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Evaluating the Suitability and Sustainability of Accounting Education Requirements from the Perspective of Employees in the Banking Sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT:
This study explores the perceived suitability and sustainability of accounting education among employees in Saudi Arabia's banking sector. In light of increasing employer concerns over graduates' readiness for the labor market, this research assesses whether current university-level accounting programs align with evolving industry needs and long-term professional demands. A structured questionnaire was administered to banking professionals holding at least a bachelor's degree. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the study examined eight key dimensions of educational sustainability, including curriculum adequacy, instructional methods, soft skills integration, technological adoption, and experiential learning.
The findings indicate that while most educational factors—particularly curriculum relevance, institutional support, and pedagogical quality—positively influence perceptions of sustainability, notable deficiencies remain in practical preparedness and the effective use of accounting information. Fit indices from Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) confirm the structural soundness of the proposed model, with good-to-acceptable model fit values (e.g., RMSEA = 0.069, CFI = 0.93). Hypotheses related to curriculum adequacy, teaching quality, and technological tools were supported, highlighting their significance in shaping sustainable educational outcomes.
The study emphasizes the urgent need for accounting programs to integrate dynamic, interdisciplinary, and practice-oriented learning strategies. It concludes by recommending curriculum reforms that promote ethical awareness, lifelong learning, and digital competency. These insights aim to guide academic institutions and professional bodies, such as SOCPA, in aligning accounting education with the demands of Saudi Arabia's evolving financial sector and Vision 2030 objectives.

Keywords: Accounting, Education, Efficiency and quality of accounting, Banking Sector

1. Introduction

The existing body of literature highlights the pivotal role that students play in shaping their future career choices, particularly in accounting and financial professions (Van Helden, 2019; Shniekat et al., 2021; De Lange et al., 2006). High-quality accounting education is not only essential in building technical competencies, but also in embedding ethical standards and professional values that guide future accountants in their decision-making and conduct (Giang, 2024). The goal of accounting education thus extends beyond knowledge acquisition to the cultivation of ethical awareness and sustainable professional practice.

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In recent years, the quality and readiness of accounting graduates have been increasingly questioned. Employers argue that many graduates are inadequately prepared to meet the practical demands of the labor market (Azhar et al., 2024; Lee, 2020; Cernusca , 2007). This gap between academic training and practical requirements is partly attributed to outdated curricula, limited integration of technological tools, and insufficient development of soft and employability skills. Accordingly, global professional bodies such as the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) and the American Accounting Association (AAA) have developed standards aimed at elevating the quality and sustainability of accounting education, ensuring its responsiveness to ongoing transformations in the global economy and business environment (Kurnia & Hapsari, 2025; Suryawathy & Putra, 2016).

Globalization, the rise of digital finance, the expansion of international business networks, and evolving corporate expectations have significantly influenced the required skill set of accounting professionals (Chabrak & Craig, 2013; Al-Ghaswyneh,2023). Sustainable accounting education must therefore evolve in parallel with these developments to produce graduates equipped for long-term success in dynamic industries such as the banking sector. Sustainability in this context encompasses not only the ability to continuously meet market needs, but also to foster lifelong learning, adaptability, and ethical responsibility.

To truly foster lifelong learning within accounting education, it is essential to incorporate institutional policies and incentives that support continuous professional development. Universities and training centers can implement structured programs such as mandatory Continuing Professional Education (CPE) modules, partnerships with professional bodies (e.g., SOCPA, CPA, CMA), and alumni access to updated training resources. These initiatives encourage graduates to remain engaged with new developments in the field. Moreover, embedding adaptive learning strategies into curricula—such as problem-based learning and reflective practice—can instill habits that promote self-directed growth beyond graduation. For instance, the integration of digital learning platforms offering micro-credentials and certifications can motivate professionals to upskill periodically, ensuring sustainability and adaptability in their career paths.

This study evaluates both the suitability and sustainability of accounting education requirements from the perspective of employees in the Saudi banking sector. It aims to determine the extent to which current accounting education prepares graduates for employment and long-term competence in the banking industry. The research employs a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires to assess perceptions of accounting education quality among Saudi university graduates currently employed in the sector.

The contribution of this research is twofold. First, it adds to the growing literature on sustainable accounting education by examining how well current educational standards align with market expectations in Saudi Arabia. Second, it provides insights that may assist the Saudi Organization for Chartered and Professional Accountants (SOCPA) and academic institutions in refining curricula to support sustainable career development for future accountants.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents a review of relevant literature and identifies the research gap. Section 3 outlines the methodology and

hypotheses. Section 4 presents the results, while Section 5 discusses the findings and concludes with recommendations. (Hang, 2021).

