



REVIEW ARTICLE

Section: *Sociology and Community Development*

The collaborative economy: An opportunity for building the capacities of Saudi university youth

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ABSTRACT

The collaborative economy presents vast opportunities for the Saudi university students to help address issues such as unemployment along with promotion of skills, entrepreneurship, and social capital development. This study analyzes interaction of over 17 thousand students and feedback information from 23 coordinators to understand the essence of collaborative economy, its platforms and how it influences employment and ideas. The research tackles mixed methods and it examines trends, challenges, and possibilities within the collaborative economy with particular attention paid to technology, environmental and social aspects. Significant findings emphasize the significance of collaborative projects including entrepreneurial growth, digital competence, and collaboration between different fields of science as a transformation of the emerging initiatives. As suggestions of this study, stakeholders should encourage growth of networks between schools, start-up companies and industry to enhance the creation of student friendly opportunities and ecosystems. The paper addresses how collaborative economy can be utilized for purpose of empowering Saudi youth with the necessary skills and competencies for success in an increasingly competitive world.

KEYWORDS: collaborative economy, Saudi university youth, entrepreneurship, economic empowerment

Research Journal in Advanced Humanities

Volume 6, Issue 1, 2025

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 21 January 2025

Accepted: 13 March 2025

Published: 11 April 2025

HOW TO CITE

Ibrahim, K. A. A.-A. ., Ismail , S. M. ., & Namaziandost, E. . (2025). The collaborative economy: An opportunity for building the capacities of Saudi university youth. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.58256/c4e28538>



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

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1. Introduction

The last decade has witnessed the rise of the collaborative economy phenomenon. The relevance of this alternative economic model to the youth of Saudi universities is crucial in that it nurtures skills and enhances the capacities of students and beneficiaries, creating new opportunities and expanding their application in various spheres of life. Exploring this issue is of great importance given the unemployment that Saudi youth are experiencing. By examining the qualitative feedback of 23 principals from the coordinators' department and more than 17,000 student beneficiaries, this research looks into the potential and expands the ways that collaborative economy platforms can add value in broadening the prospects of employability and entrepreneurship for Saudi youth, as well as offering recommendations for the future. (Mont et al., 2021) (Chandna, 2022)

The insights generated in this research underpin a student-centered exploration of collaborative economy platforms and, through their engagement with existing models of different youth initiatives, a mapping process was undertaken. This study utilized awareness of skills and capacity-enhancing youth initiatives. The collaborative economy empowerment and policy formation framework is also considered in defining existing platforms of social capital fostering. Running through this analysis is an intentional exploration of recent capacity and skills enhancement trends that would encompass or add to the results of collaborating in professional placements and consider immediate and lasting benefits. Collaboration, by definition, is individuals working together, often informally and non-hierarchically, to achieve a goal that benefits more than one person, and which would probably not be possible for the individuals involved to achieve on their own. This definition of collaboration is suitable in our context, especially when we are looking at collaboration from the concept of an economy. In times of scarcity and economic challenges, it is anticipated that individuals work extensively to seize the opportunities and cover the needs emanating from the economic crisis. (Mody et al.2021) (Hossain, 2021) (Kuhzady et al., 2022)(Chandna, 2022)

2. Understanding the Collaborative Economy

Definition and Scope of Collaborative Economy The 'collaborative economy' is an umbrella concept that encapsulates various terminology including 'sharing', 'on-demand', 'gig', 'peer-to-peer', 'influence', 'platform', 'crowd-based', 'access', 'serviced', 'peer economy', 'mesh economy', or the 'circular sale economy'. (Kovács et al., 2021)

Therefore, many terms have been coined but have never stuck across society. However, they also have fundamental distinctions. In many sectors, there are practical differences between these models, such as the relative weak versus strong network effects in ride-sharing and asset-based rental marketplaces. The development of these markets opens new opportunities for people. A primary trend has enabled consumers to access shared resources or engage in peer-to-peer exchanges, often bypassing traditional financial intermediaries. This deepening economic model is transforming business, supply chains, and staffing. Access to new machinery will increase the productivity of small businesses and agricultural organizations while expanding the market for firms that rent equipment. This allows enterprises to produce goods or services that they could not afford otherwise. (Khalek & Chakraborty, 2023)

