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Nation Branding and The Case of Saudi Vision 2030 and The Use of Twitter

by

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Science in Communication and Media Technologies

Department of Communication

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Abstract

Nation branding has played a pivotal role in how Saudi Arabia represents itself in the global community. This thesis analyzed Saudi Arabia's government approach towards the implementation of a nation branding strategy using social media as a vehicle to engage with the rest of the world. The study addresses questions of how Saudi Arabia communicates through nation branding as part of its core identity and how different values are presented in the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 on Twitter. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the tweets and tweet contents regarding the Vision 2030 national branding in Saudi Arabia. Data was collected from the @saudidivision2030 Twitter handle using NodeXLPro. The findings of the study revealed Saudi Arabia's investment in Twitter, as a way to enhance the country's brand image and improve the outside world's view of the country. Twitter presents a reliable solution for promoting the social, political, economic, and overall progress of Saudi Arabia. It creates excellent opportunities in building the nation brand of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Keywords: Nation branding, Cultural, Political, Saudi Arabia, Vision2030, Twitter.

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Introduction

Internally in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram project the country's image digitally to others (AlKarni, 2018). These forms of engagement show that social media on a macro and micro level enhance the participation and collective viewership of the country, and provides a platform to reach viewers around the world. This research paper will use qualitative research approaches to address the stated research questions.

The Aim

This study investigated the influence of social media, specifically Twitter, on nation branding efforts in the Middle East. Nation branding is a relatively new topic in the Arabian Gulf governments' agenda (Al-Najjar, & Allagui, 2018). The main objective of the thesis was to explain how Vision 2030 has had measurable results in its branding campaign in the form of an economic revival for Saudi Arabia. Research shows that Twitter plays a massive role as a marketing vehicle and data retrieving center regarding citizens' feedback about Saudi leader Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Al Saud's (MBS) Vision 2030 initiative. Vision 2030 has made it a goal to achieve recognition for women, enhance the country's international relations, and create a quality image of the nation. This paper sheds light on this, especially by examining Saudi Arabia's nation branding efforts through Twitter.

Relevance and Contribution to the Field

As globalization expands, the importance of positioning a nation to reap its benefits is higher than ever. Economic gains achieved through diversification of industries increased exposure to tourism, culture, and alignment of universal ideals and beliefs. The backdrop to all of this is the concept of “Nation Branding.” It guides a nation to adapt to these global changes and change the perception of a country ready to do business for the better. The findings of this study consolidated information from various sources, revealing the role played by social media in enhancing the branding of a nation. This information can help governments understand the ways in which social media can be used to improve their image to the outside world, which is essential in terms of building international relationships for business, culture, and politics.

Background

Saudi Arabia’s Brand

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one nation that has invested heavily in its rebranding. The creation of the Saudi Vision 2030 agenda, women empowerment, expansion of its economic frontiers, and sustained tourism investment are on track to project the nation as a country with a positive national image (Vision 2030 Official Page, 2020).

What is unique about Saudi Arabia is the speed at which it has made transformative changes in education, social and economic issues, and women empowerment within the past four years. Throughout this period, Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS) and his government have successfully used social media to reach nearly 70 percent of the Saudi population that is under 30 (Zahraa, 2018).

By starting a new wide-ranging initiative for oil-dependent Saudi Arabia, called Vision 2030, MBS has sought to bring change in Saudi Arabia, diversifying away from oil, which accounts for \$US266 billion of state's revenue (BBC News, 2018). As per the statistics published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), oil receipts accounted for almost 90 percent of fiscal revenue and nearly 85 percent of exports in 2007. This dependence leads to inefficiencies, and a considerably subsidized welfare system and a high rate of unemployment among Saudi citizens. (Nurunnabi, 2017). Changing this is achieved through nation branding, funding of new industries, and the use of the digital movement for engaging the public. Nation branding has been vital to recalibrating Saudi Arabia as an open society, still built on religious tenets.

Negative perceptions of Saudi Arabia in the global community include its attitudes towards individual rights and liberties. A fundamental premise of Vision 2030 is to change this perception and present Saudi Arabia as a welcoming place to visit. Due to the significant emphasis on cultural, religious, and conservative traditions and customs in Saudi Arabia, international travel to the country for tourism purposes has attracted the typical view (Alzhrani, 2020).

Vision 2030

Vision 2030 is a developmental program that aims to rid the kingdom of negative perceptions and establish it internationally as an economically, culturally, and socially progressive nation (Mohamed, 2018). Fundamentally, the Saudi Vision 2030 plan is based on three key themes, namely a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation. Several recent reforms easing restrictions on women's rights achieved a three-pronged result in one broad stroke.

Additionally, under the leadership of Crown Prince MBS, several reforms have been implemented to reduce the nation's oil dependence (Bsheer, 2018). For instance, increasing tourism has been a critical strategy in the Vision 2030 plan (Mandeli, 2019). Hoping that this would increase employment, the kingdom has initiated several programs to attract international tourists (Hussain, 2017).

The radical plan that fueled the Saudi Vision 2030 involved reinforcing the country's investment and economic activities and improving the nation's social, cultural, economic, and human capital image. The national reforms are expected to increase revenue, produce more economically diversified income sources as well as attract overseas students and tourists. As Saudi Arabia continues to transform into a more open society, reliable information is limited. This study aims to bridge the gap in the overall nation branding studies of Saudi Arabia, and refine our understanding of Saudi Arabia's use of social media, specifically Twitter, to reform its image.

Literature Review

Nation Branding

Nation branding worldwide has been exponentially growing in the past decade, primarily as nations aim to cultivate a positive image of their country. Governments around the world hire public affairs and public relations firms to strengthen their national brand image. Branding efforts have continued to grow in the areas of tourism, the economy at large and politics (Teslik, 2007). British brand consultant, Simon Anholt, first created the concept of nation branding in the 1990s (Anholt, 2011). It is principally the concept of branding a nation through various facets such as its economic, political, and cultural aspects. According to Varga (2013), "nation branding is

conceived of as a political marketing strategy that targets external markets to establish and communicate a specific image of national identity” (p 3).

According to Anholt (2011), there are two significant differences between traditional political frameworks and current nation branding efforts. Nations worldwide are more acquainted with and conscious of the value and strength behind “their brand as an asset,” (p 3) which prepare and push countries to make more tactical and strategic investments in their image. Secondly, the focus on the “behavioral aspects of managing a nation’s image” is imperative. Anholt suggests that government, businesses, and non-profit organizations “can better collaborate to make sure the messages a country is putting out represent what they view as the fundamental common purpose of their country” (p 3).

Nation branding efforts have had varying results in the past decade. The success of nation branding depends on different variables and factors. According to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), countries such as Croatia and Slovenia are the pioneers of nation branding. In the post-Yugoslavia era, these countries heavily emphasized their tourist attractions and quickly distanced themselves from their political and economic past. These marketing campaigns became successful, and this success is evident now in the 83 million non-residents who used tourist accommodation establishments in Croatia and the 11 million in Slovenia in 2018 (Eurostat, 2018).