2. Literature Review

The development of accounting standards aims to establish internationally recognized specifications and frameworks that support the effective and high-quality implementation of accounting practices across various sectors. In the context of sustainable development, such standards are increasingly expected to align with evolving economic, social, and technological transformations, particularly in industries such as banking that demand long-term financial stability and transparency. This study draws inspiration from the empirical work of Şen and Üçoğlu (2018), who investigated the relationship between accounting education requirements and professional applicability in the Turkish context. Their methodology, which relied on surveys targeting banking employees, parallels the approach adopted in this study conducted within Saudi Arabia.

Efforts to enhance the sustainability and quality of accounting education have been emphasized in global initiatives led by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), which issued the International Education Standards (IES). Notably, IES 2 underscores the essential components of accounting education by mandating competencies in accounting, finance, organizational management, and information technology (Terzi et al., 2013). These competencies are not only technical but are also intended to support continuous professional development and ethical practice—two pillars of sustainable career trajectories in accounting.

Numerous variables influence the effectiveness and sustainability of accounting education, including tuition fees, student demographics, faculty qualifications, institutional resources, and class size. Moreover, the ongoing challenges facing the accounting profession—such as rapid technological change, the rise of automation, increasing demands for corporate accountability, and globalization—require academic institutions to adapt and modernize their curricula (Alsarayreh et al., 2011; El-Sheikh et al., 2012). Sustainability in accounting education thus entails designing programs that remain relevant over time, prepare graduates for a dynamic labor market, and promote ethical and socially responsible decision-making.

To achieve these goals, accounting education must foster both academic proficiency and soft skills development. Tertiary education institutions play a central role in equipping students with interpersonal competencies such as communication, critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership—skills necessary not only for initial employment but for sustainable career advancement. Studies have shown that graduates often acquire soft skills in both academic settings and on-the-job experiences; however, certain capabilities like innovation, decision-making, and adaptability are often underdeveloped and require targeted attention within academic programs (Laswad & Beu, 2006).

Debates surrounding curriculum duration and structure also intersect with sustainability concerns. While shorter programs may offer financial benefits, they can potentially compromise the depth of student learning. Conversely, four-year liberal studies-based accounting programs have been shown to provide broader educational value and reflect international trends in accounting education (Laswad & Beu, 2006).To further

strengthen the sustainability dimension of accounting education, it is essential to structurally integrate liberal studies elements into the curriculum. These include areas such as ethics, environmental awareness, and global business practices, which are vital for preparing graduates to contribute meaningfully to sustainable and responsible business environments. Interdisciplinary modules—such as sociology, environmental science, and sustainability studies—can be embedded into accounting programs either as core components or electives. For instance, a course like "Sociology of Organizations" may offer valuable insights into stakeholder behavior and organizational culture, while "Sustainability and Accounting" can enhance students' ability to assess environmental impacts and align reporting with global standards. Embedding such subjects not only promotes holistic and adaptive thinking but also aligns Saudi accounting education with evolving global expectations for socially responsible professionals.

Recent studies have pointed to gaps between current accounting education programs and the standards set by professional bodies like IFAC. For example, Lee et al. (2017), O'Connell et al. (2016), and Prikshat et al. (2019) highlighted inconsistencies in course design and learning outcomes, which undermined the alignment with global benchmarks. Saleh et al. (2018; 2021) emphasized the need for curricula to incorporate real-world case studies, reflect emerging trends in accounting, and expand ethics-related credit hours to strengthen the long-term relevance and sustainability of accounting education.

Designing sustainable accounting curricula requires collaborative efforts among academic institutions, industry professionals, and regulatory bodies. Universities should invest in faculty development and provide incentives for integrating innovative teaching methodologies. Moreover, accounting professionals can contribute meaningfully to academia by sharing field-based insights, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice. Ultimately, the sustainability of accounting education lies in its capacity to continuously evolve in response to industry needs, support lifelong learning, and produce graduates capable of advancing the accounting profession in an increasingly complex global economy.

2.1.The Research Gap

Recent research has increasingly called for the integration of soft skills into accounting curricula, recognizing that technical knowledge alone is insufficient for sustainable career development in the accounting profession. Several studies have proposed new curriculum models that emphasize soft skills as a foundation for professional adaptability and ethical responsibility. However, many of these efforts remain limited in scope, often focusing on the expectations of stakeholders such as employers, educators, and recent graduates, without adequately addressing the long-term sustainability of accounting education frameworks.

