

Culture in Advertisements: A Discursive and Semiotic Analysis of Maestro Pizza Advertisements in Saudi Arabia

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To cite this article. H. M. Albogami, N. Alshurafa, T. Elyas, and M. Alrawi, “Culture in Advertisements: A Discursive and Semiotic Analysis of Maestro Pizza Advertisements in Saudi Arabia”, *Lang. Technol. Soc. Media*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 304–327, 2025.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70211/ltsm.v3i2.271>

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Published online: 30 August 2025



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Culture in Advertisements: A Discursive and Semiotic Analysis of Maestro Pizza Advertisements in Saudi Arabia

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Received: 27 June 2025

Revised: 21 August 2025

Accepted: 29 August 2025

Online: 30 August 2025

Abstract

Advertisements have long been acknowledged not merely as tools for product promotion but as powerful cultural agents that reflect and shape societal values. This study critically examines the cultural and ideological underpinnings embedded in Maestro Pizza advertisements aired on Saudi National Days 88, 89, and 91. Employing Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Barthes' Semiotic Theory, this research investigates twelve selected visual frames from three advertisements to uncover how Saudi cultural identities, historical figures, and social norms are represented. The findings highlight the prominence of cultural symbols such as national landmarks, historical narratives, and the evolving image of Saudi women, illustrating how these advertisements align with national ideologies and social conventions. This study underscores the significance of advertising as a medium for cultural transmission, offering new insights into how advertisements can reflect and perpetuate national identity in the context of Saudi Arabia. The implications of these findings contribute to the broader field of media studies and cultural representation in advertising.

Keywords: CDA, Semiotics, Advertising, Fairclough, Barthes, Maestro Pizza, Saudi National Day, Saudi Cultural and Ideologies

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Language,
Technology,
and Social Media

VOL. 3 NO. 2 2025



INTRODUCTION

Advertisements are originally designed to attract the people's attention to promote a certain product, service, or idea using visual, audio, and textual messages [1]. They are also known to be culture-specific, carrying cultural values that have an influence to change peoples' minds [2], [3]. Saudi Arabia has a strong advertisement system. In the Gulf alone, it accounts for 40% of all advertising expenditures, making it the most important advertising market in the region [4]. Despite the importance of advertisement in Saudi Arabia, no previous research, to the best of our knowledge, has been done to explore the cultural features using semiotic and discursive analysis.

The correlation between advertisements and culture was highlighted by many researchers [5], [6], [7], [8]. Tuncalp [5] confirms the special performance undertaken in Saudi advertising. More specifically, the advertisement content is carefully designed to comply with the religious culture that characterizes Saudi society. Sahin [6] argues that ads respect the cultural values such as religion, language, and norms to align with the receivers. Al-Qasimi [7] analyzes the way shampoo advertising is presented in Saudi Arabia and concludes that shampoo companies create special ads for their products with a more conservative image compared to advertisements in other Arabic countries. In general, Arab countries employ strategies to maintain a conservative society. Advertising for alcohol products, for example, is usually avoided in Arab societies [6], [9], [10]. Therefore, it is hypothesized that Saudi cultural and ideological values are reflected in advertisements. On the differences between Western and Arab ads, Kalliny and Gentry [8] argue that women in Arab ads are dressed more conservatively than those in the Western ads, and sexual scenes are avoided in the Arabic ads in comparison to Western ads. Because Saudi Arabia has a unique culture that is worth investigating [11], the current paper's contribution is to linguistically explore the Saudi culture values embedded in the advertisements of one of the most successful local brands, namely Maestro Pizza.

Accordingly, the study aims to analyze the semiotic elements that reflect Saudi cultural values and the ideological representations conveyed in Maestro Pizza advertisements released during Saudi National Days 88, 89, and 91. To achieve this, we adopt Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis model [12] alongside Barthes' semiotic theory [13] to uncover how these advertisements embed, communicate, and reinforce cultural identity and ideology in the Saudi context.

METHODS

Research Design

The data comprise 12 pictures taken from 3 videos, which are downloaded from Maestro Pizza's official YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/MaestroPizzaKSA/featured>). The videos were released on the Saudi National Days: 88, 89, and 91. The first video was collected from (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkFk9rOsXLs>), and lasted for 2 minutes and 20 seconds. 4 screenshots are taken from this video. The second was collected from (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOqUXlnNuhg>) and lasted for 3 minutes and 17 seconds. 5 screenshots are taken from this video. The third was from (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ib16hcWiGM>) and lasted for 2 minutes and 17 seconds. 3 screenshots are taken from this video. The total duration of the 3 videos was 7 minutes and 54 seconds.

The data were discussed based on the category. The first video category is titled *bilaadii* ‘my homeland’, from which the 4 images are taken. The second video category is titled *na'am naHnu l-Hijaaz wa naHnu najd naHnu minha* ‘Yes, we are Najd, and we are Hejaz; we belong to it’, from which the 5 images are taken. The third video category is titled *ʔabširii wa sammii* ‘start and be welcomed’, from which the 3 images are taken. Two models were adopted to analyse the data. The first is Fairclough's [12] three-dimensional model, which uncovers the ideologies embedded within the videos (as dialogues), and the second is Barthes' [13] semiotic theory, which identifies the denotations and connotations represented in the scenes of advertising videos to explain how these videos may reflect Saudi society and culture.