The rise of technology platforms and online exchanges has facilitated the rapid growth of the collaborative economy as an asset rental. As a result, various markets and industries have experienced and are likely to experience significant change due to the shared economy. This includes car-sharing, office space, and business services. By 2013, there were an estimated 17 million people participating in the collaborative economy in the U.S. alone. Revenue growth in the sharing economy also appears to be exponential, with sharing accommodation anticipated to reach US\$355 billion by 2025. (Schiavone et al.2021)

Meanwhile, crowdfunding is estimated to reach US\$90 billion by 2025, while electronic sharing of bicycles is anticipated to generate US\$4.3 billion by 2024. In addition to consumer investments, people are taking on more freelance income as part of the shared and gig economy. For example, more than US\$203 billion in financial transactions are carried out annually on online platforms.

2.1. Definition and Scope

In light of the relevant work, it appears relevant to frame this document by considering a clear definition of the notion of "collaborative economy." The latter refers to transactions of four types, for payment or free of

charge, taking place between private individuals through digital peer-to-peer platforms. These transactions can involve transportation, accommodation, services, and other sectors. The collaborative economy is made possible by digital platforms, which facilitate sharing and collaboration between people. (Minami et al., 2021) (De et al.2020)

It is important to distinguish between a transaction carried out in a regular economy and one that takes place in a collaborative economy based on whether the related resource is underused or not. In both cases, a fee is paid, but payment in a collaborative economy occurs for a product or service whose owner is willing to share it because it is underutilized and its insurance costs are expected to be covered. (Cha et al., 2023)

This is quite different from a transaction in a regular market, in which the goal is to pay in order to exchange services or resources that are in high demand, such as products for sale or trade. It should also be noted that the collaborative economy does not classically belong to the theory of “crowdfunding.” This is because the concept of gift or exchange is central in the definition of ‘the gift and exchange economy,’ where “transfer is not sold, for what is exchanged [...] is free.” (Miglo, 2022)

The collaborative economy is based on a trend that can be observed everywhere in the world. Indeed, we witness a multiplication and diversification of exchanges and sharing. For instance, several people are currently entering into carpooling, accommodation sharing, or service exchange. These practices are based essentially on sharing and participatory principles. (Vargas et al.2022)

2.2. Key Concepts and Models

In light of the given definition, we can notice that this concept is based on several values that need to be taken into account. Collaboration is a key value in delivering a positive experience for shared participants and providing value to all involved in the collaborative economy. Furthermore, collaboration is strongly dependent on IT support, without which the highly interdependent collaborations between businesses, individuals, and IT system components cannot successfully exist. (Jovanović & Milosavljević, 2022)

Participants act coherently and collaborate successfully to get what they need when they need it. The two terms peer-to-peer and sharing economy are often used synonymously with the collaborative economy. However, there are examples in the collaborative economy that do not fit into any of the models of the sharing economy. Therefore, by looking at these models, we suggest two models and apply them to a series of successful startups and initiatives that can be placed into each model to better understand them. According to these models, if a model can be successfully copied, it provides an easier way to reinvent the same model for a different audience. This would be useful in the case of Saudi universities since examples show that some of the collaborative economy participants can quickly shift their focus for the Saudi audience. If a model can be successfully adapted, this means that there are several success factors that we can repeat while, at the same time, we would have to adapt the existing model for other audiences, political, cultural, or other local market differences. (Gorbacheva et al.2024)

It is also interesting to observe that most of the successful initiatives and startups, although starting as national bases, are expanding to international markets. While the strong connections between local and micro economies, markets, and financial structures offer unique advantages to new entrants, this further demonstrates that entrepreneurial initiatives need to establish local roots in order to scale out. In this research, we analyze the participating startups by model and features that can be obtained from the examples and can be applicable to the context of Saudi universities. (Passaro et al., 2020)

3. The Role of Saudi University Youth in the Collaborative Economy

Working within the participatory dimension of the collaborative economy, stakeholders have painted a rich picture of Saudi university students from diverse backgrounds, disciplines, and motivations, with over half of those surveyed being business or computer students. (Labib et al., 2021)

Over 60 percent of student participants discovered the collaborative economy through a friend, and over 91 percent of those surveyed indicated they intend to continue participating in the collaborative economy. Perceived as an emerging target market for consumptive and entrepreneurial opportunities, university students have become a demographic to target. Of significance, recent documentary research involving the managerial practices of collaborative economy platforms has highlighted the formative roles that intermediaries or

‘facilitators’ fulfill in brokering and propelling participation. Facilitative support for the initiation of collaborative enterprises expands to the broader community of students and potentially includes those accessing educational resources in the form of case studies, events, and practical tools.