For instance, Hassall et al. (2005) examined the preparedness of management accountants in Spain and the United Kingdom, revealing significant gaps in students' soft skills, particularly communication and adaptability. According to Fisher et al. (2007), Healy & McCutcheon (2010), Henry (2005), and Hurt (2007), employers identified students' knowledge and attitudes as major barriers to soft skill development. Furthermore, a

persistent lack of practical experience among accounting faculty has hindered the capacity of educational institutions to deliver applied and sustainable accounting education.

The dynamic nature of today's market environment further widens this gap. Accountants are increasingly expected to assume broader responsibilities beyond traditional reporting roles. They are now called upon to support strategic decision-making, communicate with diverse stakeholders, and address environmental and social accountability. As companies face pressure to disclose their impact on sustainability, accountants must be equipped to produce and interpret data related to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics. However, current curricula remain heavily focused on conventional financial accounting practices, with insufficient emphasis on sustainability-oriented content and skills.

Critics argue that many accounting programs are outdated and narrowly focused, lacking the breadth required to prepare students for modern business realities (Karatzimas, 2020; Mohamed & Lashine, 2003). Although foundational knowledge in accounting remains important, over-reliance on traditional content prevents students from developing the interdisciplinary competencies needed in a sustainability-driven economy. Turner et al. (2011) and Watty et al. (2013) emphasized the necessity of moving beyond content delivery models toward curricula that encourage innovation, critical thinking, and ethical leadership.

Moreover, emerging research underscores the importance of incorporating societal and environmental perspectives into accounting education. Stakeholders increasingly demand transparency regarding an organization's social and ecological impact, which requires accountants to be well-versed in sustainability reporting frameworks. Salin et al. (2024), as well as Toke & Kalpande.(2024), highlighted the growing need to examine the environmental and cultural consequences of corporate activity. Yet, many accounting programs fail to include such content, leaving graduates ill-equipped to navigate these emerging demands.

In summary, while there is a growing awareness of the need for accounting education reform, there remains a notable gap in addressing sustainability as a core dimension of curriculum design. This study seeks to fill that gap by evaluating how well current accounting education in Saudi Arabia aligns with sustainability imperatives from the perspective of banking sector employees, a group increasingly impacted by the intersection of financial performance and sustainable development.

3.Methodology

This study aims to identify the key factors influencing the effectiveness, consistency, and sustainability of university-level accounting education for graduates employed in the banking sector. To achieve this objective, the research utilizes a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach to examine the relationships between latent (unobserved) variables and observable (measured) variables. This method allows for a comprehensive analysis of the constructs influencing the sustainability of accounting education in terms of long-term applicability, employability, and relevance to dynamic industry needs.

A structured questionnaire was developed to assess the viability, coherence, and sustainability of accounting education. The first section of the questionnaire collected general demographic data, including participants' academic background and work experience. The second section evaluated participants' perceptions of the effectiveness and sustainability of their accounting education, focusing on curriculum quality, practical preparedness, integration of soft skills, and responsiveness to market demands. The questionnaire was designed based on established scales from previous research and utilized a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

An initial pool of 30 items was subjected to exploratory factor analysis to identify the underlying structure of the data. The analysis led to the classification of the questionnaire into eight distinct categories reflecting key themes in sustainable accounting education, including curriculum adequacy, teaching methods, access to resources, integration of technology, and connection to real-world practices. These categories were later validated through confirmatory factor analysis.

To assess the model's goodness-of-fit, standard fit indices were applied, including RMSEA, CFI, NFI, and GFI. The results determined whether the model adequately reflects the observed data and supports the theoretical constructs of sustainability in accounting education. Prior to conducting SEM, the data were examined for multivariate normality and multicollinearity. Normal distribution was confirmed by skewness and kurtosis values falling within the accepted range of -2 to +2. Additionally, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was calculated for each item. With all VIF values under the threshold of 10 (Albayrak, 2005), multicollinearity was not detected.

The target population consisted of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher currently employed in the banking sector in Saudi Arabia. Participants who had not yet obtained a degree or were unemployed were excluded from the study. The banking sector was selected due to its close and continuous reliance on accounting knowledge and its demand for graduates who possess not only technical skills but also sustainable competencies—including adaptability, ethical decision-making, and the ability to respond to complex financial and regulatory environments.

By focusing on this demographic, the study provides insights into how sustainable accounting education contributes to graduates' career readiness and long-term success within one of the most accounting-intensive industries.

