the majority of women (80%) in Saudi society opposed the idea of women given the permission to drive like men. This implies that most women resist reforms and the authors related such resistance with these women's perceived repression.

The impact of women driving cars on the Saudi economy was studied in Fadel Al-Buainain (2017). From the results, the author concluded that having women empowered to drive would significantly contribute to the solution to the transport problem in the sector of labor. Furthermore, such decision will allow women to do more and exercise their freedom. According to the author, such decision will ease the family budget, considering that the domestic labor of the country mainly comprises of drivers. Besides that, the decision will positively reflect the employment division in the country. The decision to allow women to drive will benefit several sectors especially the sectors of banking, insurance, and indefinitely that of automotive. Still, other sectors may be adversely affected including the public transport sector especially smart application taxis such as Ober and Karim.

Concerning the decision to allow women in Saudi Arabia to drive, Al-Ghamdi (2017) stated that it would reduce the reliance on drivers while also decreasing the external transfers. In

fact, next to the United States, the World Bank (2012) reported Saudi Arabia as the second leading country in the world to transfer funds abroad, amounting to 27.6 billion dollars, and the amount rose up to SR 41.8 billion in 2015. Furthermore, as reported by the Saudi Statistics Service, by the end of 2014, the non-Saudis working in Saudi Arabia reached 10.7 million. In Saudi Arabia, approximately 4.6% of the foreign labor force consists of family and female drivers, which contributes to roughly \$ 2 million of funds being sent abroad.

Al-Ghamdi (2017) further stated that the decision to allow women in Saudi Arabia to drive the car will impart them with more prospect in labor market involvement. In fact, among working women, transport is among the obstacles faced. This has dampened their prospect of contributing to the country's national development, Saudi Arabia's vision 2030 includes a wider participation of women in the labour market because of its impact on economic development, relevant to the economic development in Saudi Arabia, women make up almost half (49.6%) of university graduates in the country. Ironically, they comprises just 16% of the labor force in Saudi Arabia. As such, increasing their partaking will increase GDP to approximately 40%, which will account for approximately 17 billion dollars, and this may bring the additional \$58 billion of revenues to Saudi companies.

The Dean of the Jeddah International College, Dr. Nadia Baashen noted that transportation issue has been an obstacle to a significant portion of women in seeking employment. Dr. Baashen further opined that allowing women to drive would help reduce unemployment while also supporting family safety. In fact, a study has affirmed that the permission to drive will allow 5-10% of women to participate in the labor market in the first year.

As stated by Dr. Yusuf Al-Ramah (2017), who was an expert in criminology and counter-terrorism at Qassim University and the security advisor in the Qassim region. The permission to drive given to women will save them from having to hire more than one million foreign drivers and this will reduce the transfer of money outside of the country (which would be an advantage to the country). Reducing the reliance upon foreign drivers following the driving permission to women will increase safety to women. However, other related aspects need to be taken into account, such as the number of cars in the city, which is likely to increase when more and more women are behind the wheel. Hence, the Saudi Arabia needs to prep itself for the forthcoming phase.

Cerioli (2019) put the light on the main reforms that should be done to legislation in order to give more liberalization to women in Saudi Arabia. Williams, et al. (2019) focus on the relation between increasing the opportunities of women's work with the different type of transportation in term of cost and time. They find that one of the challenges for women working in Riyadh is the high cost of transport. So, the opportunity to work will increase by allowing women to drive.

In the paper of (Al-Ismail, et Al. 2019), they look at barriers to employment, problems linked to work environment, motivation and job satisfaction of women in the sector of hotels in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Danish and Smith (2012) study the female entrepreneurs' challenges in Saudi Arabia. They detect that female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia are now launching and

handling more small and medium sized entities than at any time in the past and this trend is expanding.

Alfarran, et Al. (2018) look at the usefulness of the Saudi employment programme “Nitaqat” in addressing institutional barriers to women’s employment in the Saudi private sector. They use face-to-face interviews performed with two groups of stakeholders, government officials and unemployed Saudi women. They provided new insights into the institutional barriers related to the labour force participation of Saudi women from the perspective of Saudi women themselves.

