Analysis of Saudi Arabian Television Advertising on Social Changes Post MBS Cultural Reform

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the social changes that occur among Saudi Arabian teenagers in the Takki film series; the form of social change that occurs in this film series, how the characters respond to these changes, and how they adapt to the changes that occur. The method used is a descriptive qualitative method, the researcher presents a description or narrative about this film series and is accompanied by articles related to the research object. From the research conducted, it was concluded that there were three important points discussed by researcher regarding the social changes that occurred among Saudi Arabian teenagers, namely gender equality, the limitations of women, and also opportunities for the cinema industry in Saudi Arabia. There is still an imbalance in terms of gender equality, the limitations of women which are very visible in this film series, and how the film industry is still very behind.

Keywords: *Social Change, Saudi Arabia, Gender Equality.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Aimed at realizing the vision of Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Muhammad bin Salman, Saudi Vision 2030 is a government initiative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Its primary objective is to augment economic, social, and cultural diversity. The Saudi Arabian government initially declared this objective on April 25, 2016.

Since the existence of the Saudi Vision 2030, there have been changes in various areas of government in an effort to implement this vision, and one of them is by changing the image of Saudi Arabia, which previously looked conservative and relied on oil as the country's main income.

The Saudi Arabian advertising landscape underwent a 180-degree shift following the MBS period. Social media and digital advertising are at last gaining attention thanks to the Digital Revolution. In 2021, Saudi Arabia spent around 950 million US dollars more on digital advertising than any other country in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), according to Ipsos.

Advertising or what is also known as advertising is something that aims to make us aware of information about goods, services or ideas. The role of advertising in the commercial sector is the window of a company's room, its existence connects producers with society, especially consumers (Tinarbuko, 2013:2).

Researchers are interested in discussing the analysis of Saudi Arabian television advertising after the cultural reform of MBS or Muhammad bin Salman.

The social changes caused by the MBS reform can be seen in changes in television advertising in terms of freedom of expression, changes in the role of women, and changes in the lifestyle of Saudi Arabian society.

From this research, it is hoped that the data presented and the results obtained can be a contribution and input in the form of information and knowledge in the field of history and culture, both for students, scholars, researchers and the general public.

B. METHOD

In this study, researchers used a qualitative descriptive approach using media analysis in advertising scenes to understand the meaning of cultural and social messages contained in Saudi Arabian television advertisements which aim to reveal a reflection or picture of cultural and social modernity that occurs in the lifestyle in Saudi Arabia. The data used in this research are texts and images originating from several advertising videos on Saudi Arabian television.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the goods produced by the mass media is advertising. Informational media that is designed to pique an audience's attention, be unique, possess certain qualities, and be persuasive enough to persuade viewers or customers to behave in the advertiser's desired manner are called advertisements (Jefkin, 1997:18; Lukitaningsih 2013:121). Advertisements are usually in the form of messages containing goods or services (products) made by producers (advertisers) which are delivered through media, either print or electronic media, aimed at the public. The purpose of advertising is to attract people's interest in buying and/or using the products or services offered by the advertiser.

Several global businesses, especially the auto industry, made the decision to use the opportunity to integrate themselves into the social change movement in light of these statistics. It is pertinent to note that, generally speaking, the many foreign businesses which created the advertising in relation to this momentous historical shift in Saudi Arabia did so extremely carefully to avoid mentioning anything unfavorable about the greatly anticipated transformation. Rather, the brands of Coca-Cola, Nissan, and Audi saw this movement in gender equality positively, expecting that women and their families would find it acceptable in society.

Procter & Gamble, one of the biggest international corporations in the world, made the decision to take Saudi cultural sensitivities into consideration when advertising its well-known brand, Buitoni Pasta, in the Saudi market. The firm opted to utilize pasta imagery and phrases in place of female models for its product commercials (Bankhar, 2015). Most Saudi Arabian corporations promote by removing female models from their campaigns. Religion, socioeconomic status, consumer preference for foreign goods, environmental consciousness, the state of the local media, and government regulation all have a significant impact on the advertising sector in Saudi Arabia (Rau & Preble, 1987; Boddewyn 1980; Luqmani,

Quraeshi & Deleno, 1980). Of them, religion and culture are the two most important variables (Wright, 1981). Islam is the most common religion in Saudi Arabia. Until the advent of Islam, it was unheard of to advertise a product or service using audio-visual tactics. Word-of-mouth and hands-on product evaluation are the only ways to market a product. Nonetheless, the Last Prophet and the Quran both provided precise instructions on how to market a product. As a result, Islam accepts advertising as long as it adheres to certain rules and values. Muslims are urged, for instance, to present themselves honestly, refrain from lying and misleading others, refrain from encouraging usury, refrain from encouraging acts that are forbidden by Islam, such as dealing in illegal goods like drugs and dead meat, refrain from using vulgar language and imagery, and refrain from disparaging the competitors (Al-Yusuf, 1994).