4.Study Hypothesis

H1: The efficient utilization of accounting information within the banking sector is expected to be significantly influenced by the perceived sustainability and quality of accounting education ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

H2: The extent to which the accounting curriculum meets evolving industry standards is hypothesized to have a significant association with the sustainability and quality of accounting education ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

H3: It is proposed that the presence of adequate reference materials and academic support systems has a statistically significant link to perceptions of sustainability in accounting education ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

H4: Graduate readiness for practical tasks and long-term career engagement is hypothesized to correlate significantly with the effectiveness and sustainability of accounting education ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

H5: A significant relationship is anticipated between the quality of learning environments—such as facilities and student-teacher ratios—and the perceived sustainability of accounting education ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

H6: The availability of up-to-date teaching technologies and collaboration with industry professionals is proposed to influence the sustainability and effectiveness of accounting education in a statistically significant way ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

H7: Teaching effectiveness and instructional design are hypothesized to be key contributors to how sustainable and relevant accounting education is perceived ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

H8: The inclusion of real-world learning opportunities and integration of current industry practices is expected to significantly affect the overall sustainability and impact of accounting education ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

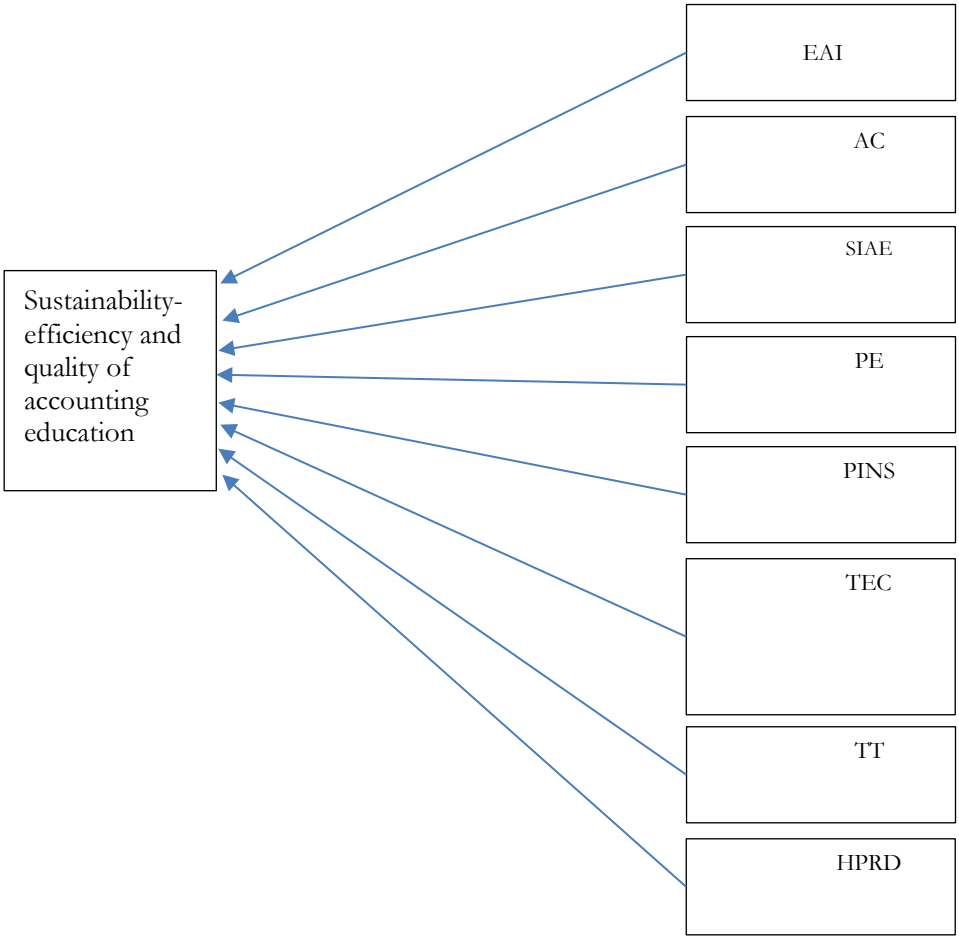


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Study

5. Findings

The demographic analysis of the sample provides essential insights into the participants' background, which supports the evaluation of the suitability and sustainability of accounting education in Saudi Arabia. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 45 years. A majority (52%) were between the ages of 18 and 25, while only 2% were between 36 and 45 years old. Gender distribution included 57% male and 43% female participants. Regarding professional experience, 86% of respondents had between 0–2 years of experience, 10% had 2–5 years, 2% had 5–10 years, and another 2% had more than 10 years of experience. These findings indicate that the majority of participants are relatively early in their careers, making their perspectives particularly relevant for assessing the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of their academic preparation in accounting. In terms of educational attainment, 80% of respondents held a bachelor's degree, while 20% held a master's degree or higher. Respondents came from various academic backgrounds: 30% were graduates of business administration, 27% economics, 16% public administration, 10% public finance, and 17% from other fields. This diversity reflects the interdisciplinary nature of accounting within the banking sector and enhances the assessment of its sustainability across related domains.