Jarbou (2018) explore the campaign of Saudi women’s driving decision in different social media (youtube, tweeter...).

Almarhaby (2019) summarise in his paper the book: Modern woman in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia: rights, challenges and achievements by Hend T. Al-Sudairy. Al-Sudairy recognizes the power of political decisions in overcoming persistent obstacles to Saudi women’s empowerment, exemplified by the broadening of state education in the 1950s–1960s and the eventual lifting of the driving ban.

Amirat and Zaidi (2019) focus on the role of Saudi women to improve the knowledge economy indicators. The paper of Wheeler (2020) argues that the government’s new gender inclusive driving policy embodies a rebranding effort from the top, rather than responsiveness to Saudi women’s rights activism, or public opinion. The arrest of a number of Women2 Drive activists before June 24 sends a clear message that such changes are not the beginnings of an intended “pink revolution” (Ghazanfar Ali Khan, “Three Million Saudi Women on the Roads by 2020,” Arab News, June 24, 2018, <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1326991/saudi-arabia>). On the contrary, allowing women to drive fulfills several of Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman’s immediate Vision 2030 goals for economic and social reform in the kingdom.

3. Data and survey analysis

3.1. Data

Overall, there were 30 sets of questionnaires used in this study. These questionnaires were prepared and evaluated by experts and was created in a manner that fits with the context of this study. In particular, this study attempts to delve into the economic and social dimensions of the decision to allow women in Saudi Arabia to drive the car. Accordingly, the obtained outcomes are broken down into four key dimensions as follows:

1. The first one comprises six (6) questions on the respondent’s personal information. This includes the information on gender, age, marital status, academic qualification, job status and level of income.
2. The second dimension comprises six (6) questions on the transportation that the respondent utilises for working or personal affairs, the amount of weekly traffic, monthly expenditures on transportation, the daily amount of time spent on transportation and the support level received by the respondent concerning driving allowance.
3. The third dimension comprises nine (9) questions that cover the economic dimensions of women driving. This dimension employs the Likert scale with the

following suggested answers: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Strongly Agree and Agree.

4. Fourth one comprises nine (9) questions that cover the social dimensions of women driving. This dimension employs the Likert scale with the following suggested answers: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Strongly Agree and Agree.

The Google docs site was used in the preparation of the questionnaires, and the questionnaires were disseminated to 516 respondents. The respondents were Saudi nationals and they were selected randomly from different Saudi Arabian regions. The gathered data were processed with the use of Microsoft Excel 2016.

3.2. Reliability and stability of measuring instrument

In this study, reliability of the instrument was measured with the coefficient of internal consistency through the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Accordingly, the internal consistency of the questionnaire expressions was measured in order to ascertain the stability of the measurement items. As discovered, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 72.1%, which implies that it is higher than the minimum tolerable value for scientific research purposes (60%). Hence, the tool is sufficiently reliable and it fulfils this study's purposes.

Table 1: Total Stability Factor (Alpha Kronbach)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.721	18

The method of Factor Analysis was used in measuring the validity of the instrument. Here, measurement was made to the dimension's accurateness of both the economic and social dimensions. As can be observed from the results displayed in Table 2, all the paragraphs measure what it was intended to measure.

Table 2: factorial analysis according to the economic and social dimensions

Paragraphs of the economic	Extracti on	Paragraphs of the social	Extracti on
Create new job opportunities	.535	Conforms to the Islamic and moral values of society	.688
Reduce transportation costs	.653	Increase women's education	.831
Increased productivity and efficiency at work	.789	The achievement of justice between women and men	.741
Reduce the number of special drivers	.752	Reflect the level of urbanization and progress	.704

Reduce the number of users and delivery companies	.632	The large number of women leaving homes	.626
Increase household income	.650	The man abandons his responsibilities	.824
Increase household spending	.672	Women neglect their family responsibilities	.870
Increased car prices	.726	Increased harassment and sexual harassment	.663
Increase traffic congestion and traffic accidents	.632	Increase family problems and divorce cases	.832

3.3 Analysis of questionnaire results

3.3.1 Analysis of personal information dimensions

Gender: Figure (1) displays the sample's gender, and as can be seen, the majority were women (73%), making men the minority (27%).