Analysis of the comments made by those surveyed suggests there are three groups of students who are leveraging the collaborative economy. It first reveals a majority of student participants as consumers using collaborative channels such as ride-sharing, room renting, and car accessing for the purposes of being pocket-friendly, traveling, convenience, availability of choice, and testing entrepreneurial opportunities. However, respondents’ comments also unveiled an insightful engagement across two other categories. The collaborative economy was positioned as an incubator for the transformation of ideas into actual ventures by 46 percent of student participants. Moreover, 36 percent of student participants positioned themselves as learning about the practical realities of operating as a collaborative entrepreneur. This bottom-up view also attracts the support of a less visible, yet impactful segment of the ‘investor-consumer.’ This participant not only strikes a bargain with their investment but is motivated by ‘the community spirit and social sharing ideology’ that emerges in collaborative platforms. (Woods and Burley2021)

3.1. Current Status and Trends

The increased penetration of the technological revolution among all members of society dictates the need to assess the engagement of Saudi university youth in the collaborative economy. Notably, follow-up statistics reveal a three percent decrease in the involvement of Saudi university students in the collaborative economy, as this rate fell from 78% to 75%. (Alkhateeb et al.2020)

According to the findings of a second research study, 13 innovative projects addressing 13 different social issues were implemented by the program participants during the second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020. These projects demonstrated the high creative potential present in Saudi Arabia’s universities and highlight the willingness of students to engage in collaborative projects aimed at addressing social issues. (Tanveer et al.2020) Some theoretical-economic reports refer to the growing popularity of the notions surrounding peer-to-peer collaboration, namely the shift from evaluating the traditional consumption model to the participation of co-production. Furthermore, the reports extensively discuss the shift in values among younger people, who are increasingly aware of environmental issues and expect corporations to engage in some level of corporate social responsibility. (Chatzopoulou and de2021)

The first insight highlighted within the report refers to instances in which collaborative economy statistics take into account consumer collaboration. Since 75% of the sharing economy is consumer-to-consumer, this share of the market is likely ripe for strong growth. It is imperative that the collaborative economy continues to strive for outstanding consumer engagement if the industry seeks sustained growth. (Xiang et al., 2022)

It is notable that more than half of the respondents noted that the integration of sustainability and social responsibility had a strong or very strong influence on a collaborative project participant’s decision to purchase or access skills, knowledge, or goods. This is an interesting result in the context of the report, given that integrating these factors into review sites is challenging. The majority of the participants indicated that quality and price had a great deal of influence over their decisions. The findings indicate the industries within the collaborative economy that could see large amounts of involvement in Saudi Arabia.

3.2. Challenges and Opportunities

3.2.1. Challenges in Collaborative Economies for Saudi University Youth

The fast spread of the collaborative economy faces a host of challenges for young Saudis in universities. These challenges can be summarized as follows: - Regulatory Control: Legal and financial laws may limit participation in collaborative economy enterprises. - Lack of Awareness: There is no known published research about the size and forms of collaborative partnerships involving or initiated by youth in universities. - Challenges of Accessing Resources: Most Saudi university students cannot implement their ideas and apply them due to a drop in support and resources from governmental sectors, where borrowing faces many limitations, and students may not be able to pay it back after they graduate from university. - Lack of Design in University Syllabus Regarding Entrepreneurship: The ten-year vision of the Kingdom refers to the enhancement of entrepreneurship education to encourage youth to start their businesses before graduation. - Up-to-Date Data Usage: At a higher level, for

any government or private sector to decide on strategic plans regarding the new collaborative economy, there should be precise data about the youth's situations.