Fairclough's (1995) Three-dimensional Model

In Fairclough [12] three-dimensional model, three dimensions are analysed to study linguistic practices: the spoken and written language text, the discursive practice of interpreting and producing the text, and the social practice as illustrated in Figure 1 below. The first dimension is concerned with the analysis of the text and refers to verbal language in spoken or written clauses and sentences and the semiotic elements such as images, signs, various colours, and sounds. The second dimension is the discourse practice, which refers to the production, distribution, and assumption activities of the text. The third dimension is the analysis and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context. This model can reveal hidden ideologies within discourses.

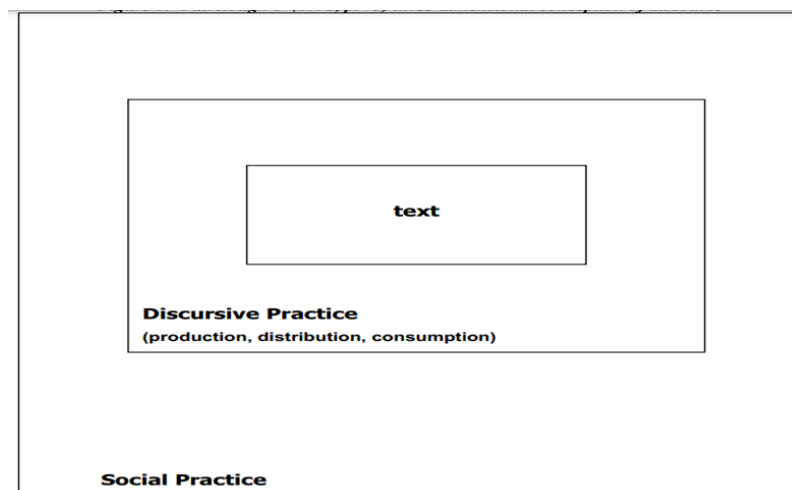


Figure 1. Fairclough's [12, p. 73] three-dimensional conception of discourse (as cited in Dalley-Trim [14, p. 129])

Barthes' (1957) Semiotic Theory

Barthes' Semiotic Theory, which stems from de Saussure [15], studies the meaning of signs, the concept of a signifier, and the signified [16]. Signifiers are objects of analysis, such as pictures, images, or signs as well as symbols. As defined by Barthes, semiotics consists of two stages of signification: denotation and connotation [17]. The denotation is basic meaning of a sign whereas the connotative meaning is drawn from cultural and social aspects as well as Barthesian mythology. The connotation lies in what the audience sees, feels, or reads in the logo that goes beyond what the word means where signs that bear their literal and actual meanings are called denotations [18].

In contrast to connotation, denotation is stable and does not change over time, whereas connotation does. That’s why connotation is more complex than denotation [19]. In other words, the connotation is not about what the words or the pictures say, but about how people interpret them and how they respond according to their own experiences and emotions [20]. The term is often used when discussing codes, it is often used to refer to a Barthian Myth, which, by being repeated becomes coded, and goes beyond the association with signifier and signified [21]. Moreover, myth's ability to be embedded within ideologies characterizes it as different from all other narratives and explains its strong association with sacred narratives [22]. The term myth serves as a means of naturalizing and maintaining old values and beliefs in modern society, as well as making them clear and believable. In the work AlShurafa et al. [23] cultural signs are explained within Barthes’s [13] orders of signification to describe each message in three levels of meaning as: denotation, connotation, and myth.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Category One: The 88 Saudi national day bilaadii ‘my homeland’

This category includes 4 images illustrated in figures 2 – 4. The video has been viewed 555,000 times on Maestro pizza's YouTube channel. Maestro pizza has released the video to celebrate Saudi national day 88. The video shows 28 Saudi girls singing a song celebrating Saudi National Day in white abayas. Some of the girls cover their hairs, while others don't. This video reflects the new stereotype of the Saudi woman, who are given the freedom not to put *hijab* on and not to wear black *abaya*. The first picture, illustrated in Figure 2 below, shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of warrior men on their horses at a battle.



Figure 2. A picture in the 88 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of warrior men on their horses at the battle

Table 1. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 2

	Explanation
Sign	A scene shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of warriors stands on their horses during battle.
Type	Visual sign representing an action.
Denotation	Warriors who are fighting for their country.

Explanation	
Connotation	King Abdulaziz and his men fought to unite the region and establish the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, armed with simple weapons and full of courage and determination.
Myth	Those with no past, have fragile present and future.

Description

Figure 2 shows Saudi Arabian warriors on horses, holding Saudi flags, and the man standing in the middle is the founder of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud.

Explanation

The scene depicts the beginning of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, established through the efforts of King Abdulaziz and his men. This was the stepping stone to create the great country Saudi Arabia is today. On 23 September 1932, King Abdulaziz unified most of the Arabian Peninsula under his leadership, where the Arabic language became the official language and the Quran became the official constitution [24], [25]. King Abdulaziz's personality has fascinated many scholars and historians around the world, including Austrian Dr. Von Diesel, who visited the Kingdom in 1926, described King Abdulaziz as a genius, stating if you know that Ibn Saud ruled from just a handful of men and created an kingdom that was larger than the territories of Germany, France, and Italy combined. In the past, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has faced many difficulties, due to Arabian Peninsula's size as well as it contains different tribes, but through the efforts of King Abdulaziz and his brave men, he has maintained his territory. The knowledge of the past as well as the challenges the Saudi country had to deal with to become the country that it is today will encourage the new generation to work on maintaining this great legacy.

The second picture is illustrated in Figure 3 below. It shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of Masjid al-Haram.



Figure 3. A picture in the 88 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of Masjid al-Haram.

