

التحقيق في كيفية تأثير حملات العلاقات العامة على مواقف المستهلكين وقرارات الشراء في المملكة العربية السعودية

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**Topic- Investigating How PR Campaigns Influence Consumer
Attitudes and Purchasing Decisions In Saudi Arabia**

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the impact of public relations (PR) campaigns on transforming consumer attitudes and their decisions to purchase goods from brands. The study utilised the primary quantitative data collection method, using purposive sampling to recruit 8 participants for the detailed analysis. Data analysis using thematic analysis consolidated participants' views, and the findings entailed that emotion, cultural values, ethics, and necessities are all essential factors in organising a successful PR campaign. This study found that individuals prefer brands that are more synchronised with their cultural beliefs and emotional connections. Participants offered detailed responses with examples of different companies's successful PR campaigns, which can be utilised in later studies for analysis aiming to evaluate PR campaigns' success factors. Even though the study was conducted in Saudi Arabia, the findings are generalisable and follow strict ethical guidelines, making this study highly useful in the marketing domain.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

PR is now seen as a crucial element in a contemporary business and marketing mix with the principal goal of managing the public's perception of a particular enterprise or its products (Doorley et al., 2015). Public relations accord several strategies for relaying messages, creating an image, and improving relations with the public. These campaigns are normally used to appeal to the consumers, promote brand image, and also to call on the consumers to buy the brand (Quesenberry, 2020). Specifically, PR has evolved into a powerful tool in the context of digital media hence becoming a core area of study in business especially for firms aspiring to perform well in competitive markets.

With the process of globalisation escalating the integration of many markets, knowing more about how PR campaigns operate in a cultural setting is critical (Alon et al., 2020). This is a clear show of the uniqueness of consumers depending on the region of the country, it may be due to cultural or social factors or even the level of economic development. PR results generated from one market can differ significantly from the results that are achieved in another. Hence, the adaptation of PR activities to the local culture is a foundation for real results. That is why PR campaigns have a special meaning in the context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is experiencing fast evolution in the implementation of the Vision 2030 agenda that seeks to diversify the economy away from oil and gas (Moshashai et al., 2020). This revolutionary strategy has produced both opportunities and threats which are relative to firms existing in Saudi Arabia. Emerging market conditions entail corporate organisations to come up with creative ways of reaching out to customers and creating mutually beneficial relationships with them. PR practices remain influenced by the country's traditions allied to the fact that Saudi Arabia is rapidly becoming an economic powerhouse (Al-Otaibi, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to interpret their attitudes towards purchasing and identify factors that underscore their consumption patterns to inform PR campaigns in Saudi Arabia.

In this research, an attempt will be made to investigate the correlation between PR campaigns and consumers' perceptions and buying behaviours of Saudi Arabian consumers, which will be useful in understanding the fluctuations in this market.

1.2. Significance of Study

The study is important in the sense that it undertakes a detailed assessment of the impact of PR campaigns on the Saudi Arabian consumer markets, a region that is culturally and economically distinct from certain global markets. Knowledge of such tendencies is essential

when and if Saudi marketers want to communicate with Saudi consumers to accomplish their marketing strategies. The outcomes of this study will shed light on the efficiency of various PR campaigns and media outlets aiding businesses in enhancing their communication successes. Furthermore, this research makes an addition to the existing knowledge of PR as it underlines the cultural influence on consumers' perception of PR campaigns.

1.3. Research Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this research therefore is to examine the relationship between PR campaigns and consumer perception and behaviour in the context of Saudi Arabia, whereas following are the study's objectives:

- To explore the impact of public relations tactics on Saudi Arabian consumer behaviour.
- To examine how PR influences consumer purchase decisions in Saudi Arabia.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of various media channels in the success of public relations campaigns.
- To provide recommendations for Saudi Arabian corporations on developing effective public relations strategies.