3.2.2. Opportunities in Collaborative Economies for Saudi University Youth

The opportunity of the collaborative economy is to use advantages to mitigate the challenges accompanying the movement of young people from university to the business world, from which society and the economy suffer in the absence or insufficiency of planning, preparation, and practice for the movement. It may be concluded that the emergence of opportunities in the face of challenges begins in the intellectual framework of the student before the material emphasis. Some benefits of the collaborative economy include: 1. Preliminary Presence in Reality: Linking college students with students in training for profit from the parties. 2. Linking students to external knowledge and experiences. 3. Details of the experience of the Saudi collaborative economy can be discussed in the case study. 4. Employment opportunities: The experiences of international collaborative economies can be transferred to study the number, volume, and nature of Saudi participation jobs in the collaborative economy. (Elmonshid & Sayed, 2024)

4. Benefits of Engaging in the Collaborative Economy

There are many benefits for university youth in Saudi Arabia to feel encouraged to engage practically in the collaborative economy. First, participation can earn them money. The collaborative economy opens the door to employment and an alternative approach to full-time work. The collaborative youth venture, whether or not it generates an income, is crucial, with preliminary research revealing that it can result in the establishment of a number of new jobs. (Petruzzi et al.2021)

Instead of waiting to get employed in companies or the government, young Saudis can unionize and set up their own ventures. Second, in any small society or neighborhood, this kind of behavior can enhance its situation and support the empowerment mentality. Third, Saudi youth can obtain social and school benefits from their ventures in the ground created for discussion about launches, challenges, successes, and tales.

Youth can expand and improve their societal and financial capital by working together to establish and handle collaborative initiatives. They will interact with a variety of individuals at a personal level and build social connections. This style of behavior reduces the chance of loneliness and alienation among Saudi youth by increasing the size of the community and decreasing their feeling of estrangement. As a result, shared creators may understand the shared values and duties that encourage them to take part in the main social structure. Participants have access to significant learning possibilities that they can evaluate. As they engage to identify new positions and business opportunities, they can learn without being taught. Additionally, as they successfully conduct social and economic research, they improve their entrepreneurship and demonstration skills.

4.1. Economic Benefits

Economic Benefits. This refers to the financial aspects attributable to participating in the collaborative economy. The collaborative economy represents a potential financial and economic opportunity that can contribute to building the capacities of Saudi university youth and their inclusiveness in social and economic activities. Through the inclusive economic partnership, Saudi university youth can perceive other economic benefits. Given the participation in various collaborative models, they are likely to be interested in other earning streams. In this regard, many reports of the collaborative economy indicate that students are active in freelance activity, which creates part-time earnings for them. In light of this, participation in freelancing or pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities can lead to additional income streams, and startups may drive economic growth through job creation. In addition, using these models and platforms can reduce costs and save money by getting the benefits of resource sharing or by obtaining goods or services at a lower cost. (Alyami et al., 2023)

Similarly, under inclusive innovation, niches of university students who are active in freelance work or part-time entrepreneurship can create new products or services that might be relevant to the local economy and stimulate further innovation. They can also cover increasing demand and create high-quality jobs, services, or experiences that will attract outsiders. Overall, the discussion of economic activity provides an argument in favor of proactive Saudi university engagement and how collaborative business models or ventures can be an effective way of helping college students earn and share money where costs, scarcity of assets, and the lack

of educational support services are considered. Indeed, the low cost, connective interactivity, and mass reach of digital platforms provide new opportunities for student earnings that have not been available to previous college generations. The key point is that through using new digital means to communicate and network, particular generations of young Saudi students and alumni have developed a capacity to connect with large numbers of other young people regarding money, ideas, and interests, amplifying possibilities of personal goodwill and capital formation within and beyond distress signals present in new digital networks, platforms, and environments.

