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Widening General Higher Education or Turning to Vocational Education in Saudi Arabia: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT The educational landscape in Saudi Arabia has undergone substantial changes as a result of Vision 2030, which aims to promote economic diversification. The Saudi government has been confronted with a critical choice in its efforts to bring about this transformation, that is, whether to prioritise the expansion of general higher education possibilities or to prioritise the development of vocational education in order to align with the changing demands of the labour market. By using a systematic review, 12 related studies to general higher education and vocational education were described and analysed. The findings highlight that allocating the largest share of financial resources to prestigious educational institutions as well as making vocational education a second option for failed students have significant impacts on the unwillingness to enrol in it. Some traditional works have been replaced by machines. Therefore, focusing on integrating both general and vocational pathways to achieve digital transformation has become an important requirement to achieve the requirements of Vision 2030.