Saudi Arabia is not an exception to the rule that advertising is vital to the consumer market. Women are excluded from advertisements and, when they do feature, are limited to the use of their eyes in an ultra-conservative consumer society. There is no interaction between the male and female models (except from relatives). The idea of advertising models is absent, unlike in Western markets. Because of conservative beliefs, the majority of advertising is produced outside of the nation, translated into Arabic, and distributed in regional markets and media. Due to these circumstances, Saudi Arabia is a desirable market for gauging public opinion of advertising and advertising models.

There have been several changes to the Kingdom's government concerning economic policy in the wake of the Saudi Vision 2030. More corporate reforms and luring in foreign investment are necessary to move the emphasis away from an oil-based economy in terms of income. The main area of change with those corporate changes will be "Advertising." Currently, all commercials are maintained within social and cultural bounds by local cultural norms and governing rules.

Throughout many developing nations, a The Saudi Arabian advertising industry is heavily influenced by external factors such as religion, socioeconomic conditions, consumer preference for foreign products, environmental consciousness, local media infrastructure, and government regulation (Rau & Preble, 1987; Boddewyn 1980; Luqmani, Quraeshi & Deleno, 1980). According to Wright (1981), religion and culture are the two most important influences. Accordingly, the culture and social conventions provide the guidelines for making advertisements in such a community (Luqmani, Quraeshi & Deleno, 1980). Marketers are aware that their primary focus should be on stimulating their target market, since this may have a big influence on individuals (Weilbacher, 2003). Understanding the social and cultural norms of one's audience is therefore one of the top priorities for any advertising. After that, this knowledge is applied to persuade customers to change the way they buy and consume. Ads that are effective not only boost sales but also influence customer attitudes and decisions (MacBride, 1980).

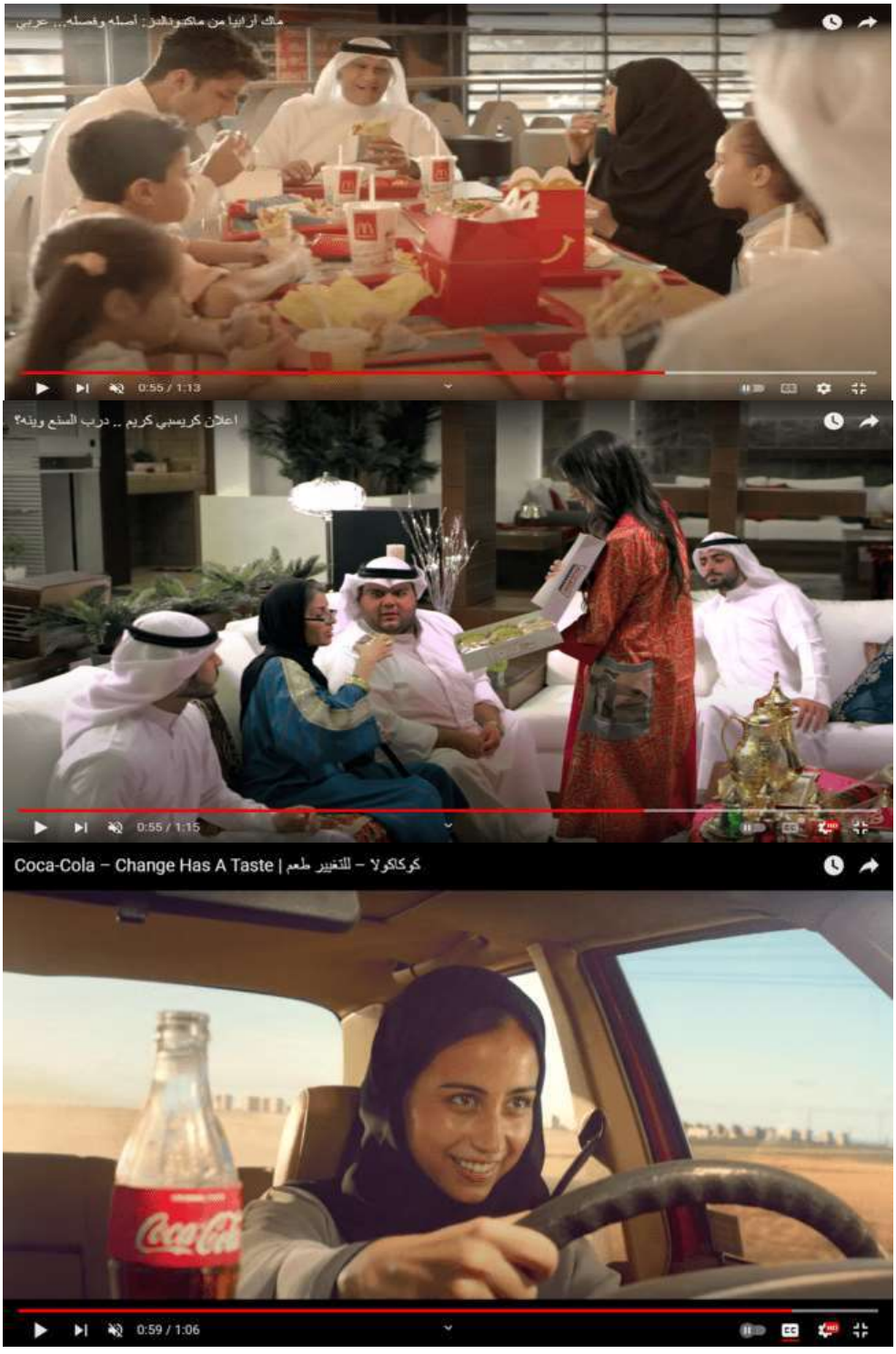
The attitudes toward advertising in Saudi Arabia were the subject of this study. It revealed how Saudis see advertising and ideas around the marketing

