

## The impact of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) on local marketing of national products

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### Keywords

Local marketing, National products, Saudi companies, WTO, Saudi Arabia

### Abstract

*Saudi Arabia is one of the wealthiest nations per capita in the world, as well as an economic power through its possession of a large share of global oil resources. This study has been carried out to identify the benefits, which are likely to be enjoyed by Saudi Arabia after its accession into World Trade Organization. A total of 15 entrepreneurs completed questionnaires, which were designed on the basis of Likert scale. In order to analyze the outcomes, a descriptive statistics technique has been applied after data collection from the respondents. Most of the participants consider Saudi Arabia's joining the World Trade Organization as a beneficial decision for the Saudi market. This accession is advantageous as it helps to enhance the marketing and investment opportunities, as a consequence of which the economy of Saudi Arabia flourishes and the population rises. The marketing techniques are required to be established and adopted to manufacture high-quality products. The study outcomes are helpful for the policymakers and Saudi companies as it emphasizes the production of high-quality products, as well as the importance of implementing the strategies for more effective marketing of their products in the local market.*

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### 1. Introduction

To benefit from the opportunities of trade and perceived globalization, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has made a strategic decision to join the World Trade Organization (WTO). The influence of global liaison has been observed to reach far beyond the openness of mere markets as well as introducing the measures of international competition. For the majority of the service and manufactured goods, Saudi Arabia is one of the largest markets in the world (Ramady and Mansour, 2006). The Saudi companies enjoy real opportunities to enter into an effective partnership with international companies, due to the joining of the KSA in World Trade Organization (WTO), in order to take advantage of their accumulative experience in trans-border economy. In fact, there are different challenges that may confront small and medium companies, as a result of the joining of the KSA in WTO. This necessitates that these companies embark upon structural changes, enabling them to stand in the face of the competition from huge companies. Furthermore, marketing is considered as one of the most significant activities that will be affected by the joining of the KSA in World Trade Organization. The reason is that there are a number of matters that may weaken the capabilities and strengths of the marketing department or section to stand effectively, competitively and defiantly before the foreign products (Aldhomour, 2004). Saudi Arabia is skillful enough at using its economic and cultural strength to ensure that its trading arrangements are advantageous to itself. The KSA has decided to regulate private market-based economic activities. To achieve this objective, the Kingdom has joined World Trade Organization to enable itself to attain a bigger market share in the world (Ramady, 2010).

The impact of World Trade Organization on Local Marketing of national products and services can be observed through the example of Jordan. The average contribution of the Jordanian agricultural sector to GDP is only 4%, and it is one of the most important sectors, and

it is the nucleus of development and income of the rural areas. The government of Jordan has made effective efforts in the last years and raised the productivity of the agricultural production (Beblawi and Luciani, 2015). It has cut the subsidies, which were distorting trade in line with the World Trade Organization obligations (Hoekman and Mavroidis, 2015).

Saudi Arabia has been almost completely reliant on the oil-export revenues since the innovation of commercial oil in March 1938 at Dammam (Burton, 2016). The budget of Saudi Arabia is still dependent on oil revenues to the tune of ninety percent. Saudis needed a broad-based comprehensive economy, and the country requires that it creates additional opportunities that free it of its oil revenue dependency. The current situation is unsustainable and as a result the country has launched the *Vision 2030*, which aims to reduce unemployment by expanding the non-oil sector. This document has been planned to create 21st-century economy almost from scratch. *Vision 2030* is a step in the right decision no matter how it will achieve the goal since it is not bold enough on the field that matters most of the developing countries (Salameh, 2016).

### 1.1 Problem Statement

It is essential that the impact of joining of the KSA in WTO seems to have an economic impact on the country at a partial or comprehensive level, i.e. the level of state and individual. Hence, the primary emphasis is on answering the following question: What is the impact of joining of the KSA in World Trade Organization (WTO) on the local marketing of the national products?