1.4. Research Questions

The research questions of the dissertation are:

- How do public relations tactics impact consumer attitudes in Saudi Arabia?
- What role does PR play in influencing consumer purchasing decisions in Saudi Arabia?
- Which media channels are most effective in the success of PR campaigns in Saudi Arabia?
- What strategies should Saudi Arabian corporations adopt to enhance the effectiveness of their PR campaigns?

1.5. Ethical Considerations

This research work will also respect certain ethical considerations by ensuring that none of the participants is easily identifiable by anyone. Consent will also be sought from all the respondents and will be told the reason for the study and that they can pull out if they wish to at any one time. Raw information will be archived in such a way that the identities of participants shall not be easily identifiable to honour their privacy. The work will also refrain from bias or manipulation of the results, and the findings will depict the views of the participants.

1.6. Structure of Dissertation

The presented dissertation is divided into the following sections. Chapter One gives a background of the research, the reason for its importance, the study's purpose, objectives, questions' statements, and ethical considerations as well as the organisation of the study. The Literature Review section of the proposed paper examines the literature regarding PR campaigns, consumers' perceptions, and the Saudi Arabia setting. The Methodology explains the work's scope, including its primary approach, sources, and procedures of data gathering and processing. The Analysis and Results chapter can be summarised as including the findings in the data collected and the following. The Discussion explains the findings referring to the research questions and the literature review section. Therefore, the Conclusion provides general findings, implications, and suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this literature review chapter, the impact of public relations (PR) campaigns on consumers' purchasing decisions in the Saudi Arabian market is explored critically, utilising scholars' perceptions over the research topic. The chapter explores how marketing managers can make their campaigns successful using social media marketing, influencer marketing and advertisements. Also, the study explores impact of PR campaigns on consumer decisions, investigating how PR campaigns should be modified to target more audience and attract potential consumers and improve brand image in the industry. Furthermore, different channels utilised in ensuring success of PR campaigns are to be explored, to offer a thorough grasp over the research topic. The chapter also provides a theoretical lens to direct the study in a specific direction, and the proposed theories guide how culture can be utilised to impact the audience in campaigns, as well as, emotions that can be targeted to benefit the brand awareness. Overall, the chapter explores in detail the impacts of public relation building efforts on consumers' behaviour globally and what is useful for marketers to know in order to maximise their campaign impact.

2.2. Analysing Relationship Between PR Campaigns and Customer Behaviour

A PR campaign helps in improving a firm's brand image and attracting more consumers, and is made successful using influencers, social media, and TV advertising (Adeola et al., 2020). Alanmi & Alharthi (2023) examined the role of digital marketing by determining its effects on buying behaviour and purchasing decisions, as well as the popularity of brands in the Saudi Arabian market. Samples were attained from 200 participants aged between 18 and 55 years through an online survey, where quantitative data was attained and analysed utilising the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study found that digital marketing, particularly through social media applications such as Snapchat, TikTok, and Twitter, has a positive and significant impact on brand popularity, consumers's buying behaviour, and their buying decisions. The study supports the current view that in the marketing domain, marketing managers' knowledge regarding digital marketing usefulness impacts the campaign's success and users' engagement. By exploring the impact of social media marketing in the domain of digital marketing, the study emphasised on the benefits of novel technologies in improving brand image and business growth.

The study by Chopra et al. (2020) examined how influencer marketing positively changes consumer behaviour utilising the theories of planned behavior and the Social Learning. The research revealed the relationships between consumer behavioural intentions and influencer attitudes had a positive impact on the controlling their appeal towards campaigns. Surprisingly, peer influence was found to be insignificant in influencing the consumers' consumption. Other factors like relevance, inspiration, and faith in the influencers also had positive effects on the consumers' behaviour, however, the perceived risk factor did not have any effect on consumer behavior. An important finding of the research was the product-influencer fit, where the customers deemed certain influencers as ideal for advertising some products. The findings of this research provide support that influencers are an essential component of today's marketing strategies and are equipped to influence the perceptions and actions of the target audience using social media applications.