Degrees were awarded by multiple Saudi universities, including King Abdulaziz University (8%), Northern Borders University (8%), King Saud University (8%), King Faisal University (5%), Taif University (4%), University of Tabuk (8%), Majmaah University (2%), and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (6%), with the remainder of graduates coming from various other academic institutions. Regarding language of instruction, 80% of participants reported completing their studies in English, while 20% studied in Arabic. These figures may influence curriculum sustainability and alignment with international academic benchmarks.

As for course exposure, participants indicated a diverse but inconsistently distributed engagement with essential accounting topics. The most frequently taken subjects included introductory financial accounting (87%), managerial and cost accounting (86%), financial analysis of statements (79%), corporate accounting (45%), digital or computerized accounting systems (40%), both local and international accounting standards (TAS/IAS) (40%), accounting practices specific to banking institutions (34%), audit procedures and frameworks (33%), and accounting for foreign trade activities (16%). A small fraction (3%) pursued other niche or specialized courses.

This inconsistency in course exposure underscores the need for a more standardized and inclusive curriculum. It highlights critical areas where curriculum development efforts are essential to ensure a more sustainable, well-rounded, and sector-relevant accounting education, particularly one that aligns with the evolving demands of the banking industry and broader financial sectors.

5.1. Structural Model Findings.

To evaluate the conceptual model of accounting education suitability and sustainability, a descriptive factor analysis was conducted on the 30 survey items. After

statistical assessment, three items were excluded due to inadequacy, leaving 27 items for final analysis.

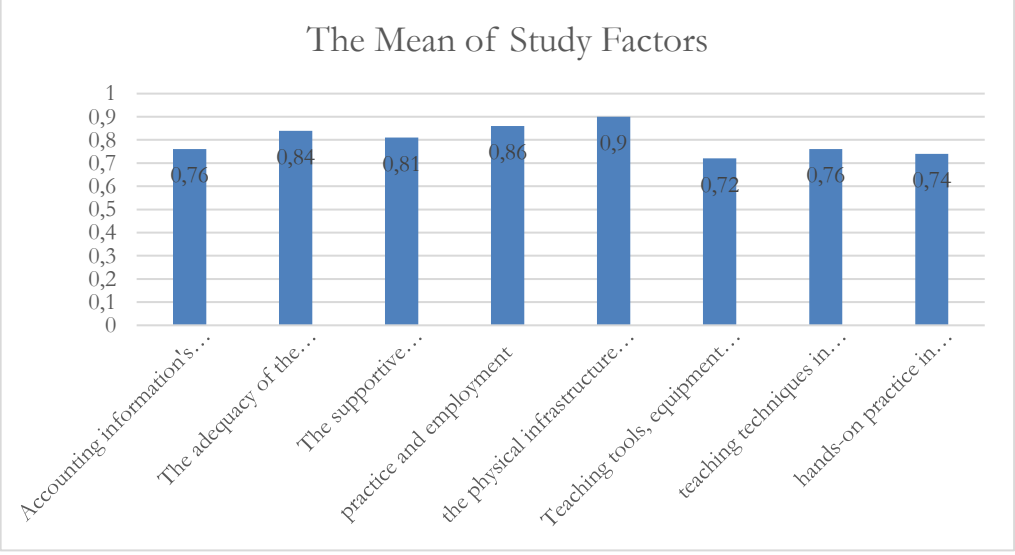
The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a significant result ($\chi^2 = 6980$, $p < 0.001$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.79, indicating strong suitability for factor analysis.

The exploratory factor analysis revealed that all 27 variables had eigenvalues above 1, resulting in the extraction of eight components that accounted for 72% of the total variance—well above the 60% threshold generally considered acceptable in social science research (Yiğit et al., 2008). These components align with the study's framework for evaluating multiple dimensions of sustainable accounting education, such as curriculum adequacy, teaching quality, and experiential learning.

To assess the reliability of the measurement model, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for all items. The overall alpha coefficient was 0.72, indicating acceptable internal consistency and reliability for further structural modeling. According to social science research standards, values above 0.70 are generally considered acceptable (Yiğit et al., 2008). Each factor group met or exceeded this threshold, confirming that the model reliably measures the underlying constructions of suitability and sustainability in accounting education.

This robust statistical validation supports the model's relevance for understanding the current state of accounting education from a sustainability perspective and its impact on graduates employed in the Saudi banking sector.