Overall, prosperous countries such as Switzerland and Belgium had disappointing results from their nation branding efforts for many reasons. Both countries have abandoned their nation branding efforts due to not having the patience for growth and progress (Teslik, 2007). According to Peter Van Ham (2008), a branding expert at a Dutch think tank, nation branding is

“like watching a flower grow,” and “policymakers do not have the patience, and politically they do not have the time” (p 1). Moreover, countries that seek to be successful at nation branding must have cross-collaboration between the private and public industries. Both industries that cooperate and coordinate their efforts will have better outcomes in the short and long term. The tourism department of a nation can work adjacent to private sectors seeking to improve their profits and value (Teslik, 2007).

Given the vast disagreements and unresolved debates, the concept of nation branding may be perceived to be in its infancy. A vital issue in the context of nation branding highlighted by previous scholars is the multifaceted attributes attached to a country (Sataøen, 2019). In this context, Browning & Ferraz de Oliveira (2017) argued that countries must invest a significant amount of time, energy, and capital to develop a national brand through the inclusion of an adjective as a prefix or a suffix with the name of the nations. Nation branding is achieved by highlighting the critical resources of the country, which for Saudi Arabia would be oil.

In this regard, most governments in the world tend to focus on developing bombastic campaigns, which leads to confusion between the development of a tourism brand and a national brand (Graan, 2016). Sociologists associate nation brands with national identity. Nation branding has a national brand identity in the primary phase of treating a country as a brand. The functionality of nation branding, therefore, serves as an essence for the development of attributes that differentiate one nation from another (Hao et al. 2019).

Nation Branding: Economic dimensions

Nation branding from an economic perspective can help in direct and indirect monetary growth and capital accumulation. Nation branding, paired with economic progression, is a highly effective method of taking on and growing current market share and gaining new market share (Szondi, 2010). One noteworthy example of this form of sub-branding is Finland's approach to using the slogan "land of creative and smart people" (Azad, 2016), promoting the nation's educationally developed population to attract more investment from foreign businesses. According to Azad, the technical-economic incentives in Finland are based on three assumptions, namely:

- The global market is competitive, and there is a competition among countries
- National well-being ensured by securing a competitive economic advantage, and the focus of the nation branding is to attract foreign investments, tourists, human capital, or trade
- A parallel between nations and brands is warranted and necessary (p 1)

Nation Branding: Political dimensions

Nation branding in the political context is a valuable tool to further a country's overall objectives and increase soft power. It is a multi-coordinated effort to promote a country's image to the international community through international affairs and political goals (Fan, 2010). Moreover, nation branding is vital for smaller, less-influential countries as this method can better position them to compete with larger nations with more significant financial and political influence (Fan, 2010). Countries such as the United States use political nation branding to promote itself as the most vigorous democracy in the world.

Nation Branding: Cultural Marketing dimensions

Vision 2030 offers Saudi officials efforts to engage essential stakeholders by offering a competitive advantage and a compelling value proposition. According to the American Marketing Association (AMA) quoted by Keller (2015), a brand is a “name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (p 7). Vision 2030 is an example of a specialized type of branding where nations interact and compete to have a more significant role in global leadership, collect valuable cross border partnerships, and better diplomacy levels (Keller, 2015).

The approach to nation branding can be justified to reconstruct a nation’s identity to influence how domestic or international audiences perceive the country. It helps governments reinforce or reshape the external identity of a nation internationally, and the brand perception of its citizens (Browning, 2016). National identity embodies the characteristics of a country as enduring, central, and distinctive traits based on the past, present, and future of the nation. Nation branding is a tool that helps governments align the national identity with reality or even narrow the gap between the image of the country and the truth. In constructivist approaches, nations imagined as commonalities utilized narratives for binding the community’s members through sharing information on social media platforms, especially Twitter.

Bubík (2019) may not relate the values that are generally stressed by nation branding to the actual products. Instead, there is a greater focus on symbolism and meaning. In that sense, nation branding helps nations to display specific selected national attributes that represent the country as a whole. As discussed by Bolin & Miazhevich (2018), relationship building acts as a core concept

and ultimate objective of nation branding rather than management and image creation that have long dominated the practice of nation branding and restricting the development of the idea. Yalkin (2018) further describes national brands to be contextualized since relationships built by the establishment of links between communities of different countries that are mutually beneficial in the form of quality of life, profit, capital, entertainment, increased well-being, reputation, and so on. Additionally, Edwards & Ramamurthy (2017) argue that for the development of nation-branding campaigns, understanding and awareness of the core attributes of a specific country is required. Nation-branding is the essence of any nation and cannot be derived solely from the brands and companies in a country. It must also rely on the culture of the country in the broadest sense, including elements such as architecture, language, sport, literature, and music.

Values Related to Nation Branding of Saudi Arabia

In nation branding, two of the most significant value components that have been getting empirical attention from scholars and social researchers include nation image and nation identity (Kim, 2012). The image component refers to how a thing is perceived, while the identity component refers to what something, in its essence, actually is. The values of nation brand identity include critical components such as national icons, art, religion, territory, language, history, and political regimes.

@SaudiVision2030

The Vision 2030 Campaign has used Twitter as the leading digital marketing vehicle to consolidate a trustworthy, authoritative, and engaging national branding campaign. “Governments are turning to brand techniques to differentiate their nations on the global stage and to give

themselves a competitive edge over “rival” countries” (Fetscherin, 2009, p 1). While Mohammed Bin Salman’s branding efforts encourage a positive multidimensional change in Saudi Arabia’s image, the changing of the pillars of any brand represents a high risk. Although it is not a corporation, the Saudi Arabian government has focused its resources on marketing strategies - especially over social media - to differentiate Vision 2030 as a turning point in the Saudi Arabian political, social, cultural, and economic spheres. The fundamental idea of the Vision 2030 plan is the reduction of Saudi Arabia’s dependence on oil.

In addition to that, the vision also aims to highlight the country’s attempt at economic diversification and development of several public service industries, including tourism, education, infrastructure, health, and recreation (Alshaikh, 2019). The achievement of a vibrant society is the first key theme. This theme is of paramount importance for successfully attaining the overall vision and building a consolidated foundation for economic and financial growth and prosperity within the kingdom. Some of the key goals associated with the theme include increasing household spending on entertainment and cultural activities within the country by 3.1% and raising the position of Saudi Arabia from 26 to 10 in the index of Social Capital (Zamakhshari, 2018). In the context of @Vision2030, a vibrant society refers to a society where members live following the local traditions of moderation. The community can enjoy a great life in an environment that is beautiful and exhibits pride in its cultural heritage and national identity and, where its citizens are supported by health care and social systems, and protected by caring families.