Table 2. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 3

Explanation	
Sign	A scene shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of Masjid Al-Haram 'the Great Mosque of Mecca'.

Explanation	
Type	Visual sign.
Denotation	Al-Masjid Al-Haram which is also known by ‘the Great Mosque of Mecca’
Connotation	The Holy Mosque in Mecca ‘Al-Masjid Al-Haram’ is the Qibla for all muslims around the world.
Myth	The Holy Mosque is the vital heart of Islamic nation.

Description

The image shows the Holy Mosque in Mecca known as *Al-Masjid Al-Haram* ‘The Holy Mosque’, where *Kabbah*, Qibla of Muslims, is located.

Explanation

This image displays the Holy Mosque ‘Al-Masjid Al-Haram’ in the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The Mosque surrounds the Kabbah (the qibla), Islam's holiest shrine. Al-Masjid Al-Haram is the largest mosque in the world and is the destination for pilgrims doing the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages and receives millions of worshipers each year [26]. It holds a significant place in the heart of all Muslims throughout the world. Throughout its history, it has been controlled by various caliphs, sultans, and kings, and is now ruled by the Saudi Arabia kings. The Saudi kings used the title of The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques as a sign of the honour. King Fahad bin Abdulaziz first used this title, and kings after him still use it to this day [27]. The Great Mosque of Mecca has gone through three expansions during the reign of Saudi kings; the first occurred in the era of King Abdulaziz Al Saud in 1955, the second occurred in the era of King Fahd bin Abdulaziz in 1988, and the last expansion occurred during the reign of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz in 2011 [28]. In serving the Holy Mosque and the visitors arriving from around the world, Saudi Arabia has constantly exerted remarkable efforts for years. They fully allow Muslim pilgrims to complete Hajj and Umrah and enrich and enhance their experience. Among these activities are preparing the Two Holy Mosques, achieving Islam's universal message, organizing tourist and cultural sites, and providing the best services before, during, and after a visitor's visit to Mecca and Medina Munawara. Throughout history, the Kingdom has been known for its honourable and civilized image in serving the Two Holy Mosques, as pilgrims and people throughout the world also acknowledge. Maestro pizza, among all the pizza companies, has acknowledged the blessed duty of the Saudi government to take over the responsibility for caring for the holy places.

The third picture shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of the current king of Saudi Arabia, the king Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as illustrated in [Figure 4](#).



Figure 4. A picture in the 88 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of the current king of Saudi Arabia, the king Salman bin Abdulaziz AL-Saud.

Table 3. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 4

	Explanation
Sign	A scene shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of the silhouette of the king Salman bin Abdulaziz AL-Saud, the king of Saudi Arabia.
Type	Visual sign.
Denotation	The current king of Saudi Arabia and the custodian of the two holy mosques, king Salman bin Abdulaziz AL-Saud.
Connotation	The kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the rule of the king Salman bin Abdulaziz AL-Saud.
Myth	The firmness of King Salman and his era.

Description

The image displays the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who is known as a ruler in a time of changes.

Explanation

The scene presents the seventh king and the current king of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. He served as governor of Riyadh province for 48 years before becoming the Saudi Arabia kingdom's defense minister in 2011 and then it's crown prince a year later [29]. Since King Salman assumed his reign in 2015, the Kingdom has made remarkable and unprecedented political, social, economic, and developmental progress. A major initiative of King Salman was the Saudi intervention in the Yemeni Civil War, the 2017 decree allowing Saudi women to drive, and Saudi Vision 2030. Several military actions are being conducted by Saudi Arabia in Yemen to bring the Hadi regime to power and stabilize the situation with the help of different major powers, including ‘Operation Storm of Firmness’ in 2015. Saudi Arabia began this operation to protect its borders from the Houthi forces, as well as to answer President Hadi's request that Yemen be reclaimed from the Houthi forces [30]. Furthermore, Saudi women are now allowed to drive their cars due to an order issued by King Salman bin Abdulaziz. Because the prohibition does not actually fall under any law or religious edict, it was seen as purely a social issue in the Kingdom. It was the

first time in 30 years that Saudi women took to the road in June 2018. Before then, Saudi Arabia was the only country in the world where women were not allowed to drive motor vehicles, and this topic has garnered considerable attention in government, media, and social circles [11], [31]. The third and most important accomplishment of the era of King Salman was Saudi Vision 2030. Through Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has demonstrated its commitment to building an independent state for the future and cementing its place in the G20. This has led to a noticeable and rapid evolution in a wide range of sectors, including finance, housing, tourism, entertainment, and energy, among others. With king Salman bin Abdulaziz and crown prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia will retain its glory in the future.

The fourth picture shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia' flag.



Figure 5. A picture in the 88 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that shows Saudi girls singing with a reflection of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia' flag.

Table 4. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 5.

	Explanation
Sign	A scene shows Saudi girls singing covered with a reflection of the Saudi Arabia green flag.
Type	Visual sign.
Denotation	The flag of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
Connotation	The Saudi Arabia is a nation that is ruled by the Islamic laws and the strictness in applying justice.
Myth	A flag that was raised with Monotheism, the Muslim faith, and has never been lowered, nor has it been allowed half-mast.

Description

The green flag of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is shown in the image, which is the official and only flag flying in the country.