Nair et al. (2021) examined the effects of Starbucks' marketing communications initiatives in the context of the consumer buying process in India and Malaysia. Scholars used surveys and statistical tools to analyse consumer responses and found that 52.7% of the respondents felt the store environment was influencing their purchase decisions. Social factors were also prominent, with 40% mentioning that a friend or family member had recommended them, and therefore, they visited Starbucks. The study revealed that, although most of the campaigns were online, only 24 percent of them received global public attention, meaning that PR campaigns need to be more effective to attract a larger audience. All the promotions, both in the interior and exterior design of the store, setting, and complementary services such as drive-thru, positively impacted 64.6% of the respondents. Other strategies, like one-to-one communication with their clients and product differentiation, were also accredited to Starbucks for promoting customer retention and creating a positive image. It also proves how Starbucks uses a different approach to manipulate the behaviour of the customer in the process. Together these studies ensure that PR campaigns greatly impact consumer behaviour and social media plays a great role in ensuring success of PR campaigns.

2.3. Impact of PR Campaigns on Consumers' Purchase Decisions

The research by Tsai et al. (2020) provides a thorough analysis of consumers' perspectives on various aspects of green marketing and their purchase intentions, particularly for Starbucks. Thus, with references to DEMATEL, DANP, and VIKOR methodologies, the research outlines a comprehensive model for evaluating the interrelationships and weights of indicators, which belong to green management, green brand image, green brand relationships,

and green brand equity. The results show that green management practices like the development of green culture and cleaner production are vital in creating better views from consumers and influencing their buying decisions. More importantly, the study explores and establishes that the perceived credibility of firms' environmental claims and level of brand satisfaction bear a critical influence on green brand loyalty. The empirical analysis results thus provide a strong call for organisations to design and implement green marketing suitable to consumer perceptions with the view of achieving brand loyalty and revenues. This research helps Starbucks and similar firms better understand how sustainability and green campaign marketing can be optimised for consumers based on the research's information gathering techniques and analysis.

Fayad's (2022) study examines the effects of cause-related marketing (CrM) campaigns on Saudi consumers' product choices, specifically the aspects of donation amount, perceived firm level, firms' philanthropic involvement, as well as the content of the CrM message. Based on the SEM fitted with PLS, this research investigates the 293 Saudi participants' feedback on the statement. The research results imply that the size of the donations has a positive correlation with Saudi consumers' buying behaviour intentions, but the quantity of the donation does not have an impact on the intentions. Surprisingly, KSA consumers are not very considerate of the compatibility between the business's cause and its charitable contributions. Other internal and external factors, such as a company's image, the levels of corporate philanthropic contributions, and the passion and appeal used in messages, are key to changing consumer behaviour. This research thus increases understanding of Saudi consumers' psychological and social reactions to CrM campaigns since they are concerned with charitable actions and respond well to emotionally-framed appeals. It also underlines the necessity of adopting proper communication appeals in CRM campaigns to ensure the sending of the right messages that are comprehensible to Saudi consumers.

Concerning CrM, there is a similarity between Fayad (2022) and Tsai et al. (2020), whereby both works include a focus on the corporate responsibility of green marketing. Both of these studies emphasise upon the importance of ethical values in promoting positive perceptions among consumers. These perceptions are complemented by presenting Chopra et al. (2020) study by demonstrating how influencers, based on perceived transparency and the nature of consumers' values, improve these perceptions. Chopra et al. (2020) also indicate that consumers are more susceptible to the PR actions performed by influencers also, by use of cultural and ethical endorsements in the advertisements. This occurrence spans ethical

corporate behaviour that has been observed according to the research conducted by Fayad (2022) and environmental conservation as presented by Tsai et al. (2020). These findings suggest that much of PR campaigns that involve use of multimedia in appealing consumers can shift perception significantly because culture and belief forms a significant part of the consumer.