### 1.2 Significance

The World Trade Organization has been considered as the first institutionalized framework for international free exchange. Therefore, it is expected that the outcomes and suggestions established through this study will lead to the following:

- Assist the local companies that are covered by this study to avert the negative aspects of joining World Trade Organization (WTO).
- Help the business sector lay the scientific foundation for marketing of products.
- Open new horizons for researchers in this field via continuing the study regarding the impact of joining of the KSA in WTO on the local marketing of the national products.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

The primary objectives of the study are mentioned below in detail:

1. To know the new marketing mechanisms, which have been imposed on the Saudi companies after joining of the KSA in World Trade Organization (WTO)
2. To specify the new means and techniques that assist in increasing the opportunities for local marketing of national products under the framework of joining of the KSA in World Trade Organization (WTO).
3. To propose certain recommendations and solutions that help eliminate or overcome the marketing problems that may confront the companies after the KSA joins into World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as utilize them to have a positive reflection on companies.

## 2. Methodology

As the study has been carried out to evaluate the impact of Saudi Arabia joining the WTO on the local marketing, the quantitative research design has been adopted. The data collection has been done through a structured questionnaire, designed on the basis of Likert Scale. There are five different ranges of Likert scale, which include Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and strongly disagree. The population of study includes entrepreneurs, who were the members of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Jeddah city. A total of 15 entrepreneurs have been

selected as study participants, through random sampling technique. The selected sample has been considered as the probable sample, which is appropriate to generate the study outcomes. The statistical technique of descriptive statistics has been used to analyze the outcomes. The descriptive statistics establishes the association among variables of the study (Hopkins, 2008). The study has been classified into theoretical and field study.

## 2.1 Preamble

Taking into consideration the international law, it has been designed under the World Trade Organization (WTO) to favor a competitive outcome of the trade. Under this agreement, the countries should be penalized in the case if they attempt to use trade restrictions to extract the rents from their trade partners (Balistreri et al., 2015). In fact, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has been considered as an extension to General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT); and that it has created to avoid the shortcomings of GAAT. The World Trade Organization is generally considered the only organization, which deals with the principles of international trading among countries. The primary function of World Trade Organization is to secure the process of trade flow among countries with due easiness, smoothness, and freedom (Jeddah Chamber of Commerce, 2016). Numerous advantages achieved by various sectors of the economy in Saudi Arabia resulted due to the joining (accession) of the KSA in World Trade Organization (WTO). These salient features are mentioned below in detail:

1. Develop the quality of goods and services in particular, and the performance of the Saudi economy in general, as a result of the pressures of international competition.
2. Make goods and services available for the residents of Saudi Arabia at competitive prices, which is appropriate for them according to their varying incomes.
3. Settle professionally commercial disputes and conflicts via the World Trade Organization (WTO) in a manner that retains for Saudis and their respective economic partners their due rights.
4. Achieve justice for all at the international markets without discrimination for any country at the expense of other, since that country is a member of WTO (Turkustani, 2005).
5. Encourage the World Trade Organization (WTO) to achieve international economic growth, let alone securing commercial opportunities at local and regional levels.
6. Confirm that joining WTO assists in developing commercial laws at international, transparent level.
7. Take advantage of commercial information possessed by international centers and organizations, such as International Trade Centre in Geneva.
8. Benefit from the technical consultations provided by WTO to the member states via International Trade Centre in Geneva (Department of Commerce, 2016).

The KSA has also been observed to face some negative aspects internally after becoming a member of World Trade Organization. Some of these aspects are mentioned below:

- 1- The increase in the prices of the commodities protected by intellectual property rights, such as computer programs (software), medication and genetically modified cereals. The foreign companies will have a strong presence at the local market. This, in turn, is negatively reflected on certain small local companies that will be compelled to exit the market due to their inability to compete effectively or vigorously.
- 2- The income of the state from customs duties will decrease, because the Trade Agreement on Commodities, one of the agreements of the Organization (WTO), holds the member state liable to reduce gradually their customs duties and cancel them totally at the end. Furthermore, the restrictions on the country's importation of modern technology will

become more complicated under the framework of the agreements of WTO (Al-Jarf, 2006)

Besides this, the Saudi companies are also likely to face marketing challenges in the case as other countries enter into the World Trade Organization. Some of the marketing related challenges are mentioned as follows:

- Certain cheap products of other Asian countries threaten the national products when local producers desire to market their national products on the local or global basis.
- The national exports, which enjoy preferential characteristics treatment at foreign markets, will be affected by all such preferential characteristics treatment that was given to national products and exports will be canceled after getting into accession with WTO (Zaid, 2006).
- The foreign products that enter the local markets without the imposition of customs duties will be in a position to vigorously compete for the national products.
- The cost of virtual foreign commodities will increase for Saudi consumers because government subsidy ceases for foreign products at the source country.
- The competition of foreign products that enter the local markets increases due to the high quality of imported goods, when compared with national products.
- The ability to market national products at internal markets seems to weaken, due to the big difference in marketing experience between the foreign marketing department and the local one (Alaskar, 2005).