The second theme is an economy that is thriving. In the context of the @Vision 2030, a thriving economy refers to an economy where equal opportunity is available for all through an

education system that aligns with the different market necessities and can deliver financial options for small enterprise, large corporations, and entrepreneurship. Under this theme, some of the critical goals that the kingdom outlines is to increase the contribution of Saudi Arabian SMEs to the Kingdom's GDP by 15% and to increase the current rank in the Global Competitive Index from 25 to the top 10 countries. Under this theme, @Vision 2030 aims to develop investment tools that allow the nation to create job opportunities, diversify the overall economy, and exploit potential economic industries. This theme also aims to improve the economy by enhancing the business environment, leveraging a precise strategic placement that links three continents, attracting global investments and talents, and privatizing several government services.

The third and final theme is establishing an ambitious nation. In the context of the @Vision 2030, an ambitious country refers to a nation that has a government that is high-performing, accountable, enabling, transparent, and most importantly, valid. One of the key goals under this theme is increasing the contribution of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the overall non-profit sector to the kingdom's GDP by almost 4%. The Saudi Arabian government, through this theme, aims to establish an appropriate environment that is suitable for the non-profit sector, the private sector, and in which citizens may cope with the challenges as well as exploit rising opportunities.

In 2019, the Saudi Arabian government set a 15-year goal to sell 5% of Aramco, the national oil company, to increase the living standards in Saudi Arabia, and for flexibility in the private sector as the main value proposition (Abuljadail, 2019). The focus on Twitter has not been a coincidence since 20% of Saudi Arabia's total internet user population has used Twitter (Alrkani,

2018). “When compared to the rest of the Middle East, Saudi Arabia ranks Twitter as being the most preferred social media tool at the usage of 12%” (Alkarni, 2018, p 1). A high percentage of Saudi Arabia’s population uses Twitter, whether to write about or to read about the top trends in their country, like Mohammed Bin Salman’s vision.

A similar nation branding case in the Arabian Gulf is the United Arab Emirates’ modernization project. As Al-Najjar, & Allagui (2018) notes, “the United Arab Emirates (UAE), for instance, has invested heavily in global cultural icons to put itself in a world-class cultural position”(p 1). Nation branding is useful for promoting investments, engaging tourists and investors thanks to technological and travel plans. It also offers political advantages for entrepreneurs interested in leaving a valuable print in the country but also to embrace and address negative stereotypes and weaknesses that might affect the brand image.

Behind their success, there is brand management similar to that applied by a corporation operating in a specific country. “These determinants include sustainable tourism factors such as culture, heritage, environmental and integration of internal and external stakeholder groups from the public and private sectors” (Hassan, & Mahrous, 2019).

Twitter and Nation Branding

Social media develops a gray area in the context of public diplomacy. A study by USC Annenberg’s International Journal of Communication (Sevin, E., & Ingenhoff, D) asserted that earning “Likes” on Twitter may not be indicative of meaningful relationships. In the study, the authors warned against “over-valuing likes.” They introduced several solutions for the multiple challenges concerning quantifying or measuring the overall efficacy of public diplomacy

campaigns driven on different social media platforms to enhance the nation brand. The study investigated the Twitter activities of the governments of several nations, including Belgium, New Zealand, Australia, and Switzerland. The fundamental model considered both digital networks, referred to as the links that users build among themselves through activities such as mentions and retweets, and content, which are referred to as the expressed ideas contained within the posts. Notably, the study suggested that there may be four dimensions that measure the impact of social media on the reputation of a nation. These dimensions include the normative size associated with the beliefs concerning the integrity of a country, a functional measurement related to the views concerning the competitiveness and competency of a nation, sympathetic dimension related to the general fondness of citizens concerning a state, and finally, aesthetic dimension related to the traditions, territory, and culture of a nation.

According to Zimdarsa (2015), a nation's perception and reputation should be perceived as a direct result of public diplomacy. The author further indicates that with the inclusion of social media, countries are presented with explicit platforms for the nation's individuals to express their honest concerns and opinions, making social media an authentic, credible, and reliable arena in terms of data collection. The author perceives the link between nation brands and digital public diplomacy is not only based on the message content but on the message flow as well.

Nation branding and internationalization

The practice of nation branding aims to position the countries adopting these methods favorably in a global market. In the broadest sense, the concept of nation branding revolves around applying corporate branding techniques and tactics to nations to influence international

interactions and foreign affairs positively. It emphasizes adding an appeal for a government to endorse the presence of the country and facilitate its ability to have global influence. The particular goals associated with nation branding campaigns may vary depending on a nation's governing entity (Hart, 2018). However, in general, all government branding campaigns in the past have been associated with facilitating trade, attracting foreign investment, and the specific aim of enhancing the country's image.

In the context of internationalization, nation branding assists countries significantly in multiple fields. For instance, enhancing the positive image and appeal of a nation from an economic standpoint allows the governments involved to highlight the key opportunities of foreign investment in that nation. On the other hand, the development and inclusion of foreign trade and investment policies favorable for business and investors also increase the commercial appeal. This leads to increased foreign investment in a nation and raising the interest of global brands to engage in place with the government (Hart, 2018). From an educational standpoint, a country with a sound education system, and several universities promoted to the global audience helps a country bring in more students from overseas.

The increase in foreign investment in a nation helps countries resolve several issues such as unemployment and attracting foreign talent (Sevin & Ingenhoff, 2018). From a cultural standpoint, nation branding also helps a country promote a positive image around its key cultural features, which, in turn, attracts travelers and tourists, and helps achieve economic diversification due to an increased profit from tourism.

Research Questions:

R1: What ideas about Saudi Arabia are being communicated as core aspects of the nation's identity through the government's nation branding efforts on Twitter?

A sub research question was also developed to determine how the different values concerning the nation branding identity have been represented in the official Twitter page of Saudi Vision 2030:

R2: How are different values of national identity represented in the Saudi Vision 2030 on Twitter?

Methods

The section presents the research design, data collection, and data analysis procedures used in this study.

Research method: Qualitative content analysis

Qualitative content analysis is a research approach used to interpret data collected in textual formats (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, are among the growing media in the world in the 21st century. As such, they present databases full of information that can be analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is useful in analyzing data collected from different from sources (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Qualitative content analysis also provides an appropriate method for textually analyzing data from social media.

Data collection

NodeXL is a research software used to analyze and visualize data on social media platforms. NodeXL works by importing data of specific nature from the social media platforms, as determined by the researcher. The software allows collecting social media messages from users of a country who share information based on agendas taking the lead within a country. The

software enables the researcher to import data from social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. The data retrieved from NodeXL is used to identify trends about @Saudivision2030 and to reveal the content that is widely shared among users who engage with this Twitter handle. In this study, NodeXL was used to retrieve data about the ideas and values related to Saudi Arabia, shared by users on the official Twitter page, @Saudivision2030.