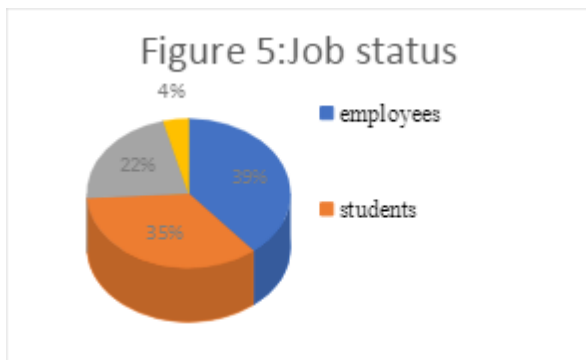
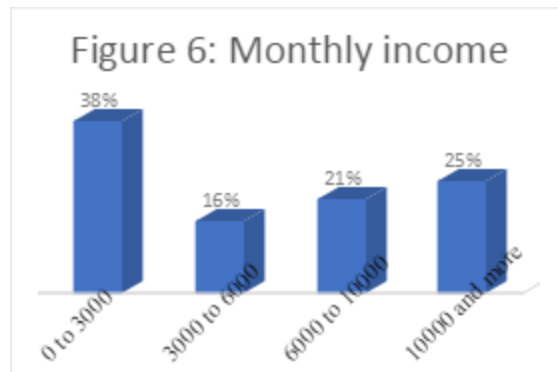
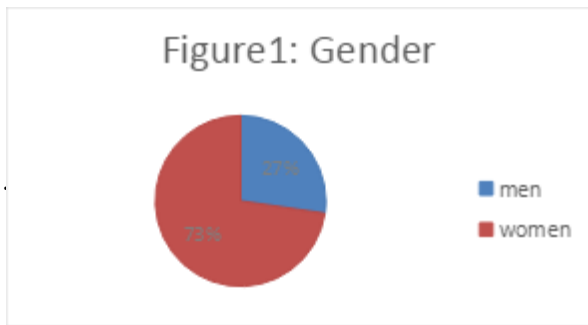
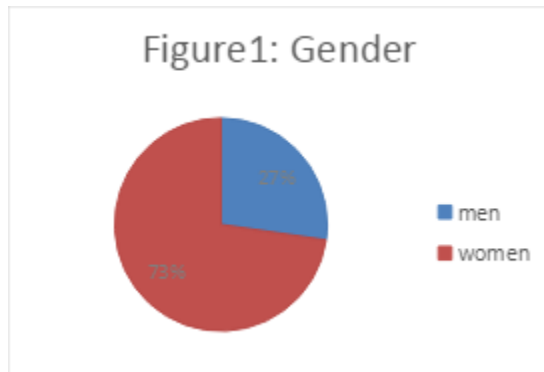
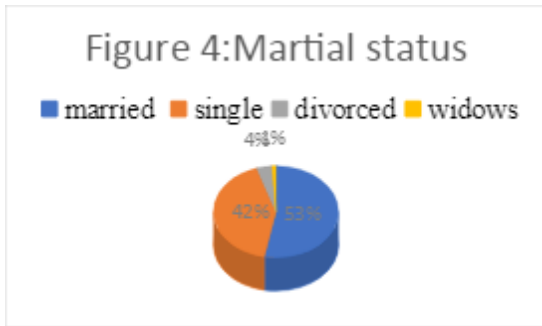
Age: As can be observed in Figure (2), the majority of the samples were between 20 and 30 years old (37%), followed by those between 30 to 40 years of age at 30%. Roughly 19% were more than 40 years in age, and 14% of the samples were less than 20 years old. All age groups are represented in this study, and the sample distribution is also good.

Education level: From Figure 3, the samples were mostly university graduates at 74%, and this denotes their scientific and cultural experience. One fourth of the samples (25%) received secondary or intermediate level of education and 1% received primary level of education.