### 3. Discussions and Conclusion

#### 3.1 Data Analysis

##### 3.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

From the outcomes of descriptive statistics, it has been observed that 40% of sample members were less than, equal to, and more than 50 years of age. Moreover, 20% of the members belong to an age group of 30 to 40 years. It is conspicuous from Table 1 that the sample is represented at the different age groups, although the great portion of them is concentrated between 40 years to 50 years and more.

Age Bracket	Number	Percentage
18 to less than 30 years	-	-
30 to less than 40 years	1	20%
40 to less than 50 years	2	40%
50 years and more	2	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 1: Distribution of Sample according to Age Group**

With respect to the qualification level of study participants, it has been examined through descriptive statistics that 60% of participants have a university qualification. On the other hand, a ratio of 40% participants holds secondary and intermediate school certificate, which can be observed from Table 2. The outcomes of Table 3 revealed that around 40% of participants have an experience of 10 to 14 years. Moreover, approximately 60% of the participants have work experience of 15 years and above. Table 3 provides a detailed descriptive analysis of working experience.

Educational Level Category	Number	Percentage
Elementary School Certificate	-	-
Intermediate School Certificate	1	20%
Secondary School Certificate	1	20%
University Certificate and above	3	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2: Distribution of Sample according to Educational Level**

Experience Years Category	Number	Percentage
Less than 5 years	-	-
From 5 to less than 5 years	-	-
From 10 to less than 15 years	2	40%
From 15 years and more	3	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3: Distribution of Sample according to Years of Experience**

### 3.1.2 Analysis of Exploration Data

When the respondents were asked whether the accession into World Trade Organization assist to confront the undesired change in the price of the product of markets, it has been reported by 60% of participants thought that joining into WTO does not assist in the undesired change in the price of the product of markets. On the contrary, approximately 40% of the participants responded that the accession assists to confront the undesired change in the price of the product by foreign products.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	40%
Agree	1	20%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	1	20%
I strongly don't agree	1	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4: Joining (Accession) of World Trade Organization (WTO) and Undesired change in the price of product by Foreign Products**

Taking into consideration whether some particular cheap products of Asian countries threaten local products, 60% of the participants responded that certain commodities threaten local products, when there is a desire to market the products internationally or locally. On the other hand, certain cheap products of Asian countries do not threaten local products of Saudi Arabia, when there is a desire to market products on the local or global basis. The frequency of responses about this phrase can be observed from Table 5.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	3	60%
Agree	1	20%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	1	20%
I strongly don't agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5: Threat of Cheap Commodities of other Asian Countries for Local Products**

When the respondents have been asked regarding the use of new techniques for marketing, the outcomes demonstrate that all participants showed a positive response. A total of 60% participants strongly agree; whereas, the remaining 40% agree that the Saudi companies should emphasize on adopting new marketing techniques after joining the World Trade Organization. Table 6 revealed the outcomes for usage of marketing techniques.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	3	60%
Agree	2	40%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	-	-
I strongly don't agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6: Usage of New Marketing Techniques**

It has been observed through results that all participants agreed that the Saudi companies are required to develop their products continuously. Table 7 shows the frequency of responses obtained through statistical analysis.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	80%
Agree	1	20%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	-	-
I strongly don't agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 7: Development of National Commodities to cope with Openness**

The response rate of participants has been evaluated regarding the launch of innovative products by Saudi companies; it has been identified that all participants agree with this statement. Thus, it can be said that the countries that join the WTO necessitate launching innovative promotional campaigns, enabling to confront foreign competition. Table 8 represents the response rate of study participants.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	80%
Agree	1	20%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	-	-
I strongly don't agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 8: Launching of Innovative Promotional Campaigns to confront Foreign Competition**