The first data set was derived from the Saudi Arabia's government official Twitter page. The primary data was coded descriptively to determine the underlying themes related to chatter about Vision 2030 in the textual messages shared by users. In this study, a directed qualitative content analysis was used to retrieve messages posted between April 2020 and June 2020 on the official Twitter page of Saudi Arabia @saudivision2030. The data was analyzed using the NodeXL software, which organizes and evaluates the textual messages relating to vision 2030.

Data on Saudi Arabia's national branding was collected from the @saudivision2030 Twitter using Twitter handle using NodeXL Pro software. The data was collected using the following procedure. NodeXL Pro was used to import tweets from the above mentioned Twitter handle. Eighteen thousand (18,000) tweets were initially retrieved. The NodeEXL tools were then used to show the relationships between the tweet, mentions, and retweets. The researcher saved the retrieved data on an excel sheet containing the vertices, edges, groups, groups vertices, and a matrix showing the various networks that exist on the vision 2030 handle.

Data selection

The researcher chose the Twitter page because it had the highest number of followers, 1,300,000, during the research period. Spring and summer are the busiest months for the Saudis

because of certain cultural activities taking place, such as the Jeddah festival, international town festival, and Riyadh Oudh festival, among other celebrations. It is the only time of the year that people are relaxing and so, becomes ideal for sharing development ideas and progress about their country (Kotb, 2020).

Data were analyzed using inductive coding. Raw data is collected from the Saudi Arabia Twitter account and divided into two sets. The first set of data is computer-generated and comprise data from Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 official Twitter account. This data includes the number of people on Twitter talking about Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. In other words, it depicts how far information about Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 had gone on that platform. The more news spreads, the more the values, philosophies, beliefs, culture, economy, and many other aspects of a country are marketed. The spreading of such information is part of the nation branding project and is covered in this category. The second set of data is content-based and was reviewed by the researcher directly by examining the tweets and retweets and other related posts about Saudi Arabia posted on the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 Twitter account (Bubík, 2019).

Data analysis

The researcher subjected raw data generated by NodeXL Pro to a word by word analysis and categorized them according to the following: Positive tweets, i.e posts that mentioned the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 goals, Neutral tweets i.e. tweets that did not say anything about Vision 2030, and Negative tweets, i.e. tweets that contained scam messages.

NodeXL Pro software imported content posted to @saudivision2030 within a three month period (April 2020 to June 2020). Despite the @Saudivision2030 being a busy national page, it

received high numbers of tweets in June 2020. This could be attributed to the decline in the global pandemic in Saudi Arabia, allowing the citizens to engage in other activities such as participate in Twitter conversations.

Values from the NodeXL that was primarily focused on was the frequency of occurrence of certain content. The researcher also selected the tweets based on the terms used most often. The types of tweets were defined, as shown in Table 2 below. The positive tweets were tweets containing the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 goals. Certain search terms related to the objectives of @Saudivision2030 were then used to code the data. The terms used include Saudivision2030, women empowerment, reduced oil dependency, three big cities, technology improvement, energy investment, sustainable economy, strategic foresight, and education access.

Data coding

Manual coding of qualitative data makes it easier to interpret the *raw data* in the @Saudivision2030 Twitter account. Manual coding is achieved through inductive coding. Inductive coding means starting everything from scratch (*raw data*) and then categorizing it into coding frames. This method is essential in this research because it assisted in covering as much information as possible. It helped in avoiding redundancies and captures the positive elements of the phenomenon under investigation.

Table 2: Table showing the codebook for Twitter analysis of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030

Categories	Description	Example tweet

Positive tweets	The tweet contains messages of Saudi Arabian Vision 2030 goals, national branding. The tweet retrieved from @Saudivision2030,	<i>“Saudi Arabia ranks 18th in the budget transparency index issued by the International Budget Partnership; A new achievement that reflects continuous efforts to enhance the level of transparency and disclosure in public finance”.</i>
Negative tweet	The tweet has no messages towards the Saudi Arabian Vision 2030 national branding	<i>The attack in Yemen reduced the dependency on oil</i>
Neutral tweet	A tweet that mentions the hashtag but has no action towards attaining the Vision 2030.	<i>Several future steps have been identified, in addition to identifying several available means that can contribute to developing the plan and starting its implementation after discussing it with the local community on a large scale.</i>

Results & Research Questions

NodeXL creates network diagrams for collecting tweets (vertices) and estimates the centrality. In this study, a total of 74 tweets (vertices) generated a total of 2,117 edges (tweet relations). The researcher generated different tweet edges, i.e., tweets, retweets, mention, followed, and following relationships among Twitter users. Data cleaning was performed to focus on tweets that only had the words that would define the conversation among Saudi Arabia Twitter users on #saudivision2030.

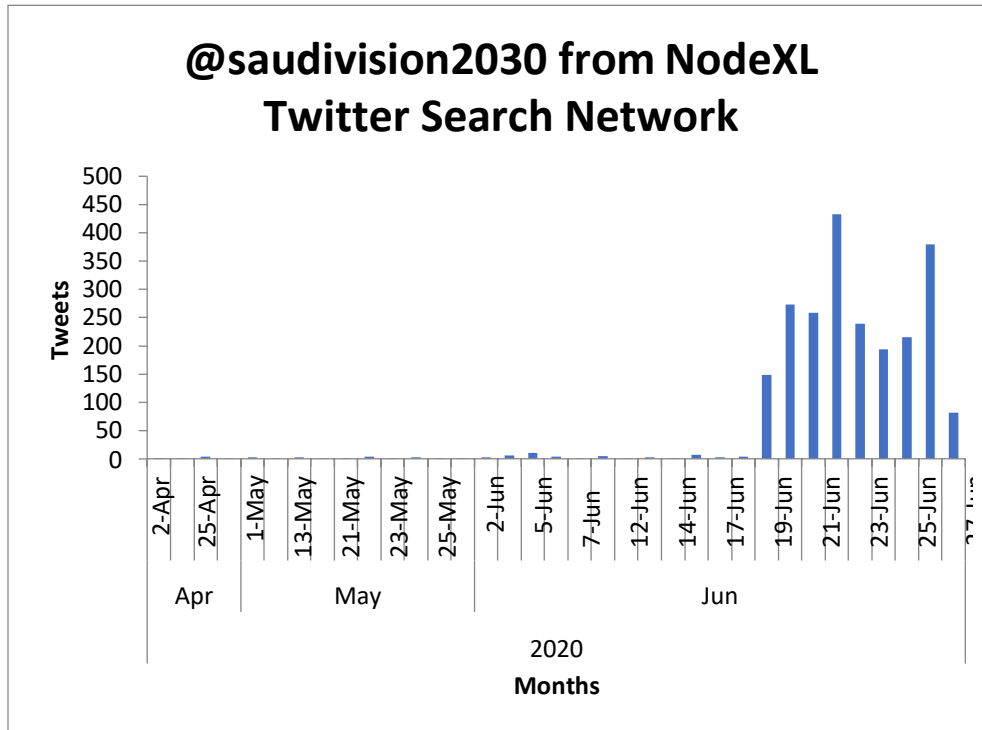


Figure 1: Figure showing time series analysis for Saudi Arabia Twitter analysis brand.