Explanation

This scene displays the flag of Saudi Arabia, used by the government of Saudi Arabia since March 15, 1973. It is a green flag with an Arabic inscription and a sword in white. It is the inscription of the Islamic creed, or shahada, that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger'. Saudi Arabia's flag's colours and design reflect the values and history of the nation [32]. Islam is represented by the green of the flag, and the sword represents the nation's strictness when it comes to justice. Saudi Arabia is ruled by Islamic law and the sharpness of the sword, and this is symbolized by its flag. Cerrato [33] also suggested that the colour green can also symbolize stability, richness, prosperity, hope, and endurance, according to the way colours are interpreted. However, to ensure the shahada reads correctly from right to left, from either side, the flag is manufactured with identical obverse and reverse sides. Likewise, the sword is pointed to the left toward the script. In addition, due to its religious symbolism, the flag is never lowered to half-mast even in cases of the king's death [34]. While other national flags feature small inscriptions, the Saudi flag is currently the only one with writing as its central symbolic design. During special occasions like the Muslims Eids, the Saudi national days, and founding days, you can see Saudis of all ages waving green flags all around the kingdom.

Category Two: The 89 Saudi national day na'am naHnu l-Hijaz wa naHnu najd naHnu minha 'Yes, we are Najd, and we are Hejaz; we belong to it'

This category includes the chosen images that taken from the Maestro pizza video for the 89 Saudi national day. The video has been viewed more than 2.8 million times on Maestro pizza's YouTube channel. Maestro pizza has released the video to celebrate Saudi national day 89. This advertisement has a unique idea and is considered the first in the media arena. The idea is to highlight Saudi characters who have influenced and contributed to the building of Saudi society. In addition, it depicts a few scholars, discoverers, and leaders whose stories have been lost in the pages of oblivion. Song lyrics in the advertisement were written by Ghazi Al Gosaibi (a Saudi politician, diplomat, poet, and novelist) during the Gulf War when Iraqi media described Saudi Arabia as 'Dar Najd and Hijaz' to provoke Saudi Arabia. The song has a special place in Saudis' hearts, and Maestro Pizza has successfully revived it through this advertisement. Saudi Arabian Ministry of Media awards Maestro pizza Media Excellence on 89th Saudi National Day. In this video, we screen-shot 5 images that contain verbal and non-verbal signs of significance.

The fifth image, illustrated in [Figure 6](#), shows Saudi character named Shmma 'šmma' and the man beside her holding the bridle of her horse.



Figure 6. A picture in the 89 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that shows Saudi character named Shmma ‘šmma’ and the man beside her holding the bridle of her horse. The writing on the picture is Shmma’ brothers; they are men from Bani Khaled ‘Khaled tribe’ stood with the orphan and oppressed women Shmma and won for her (from her husband and his family).

Table 5. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 6

	Explanation
Sign	A scene shows a Saudi woman riding a horse and there is a man holding a bridle of the horse.
Type	Visual sign representing an action.
Denotation	A woman riding a horse with a man holding its bridle.
Connotation	It represents Bani Khaled's magnanimity and dignity when he refuses to accept the injustice against Shmma ‘šmma’, the orphan woman.
Myth	The magnanimity and dignity of Arabs.

Description

The picture shows a character named Shmma ‘šmma’ and a man next to her holding the bridle of her horse, who acts as if he is her brother. On the picture is the writing ‘Shmma' brothers’. These are the men from Bani Khaled, 'Khaled tribe', who stood up with the orphan and oppressed woman Shmma and won for her (from her husband and her family).

Explanation

This scene depicts one of the great stories of Saudi women. A story about how Saudi women were in the past. This picture shows Mwdi Bint Abdullah al-Bassam, one of the women's flags at Unaizah region, that is known for her good deeds and spending. She was a rich woman who inherited a lot of money and land from her parents. As a result of her role in the famous Battle of Al-Saraif in 1901, where Kuwait's ruler Mubarak AL-Sabah was defeated by Hail's prince Abdulaziz AL-Rasheed, she hosted approximately 400 AL-Sabah soldiers secretly defeated in her homes, provided them with the food and drink they needed, and helped them return to Kuwait [35]. In addition, Mwdi's name is associated with a proverb in Qassim that says ‘if you have a son, name him Mwdi’ which is a sign

of her superiority over men in terms of courage and initiative in the work of relief, righteousness, and charity [36]. During the ‘Year of Hunger’ in 1909, when the Najd people suffered severe drought, she and her friends distributed large quantities of her stocks of dates to the poor families, so she was called ‘the mother of the poor’. Moreover, King Abdulaziz visited her every time he passed through Unaizah and even called her Aunt Mwdi out of respect and appreciation [37]. An inspirational story of a generous and giving Saudi woman, Mwdi Al-Bassam provides a vivid example of what women were like on the Arabian Peninsula.

The sixth image, illustrated in Figure 7, shows Saudi character named Omar Kadars ‘kudrs’.



Figure 7. A picture in the 89 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that shows Saudi character named Omar Kadars ‘kudrs’. The writing on the picture is Omar Kadars, the musician who helped found the Saudi song and its greatest stars.

Table 6 Semiotic Analysis of Figure 7

	Explanation
Sign	A scene shows a Saudi man named Omar Kadars ‘Kudrs’, considered to be the musician who helped create Saudi music and its greatest stars.
Type	Visual sign representing an action.
Denotation	A Saudi man who is playing on his oud.
Connotation	It represents Omar Kadars ' contribution to Saudi music.
Myth	Master of the Oud.

Description

The picture shows the character Omar Kadars 'kudrs', who wears a Saudi thobe and holds an oud in his hands and plays on it. On the picture is written that Omar Kadars, the musician, singer, and composer, who helped establish Saudi songs and its greatest stars.