2.4. Media Channels' Role in Ensuring Success of PR Campaigns

Oluyinka (2019) pointed out about the significance of the social media in enhancing PR campaigns. The study used quantitative research method to assess the perceptions of 150 final year mass communication students practicing PR. Specifically, the study revealed that social media facilitates the enhancement of relationship between organisations and consumers through direct and real-time communication and trust. Besides, it is a flexible tool for increasing the recognition of an organisation by communicating with various audiences and employing ethical and cultural arguments. Experts recommend the inclusion of social media marketing in PR practices as it is a factor changing consumers' attitudes and impacting their buying behaviours. Therefore, for PR practitioners and managers, it is advisable to employ the digital media strategies with the view of enhancing organisational performance and the buyer's purchase motivation through culturally sensitive and ethics sensitive messages from the organisation.

Regarding PR campaigns and media channels, Mustafa & Abdallah (2020) highlighted the significance of conventional media channels like billboards, TV commercials, street posters and newspapers to influence consumers' purchase intentions in Palestine. The research engaged descriptive analytical methods and adopted inductive quantitative research methods, and questionnaires were used to sample 500 respondents in Nablus, Ramallah, and Bethlehem. The detailed findings indicated that traditional communication media such as television, radio, newspapers, and outdoor advertisements significantly affected consumers' decisions, with outdoor advertisements showing the strongest influence over the other mediums of television, radio, and newspapers, respectively. The findings of the study highlight the importance of utilising advertising mediums such as billboards and newspapers, which differ between cultures and regions, to help alter the behaviour of consumers. Thus, the study entailed the importance of advertisements in promoting PR and changing consumer intentions towards purchasing through targeted advertising incorporating ethical and cultural messaging.

Pakura & Rudeloff (2018) delved into the potential of social media platforms as factors that determine the success of PR campaigns organised by start-ups. It shows that social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram are considered highly useful by start-ups for re-establishing and enhancing the brand image factor, which is positively related to brand positioning and reputation indexes. Stressing the importance of a long-term approach to PR planning, the research shows that strategic decisions help firms ensure the stability of PR activities and their ability to maintain a positive brand image and engage audience in the long run. Moreover, culture-oriented PR becomes a strategic imperative even though it is less frequently employed in start-ups, because, it helps to build positive relations with the public and constructively respond to their conditions and expectations. Furthermore, the study proves that there are differences in PR strategies used depending on the start-up age and the stages of development, while enterprises that are younger are more likely to use social media for PR and to apply adaptive PR approaches. All in all, it offers great ideas on how different media, especially social platforms, play the role of main connectors that facilitate effective PR campaigning through identifying the right target audiences, engaging them, and generally working in harmony with the firm's growth phases. Together these studies entail that social media integrated with public emotion and cultural influence greatly impacts public purchase decisions and fosters a positive image of a brand or organisation in contemporary society.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

In order to strategically explore influence of PR campaigns on consumers' purchase decisions in Saudi Arabia, following theories act as theoretical lens in this study;

2.5.1. Social Learning Theory

According to this theory, people acquire behavioural patterns through observation, imitation, and modelling and, as well, underline the significance of social factors such as observing other people's behaviour and mimicking their actions (Whiten, 2019). In the context of PR campaigns in Saudi Arabia, this theory means that consumers are concerned with the observation of other people's reactions to particular brand messages and the endorsements of popular public figures. In order to make PR campaigns successful in Saudi Arabia or in global context, companies can utilise celebrities to attract huge audience and alter their perceptions regarding brands, and improve business growth (Alghanim, 2022). This theory makes it possible to study how observational learning from PR campaigns influences the behaviour of consumers in the Saudi market.