Table 3: Table showing positive words @saudivision2030

Word	Count	Saliency	Word on Sentiment List #1: List1	Word on Sentiment List #2: List2	Word on Sentiment List #3: List3
Words in Sentiment List#1	92	0.002			
Words in Sentiment List#2	10	0.000			
Words in Sentiment List#3	1964	0.033			
Non-categorized Words	57955	0.966			
Total Words	60021	1.000			
saudivision2030	1930	0.003	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE
من	1545	0.012	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
عن	1025	0.008	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
ع	898	0.009	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
sabqorg	680	0.006	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
citc_sa	645	0.006	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
okaz_online	631	0.006	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
al_jazirah	622	0.006	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
لوزا	444	0.008	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
citc_withu	424	0.005	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
رؤية السعودية 2030	423	0.005	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
السعودية	394	0.006	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
السعودية	313	0.005	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
sagiagov	285	0.004	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
تظ	270	0.004	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
!	264	0.004	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
حان	246	0.004	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
ك	243	0.004	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
لمر	242	0.004	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
لشكوى	241	0.004	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE

The study found that 2,117 tweets contained positive tweets. The ratio of positive tweets of #saudivision2030 to the total tweets was 0.14. The percentage of people talking about Vision 2030 was lower as compared to the total number of tweets. Some of the search terms that appeared were saudivision2030, technology, and oil and women empowerment.

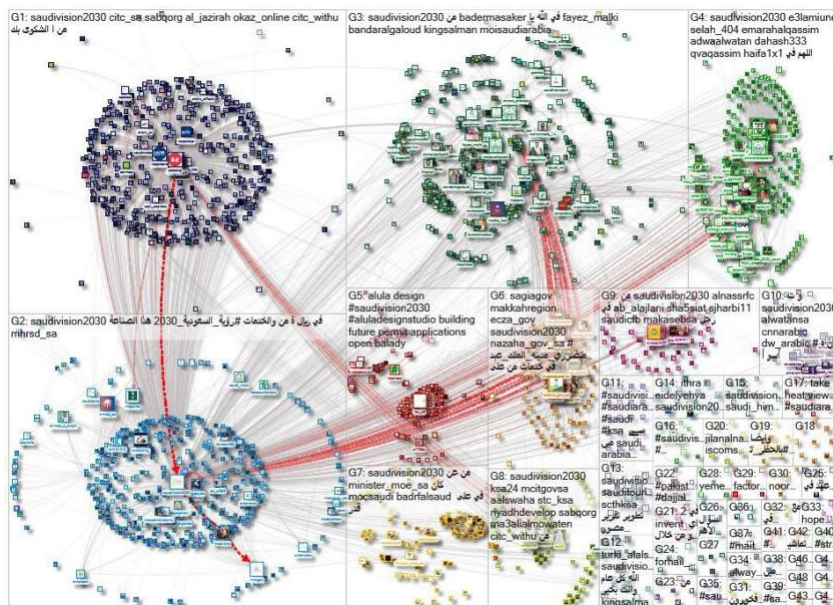


Figure 4: SaudiVision2030 Twitter NodeXL SNA Map and Report for Friday, June 05, 2020, at 16:20 UTC

The above graphs show how far information about Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 is spread. It is a representation of a network of 2,117 tweets, which contained positive tweets from users whose recent tweets included “SaudiVision2030” or people who replied to tweets which mentioned Saudi Arabia Vision 2030. There is an edge for every “replies-to” relationship in a tweet, an edge for every “mention” relationship in a tweet, and a self-loop edge for every tweet which does not fall under mentions and replies to tweets with Saudi Arabia Vision 2030. The graph

vertices are categorized by clusters using the Calumet-Newman-Moore cluster algorithm laid out using the Harel-Koren Multiscale layout algorithm. From the data above, content analysis shows that many Saudi Arabia populations are on Twitter and use Twitter to talk about their country's Vision 2030 program. Using this information and comparing it with that from other countries globally, statistics show that 41% of the online population in Saudi Arabia uses Twitter. Saudi Arabia has the highest percent of the community on Twitter per country in the world.

Graph metrics for Saudi Arabia nation branding on Twitter

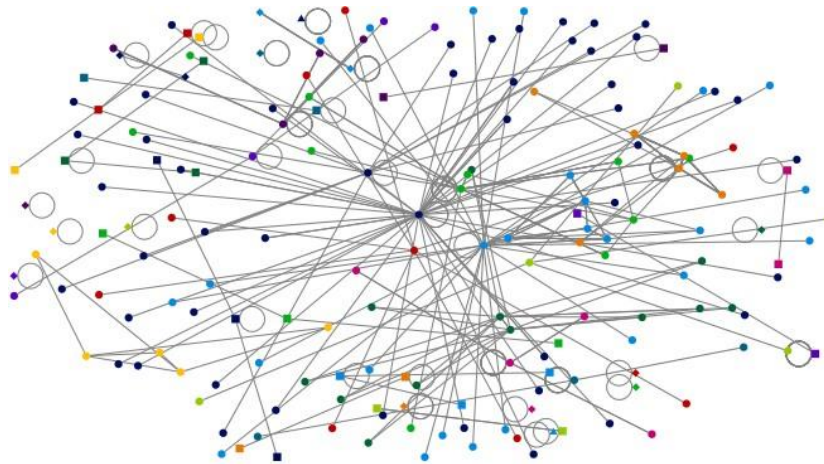
The graph metrics for @saudivision2030 nation branding are shown in the table below. According to this study, the total edges were $n=19398$, unique edges $n=6906$, vertices $n=2117$, and tweets $n=74$. According to this study, we can see the spread and links emanating from 74 tweets, which reached 19,398 people through retweets, mentions and tweets. 2117 people reacted to the tweets through mentions and retweets. The study had many nation branding terminologies appearing in mentions, mentions in retweets, and replies. In this study, the researcher was interested in the tweets that had information on the preferred nation branding goals and strategies.

Table showing the graph metrics for @saudivision2030

Graph Metric	Value
Graph Type	Directed
Vertices	2117
Unique Edges	6906
Edges With Duplicates	12492
Total Edges	19398
Number of Edge Types	5
Mentions	9437
Replies to	2029
Retweet	1394
MentionsInRetweet	6464
Tweet	74
Self-Loops	112
Reciprocated Vertex Pair Ratio	0.043980453
Reciprocated Edge Ratio	0.084255319
Connected Components	43
Single-Vertex Connected Components	20
Maximum Vertices in a Connected Component	2008
Maximum Edges in a Connected Component	19264
Maximum Geodesic Distance (Diameter)	8
Average Geodesic Distance	2.750742
Graph Density	0.002098415
Modularity	0.359397
NodeXL Version	1.0.1.433
Graph Gallery URL	https://nodexlgraphgallery.org/Pages/Graph
Graph Source	TwitterSearch
Graph Term	SaudiVision2030

The directional flow of messages was used to determine the influence of national branding on the Saudi Arabia Twitter page. Figure 2 below shows the network of influencers in the @saudivision2030 Twitter handle. According to the figure, the influencers are identified by nodes

represented as a circle, meaning the people of Saudi Arabia receive information from different influencers. The influencers have a vast network meaning they can easily pass valuable information towards the country's vision 2030 with ease. The role of influencers is to create a network of ideas and brands.