Explanation

The picture illustrates another great figure in Saudi Arabian history. This character excelled in music, tunes, and songs. It shows Omar Noah Fallatah, popularly known as Kadars a Saudi musician born in Medina, whose work is limited but is characterized by innovative melody and musical tones.

He worked at Jeddah Radio as a music consultant and head of the popular programs department. A funny incident at his primary school gave him the nickname ‘Kadars’ after his first name. According to the story, his teacher appointed him as an observer of his class students, and when the teacher returned to class, he found him standing in front of the blackboard like a lesson ‘Kadars’, his colleagues adopted the term and called him a ‘Kadars’ [38]. As a teacher, Omar was compared to the 20th century musician Igor Stravinsky, everyone knew him as a professor of music, but his art earnings are still much lower than those of his disciples, and in the foreground is ‘the Artist of Arabs’, Mohammed Abdo. Omar Kadars has developed his artistic talents and literary culture by exploring many of the available books related to ancient Arabic literature and the Saudi, Egyptian, and Turkish musical heritage. A contemporary Saudi poet and writer Taher Zamakhshari described Omar Kadars as a mobile library and a self-taught intellectual, which makes him a composer and a thinker rather than just a musician. He is also one of the Saudi artists that Om Kolthoum was so impressed to the extent that she asked him to play some tracks on the oud strings. It's not surprising that Om Kolthoum admires an artist like Omar Kadars, who is considered the 'Master of the Oud' and the master of melodic masterpieces [39]. Furthermore, as a composer, Omar worked with Saudi song poles Talal Maddah and Mohammed Abdo. Talal sang to him: "Eid comes", "Thursday Night," and Mohammed Abdo sang, "Welcome", "I have Three Days," "Delusion," and other melodies that live in Saudi society's memory [40].

The seventh image, illustrated in Figure 8, shows Saudi character named Ghalia Al-Bogammiah.



Figure 8. A picture in the 89 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that shows Saudi character named Ghalia Al-Bogammiah. The writing on the picture is Ghalia Al-Bogammiah who led and funded the army against the Turkish in battles to resist the Ottoman invasion.

Table 7. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 8

	Explanation
Sign	The scene shows a Saudi woman named Ghalia Al-Bogammiah who led and funded the army in battle to resist the Ottoman invasion.
Type	Visual sign representing an action.
Denotation	A Saudi warrior woman who is riding a horse.

Explanation	
Connotation	It represents the intelligence, strength, and courage of the Saudi warrior Ghalia.
Myth	The iron women.

Description

The picture shows a character named Ghalia Al-Bogammiah ‘galiah’ who is riding her horse and looking like a warrior in the battle. On the picture is written that Ghalia Al-Bogammiah who led and funded the army against the Turkish in battles to resist the Ottoman invasion.

Explanation

The scene depicts the story of a famous Saudi woman in the field of defending their homelands. The image shows Ghalia bint Abdulrahman Al-Bogami, the wife of Hamad bin Abdullah bin Mohi, the first Saudi prince of the city of Turabah in Western region of Arabia. Ghalia Al-Bogami was known for her valor, courage, and resistance to Turkish invasion campaigns led by Muhammad Ali Pasha, which were aimed at eliminating the first Saudi state in the early 19th century [41]. During the year 1228, Tousson ‘Toson’, the son of Muhammad Ali Pasha, raided the city of Turabah. During these events her husband Prince Ibn Mohi was sick, and it was Ghalia who delivered the battle plans to the leaders of the tribe. Many of Tosson's soldiers were killed during this battle and his army was defeated. A year later, Tousson Pasha returned and invaded Turabah, but Ghalia continued to deliver plans to the tribe's leaders and sheikhs. The battle lasted three days. Tosson's men were defeated subsequently, and Ghalia's husband died during the second battle. She concealed the news of his death from the army, issuing orders on his tongue until the tribe's victory [42]. Johan Ludwig Barkhart, a Swiss traveller and historian, describes Ghalia and Turabah people by saying that some people of Turabah were shepherds while some were farmers, headed by a widow named Ghalia, whose husband was one of the most senior men of Turabah, and Ghalia devoted much of her wealth to her people who were willing to fight the Turks [43]. Ghalia was also an example of the strength, courage, firmness, and intelligence of Arab warrior women. She encouraged the men to defend their town, and she spent much of the wealth she had to confront Muhammad Ali's invading forces. By hearing her name alone, she had even given the invaders a feeling of terror and fear, and for this reason, they called her ‘the Witch’. In addition to being cited by historians of Iraq, Egypt, and the Hijaz, and by travellers and orientalis, Ghalia Al-Bogami was also compared to Joan of Arc, who was most famous for her heroics in fighting the English, who had once occupied part of France in 14th and 15th centuries [44]. During the current era, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has done justice to Saudi women and has achieved historical gains and achievements that have strengthened her status, as well as highlighting, celebrating, and immortalizing her endeavours. In this regard, the Saudi Ministry of Education has now included a biography of militant Ghalia Al-Bogammiah and commemorated her heroics in the battle in which she defeated the Ottomans in the social studies curriculum for the sixth grade of primary school [41]. Throughout history, Ghalia Al-Bogammiah will serve as a symbol of the outstanding women who have written tournaments that are not dominated by the most dangerous knights or the smartest leaders. This shows that the women of this country have done their best to protect their homeland, and their role was not just to be trained and motivated, but they also had a well-known leading role in the field.