commutations sector by focusing on how receivers assess the advertisements. For ad agencies, it is advantageous. Avoiding the problems this study raises could be beneficial to them. Additionally, they would comprehend, from a Saudi perspective, what advertisements are appropriate and unsuitable. Due to a variety of factors, including cultural, religious, lifestyle, and governmental laws, it was argued that ads made in Saudi Arabia should not be standardized and used in other nations, including those in the Gulf.





The following images are examples taken from post-reform MBS advertisements. It can be seen that the scenes involved are more open, there are female actresses and female actresses are even allowed not to wear the hijab where previously this was prohibited.



The last image shows the changing role of women in Saudi Arabia where women are allowed to drive their own private vehicles. Previously, women could only go out if they had a male family guardian who could accompany them. Women are also not allowed to drive private vehicles without being accompanied by their guardian.

Muhammad bin Salman's Cultural Reform Policy (Planned-Change)

Saudi Arabia is a moderate country between socially mixed and strict, this should be seen in a homogenous societal culture consisting of close ethnicities and tight relationships and making this one type with its complete social diversity, to recognize Islamic and Bedouin standards. Some of Saudi Arabia's social beliefs that prohibit women from driving vehicles and later became part of the substance of the law, did not start from Islamic rules, but emerged from local efforts to protect culture (Hamdan, 2005).

Starting around 2011 there was a development of women's activism and its peak occurred in 2015 to 2018, Saudi Middle Eastern women carried out campaign activities to ask for social equality which then appeared morally justified for political support in the 2015 elections and evacuation. About the ban on women driving in 2017. Muhammad bin Salman was chosen to take over as king after King Salman, who ascended to the top position in 2015 to replace King Abdullah, decided that Muhammad bin Salman should do so. His appointment as crown prince is one of the many changes that have begun to occur during this time, Muhammad bin Salman changed Saudi Arabia Vision 2030's approach to working on Saudi Arabia's economy. This strategy is carried out by opening equal doors for male and female specialist doctors (CNNIndonesia, 2018).

The strategy regarding the position of women then emerged after the Saudi Vision 2030 program was launched by Mohammad bin Salman. The first tactic that should be eliminated as part of Saudi Arabia's policy to restrict women is the prohibition on women operating motor vehicles. The Saudi government began allowing Saudi women to operate motor vehicles in June 2018.

In addition, Saudi Arabia's strategy for placing women is to allow women to travel to other countries without guards. This can be recognized considering that Saudi Arabia's public authorities replaced the guardianship system that had been running for a long time in Saudi Arabia. This change alters restrictive guardianship arrangements that restricted Saudi women from obtaining special privileges for themselves.