Table 1: The Means of Factor Loadings and Reliability Coefficients



5.2. Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha Based on the dependability analysis; all factors had values higher than 0.70. Consequently, the average variance recovered is more than 0.50 for all components that remain and are included in the confirmative factor analysis. Furthermore, Hair et al. (2012)'s discriminatory validity.

To assess the validity and sustainability of the proposed accounting education framework, a range of standard model fit indices was employed. These included the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Relative Fit Index (RFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). These indicators are routinely applied in empirical research to evaluate how well a model fits the data, particularly within the scope of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Several key indicators are used to evaluate the fit of structural models. Values exceeding 0.90 for indices such as AGFI, NFI, CFI, RFI, IFI, and GFI generally reflect a strong model fit, while Fit Fit indices are generally assessed based on predefined threshold values that reflect the quality of alignment between the model and observed data. Typically, scores ranging from 0.80 to 0.90 are viewed as acceptable, while those exceeding 0.90 are interpreted as indicators of a strong and preferred fit. In the case of the RMR metric, lower values are considered more favorable, with scores under 0.05 commonly associated with excellent model performance. Likewise, RMSEA values below 0.05 suggest a very good fit, and values up to 0.10 are often regarded as within acceptable limits in practical applications. These benchmarks are well-established in quantitative methodology literature. Furthermore, a chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) less than 3 is broadly accepted as a sign of a well-fitting structural model.

The confirmatory factor analysis was employed to test the hypothesis that a structured relationship exists between observable variables (e.g., course quality, resources, teaching methods) and latent constructs (e.g., the perceived suitability and sustainability of accounting education). This approach validates whether the proposed model accurately reflects the empirical data and supports the theoretical structure of sustainable accounting education relevant to the banking sector.

Table 2 : Summary of Model Fit Indices and Interpretations

Fit Index	Threshold Value	Observed Value	Interpretation
Chi-Square/df (χ^2/df)	**≤ 3.00**	**2.923**	**Good fit**
RMSEA	**0.05 – 0.08**	**0.064**	**Indicates good model fit**
RMR	**0 – 0.05**	**0.077**	**Acceptable, but slightly above ideal range**
NFI	**≥ 0.90**	**0.88**	**Marginally Reasonable alignment**
IFI	**≥ 0.90**	**0.92**	**Indicates strong**
RFI	**≥ 0.90**	**0.86**	**Reasonable alignment, slightly below ideal**

CFI	**≥ 0.90**	**0.92**	**Clear evidence of strong model alignment**
GFI	**≥ 0.90**	**0.87**	**Within acceptable range**
AGFI	**≥ 0.90**	**0.84**	**Acceptable, though below optimal threshold**

The construct's validity is illustrated using factor loadings in Figure 2, and the outcomes of the convergent validity examination are displayed in Table 3. Figure 1 shows that every standardized loading value is higher than the 0.5 threshold (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

Table 3: Revised Fit Indices of the Model

Fit Index	Threshold Value	Observed Value	Interpretation
Chi-Square/df (χ^2/df)	≤ 3.00	2.85	Demonstrates strong fit within standard range
RMSEA	0.05 – 0.08	0.069	Falls within preferred limits for favorable model alignment
RMR	0 – 0.05	0.048	Satisfies recommended criteria for model fit
NFI	≥ 0.90	0.91	Exceeds threshold, indicating strong model alignment
IFI	≥ 0.90	0.90	Meets expected standard for a good fit
RFI	≥ 0.90	0.89	Near-acceptable fit, slightly under optimal value
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.93	High performance, reflecting strong model adequacy
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.88	Acceptable but slightly below ideal level
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.87	Marginally acceptable, close to recommended benchmark

As highlighted by Cokluk et al. (2012), a chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) of 3 or below is typically interpreted as reflecting a well-fitting model, whereas values between 3 and 5 can still be considered within an acceptable range. In this study, the statistical outputs related to model fit indicators, including CFI, RMSEA, and AGFI—indicate that the proposed structural model maintains an acceptable to strong alignment with the data, supporting its overall validity.

These analytical outcomes reinforce the model's effectiveness in assessing the suitability and sustainability of accounting education as perceived by professionals in the banking sector. The model captures the interplay between critical educational variables and their influence on preparing graduates who are ethically aware, adaptable, and capable of sustained professional growth.

Furthermore, path analysis was conducted to examine the associations between eight latent dimensions and the overarching construct of educational sustainability. As reflected in Table 4, two hypotheses (H1 and H4) did not achieve statistical significance, while the remaining six (H2, H3, H5, H6, H7, and H8) were supported at the 5% level. These findings highlight the importance of factors such as curriculum content, pedagogical practices, hands-on training, and organizational support in shaping perceptions of relevance and sustainability in accounting education within the Saudi context.