The eighth image, illustrated in [Figure 9](#), shows Saudi character named Khamis Bin Ramthan ‘xamis’.



Figure 9. A picture in the 89 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that is showing Saudi character named Khamis Bin Ramthan ‘xamis’. The writing on the picture is Khamis Bin Ramthan, who helped to discover Saudi Arabia's first oil well with his intelligence, Well No. 7.

Table 8. Semiotic Analysis of [Figure 9](#)

	Explanation
Sign	A scene shows a Saudi man named Khamis Bin Ramthan who discover the oil in Saudi Arabia.
Type	Visual sign representing an action.
Denotation	A Saudi man points to a place with two foreigners beside him.
Connotation	It represents Khamis bin Ramthan's contribution to the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia.
Myth	The compass man.

Description

The picture shows a character named Khamis Bin Ramthan, ‘xamis’, the one Saudi native who is sitting in the desert with two non-native men. They are surrounded by oil drums bearing the number 1938. On the picture is written that Khamis Bin Ramthan, who helped to discover Saudi Arabia's first oil well with his intelligence, Well No. 7.

Explanation

The picture tells the story of oil in Saudi Arabia. It is the tale of one of native Saudi Arabia's first heroes who wrote its significant chapters, the legendary compass man Khamis bin Ramthan, that deserves to inspire generations to come. Khamis bin Ramthan Al-Ajami was born in Al-Ahsa, a region of East Arabia, and he is known for his knowledge of the desert and its paths, as well as every inch of its north, south, east, and west regions, based on his memory, intelligence, and experience. In 1933, King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman AL-Saud signed the Concession Agreement for Oil Exploration between the Government of the Kingdom and the Standard Oil Company of California

(SOCAL)[45]. Using his memory without maps or GPS devices, Khamis had a vast understanding of Arabia from north to south and east to west, which led the Saudi government to use him as a guide to the oil search companies. In 1934, Ibn Ramthan worked for an oil exploration company commissioned by the Saudi government. In 1938, after five years of searching for oil in Saudi Arabia by Western companies and at the last minute when the team received orders by Western companies to cease working in Saudi Arabia, Ibn Ramthan and the American geologist Max Steineke discovered the first ever oil well in Saudi Arabia and named it Dammam well No. 7. The well was later called ‘the Well of Good,’ by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud [46]. Geologist Thomas Barger described Khamis bin Ramthan in his book 'Out in the Blue' by saying that Khamis bin Ramthan never got lost in the desert. His sixth sense served as a kind of infallible compass, while his extraordinary memory could recall a bush he saw as a teenager or directions to the well, he learned a decade before [47]. His innate intelligence, his powerful memory, and his knowledge of the ways and locations of the Arabian desert led to the realization of the Saudi dream and the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia, which is why Khamis bin Ramthan was called ‘the unmistakable desert compass’. As a result of his efforts, he became an official employee of Aramco in 1942, and he continued to work with the company until his death. As recognition of his great contributions, Aramco named one of its oil fields Ramthan in 1974 [47]. The name Khamis bin Ramthan continues to live on in the history of the nation and the people, and his memory will endure through generations, striking the most beautiful examples of love and giving.

Category Three: The 91 Saudi national day ?abširii wa sammii ‘start and be welcomed’

This category includes the chosen images that were taken from the Maestro pizza video for the 88 Saudi national day. On Maestro pizza's YouTube channel, the video has been viewed about 300,000 times. Among the three videos of Maestro pizzas for the Saudi National Days, this video received the least views. The video was released by Maestro pizza in celebration of Saudi national day 91. In the video, a Saudi girl, wearing a green dress (as it represents the Saudi green flag), sings a song celebrating Saudi National Day. The girl appears to be flying in outer space. She sings for her country, Saudi Arabia, as she looks at it from space. In addition, to the previous videos of Maestro pizza videos on Saudi national days 88 and 89, this video also reflects some aspects of Saudi heritage, such as Saudi traditional clothes, and the colour of the deserts in Saudi Arabia. It demonstrates the strong bonds between Saudis and their country, Saudi Arabia. 3 screenshots are taken from this video.

The ninth image is illustrated in [Figure 10](#) below. It shows Saudi girl singing with a yellow and blue waves behind her.



Figure 10. A picture in the 91 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that shows Saudi girl singing with a yellow and blue waves behind her.

Table 9. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 10

	Explanation
Sign	A scene shows a Saudi girl singing with yellow and blue waves behind her.
Type	Visual sign.
Denotation	Yellow and blue waves.
Connotation	Saudi Arabia is a land of deserts and seas.
Myth	The desert Kingdom.

Description

The colourful and marked image shows Saudi Arabia, the desert kingdom with its blue waters and wide yellow deserts.