Martial Status: As Figure 4 is showing, more than half of the samples (53%) were married, 42% were single, 4% were divorced and 1% were widows.

Job Status: As can be observed in Figure 5, the majority of samples (39%) were working, 35% were studying. Such distribution is desirable for this study, as both students and employees were the sought-after information source. Meanwhile, 22% of the samples were non-employees and housewives accounted for 22%, whereas only 4% were retirees.

Monthly income: As can be observed in Figure 6, the samples were mostly earning less than 3000 monthly income at 38%, while 16% were earning between 3000 and 6000. Meanwhile, 21% of respondents reported earning between 6,000 and 10,000, whereas 25% reported earning 10,000 per month.



3.3.2 Analysis of transportation:

Means of transport to the Work or Study: As shown in Figure 7, the largest percentage of samples (44%) reported driving for the first time with a family member, while 36% reported hiring a private driver, while the smallest percentage (21%) were using the corporates of transportation.

The number of private walkers: As can be observed in Figure 8, the majority of the samples (60%) reported that they travelled between 1 and 3 times per week, while 19% reported that they travelled between 3 and 6 per week, 15 % reported that they travelled more than 6 times per week, while 5% of the samples reported not having any specific courses apart from work and study.

Means of delivery for private brochures: As displayed in Figure 9, 46% of the samples were relying on their family in their own brochures, 14% were relying on the transportation companies, 24% were relying on a private driver, while 16% were relying on more than one means of communication.

Monthly transport costs: As exhibited in Figure 10, the majority of samples (88%) reported paying for monthly transportation expenditures, 25% reported spending less than 300 SR each month, 21% reported spending between 300 and 500 SR each month, while 32% Real.

Time spent on transportation: As highlighted in Figure 11, the majority of samples (44%) reported spending 1 to 2 hours using transportation, 40% reported spending less than 1 hour in using transportation, while, 16% reported spending more than two hours using Transportation.

Supporting the decision of the leadership of women: From Figure 12, the majority (45%) expressed their approval to women driving, while 28% expressed their opposition to the decision, while 27% were neutral.