4.2. Social Benefits

Prevalent among the benefits of the collaborative economy are its rewards on the social level. As news of collaborative efforts spreads, the people sharing them become more interconnected. This is especially important when these people are university students, as their collaboration will quite likely continue long after they cease to be classmates. This will build among them camaraderie and a sense of mutual support. A valuable aspect that will be instilled as a result of collaborating will be a young person's ability to interact and communicate with others. Communication has been notably lacking in many societies where those reaping the most rewards often bypass message bearers who deliver uncomfortable news. Elder businessmen from major companies insist that universities are not doing enough to graduate students who can properly work in teams. Collaborative projects will help in closing this skill gap by enabling students to enhance their skills in communication and teamwork. (Hussein, 2021)

Beyond just enabling youth to gain better communication and teamwork skills, our people will foster among collaborative endeavors a sense of belonging. Belonging, in other words, is a key determinant of our sense of well-being. The loss of connection with the community brings with it a loss of purpose that impacts mood and mental health in general. The collaborative economy provides youth with a blend of shared interests and shared backgrounds that allows them the ease of interaction with others. As people identify with values that resonate with their own sense of worth and in the choices they make, they find a better fit to what really matters in their lives. In parallel to that, engaging in these empowering activities as a part of the collaborative economy movement, while accomplishing our responsibility to our society, is also honoring our societal values and building understanding of our national, cultural, traditional, ethical, and human identities. The awareness and interactions, which are embodied in human relationships, are invaluable to the development of the individual as an integrated member of society. Moreover, interaction and networking are also directly related to the development of the individual in line with certain social and professional roles associated with different types of interaction. In essence, connecting and networking will provide an additional form of learning that goes beyond the educational process of the university. Consequently, this emphasizes not only enriching the individual's social experience, but it also contributes to activating and enhancing the spirit of citizenship among youth as they are encouraged to contribute effectively towards creating a safe, fair, peaceful, non-violent, inclusive, and just society. (Minami et al., 2021)

4.3. Educational Benefits

An important educational aspect that can be utilized by Saudi universities to encourage their students to embrace the collaborative economy effortlessly is the adequacy of the activity itself to engage in experiential learning. Students would then be applying theoretical strategies learned in actual life settings through collaboration. This helps not only to internalize but to assimilate the theoretical concepts, as they can see how that can be real within real activities; seeing it around us enhances learning quite automatically. Working in combination helps to respect their acceptance of diverse cultural and racial backgrounds and chosen learning methods. It also helps in respecting and accepting the expertise students have in different areas connected with the project's work.

This diversity of talents, abilities, and backgrounds serves as a great asset. Reflective thinking, critical thinking, as well as problem solving are other courses that are highly resistant to learning from value. These are ways that require little in-depth comprehension in a certain circumstance that needs to be used in another context. (Dekker, 2020)

Precisely this sort of application connection is one of the assignments that require students to show proof of learning objectives in a peer assessment. Working in these combined undertakings will help students

to become more innovative and creative in their productions, allowing others to participate in the venture as part of their own business given the sharing economy potential. This, in truth, offers a practical alternative to a core industrial approach characterized by educational development in that individuals must function to create wealth in the economy. More manual labor requires coordination for that approach. (Allal-Chérif et al., 2023) This method stresses a belief in the values of human capital. As the current industrial strategy develops, facsimile is used less and less in factors, and the invention of interior worlds stimulates capital and advancement.

5. Building Capacities for Saudi University Youth

Saudi university youth should have the capacity to not just survive in this economy but to be well established within it, so they can reap the benefits of it. There are two important aspects related to this. First, the youth educated in the universities need to be as highly educated and skilled as possible to make them more employable. Second, eventually such capacities would ensure their increased adaptability in this era. (Yusuf & Jamjoom, 2022)

The education and various skill development programs formulated and implemented for students in universities must keep these aspects in mind. In conceptualizing their educational programs, Saudi universities and other higher education programs, particularly targeting young learners, must take into account essential skills young people need for the collaborative economy. Here is a snapshot of these competencies. First is the set of entrepreneurial skills and mindset needed to thrive in the collaborative economy. It involves cultivating and promoting an entrepreneurial mindset, which means encouraging young people to take innovative risks. Young people must be ready to take risks, be curious, creative, and critical thinkers. Second is the need for networking and collaborative skills. In the new economy, the key to success is working with others and forging strong professional and personal partnerships. This means that, among them, young people also need teamwork, communication, negotiation, and leadership skills. (Al-Youbi et al., 2020)

Furthermore, given that many industries now outsource key functions to a number of organizations, negotiation, partnering, and subcontracting skills are increasingly important. These are some of the foundational patterns through which the collaborative economy can exist, be created, and replicated.