Created with NodeXL Pro (<http://nodexl.codeplex.com>) from the Social Media Research Foundation (<http://www.smrfoundation.org>)

The figure has different colors and sizes of the vertices which includes the direction and the number of people one influencer can pass information to. The Saudi Arabia Twitter page identifies several national values and ideas related to @saudivision2030. The direction of Twitter communication was mainly unidirectional, with the top influencer being @saudivision2030. The graph shows the interaction of communication between the people and the @SaudiVision 2030. Most of the information is tweeted by the national Twitter page, with most of the followers responding to the tweets, retweets, and mentions. Nation branding ideas and values are identified in the contents of the tweets, i.e., what people are hoping will be achieved by 2030.

Top words in @saudivision2030

The findings suggest that influencers were using social media platforms to disseminate the goals and development agendas of Saudi Arabia towards the attainment of vision 2030.

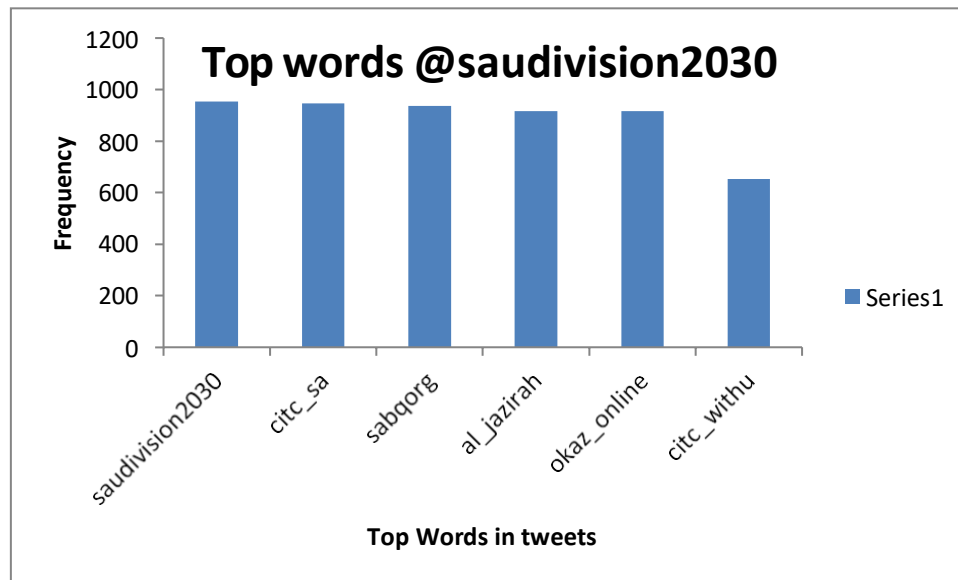


Figure showing top words @saudivision2030 Twitter account

Followers were influential in our study because they helped determine the flow of information from one person to another. Followers decided the degree of centrality between the followers and the vertex of the person tweeting the info. For example, @saudivision2030 was one of the top influencers in our study with an approximate of 1,300 000 followers, @rcu_sa had 1,039,000 followers, and @citic_with you had 104,000 followers. The top influencers were valuable to this study since the people could quickly transfer information to other people. Saudi Arabia's values and nationalism are essential to determine since the content of the tweet messages shared by the people on Twitter can evaluate some of the importance and national branding ideas identified by the followers.

The inductive coding content analysis of the Saudi Arabia vision 2030 twitter account revealed eight themes: 1) Environment, 2) Art, Entertainment and Social life, 3) Family institution, 4) Provision of improved and modern services to pilgrims 5) Saudi Arabia as the Heart of Arab and Muslim world 6) living of a healthy life and 7) a thriving economy.

The researcher analyzed the existence of core values, beliefs, and guiding principles of Saudi Arabia in every category. Additionally, the difference or similarity in some of the values and beliefs found in each category were analyzed.

The table below shows the category of contents in the Saudi vision 2030 Twitter account

Category	Description
1. Environmental values	Shifting from depending on oil to the use of eco-friendly energy.
2. Art, entertainment, and social life	Subdivided into three sub-categories: physical conditions, psychological conditions, and social well-being. Addresses the promotion of art, entertainment culture, and music
3. Family institutions values	Subdivided into two sub-categories. Promotion and reinvigorate social enhancement in a way that will build a healthy and productive society
4. Saudi Arabia as the Heart of the Arab and Muslim world	Taking of immense pride in the historical and cultural legacy of Saudis, the Arab world, and Islamic heritage. Creating among with other religions
5. Provision of improved and modern services to pilgrims	Taking honor and responsibility bestowed to Saudis by Allah to honor and to serve the increasing number of Umrah visitors in the best way possible
6. Living of a healthy life	They are encouraging more participation in sports for a healthy and well-balanced life for the Saudis.

7. A thriving Saudi Arabia economy	Divided it onto four basics that Saudi Arabia under vision 2030 will enable the country to have a thriving economy
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Findings and Discussion

This section aims at answering the research questions concerning national brands retrieved from the official Twitter page @saudivision2030.

Saudi Arabia is a country recognized for its strong core values of integrity, respect, and honesty for the people. The national values demonstrated in the conversation among the Saudi Arabians on Twitter alluded to the types of core values within the country. The tweets sourced from @saudivision2030 for three months showed an increase in tweets, retweets, and mentions of Vision 2030.

Saudi Arabia's brand on social media platforms is growing and continually appreciated by many citizens. Twitter is one of the leading platforms where many people share tweets, retweets, replies, and mentions towards the saudivision2030. The findings were congruent with a study by Mandeli (2019), who argued that the Saudi Arabian vision 2030 would improve the employment rates among the youth. The study, therefore, identifies social media to be an effective network in advancing the national brand according to vision 2030.

RI:: *What ideas about Saudi Arabia are being communicated as core aspects of the nation's identity through the government's nation branding efforts on Twitter?*

The following ideas emerged in relation to the above stated research questions:

- Fight against corruption as an identity of nation branding

- Ideas that could boost the state of the nation by 2030, these include; research and development, promoting the economic growth of the country, increase the technological innovations, and reduce the dependencies on oil resources.
- Water availability; Availability of water to all is another idea that emerged in tweets. Saudi Arabia has not received 100% water connection to its residents; the people are concerned about the water connection (@Saudivision2030)

According to this study, the directed content analysis of 2,117 positive tweets revolved around (four) main categories of (integrity, honesty, industrialization, and respect (@Saudivision2030)). The study identified how Saudi Arabia's Twitter account portrayed people communicating with respect and dignity. A country with integrity is observed in how it runs its programs; this includes having less corruption. A country without corruption is the most advanced country and can quickly achieve its Vision 2030 because resources are streamlined its stated purpose.