figure7: Means of transport to the Work or Study

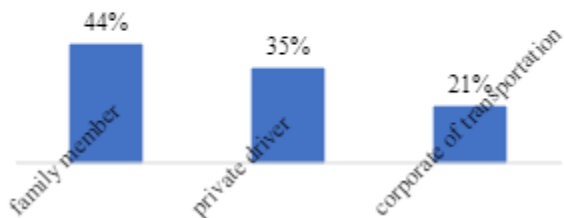


Figure 8: The number of private walkers

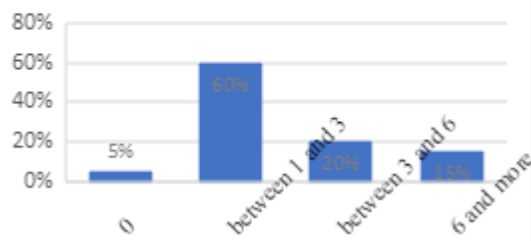


Figure 9: Means of delivery for private brochures

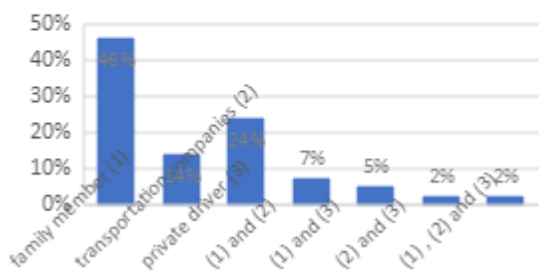


Figure 10: Monthly transport costs

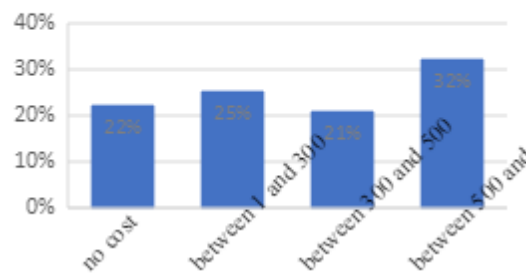


Figure 11: Time spent on transportation

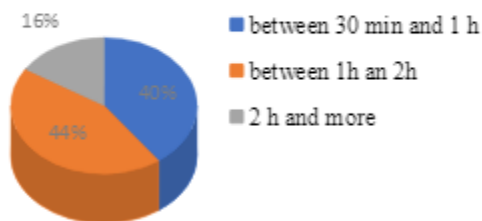
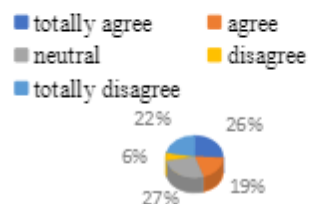


Figure 12: Supporting the decision of the leadership of women



3-4 Descriptive statistics

Table (3) evidences the closeness between the mathematical averages of the overall economic and social dimensions. Apparently, the economic averages of the economic dimensions show that the samples mostly were of the view that the decision to allow women to drive will increase both the car prices and the traffic on the roads, while also decreasing the number of private drivers and the usage level of delivery companies. In terms of social aspect, women driving is not seen as unjust to men, and such viewpoint shows the urbanization level and progress. Equally, it is perceived that the decision will cause more and more women to leave their homes and abandon their family duties. Being out of their homes can also place these women at risks of harassments.

Table 3: Statistical averages and standard deviations of economic and social dimension variables

Economic dimension	Mean	St. Deviation	Social dimension	Mean	St. Deviation
Create new job opportunities	3.20	1.503	Conforms to the Islamic and moral values of society	3.21	1.499
Reduce transportation costs	3.18	1.564	Increase women's education	3.06	1.448
Increased productivity and efficiency at work	2.95	1.432	Achieving justice between women and men	2.77	1.506
Reduce the number of special drivers	3.65	1.374	Reflect the level of urbanization and progress	2.56	1.474
Reduce the number of users and delivery companies	3.55	1.331	The large number of women leaving homes	3.70	1.371
Increase household income	2.77	1.397	The man abandons his responsibilities	3.41	1.566
Increase household spending	3.51	1.294	Women neglect their family responsibilities	2.93	1.572
Increased car prices	3.78	1.166	Increased harassment and sexual harassment	3.60	1.385
Increase traffic congestion and traffic accidents	3.98	1.323	Increase family problems and divorce cases	3.26	1.433
Economic dimension	3.3958	.81559	Social dimension	3.1679	.63140

3-5 Testing of hypotheses

The null hypothesis (H_0) proposes the presence of a link between the decision to allow women to drive, the economic dimension, the social dimension and other variables contained within the first dimensions (i.e., personal data) and within the second dimensions (i.e., data on the means of transportation).

3.5.1 Test the hypotheses by examining the correlation

The correlation coefficients between the dependent variable and the influence level of individuals towards the decision of allowing women to drive and other study variables are displayed in Table 4. As can be observed, nearly all of the correlation coefficients are weak with the exception for the economic dimension, which is a strong direct relationship and the way of going to work, which is a relatively strong correlation coefficient.

Table 4: The correlation between the support for the decision of women driving and the other variables in the study

Support the driving decision of women	Gender	Age	Scientific level	Social status	Functional status	Monthly income	The way to go	Number of times you left	The way to spend the courtyards	Monthly transportation expenses	Time elapsed Transportation	Economic dimension	Social dimension
Pearson Correlation	-.003	-.172**	.054	-.176**	-.071	-.055	.284**	.133**	.147*	.171**	.166**	.673**	.054
Sig. (2-tailed)	.944	.000	.222	.000	.105	.216	.000	.002	.001	.000	.000	.000	.225

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

3.5.2 Testing of hypotheses through the examination of differences

The previous section reported the weak level of most correlation coefficients. This section, we will hence test the hypotheses through the examination of the differences by testing the difference between two independent sample t-test. The table below displays the results:

Table (5): Independent Samples Test (t-test for Equality of Means)