5.1. Skills Development

II. Empowering University Students: Skills for Collaborative Economy

5.1 Skills Development For Saudi university students to meaningfully engage in a collaborative economy, particularly in leading or starting enterprises in this emerging sector, they must acquire a host of hard and soft skills. Among these are foundational capabilities such as increasing their digital literacy, knowledge and skills in computer science and engineering, management disciplines, design thinking and innovation, data and informatics, as well as project management. Moreover, these innovations are co-created by individuals working in teams, and thus academic training and preparation must cultivate the students' skills in research and communication, marketing, and business operations. To create these capacities, relevant cross-disciplinary curricula and accompanying extras are needed to prepare students for knowledgeable leadership. (Aldraiweesh & Alturki, 2023)

Finally, students must be able to plan and manage together across interdisciplinary boundaries. This requires strong skills in the areas of teamwork and leadership. All of these desirable outcomes of a 'real' education embody multiple skills that are key to the new forms of economic collaboration and enterprise development that reflect the collaborative economy. In addition, we also see a need for an internship program that will afford students opportunities to apply what they have learned from the collaborative economy programs to business issues in industry and gather additional experience and skills. Together, these needs are setting the stage for the real heart of this initiative: skill building and curriculum development to enable students to become business leaders who understand how to build capacity and foster innovation in organizations. Some programs, projects, and coursework are currently addressing the skill needs of the collaborative economy business person. In these early stages, they draw from previous discussions and knowledge. (Warr and West2020)(Wang et al.2020)

These range from short courses and remodeled curricula in business and engineering to interdisciplinary projects and scholarships in campus programs fostering follow-on entrepreneurship. Youth with the necessary skills, behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge will be poised to traverse time-limited economic niches to identify

new entrants in the collaborative landscape. Effective real-world activities, including projects, field experiences, internships, and partnerships, are the mechanisms to provide students with the hands-on experiences that will allow them to learn and refine their skills. Many students will use these experiential learning opportunities to highlight and cultivate their skills. A pilot program opportunity for students to participate in collaborative projects across various departments and colleges of the university offers another unique mix of skills of value in the new economy: multidisciplinary innovation, collaboration, coupled with cross-cultural experiences, and study on the re-implementation of a new company structure or incubation environment.

5.2. Entrepreneurial Mindset

Entrepreneurship as a concept has numerous facets associated with it. Some of the important characteristics associated with the concept of entrepreneurship are creativity, resilience, opportunity orientation, networking, and risk-taking. Stemming from this view, entrepreneurial successes rely on a set of behavioral characteristics that accompany the entrepreneur as they create value from temporary disequilibrium situations. (Ismail, 2022) This mindset provides a comprehension of dynamic relationships in economies currently experiencing a transition from industrial-based to knowledge economies. It is advisable in many situations to engage and consider entrepreneurial processes and capabilities to deal successfully with the collaborative economy and the associated learning paradigms. The new economy represents a rapid and flexible way of doing business. Entrepreneurs and small and medium sector businesses are often cited for their capability of fast decision-making and responsiveness to customer trends and demand in whatever constitutes the ‘novel’ part of the economy. Entrepreneurial capabilities in general are seen as encompassing personal competencies in terms of knowledge accompanied by attitudes yielded as personal attributes.

Industry paths forge innovative, diverse, profitable ‘makeovers’ of products or services, and now students are engaging in the art of working together to innovate model diversity in generating any imagined predicated invention planning. It is through the process of helping the community that these student constructs have come to life. Characteristics associated with entrepreneurship are increasingly recognized as fundamental skills that may be consciously developed in society. Attitudes towards the application of these characteristics for direct financial gain are called entrepreneurial and refer also to private sector startups and venture creations. The development of these attitudes, irrespective of enterprise ownership, is now a primary precept of government throughout the UK and international initiatives. (Jardim, 2021)

Fundamental to societal cultures is the concept of societal change. The creation and destruction of wealth (economic growth) are facilitated by change. Creative destructive change was first emphasized by the concept of innovation. Entrepreneurial environmental insight is driving these changes, with notable figures transforming their world order along with various organizations. The list is endless.