Tweets examples:

Corruption

Saudi Arabia aims to achieve sustainable development and Vision 2030 due to reduced corruption activities in the country. These are some of the core values that support the elimination of corruption in Saudi Arabia.

A tweet on May 10 2020, "Saudi Arabia ranks 18th in the budget transparency index issued by the International Budget Partnership; A new achievement that reflects

continuous efforts to enhance the level of transparency and disclosure in public finance”
(@Saudivision2030).

The tweet above shows the need for Saudi Arabia influencers to reduce corruption in their country. The reduction of corruption practices could increase the economic rules of their country. Saudi Arabia can grow economically once the corrupt are removed from the system since corruption affects vision 2030.

A tweet by To achieve رؤية (#Vision Saudi Arabia2030) I suggest to the ministries besides Security survey (المسح الأمني) (#المسح القيمي) (Valuable Survey) When selecting middle and executive leaders for sub-departments To detect نزاهة (#Integrity) The candidate and find out: 1- Was he involved in a scientific theft? 2- Has the percentage of distinguished achievements and initiatives for himself continued? (@N_Alkhwaiter,)

These tweets explain the seriousness of the country in fighting against corruption. The influencer @N_Alkhwaiter aims at improving the economic growth of Saudi Arabia by helping their fellow citizens in watching over the corrupt officials in the government.

Research and development

Knowledge is a valuable resource that needs to be passed down from one generation to the other. Saudi Arabia tweets mention the ability to conduct research, proposal writing, and improved education systems. Increasing the knowledge of the Saudi Arabian’s populace is critical in hastening the attainment of vision2030. My findings indicated that most of the tweets were concerned with ensuring that the country can work on its goals systematically. For example;

“A Tweet on June 26, 2020, The proposal is presented in its original form as a basis for discussion and research and is based on the preliminary information I have available due to my previous experience, goals, and programs. (SaudiVision) #السعودية_2030. It consists of an analysis of the current situation, goals, and strategies for achieving these goals in general, and an explanation of the next steps and available means.” @SaudiVision2030).

Improved developments within Saudi Arabia is critical. The study identified a tweet with 160 retweets on improving the development of Saudi Arabia to become of relevance to the global world.

*A tweet in April 2020; “We keep pace with developments and make achievements to make Saudi Arabia an attractive logistics platform globally.
(@SaudiVision2030)*

Tourism

Tourism is an important sector for the contribution of sustainable development and Vision 2030 goals. Tourism increases the gross domestic product of a country. A country with a high GDP indicates a high living standard as compared to a country with a lower GDP.

A tweet by posted on June 27 2020

“A beautiful vision ... But I see it overlooked the most important constituents of Al-Baha which constitute its basic identity, namely that the region is agricultural first and tourism second, and I previously wrote an article entitled: The patio that we want, including

suggestions from the most important: that the region is suitable for hospitalization, recovery, and study in specific institutes and colleges ..” (@ Salehjaoraibi).

One of Saudi Arabia's vision 2030 goal is to be the leading country internationally to increase the gross domestic product (GDP). The country needs to identify different forms of national branding that helps to boost the economy of the country. Among the strategies to enhance the national brand include; diversifying income away from the dependency on oil to other income-generating activities such as tourism. Literature indicates that Saudi Arabia is a country identified for its renowned tourist attractions(Azziad, 2016).

Technology

To achieve Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia wants to improve technological advancements in the country. Various sectors of Saudi Arabia’s economy are adopting technology to enhance service delivery. The wake of the 21st century has more internet options available, with the 5G network, as one of the most recent technological advancements needed to promote innovations. In Saudi Arabia, the use of Twitter and other social media platforms indicates the depth of technical know-how by the Saudi people. The presence of leaders who can offer technological milestones provides benefits to the country.

“Four Types of Effective Digital Executives. With the rapid change in the nature and requirements of work environments. The change in the skills and ideas of leaders must be anticipated. Four categories for executive digital leaders.” (@SaudiVision2030).

Commitment

Commitment to work is essential as it maximizes profits and effective productivity. The presence of commitment and cohesion determines the national brand of Saudi Arabia. The unity demonstrated by the leaders and their citizens enhances the performance, towards the attainment of Vision 2030. On April 22, 2020, the official Twitter page of the country tweeted, “*Cohesion and commitment for a comeback race the clouds.*” (@SaudiVision2030).

Reducing unemployment from 11% to 7% is one of the goals of Vision 2030. The tweet analysis revealed that the government of Saudi Arabia is localizing jobs to help reduce unemployment. On April 21, 2020, a Twitter on the official Vision 2030 page said, “*Contribution to enhancing local content, localizing jobs, and stimulating building technology for the sustainability of the housing sector.*” (@SaudiVision2030). This finding is congruent with Azziad (2016), who reported the various mechanisms to be used by the Saudi Arabian government to attain its vision 2030 national branding

Saudi Vision 2030 aims to improve the living standards of people globally. Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia is based on three themes: a thriving economy, a vibrant society, and an ambitious nation. National values are attained when the community is vibrant- to mean, and there are many activities taking place to improve the livelihoods of the people. The national economy determines various factors taking place within a country. For example, a country with high economic returns is essential in improving the living standards of a nation. According to a report on Saudi Vision 2030, the country is set to create opportunities to enhance revenue creation of jobs, unlocking various sectors of the economy (Vision2030KSA, 2017). Ensuring that there is a thriving business economy is essential. The third theme aims at attaining a transparent, effective, and operational

government. The government aims at providing its citizen commitments towards achieving the ambitiousness of a nation. Technological innovation improves the ability of Saudi Arabia to improve its operations from one place to another and enhances the ambitiousness since the control time is increased (Khan & Khan, 2020). This study agrees to the themes of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the realization of vision 2030.

R2: How are the different values of national identity represented in Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 on Twitter?

The following values related to the above stated research questions were detected via coding and analysis of the data:

- Saudi Arabia is a country that has its values revolving between morality and cultural values; these include family values, religious values, loyalty, hospitality, integrity, personal honor and commitment.
- Saudi Arabia appreciates the well-being of its citizens through ensuring that each of their people and visitors alike receive equal treatments.
- Other values that have featured on Saudi Arabia, is the expansion of technological advancements within the country to increase maximum innovations, towards the achievement of vision 2030.
- Religion plays a role in the maintain national values within the Saudi Arabia.

The analysis was aimed at understanding different values of national identity represented through Twitter social media platform. According to activity on the Saudi Arabia Twitter page, Saudi Arabia is reported by the findings to have a high level of accountability, innovation,

economic and environmental sustainability. Saudi Arabia's national values are divided into various sub-categories as shown below. Another national value identified on the national core values is enhancing the ability to increase food security within the country. One of the core national economic values for Saudi Arabia is to ensure that there is an increase in food supplies. Improvement in the food security index allows the country to be viewed better in terms of development.