Variables		Gender	Age	Scientific Status	Social Status	Employ Status	Income level	Delivery Work	Numer of Rides	Delivery Work	Cost	Time
Endorsement of drivig decision	H0	0.944	0.104	0.678	0.000*	0.000*	0.014*	0.000*	0.644	0.000*	0.552	0.002*
	H1	0.945	0.074	0.765	0.000*	0.000*	0.017*	0.000*	0.686	0.000*	0.548	0.002*
Economic dimension	H0	0.668	0.465	0.261	0.000*	0.000*	0.020*	0.000*	0.627	0.002*	0.990	0.132
	H1	0.685	0.389	0.425	0.000*	0.000*	0.036*	0.000*	0.656	0.003*	0.990	0.135
Social dimation	H0	0.095*	0.068	0.017	0.000*	0.006*	0.651	0.726	0.362	0.531	0.426	0.026*
	H1	0.120*	0.033*	0.203	0.000*	0.007*	0.669	0.725	0.400	0.524	0.414	0.026*

H₀ :Equivalent variation of samples means

H₁: Inequality of samples means

(*) With 95% confidence and reject the null hypothesis of equal sample averages

The differences test results between the sample means are displayed in Table (5). Accordingly, the scrutiny on the decision to allow driving among women and the social and economic dimensions is impacted by the other variables, particularly the information concerning the transportation means or the personal information of the samples. As shown by the table (t and Sig. (2-tailed) at 95% confidence level), it is clear that support for women driving is associated with the social situation, the functional status, the income level, the means of reaching the workplace and the time spent on transportation. Meanwhile, the economic dimension has linkage to the social situation, the functional situation, the income level, the manner of reaching the workplace and to private brochures, whereas the social dimension is associated with gender, social and functional status, and time spent on transportation.

3.6 Linear regression analysis

The causal link between the variables is examined in this stage. Accordingly, the dependent variable in this study is ‘Supporting the decision of women driving the car’ (Y), while the independent variables are: the economic dimension (X1) and the social dimension (X2). Multiple linear regression: . The model presented encompasses a study of the null hypothesis, which articulates the non-existence of an effect between the economic and social dimension and the consent to the decision of driving among women. The multiple linear regression results are displayed in Table 6. Also, the following equation is presented:

Table (6): Linear Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-1.023	.272		7.086*	.000

Economic dimension	1.295	.060	.722	21.572*	.000
Social dimension	-.376	.078	-.162	-4.847*	.000

With 95% confidence and reject the null hypothesis of equal sample averages. As can be viewed in the table, all of the results are significant considering that the significance level is lower than 0.05. The null hypothesis is hence rejected, implying the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis concerning the impact of the economic and social dimensions on the driving decision. The social dimension notably shows the negative impact, whereas the effect imparted by the economic dimension appears to be positive. The model's validity is ascertained via the computation of the coefficient of selection. The table below displays the results.

Table 7: Test the strength of linear regression analysis model

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.691	.477	.475	1.061

From Table 7, the obtained correlation coefficient is roughly 70%. This value denotes the presence of a strong correlation between the independent variables and the variable V-R squared. In other words, the independent variables describe approximately 50% of the dependent variable. 50% of the decision to support driving the car.

4. Conclusion

As can be observed from the past works, the majority were in support to women driving in the context of Saudi Arabia. Many were confident that the decision will positively affect the society and economy. An electronic questionnaire survey was carried out on 516 samples to shed light on this matter. The results show that the women driving strongly and positively correlates with the economic dimension. Women driving has linkage to the social situation, while the social dimension has linkage to the functional situation. It is also linked to the Income level, means used for travelling to work and time spent on transportation. Meanwhile, the economic dimension has linkage to the social situation, income level, employment status, the manner of getting to workplace and private brochures. It was found that a significant portion of the household income is spent on transportation, for both private driver or transport company. In this context, most were of the view that women being allowed to drive will decrease the costs associated with the aforementioned. In regards to the community as a whole, women driving is generally supported, but several negative aspects were raised.

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