2.5.2. Cognitive Dissonance Theory

The theory of cognitive dissonance implies that individuals frequently tend to achieve harmony among their beliefs, actions, and attitudes which helps them in making decisions. Therefore, when there is a disturbance within these variables, they feel psychological discomfort, which impacts their decisions to purchase a product, and such dissonance can be overcome by other people's positive perceptions regarding a brand (Dilakshini & Kumar, 2020). In Saudi Arabian PR campaigns, this theory helps to guide ways via which companies can minimise the level of dissonance, impacting consumers with a message that is in full agreement with their belief system. For instance, appeals that create the impression that a certain product is relevant and reliable assist the consumer in achieving consistency between his beliefs and actions (Raza et al., 2020). According to this theory, the comprehension of how PR campaigns can eradicate the conditions of cognitive dissonance is because they ensure consumers that conforming to cultural values affects their purchasing behaviour and boosts their confidence in the company or brand.

2.5.3. Emotional Contagion Theory

Cognitive theory puts forward the idea that emotions can be transmitted from one individual to another in a manner of empathic responding (Fernandez and Zahavi, 2020). In relation to the theory in the KSA context, this theory presupposes that, for instance, such positive feelings as joy or pride, when triggered during a PR campaign, will lead to consumers' engagement or loyalty. Using emotional contagion in PR campaigns is beneficial as it can easily resonate well with the community's culture, especially if the emotions provoked are something like togetherness or patriotism (Stephens, 2022). Recognising the concept of emotional contagion helps marketers create messages and communications that appeal emotionally to consumers and build a stronger bond with the brand. This theory assists in investigating the effects of the appeal to emotion in PR advertisements within the Saudi market while stressing the importance of relating emotions to marketing success.

2.6. Research Gaps

Considering the scholarly articles reviewed, several significant research gaps can be identified in the area of public relations as well as in the area of customer behaviour. For example, Alanmi & Alharthi (2023) demonstrated that platform-based marketing displays high effectiveness, but there is still limited knowledge about how these digital strategies work across

many cultures in a number of countries in the region. Studying variations in customers' behaviour due to cultural factors could reveal important information for enhancing the targeting of public relations processes. Chopra et al. (2020) also emphasised the importance of influencers in creating consumer behaviours through perceived importance and trustworthiness. However, it is missing the aspect of how different kinds of influencers can affect the attitude of consumers. For instance, micro and macro influencers can impact consumer perception and buying behaviour differently across cultures. Finally, Mustafa & Abdallah's (2020) results on the persistent impact of television and outdoor advertising on Palestinian consumer choices show that these findings are cultural and cannot apply to Saudi Arabia. A comparative study might show how conventional and digital media fit into PR strategies. Thus, bridging these gaps allows a thorough knowledge of media moderation tactics to improve consumer engagement and campaign results across cultures.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

In this study primary qualitative research design is selected based on its relevance in thorough investigation of research subjects. While quantitative research delivers precise results and analytical findings, qualitative research delivers a comprehensive data from respondents which has more rich perspectives to offer than just quick results (Denzin & Lincoln, 2023). This strategy is appropriate in this study because it values consumer perspectives, therefore, it helps in exploring Saudi Arabian consumers' constructive insights to improve PR campaigns as they detail the factors affecting individuals' purchase decisions and attitudes (Silverman & Patterson, 2021). For this reason, the employment of detailed interviews will aid the study to develop a considerable appreciation of PR campaigns success also, how these campaigns alter customer perspectives and assist to affect purchase disposition. Therefore, the qualitative method guarantees a comprehensive investigation of the research topics, thereby enabling a better knowledge of the fundamental elements influencing customer choices.