A tweet on June 22, 2020 "Saudi; In the "Food Security Index", it ranks 30th out of 113 countries, confirming its commitment to developing a sustainable agricultural system that preserves natural resources and expands agricultural investment." (@Saudivision2030).

Healthy living is a core value and a national brand among Saudi nationals. People with healthy lives can contribute to the economy of the world. According to a tweet posted on:

22nd, June, 2020. What we have witnessed is the percentage of sufficiency in dates that reaches 125% and 116% of eggs, as we have reached 106% in the proportion of sufficiency in fresh milk and its derivatives, 60% of vegetables and poultry. Finally, 55% of the proportion of sufficiency in fish makes us say with pride and pride. My country Keeps it up (@Saudivision2030).

The tweet passes on the message about their government, indicating that the quantity of food allows Saudi nationals to live a healthy life.

The use of the Twitter platform has evoked mixed interest in different parts of the world. However, Twitter is used in Saudi Arabia to promote societal values meant to increase the number of visitors through tourism. Societal values are essential in improving the moral status of a society.

May 24 2020. Eid; Your safety. Every year you are safe and benevolent. (@Saudivision2030)

May 25 2020. The National Industry and Logistics Services Development Program; Integrative growth between four vital sectors, including industry, mining, energy and logistics. (@Saudivision2030)

The sub-category of social well-being was mentioned in our tweet analysis, by a tweet posted on May 22, 2020. *We continue the efforts; for a society whose members enjoy the quality of life (@Saudivision2030)*. One of the national brands among the Saudis is to improve the lifestyle of Saudi nationals, through adequate health care delivery. The societal vibes are felt when people live together in harmony, taking care of one another with love. The doctrines outlined in the Muslim religion allow for the people to live together, care for one another and spread love among themselves and other people. The virtue of hospitality makes Saudi Arabia among the leading countries in tourism.

Saudi Arabia is identified by one of its brands as having a thriving economy. Reports indicate that Saudi Arabia is a hub connecting three continents. Despite those calamities that affect Saudi Arabia's economy, it has improved. A tweet on June 16, 2020 highlight this:

Saudi; the progress in the Middle East is ranked 24th globally in the Global Competitiveness Yearbook report for 2020 (@Saudivision2030).

The global improvement is remarkable, especially when the country is turning away from the use of oil-based energy sources and shifting to renewable energy sources. It indicates the commitment the country has towards its national values and brands. The study identified some of the national values and goals that the country aims at achieving by 2030. According to the tweets sampled from the study, the official Twitter page demonstrated the Saudi government to be concerned of their peoples' welfare through the tweets they are sharing on the platform. Most of the tweets were tweeted by @saudivision2030, to be influential willed people interested in building their country with positive vibes.

National values such as hospitality, integrity, religion and cultural values, makes Saudi one of the countries to attract a number of tourist from all over the world. Technological innovation is vital in enhancing further opportunities and filling in the gap between the poor and the rich (Khan & Khan, 2020). Social media platforms are important areas where a nation branding can be easily sought to determine values and ideas shared by people on the platform.

The study's findings on the national values were in tandem with literature which indicates that national values and identities can be used to determine the national identity of a country at international levels. National values identified in this study include cohesiveness. Nation branding is useful for promoting investments, engaging tourists and investors thanks to technological and travelling plans, and offering political advantages for entrepreneurs interested in leaving a valuable print in the country but also to embrace and address negative stereotypes and weaknesses that might affect the brand image. According to Zimdarsa (2015), a nation's perception and reputation should be perceived as a direct result of public diplomacy. The author further indicated that with

the inclusion of social media, nations are presented with explicit platforms for the nation's individuals to express their honest concerns and opinions. In the context of internationalization, nation branding assists countries significantly in multiple fields. For instance, enhancing the positive image and appeal of a nation from an economic standpoint allows the nations involved to highlight the key opportunities of foreign investment in that nation. On the other hand, the development and inclusion of foreign trade and investment policies favorable for business and investors also increase the commercial appeal of a nation. This leads to increased foreign investment in a nation in addition to raising the interest of global brands to engage in business with the nation (Hart, 2018).

Concluding remarks, limitations, and suggestions for future study

The study had some limitations. First, the use of Twitter posts led to the generalization of the data generated through the NodeXL. Secondly, the study was limited to tweets for three months (April 2020 to June 27 2020). Despite that, the study was able to provide us with an extrapolation of the Saudi Arabian branding for Vision 2030. Three months of Twitter analysis does not provide ultimate evidence that the tweets represent what the entire nation's yearn for Vision 2030. This study failed to understand the role of political influence in the implementation of Saudi Arabia's tweet content regarding the Vision 2030. Another limitation was the fact that tweets used to determine the national branding values for Saudi Arabia, would be based on the perceptions of the people using Twitter platforms. The rise of cybercrime could affect the results mainly if we analyzed data of the same person owning different Twitter accounts or different pseudonyms.

Performing a quantitative analysis through interviews and focus-grouped discussion could yield a better view based on national brands.

In conclusion, tweets done by the Saudi Vision 2030 Twitter account are a reflection of fundamental elements of nation branding identity, and Saudi's core values and guiding principles. Saudi is represented in terms of religion, cultural heritage, family institutions, economy, health living, and many others. In conclusion, this study on Twitter is a reflection of what nation branding identity is on Twitter

For future studies, I suggest a comparative study of two different countries regarding the use of media for nation branding through Twitter so that there can be a more comprehensive view of nation branding identity representation on Twitter. Additionally, this study can also be expanded to a broader target audience with different perceptions so that it can widen the understanding of nation branding identity in Twitter. Also the future study should focus on external audiences and what social channels should be deemed effective in attaining the Saudi Arabia nation branding

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Appendix 1: Codebook

Codebook for Twitter Content Analysis: Saudi Arabia national brand

Is the tweet containing Saudi Arabia Vision 2030?

1 Yes

2 No

Social media company (Twitter)

Number of followers of the official Twitter page

Twitter natives of origin

- 1 Saudi Arabians
- 2 Verified Saudi Arabians on Twitter

Tweet: are the tweets containing a message or text of the Saudi Arabia government national brands?

1. Yes, there was a tweet used
2. No, there was no tweet used

Type of Illustration used on Twitter

1. Tweet
2. Retweet
3. Mention
4. Follower
5. Following relationship

Words used to determine the presence of national brand themes on @saudivision2030

- 1 Improved food security
- 2 Increased investment
- 3 Nation
- 4 Vision2030

Dominant theme of the textual themes

1. Integrity
2. Honesty
3. Nationalism
4. Innovation

Type of tweet messages

1. Positive tweet; contains Vision 2030 national values
2. Neutral: does not contain a strong message of Vision 2030 national values.