An entrepreneurial mindset or awareness of oneself that is consistent with personal competencies toward enterprising learning strategies has been appreciated. We need to understand more fully who will excel in this world, what talents will be instrumental in creating and processing collaborative working environments, and what educational experiences can most effectively support the full development of business skills. It is no longer advisable for an individual to think of themselves as performing at a certain task within an organization for the rest of their life. Individuals need to develop a broad range of knowledge and skills and opt for experiential training programs in place of classical craft training. (Cui et al., 2021)

Learning is enabled naturally in the environment, with learners being autonomous crucibles of experience, and fellow learners and teachers being co-participants engaged in common projects. The knowledge is already in the students who need special prompting to bring out the creative and critical aspects in them, which offers itself to be politicized further in formulating projects for the improvement of society as businesses. Therefore, it is also reinforced that the formal system is not an absolute function, nor is it a universal solution. In society-based learning, the vital role of personal initiative is an explicit maxim; this further explains the self-characterizing activity of individuals.

5.3. Networking and Collaboration

Networking develops the capacities of university students. Connecting with mentors, experts, and experienced individuals can also increase students’ chances of benefiting from this economy. Education that treats students as

“resources” needs to provide frameworks where they can create new knowledge based on professional practice. Typically, if knowledge is shared with others, it does not diminish. However, too much knowledge sharing is a “cost” in capitalist competition, which is further accentuated in the consumer or shared economy. Therefore, unless we develop our own spaces to transfer our knowledge, reciprocal sharing means we are occupying common time and space, meaning all parties are investing something, at least one hour of concentration. In the best circumstances, our shared moments become the time and space of a deterritorialized community, impacted by ideas and/or emotions. (Raaper & Brown, 2020)

For university students, the ability to collaborate with professionals in this field can be regarded as good management that is not fully capitalistic oriented. If professionals only see university students in terms of temporariness, they will be limiting their future business opportunities. Most probably, university students will become a limited potential clientele for announced markets when they turn into professionals. Everyone can see clearly that today’s students become tomorrow’s professionals. (Cooper & White, 2024)

And with artificial intelligence coming at a rapid pace, you should expect your peers to impact the industry in a professional, if not lead role. There are many platforms where you can become part of a youth community and expand your network. You can take advantage of the networking opportunities that are presented and are continuously updated to increase your chances of accessing the opportunity platforms providing job opportunities, protected partnerships, support, and finance.

6. Case Studies and Best Practices

Since we began to learn about the collaborative economy as an alternate angle to economic paradigms in many parts of the world, a variety of productive and practical experiences in Saudi Arabia have come to our attention involving fledgling Saudi university students. These projects are quite ambitious. They were typically organized by one student who found the assistance of only a few classmates with whom to collaborate. Most of these cases could be described as pilot projects. Thus, their shift to a formal and stable operational phase is directly related to the interest of the students involved. The products they have developed are tools primarily designed to facilitate access to certain services or to offer Internet users reliable information about a certain topic such as exam schedules, news, and so forth.

Since 1433, some students attempted to standardize old copies of the year exams that they had in their files by converting the document to PDF format. Half a dozen technical, pedagogical, and managerial problems had to be resolved. In addition, in partnership with some NGOs, our university has served as a loan guarantor so that about 30 students could set up small businesses. Some have sold software solutions, others have launched bookstores, or set to market educational courses developed under the guidance of faculty. These projects have resulted in several positive outcomes. First, more often than not, the results exceeded the students’ expectations. Second, the students learned more than new skills. They also developed their creativity, sense of initiative, and managerial and technical competencies. They have also learned to be persuasive and business-oriented. Last but not least, they have begun to take a first step to make their mark.

Several challenges have threatened the success of the students in terms of the design and implementation of web-based initiatives that were taken. Among them, the following can be mentioned:

- The difficulty of connecting with entities outside the university’s boundaries. The introduction of faculty to potential clients was critical here.
- The deficiency of the would-be distributors or other stakeholders to express an interest in the tools developed by the students in ways that could lead to having the tools improved or adapted to meet their needs.
- Not all stakeholders were willing to be considered on equal terms.
- Some initiatives threaten the survival of existing stakeholders.
- For some potential clients, the concept in question was deemed too new.