Explanation

The scene displays the nature of the kingdom's territory. The golden sands, deserts, and blue waters. Saudi Arabia's sand area occupies one third of its territory. It consists of three large sand areas: the Empty Quarter 'l-Rub9 'l xali', Al-Nafud 'l-nafud', and Al-Dahna [48]. Sands of the Empty Quarter is the largest connected sand area in the world, located in the south of the Kingdom, and most of it is located within the territory of the Kingdom, part of which is in the eastern region, and the Najran region. Besides ancient civilizations and precious metals, the Empty Quarter is also home to the Shaybah 'šaybah' oil field, which pumps nearly 2.3 million barrels of oil per day. Salman bin Abdulaziz, King of Saudi Arabia, said that the Empty Quarter is no longer empty, but instead is filled with work [48]. In Najd, Al-Nafud sands cover large areas, and ancient fossils have been found in their deserts, including animal and plant remains. The sands of Al-Dahna are located between the great Al-Nafud and the Empty Quarter and form a bow between them. The sands of Al-Dahna are distinguished by their red colour and are considered a part of the middle deserts of the Kingdom. The General Authority for Tourism and National Heritage in Saudi Arabia announced in 2018 the discovery of 85,000-year-old footprints of an ancient human being on the bank of an ancient lake in the Desert of Al-Nafud, near Tabuk region (*Footprints in Al-Nafud desert* 2018). These

archaeological discoveries provide insight into the cultural dimension of the Kingdom, which is not an emergency for history. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's standing today among the nations of the world at the religious, political, economic, and cultural levels is the result of a longstanding cultural heritage that comes from a land rich in history, civilization, and economy. Saudi Arabia also has a wide variety of wildlife in its deserts, including sand cats in the west, Arabian oryx in the east, and an Arab wolf in the Najd and Tabuk regions, as well as falcons, camels, and foxes [49].

Saudi Arabia has neither rivers nor oceans, but it has seas, the Arabian Gulf, and the Red Sea. Saudi Arabia faces the Arabian Gulf to the east, while the Red Sea faces the west. Saudi Arabia focuses its attention currently on its seas as an economic source, inspired by its new vision [50]. Several giant projects extending from north to south along the Red Sea were considered as pillars of Vision 2030, such as the Neom project, the AMAALA project, and the Red Sea project (*Preserving seas and oceans* 2022). Moreover, many marine economic sectors are also flourishing under Vision 2030, including coastal tourism, sustainable desalination, marine sports, seawater aquaculture, marine energy, and marine biotechnology. During the past decade, there hasn't been a single research vessel in the Kingdom's maritime research field, but today, a fleet of modern research vessels covers both the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, including the Sultan Research Ship of the Royal Authority and the Nagle Research Vessel owned by King Abdullah City for Science and Technology [51]. The Saudis have a great love for their land, with its golden sands and blue seas. They even call themselves 'sons of the desert'. It is this great land that their ancestors left to them, which enriched them with its wealth.

The tenth and eleventh images are a male and female Saudi wearing the Saudi traditional dress, as illustrated in Figures 11 and 12, respectively.



Figure 11. A picture in the 91 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that shows a Saudi man wearing the Saudi traditional dress, the thobe, shemagh 'šemaġ', agal '9gal', and bisht 'bišt'.



Figure 12. A picture in the 91 Saudi national video of Maestro pizza that shows a Saudi woman wearing the Saudi traditional dress, the black abaya ‘9baya’, the Burqa ‘burq9’, and Sheilah ‘šeilah’, and there is an image of falcon behind her.

Table 10. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 11

	Explanation
Sign	A scene shows a Saudi old man wearing a thobe, shemagh, and bisht.
Type	Visual sign.
Denotation	An old Saudi man wearing a thobe, a shemagh, and a bisht.
Connotation	The traditional costume of men in Saudi Arabia.
Myth	A rigid national identity that resists changes.

Description

This image depicts the Saudi Arabian traditional costume of men. The old man is wearing traditional Saudi clothing, which consists of a thobe, ‘šemağ’, agal ‘9gal’, and bisht ‘bišt’.

Table 11. Semiotic Analysis of Figure 12

	Explanation
Sign	A scene shows an older Saudi woman wearing an abaya and covering her face with the burqa ‘burq9’.
Type	Visual sign.
Denotation	An older Saudi woman covers her face.
Connotation	The traditional costume of women in Saudi Arabia.
Myth	The art of the past and the pride of the present.

Description

This image depicts a traditional Saudi Arabian costume for women. The old woman is wearing the traditional Saudi dress, which includes the black abaya ‘9baya’, the Burqa ‘burq9’, and Sheilah ‘šeilah’.

Explanation of Figures 11 and 12

These two scenes depict the traditional costumes of men and women in Saudi Arabia. As a cultural tool, clothing can express one's social and cultural identity. Additionally, it provides archaeologists and historians with an opportunity to investigate culture and civilization from the perspective of costumes, since those who observe them can recognize the country or region they are from [52]. Saudi men traditionally wear a loose-fitting garment with long sleeves known as the thobe, regardless of their occupation or social status. White is usually the dominant color, but occasionally there will be beige or other earth tones, especially during winter [37]. Moreover, Saudi men's headgear is composed of three items. A large white or red-and-white square of cotton fabric is called a ghutra 'ġutra' or a shemagh 'šhmaġ'; ghutra is the white one and shemagh is the red and white scarf. Typically, it's folded diagonally into a triangle, then placed on top of a small skull cap called the taqiyah or 'Taqyah'. The ghutra is secured on the head by an agal '9gal'. In addition to its black colour, it's heavy and coarse enough to keep the ghutra in place and prevent it from sliding (*Arabic dress* 2012). Men's clothing and fashion still retain a great deal of authenticity and hold on to their traditional forms, particularly in the ghutra, shemagh, as well as in the thobe.