Table 4: Summary of Factor Associations and Hypothesis Testing Outcomes

Tested Hypotheses	Associated Variables	t-Statistics	Significance Level	Interpretation
H1	QUALITY → FACTOR_2	0.022	0.54	Reject
H2	QUALITY → FACTOR_2	0.129	0.04	Accept
H3	QUALITY → FACTOR_3	0.297	0.01	Accept
H4	QUALITY → FACTOR_4	0.056	0.17	Reject
H5	QUALITY → FACTOR_5	0.172	0.01	Accept
H6	QUALITY → FACTOR_6	0.147	0.01	Accept
H7	QUALITY → FACTOR_7	0.288	0.00	Accept
H8	QUALITY → FACTOR_8	0.192	0.01	Accept

All factor categories demonstrated a positive correlation with the perceived suitability and sustainability of accounting education, as illustrated in Table 4. The structural model indicates that for each one-unit increase in any of the influencing factors—such as curriculum adequacy, teaching methods, or practical training—the overall perception of accounting education's sustainability improves accordingly.

This suggests that enhancing specific elements of the educational experience directly contributes to both the short-term effectiveness and long-term relevance of accounting programs within the banking sector. Figure 3 presents the structural equation model and the corresponding *t*-values for five of the most influential factors, confirming their statistically significant impact on shaping sustainable and future-oriented accounting education outcomes.