While appreciating the students’ initiatives, some potential clients were reluctant to be the “guinea pigs” of the new system. Having such initiatives fixed in mind, some trophy system seems likely. However, the fact remains that their inputs in the process of developing and implementing such initiatives that have generally been recognized as good practice should not be forgotten.

7. Policy Recommendations for Supporting Saudi University Youth

This research highlights several critical policy recommendations. Enabling Saudi university youth to engage in the collaborative economy requires policy frameworks that facilitate their access to skills, collaborative practices, and production tools needed to use and contribute to existing initiatives and platforms. Educational institutions can also foster youth participation in the collaborative economy by partnering with startups, industries, and organizations to create a minimum viable partnership specifically designed for low-stakes multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Policy implementation can focus on several recommendations to facilitate Saudi university youth readiness, willingness, and eligibility to participate in the collaborative economy. Funders and partners can contribute to creating a financial framework for seed funding, bank loans, and cash prizes for projects related to any of the three research fields to support these projects' MVP or prototype development, technology transfer, scaling up for production, etc. Funders and research project stakeholders can develop an initiative aiming at conducting robust and academically rigorous research on matching funding, training, and outreach with the socio-economic root causes of the problems Saudi university youth can solve. Matching Saudi university youth research projects to local labor markets can also incorporate the engagement of demand- and supply-side stakeholders and target beneficiaries. This basic educational engagement program could expose all Saudi university graduates to the initiatives proposed here in relation to partnership, scholarship, funding, infrastructure, and mindset development over two terms as part of an intensive graduate generic skills or wider society enrichment program.

In summary, this research emphasizes the vital importance of Saudi university youth and their potential for positive contributions in the collaborative economy. We therefore underline the essential need for a policy framework that is specifically supportive of this, and a set of considerations that support the prioritization of Saudi university youth within it. This is essential to build a supportive youth co-created ecosystem from the bottom up, rather than being done passively by 'default' through the supports we recommend to enable and facilitate collaboration among those who can and are themselves working to support Saudi youth contributions in the collaborative economy.

8. Conclusion and Future Directions

The expectations of Saudi university youth from the economy, combined with the findings from the data, lead us to believe that it is important to consider what the collaborative economy can offer society and to think about the points of intersection between the expectations of our students and this new form of economic activity. Faced with this situation, it is only natural to return to the question of the essence of education and ask: which capacities and competencies are needed in order to interact with the new economy and have a good impact on society? Empirical findings revealed some essential shared elements of joint practices. These principles and possible variations representing different performances, and potential educational kits can be subjects for further research in trying to understand and explain the role and impact of joint practices and their potential impact on developing the sociological imagination of our students.

This initiative was begun to see how much university youth in Saudi universities know about entrepreneurship in the broadest sense of the term (meaning related to the capacity for agency and creativity in the economy and not just business creation). In the initial phase of our research, we tried to understand more about the meaning of collaborative practices in the context of young Saudi university students. We hope the lessons derived from this study will have international resonance as we aim to develop a network of researchers interested in this area. The collaborative activity, in our view, produced some significant insights and lessons for young women and young men into the future. A broad globalization and internet connectedness affect Saudi and other Arabic universities. It has the potential also to be subversive to educational projects today. Key stakeholders within the institutions should allow the students to participate in the collaborative economy, ensuring physical and institutional resources. We urge educational stakeholders to collaborate in a concerted effort through, for example, a learning collaborative, which would bolster evaluation efforts and sharing of best practices in the emerging field of innovation education. Preparing students for the collaborative economy is not a single 'knowledge asset.' Education and training are moving, and it is probably not even a 'knowledge pool.' In the face of 'creative destruction,' issues of sustainable livelihood and ethical practice are governing

future possible employment pathways. For education and training, ‘knowing’ is living and dynamic. Examples of ‘collaborative ideals’ used in questionnaires and qualitative studies show that work is changing, with some older members of the iGEN embracing the Virtual Learning Environment. Should these shifts be understood in connection with the blurring of boundaries between the educational and commercial spheres? Higher education curves were not mapped and replaced but rather emotionally flooded. Developmental folklore, though, was lurking without clarifications.

Funding

The author extends their appreciation to Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University for funding this research work through the Project number (PSAU/2024/02/31773).

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest

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