Taking into consideration the concept that Saudi companies after joining the WTO should emphasize on the manufacturing of high-quality products with reasonable prices, 20% of the members responded that it is not essential to manufacture high-quality products. On the other hand, approximately 80% participants reported that Saudi companies are required to produce high-quality products at reasonable selling prices. This production is beneficial for them to reach the level of international competition. Table 9 provides the detail of responses obtained through outcomes.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	80%
Agree	1	20%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	-	-
I strongly don't agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 9: Manufacturing of High-Quality Products with reasonable Selling Prices**

The respondents have also been asked whether entering into World Trade Organization is one of the reasons for rising prices of national products. From the results, it has been revealed that 60% participants reported the rising prices of national products as a reason for joining the WTO. The price of national products are enhanced because of an increase in the cost of raw materials. Moreover, 40% of the participants disagree with this statement, as they do not consider it as one of the major reasons for rising costs. Table 10 illustrates the percentage of responses obtained for this question.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	-	-
Agree	2	40%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	2	40%
I strongly don't agree	1	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 10: Increase in the Prices of certain National Products**

Concerning the design of high quality of products, it has been the indication by 80% of the participants that Saudi companies are required to design their products similar to the foreign products with a view to coping with openness. But a sample of almost 20% participants disagrees that there is no need to imitate the design of foreign products. The response rate for this question can be observed from Table 11.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	40%
Agree	2	40%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	1	20%
I strongly don't agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 11: Design of High-Quality Products**

Another question showed that all participants agreed with the statement that innovation and development in production techniques enhance the capability of the company to market its product more efficiently. The percentage of respondents about this query can be observed from Table 12.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	3	60%
Agree	2	40%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	-	-
I strongly don't agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 12: Development and Innovation in Production Techniques**

When the respondents have been asked regarding the required marketing mechanisms, it has been identified that all participants reported the creation of internet sites by Saudi companies as an essential medium of marketing. Hence, the outcomes of Table 13 demonstrate that Saudi companies should emphasize on providing the information of their products on internet sites in an attractive and engaging manner. This medium serves as one of the most fundamental mechanisms for marketing.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	40%
Agree	3	60%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	-	-
I strongly don't agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 13: Creation of Internet sites for Saudi Companies**

From the outcomes of Table 14, it can be observed that Saudi companies are not sufficiently capable of marketing their products within the domestic markets due to the difference in the experience of marketing. On the contrary, almost 40% of the participants disagree with this statement. They do not think that the difference in marketing experience of local and foreign marketing departments is the reason for the weakness of Saudi companies.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	1	20%
Agree	2	40%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	2	40%
I strongly don't agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 14: Weakness in ability of companies in Marketing of their Local Products**

Taking into consideration the creation of opportunities regarding marketing and investment, it has been evaluated from the outcomes of Table 15 that all participants agreed with this statement. According to the study participants, entering into the WTO is beneficial for the Saudi companies to generate new investment as well as marketing opportunities.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	-	-
Agree	-	-
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	4	80%
I strongly don't agree	1	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 15: Creation of New Investment and Marketing Opportunities**

Another important question asked of the respondents is that entering into WTO results in the flourishing of the Saudi market. The outcomes of Table 16 demonstrate that all participants showed a positive response towards this query. It has been reported by the participants that results that increase the opportunities for marketing and investment are beneficial for the economy of Saudi Arabia.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	-	-
Agree	5	100%
Neutral	-	-
I don't agree	-	-
I strongly don't agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 16: Flourish of the Saudi market**



### 3.2 Discussion

Through detailed analysis, it has been evaluated that the joining/accession of the country into WTO does not assist in confronting the undesired change in the price of the product of markets by foreign products at a ratio of 60%. Moreover, certain cheap products of other Asian countries threaten local Saudi products, when there is a desire to market products on the local or global basis. Another study findings is that the accession of the country for World Trade Organization necessitates that Saudi company should focus towards using new marketing techniques. The accession of Saudi Arabia to the WTO seems likely to have a profound impact on different industrial sectors of the country, particularly on high-tech industries. With respect to the marketing of new products on the global basis, the production of high-quality products is essential, and Saudi companies should emphasize on promoting these products through promotional campaigns. These promotional campaigns are beneficial for the companies to confront the foreign competition. The country's joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) may well lead to the creation of new investment and marketing opportunities. Hence, it can be said that the accession of Saudi Arabia to the WTO results in an expectation of a general flourishing of the Saudi market, which leads to enhanced opportunities for marketing and investment. This ultimately results will augment the Saudi Arabia's economy.