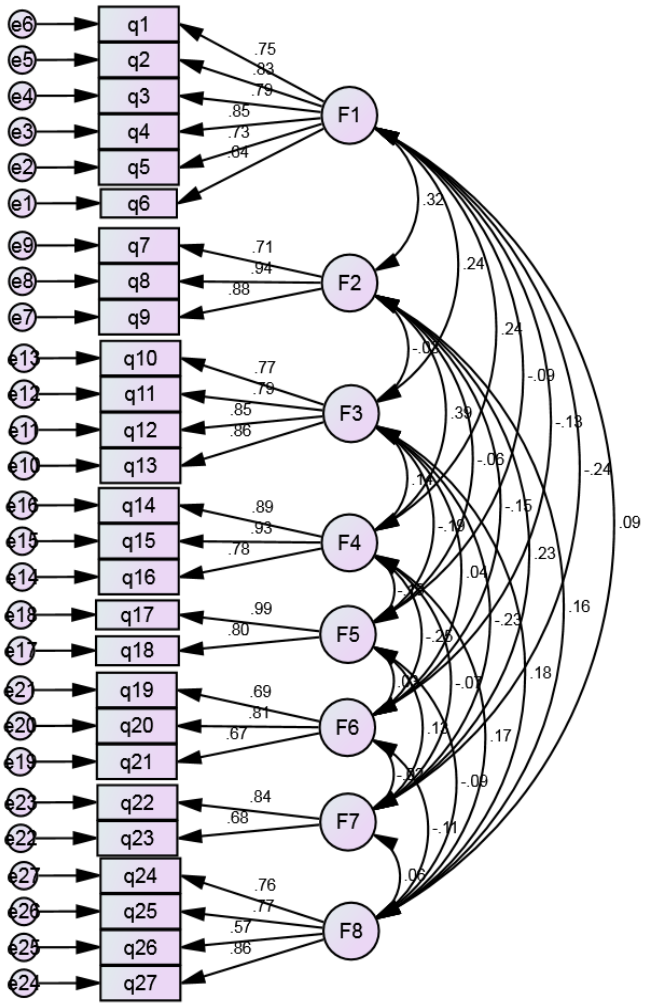


Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analy

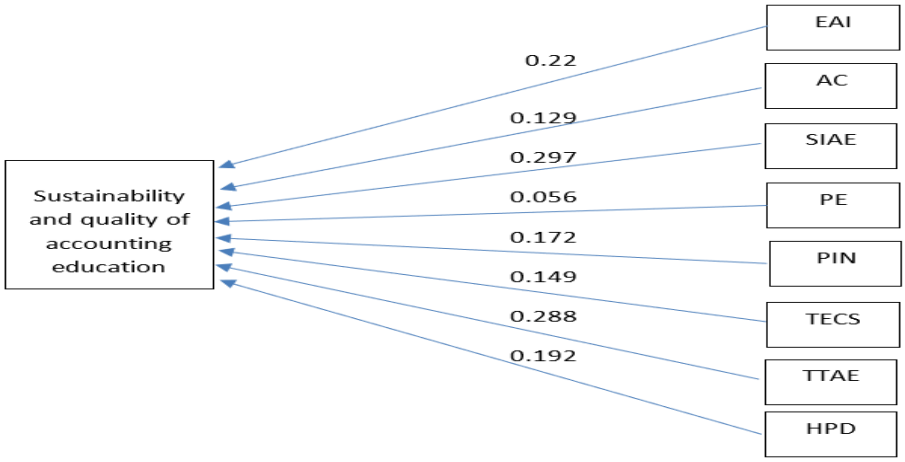


Figure 3. Structural Equation Modeling

6.Discussion

This study examined how employees in Saudi Arabia's banking sector perceive the relevance and sustainability of current accounting education practices. The analysis revealed that key educational elements—such as the structure of the curriculum, teaching strategies, institutional backing, and practical exposure—play a meaningful role in shaping positive perceptions of educational sustainability. These results imply that strengthening such components can enhance the long-term impact and effectiveness of accounting programs offered by Saudi universities.

Nonetheless, the lack of support for hypotheses related to the application of accounting knowledge and graduates' job readiness signals existing gaps in core workplace skills. This underlines the urgency of implementing more applied, competency-driven, and forward-looking educational strategies that better align with market expectations. Concerns raised regarding soft skills, the use of technology, and curriculum adaptability further reinforce the necessity to infuse sustainability not only in course content but across teaching methodologies and institutional policies. Overall, the findings support the case for accounting education that is agile, multidisciplinary, and consistent with both national development goals and international sustainability agendas.

While the study acknowledges a gap in graduates' practical preparedness, it does not specify which competencies are most deficient. Future research should identify specific skill gaps—such as data analysis, use of accounting software, or financial reporting—that hinder job readiness. This can guide curriculum revisions and foster stronger collaboration with industry partners for internships and practical training aligned with labor market expectations.

7.Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence supporting the need to enhance both the suitability and sustainability of accounting education in Saudi Arabia, particularly for graduates entering the banking sector. While several educational components—such as curriculum adequacy, teaching quality, and the use of technology—positively influence perceptions of educational quality and relevance, the findings also highlight persistent challenges in preparing students for long-term career success.

To meet the demands of an increasingly complex and sustainability-oriented financial landscape, accounting education must evolve beyond traditional frameworks. A more holistic, dynamic, and forward-thinking approach is required—one that places greater emphasis on practical training, soft skill development, digital competencies, and ethical awareness. Collaboration among universities, educators, and professional bodies is essential to redesign curricula that not only address immediate market needs but also foster lifelong learning and responsible leadership.

Furthermore, while the study stresses the importance of forward-looking curricula, it does not benchmark local accounting programs against international models. Future research should undertake comparative studies with globally recognized institutions to identify best practices in sustainable accounting education. Such benchmarking would facilitate alignment with international sustainability frameworks and enhance the global credibility and competitiveness of Saudi accounting education.

7.1.Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study, while offering valuable insights into the suitability and sustainability of accounting education in Saudi Arabia's banking sector, is not without limitations.

First, the exclusive use of a quantitative survey approach may not fully capture the depth and richness of participants' experiences. While structural equation modeling enables robust analysis, it does not allow for exploratory insights or personal narratives. Future research should consider incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to gain a more nuanced understanding of stakeholder perspectives.

Second, the sample is limited to employees within the banking sector. This narrow focus restricts the generalizability of the findings, as perceptions and needs may differ across other domains such as auditing, consultancy, public finance, or academia. Including participants from a wider range of sectors in future studies would allow for broader applicability and richer comparative analysis.

Third, the cross-sectional design used in this study provides a snapshot at a single point in time, making it difficult to assess how perceptions of accounting education evolve with career progression or shifts in economic priorities. Longitudinal studies are therefore recommended to evaluate the sustained impact of accounting education on professional development and adaptability in dynamic job markets.

Fourth, while the study highlights the importance of technological advancement, it does not examine the role of emerging innovations such as artificial intelligence and blockchain. Future research should explore how these technologies can be integrated into accounting curricula to enhance sustainability and relevance. Attention should also be

given to ethical considerations like data privacy and the responsible use of automation tools.

Furthermore, the study did not delve into the implications of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and automation in the context of accounting education. These innovations are increasingly shaping both the financial industry and academic curricula. Future research should explore how integrating these technologies can enhance educational sustainability and align learning outcomes with evolving industry standards.

Finally, the absence of a clear framework for assessing the sustainability of accounting education—particularly regarding its social, environmental, and ethical dimensions—represents a gap. Developing comprehensive, multidimensional indicators would help future studies better evaluate educational programs in line with national strategies like Vision 2030.

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