In addition to being allowed to travel, women in Saudi Arabia also officially have the privilege of registering births, relationships or separations and are considered guardians of minor children. The change in the guardianship framework in Saudi Arabia turned into a big leap, a change in Saudi Arabia which was initially very conservative in terms of different orientations. Because the guardianship system in Saudi Arabia severely limits women's development, this change in the guardianship system now allows women to move independently and do things that were previously challenging for them. Saudi Arabian women who use this progress changing arrangement can easily make their dreams come true. With authorization for women to travel to other countries without guards, women were allowed to work abroad or even work abroad. The previous guardianship system made it difficult for women to leave without being inconvenienced if their caregivers did not allow it. Planned social changes that change the social elements of women in Arabia

are regulated by the Saudi Vision 2030 announced by the Crown Ruler of Saudi Arabia, Mohammad bin Salman. As a general rule, the vision means saving Saudi Arabia's economy due to the decline in world oil costs and improving the economy to strengthen monetary movements and interests in Saudi Arabia, increasing areas of exchange other than oil. Apart from the financial sector, Saudi Vision 2030 also includes a plan for a "direct return to Islam" which is centered on eradicating the conservative image that has historically characterized Saudi Arabia.

The issue is that, as Saudi Arabia expands its economic sphere of influence, it must also modernize its conservative policies in order to become more moderate. This implies that domestic support for the Saudi Arabian government and society must decline. In order to repair its reputation as a nation that is walled off to outside culture, particularly the West, and is revered in the Islamic world as a symbol of unadulterated Islamic principles, Saudi Arabia must thus engage in nation branding.

The publication of Saudi Vision 2030 by Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman in April 2016 marked the beginning of significant reforms in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia's grand strategy to diversify its economy and lessen its reliance on oil is known as Vision 2030. In order to complete this change, the private sector must take the lead in future economic growth. The Saudi Vision 2030 is built around three primary components. Putting Saudi Arabia at the heart of the Islamic and Arab worlds is the first step. Second, Saudi Arabia is using its finances and resources to diversify its revenue sources and become a worldwide investment generator, therefore emerging as a major player in the financial world. Third, making use of Saudi Arabia's advantageous position as a global hub that connects Asia, Europe, and Africa (Saudi Vision 2030:8).

Fast forward to the MBS era, and it's like someone hit the refresh button on the Saudi ad scene. With the rise of the internet and a push for modernisation, the advertising landscape has done a total 180. Let's check out how things are shaking up in the post-MBS era

Reduced sensitivity to Saudi Arabian culture, while it remains important to respect Saudi Arabia's cultural and religious norms, there is now more flexibility in advertising. Big brands can now look for creative ways to adapt their advertising while staying true to the country's values.

The market can be more open due to the government's efforts to diversify the economy and attract foreign investors. It is easier for international brands to collaborate with local partners, agencies and talent, thereby encouraging a more inclusive and innovative advertising environment.

There are various forms of socio-cultural change brought about by television advertising, such as lifestyle, shifts in behavior patterns, changes in belief patterns and the development of knowledge, society is consumeristic and instantaneous. Television advertisements have introduced decent and modern lifestyle standards. Starting from the way you dress, the way you speak, everything is conveyed through television advertisements, creating a hedonistic, pragmatic and consumerist

lifestyle. In fact, the advertisement creates awareness, knowledge, choice preferences and reactions to the advertised product.

D. CONCLUSIONS

From this research, it is hoped that the data presented and the results obtained can be useful for further research. The researcher recommends that future research utilize this data to continue the discussion with a broader scope, such as discussing more deeply the influence of advertising on the purchasing power of Saudi Arabian citizens, the influence of advertising on other fields from an economic, social and cultural perspective.

The social changes that occur in Saudi Arabian television advertisements explain that Saudi Arabian citizens have experienced social changes towards modernization caused by, one of them, technological advances. It can be seen from the differences and more openness of television advertising after the reign of Muhammad bin Salman, Saudi Arabia can more freely produce advertisements with a more modern concept than before.

The scenes that occur in Saudi Arabian television advertisements show that the social changes that occur in the development of the world of advertising are evolutionary changes or slow changes, and changes are planned. This is because the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is making big plans to diversify the kingdom's economy and reduce their country's dependence on petroleum.

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