### 3.3 Limitations of the study

The primary limitation of the study was to restrict the impact of joining the World Trade Organization to Saudi Arabia only. The study has been conducted with the entrepreneurs of KSA, particularly the Saudi nationals.

### 4. Recommendations

Taking into consideration the aforementioned outcomes of the study, some suggestions have been provided. These recommendations will lead the Saudi companies to progress further regarding the local marketing of their products with a view to coping with the openness and competition by joining (accession) of the KSA for the World Trade Organization (WTO).

- It is essential to establish a national centre that is concerned with the affairs of WTO and renders relevant technical consultations, whether these be economic, legal, administrative or marketing. The centre will also help the private sector in dealing with the laws and regulations of WTO, particularly those about conflict resolution issues and marketing undesired change in the price of product ones, conducting of specialized studies on various agreements of WTO on commercial activities in the Saudi business market.
- It is necessary to develop marketing services and create new marketing techniques and to take advantage of modern technology that is reflected on the quality of products and transformation to electronic establishments. Moreover, it is also essential to adopt presentation of electronic commerce solutions, whenever they are possible, so as to enhance the competitive position of company at the market. Besides this, it also increases the market share of the company, augments the consumer's confidence in the company's products, and concentrate on the items acceptable at the market, so as to cover a greater segment of consumers.
- It is worthy to mention that we take advantage of the openness of Saudi market in a manner that companies become more competent and capable of confronting the challenges imposed by imports. Moreover, it is also advantageous, as we benefit from the marketing opportunities of respective products of the companies via securing due qualification for marketing personnel. This seems to help the marketing personnel to

reach the desired level by encouraging them to attend various training programs and courses, as well as specialized workshops, in addition, to read freely rich, useful, and informative and relevant literature.

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**Appendix**

**Questionnaire**

**Question 1:** Please tick with (√) the box that expresses most your point of view.

Clause	I strongly agree	I agree	I am neutral	I don't agree	I strongly don't agree
1- The joining "accession" of the country for World Trade Organization (WTO) doesn't assist in confronting the undesired change in the price of product of markets by foreign products					

2- Certain cheap products of other Asian countries threaten local Saudi products when there is a desire to market products locally or internationally					
3-The joining "accession" of the country for World Trade Organization (WTO) necessitates that Saudi companies should use new marketing techniques					
4- The joining "accession" of the country for World Trade Organization (WTO) necessitates Saudi companies to continuously develop their products with a view to coping with openness					
5-The joining "accession" of the country for World Trade Organization (WTO) necessitates that Saudi companies should launch innovative promotional campaigns so as to confront the foreign competition					
6- The Saudi companies should manufacture high quality products with reasonable prices with which they can reach international competition					
7-The joining "accession" of the country for World Trade Organization (WTO) may be a reason in the increase of prices of certain national products due to the increase in the cost of raw materials					
8-The Saudi companies should design high quality products that imitate foreign products in order to cope with openness					
9-Development and innovation in production methods increase the ability of the company for marketing its products					
10-The creation of Saudi companies for Internet sites for provision of information about the company and its products in an attractive manner is considered one of the essential marketing mechanisms					
11-There is weakness in the ability of companies in marketing local Saudi products at domestic markets due to the huge difference between local and foreign marketing departments					
12-The joining "accession" of the country for World Trade Organization (WTO) leads to the creation of new investment and marketing opportunities					
13-The joining "accession" of the country for World Trade Organization (WTO) leads to - at the percentage of 100%- the flourish of the Saudi market, an act that leads to increasing the investment and					

marketing opportunities that augment the economy in the KSA					
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**Question 2:** Please tick with (√) for the choice that suits you well.

- 1- **Age:** 18 to 29 years \_\_\_\_\_ 30 to 39 years 40 to 49 years 50 years and above
- 2- **Educational Level:** Elementary School Intermediate Secondary University
- 3- **Years of Experience:** Less than 5 years 5 to 9 years 10 to 14 years 15 years and above