Exploring Cultural Challenges of Wearable Devices for Health in Saudi Arabia
A qualitative approach

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A wearable device can be defined as a computer that can be attached to the human body. It is characterized by its ability to run by itself without any user intervention. The wearable devices do not only vary in their external design and internal engineering, but also in the domain they serve, such as healthcare, education, fitness, and sport. Perceived benefits, useful functions, attractive design, high performance, and affordable prices are among the main factors that were found to be significant in the domain of wearable technology adoption. However, fewer studies show the impact of factors from the social domain on the adoption of this technology.

Saudi Arabia, considering its developing and conservative nature, has a unique society that requires in-depth study and analysis. Investigations in this research go beyond common factors used in previous research and dig into traditions, cultures, norms, and religious traits of people in the society. Culture and beliefs are found to be strong predictors of technology resistance in the Arab region in general. This part of ongoing qualitative research is designed to identify social factors and challenges that may impact the adoption of wearable technology in Saudi Arabia.

The proposed method to be used to conduct this ongoing research is an abductive approach. The data collection process will be divided into several stages. The first stage will be mainly for exploratory purposes to investigate Saudi society and find out the most critical issues that may affect the adoption of wearable technology. In this phase, a considerable number of interviews will be conducted with individuals or focused groups. Participants will be subjectively selected or referred to by others. Semi-structured questions will be formulated based on previous literature, theories, and models. Consents and legal documents, including IRBs, will be obtained before the data collection.

The results will expand the body of knowledge by exploring the cultural and social aspects of wearable technology adoption. The results will also help the decision-makers in Saudi Arabia to take advantage of the wearable technology and improve the society aligning with their planning toward achieving the goals of vision 2030.