Saudi women typically wear an abaya; a long black cloak made of silk or synthetic material and covering everything but their faces and hands in public [52]. It can be worn over either a traditional or modern style dress. Dress in the traditional style is often bright with coins, sequins, patterns on fabrics, and other embellishments [53], [54]. Dresses and jewellery could vary depending on the woman's social status and wealth. High-class women often wore clothing made of high-quality silk, adorned with gold, while women from lower classes typically wore black fabrics, which were less expensive. Saudi women often cover their faces except for their eyes with a full-face veil, such as a niqab or a burqa 'burqa9' [54]. Saudi women also wear scarves named Sheilah 'šeilah'. The black scarf covers both the hair and the head of the wearer. While black is the colour for women and white for men, both are based on tradition and not on religious beliefs. The dress code for women in Saudi Arabia has recently been relaxed. In recent years, Abaya has transcended its traditional purpose as a cover for women to play a visible role in Saudi woman's fashion and elegance. Today, Saudi women can wear abayas in different colours and designs besides black [55]. In short, costumes represent an essential component of cultural heritage, since they are an integral part of each nation's identity, culture, and history [52]. Costumes are an important part of the cultural heritage because they are a vital aspect of each nation's heritage and vestiges since they represent part of its history, civilization, and identity. Saudi Arabia's traditional clothing reflects the great heritage of its people and the immense pride that every Saudi feels whenever they put on their traditional clothing.

Discussion

In this study, the findings support Khan et al. [56] claim that advertising reflects the values of the society, and that effective marketing and advertising are inextricably linked to the target group's cultural values. In the selected images from the videos, the themes are presented linguistically through written texts, and semiotically by using visual signs, to draw the viewers' attention to the details of Saudi society's great heritage.

As a first video of the Saudi national day 88, Maestro Pizza depicted the historical development and changes Saudi Arabia underwent from the establishment date of King Abdulaziz AL-Saud to the present day of King Salman bin Abdulaziz AL-Saud in Figures 2 – 5. Throughout

this video, each image explains the great journey of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. With the founding of the country with the king Abdulaziz and his brave men, as her green flag represents, the guardian and the honour of the protection of the Al-Masjid al-Haram, and then with King Salman bin Abdulaziz's era. Maestro pizza successfully reflected these significant developments that shaped the Saudi Arabia we know today.

Maestro Pizza's second video for Saudi national day 89 sheds light on great figures of Saudi history in figures 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. It also describes the characteristics and ideologies of Saudi men and women. Saudis have a long history of being known for their magnanimity, dignity, intelligence, courage, and generosity. In this video, Maestro Pizza successfully depicts the five stories of five great characters. Shmma's brothers, Mwdi Al-Bassam, Omar Kadars, Ghalia AlBogammiah, and Khamis bin Ramthan are five characters who left an indelible mark printed on Saudi Arabia's history. These great names and what they did for this country had been forgotten over the years, but Maestro Pizza revived their stories in its video of the Saudi National Day 89.

Maestro Pizza's third video on Saudi Arabia has appeared for National Day 91 to continue the series on the country and its culture. It highlights Saudi Arabia's territory with its wide golden sands and clear blue waters, as well as traditional costumes. In figure 10, Maestro Pizza depicted the land of Saudi Arabia and what it gave to its citizens. It provided Saudi Arabia with the systems and the foundation of its economy and society. It had also given them the opportunity to make great changes and developments as the vision 2030. The last two figures, 11 and 12, illustrate the traditional clothing of Saudi men and women. They are the costumes that distinguish Saudis from the citizens of other countries. Saudi Arabians are symbolized by white thobes and black abayas. Despite this, Maestro Pizza's videos express the fact that the knowledge of the past, as well as the challenges Saudi Arabia had to face to become the country it is today will make the next generation proud of their country and encourage them to work toward preserving this great legacy.

Maestro pizza also focused on showing Saudi women in its videos, as seen in the first video of Saudi national day 88 with women in white abayas. In the second video of the Saudi national day 89, Maestro pizza shed light on great stories such as the tale of the warrior Ghalia AlBogammiah and the tale of the mother of poor Mwdi AlBassam. Saudi women are also featured in the third video of the Saudi national day 91 advertisement as singers who are singing to their country, Saudi Arabia. In addition, Maestro Pizza had never advertised its products in any of these videos. The main and only focus of the videos was to present the culture, values, beliefs, and heritage of Saudi Arabia. Saudis however, loved these videos and they became widely popular on the internet every year. The next video of Maestro pizza in honour of Saudi national day 92 is eagerly awaited by many Saudis.

CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence for the correlation between advertisements and culture. It implements semiotic and critical discourse analysis theories to analyse the ideologies, cultures, and social signs displayed in the Saudi advertisement videos. Under closer examination, cultural and ideological signs of Saudi society are revealed in Maestro Pizza advertising during Saudi National Days 88, 89, and 91. The examined videos confirm implicit messages Maestro Pizza deliver to the audience using visual images or written texts. These messages provide a better understanding of cultural manifestations, local ideologies, great heritage, historical figures, and social conventionalities of Saudi society that are conveyed through these videos. In turn, it contributes to

the literature by documenting the local ideological, social conventionalities, and cultural aspects in advertisements.

LIMITATIONS

The study was mainly conducted on Saudi advertisements for one brand which Maestro Pizza advertising during Saudi National Days 88, 89, and 91. It is also limited to 3 videos of one brand. More semiotic analyses are needed to analyse the cultural signs in other brands' advertisements in Saudi Arabia during Saudi National Day.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

H.M.A. conducted the study, performed the systematic review, and analyzed the data independently. H.M.A. also wrote the manuscript and was responsible for all stages of the research process. N.A and M.A. provided valuable guidance and critical feedback, which significantly contributed to refining the study and ensuring its rigor. T.E. revised and submitted the final version. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

DECLARATION OF USE OF AI IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

The authors have not used AI or ChatGPT.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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