3.2. Research Philosophy

This study used a constructivist research methodology to look at how PR efforts affected Saudi Arabian customer attitudes and purchase choices. Fosnot (2013) explains that constructivism shares the conviction that people actively create knowledge depending on their interactions with the social environment and experiences. Since this philosophy stresses the need of context in interpreting events and accepts the subjective character of reality, it is fit for qualitative research. Employing constructivist paradigm, the study aims to voice participants perceptions on PR activities and exploring its impact on consumer choices when cultural, social and personal contexts are targeted. While positivism enforces the results based on mathematical deductions derived by logic and reasoning, constructivism utilises speakers' knowledge to consolidate the findings (Periera, 2019). Thus, positivism is best suited in quantitative studies, and since current research is qualitative, constructivism lets investigators enhance analysis by deeply exploring realities and viewpoints. This constructivism philosophy is deeply engrained with principles and requirements of this research on consumer behaviour moulded by public relations campaigns, allowing for a deeper analysis using consumers' perceptions. Constructivism proves to be useful in identifying the interdependences between the Saudi Arabian people and the PR messages as it embraces the subjectivity into the consumers' actions and opinions. Stressing the dynamic and constructive nature of customers' responses to marketing communications, this

philosophical approach allows investigators to get a better glimpse at how PR initiatives influence the consumer perceptions and decisions (Fosnot, 2013).

3.3. Data Collection

In this research, qualitative design was followed and therefor, semi-structured interviews were conducted using open-ended questions to allow participants offer rich perspectives. The primary data was collected by recruiting 8 consumers from Saudi Arabia markets, questioning them upon effectiveness of PR campaigns as well as the factors that make them successful. This strategy helped in getting more specific information from the participants since general questions offered deeper insights into the effects of PR campaigns on consumers' purchasing decisions. Using purposive sampling, eight people were considered important for the study due to their consumers' experience, and to ensure diversity, consumers from both genders (male and female) were included. The study involved a detailed analysis of the participants' experiences, there was a conscious effort to consider the participants since purposive sampling was employed to find the people best positioned to collect useful information (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 118).

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were adopted using open-ended questions that allowed the interviewer to wander off from a somewhat fixed course but did not let the interview go off track entirely because some general questions pertaining to PR campaigns, consumers' perceptions, and buying behaviors were asked and answered (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, pp. 109). This approach sought to produce qualitative information that would not be acquirable through quantitative research in order to hear the participants' opinions, feelings, and physical views. Therefore, this method was used to gain insights into the preceding motivations and factors compelling consumer behaviors towards PR campaigns, with the aim of capturing the complexity of the consumer-brand relationship in Saudi Arabia as identified in the study's goal.

The strategy used in this study in identifying the participants was purposive sampling since it focused on selecting volunteers who would be of benefit in their contribution to the study concerning PR campaigns. Palinkas et al. (2015) explains that purposive sampling method is better suited than convenience sampling in qualitative research, because, the participants using purposive sampling justify the objectives of the study and are recruited directly in line with study's purpose. This methodological decision was intended to increase the degree of explorativeness and depth of the collected data and allow for a profounder comprehension of Saudi consumers' perceptions of the effect that PR campaigns have on

their purchasing decisions. Eight participants were enrolled in the study and given that the study sought to provide detailed analysis, the small sample size is desirable (Palinkas et al., 2015). The selection criteria were aimed at including participants from various age groups, male and female, different economic statuses, and consumers who differ in their consumption patterns, so as to capture more divergent views.

3.4. Data Analysis

In this work, thematic analysis was adopted as the general approach to the analysis of the qualitative data that were generated from the 8 participants' semi-structured interviews. As both a qualitative and systematic form of analysis, TA is effective for discovering and describing patterns of various sorts, including those within data, which apply well to investigating such multifaceted aspects as consumers' perceptions of PR campaigns. This approach involves several iterative steps: Miles' and Hubberman's four phases of analysis include data familiarisation, the development of initial codes, identifying themes and reviewing the themes with the aim of defining and naming them, and finally producing the results (Terry et al., 2019). Thematic analysis was considered for its capacity to provide a rich qualitative description and understanding of participants' accounts and thus suitably facilitate the investigation of cultural changes that PR campaigns affect in Saudi Arabia. Using repeated patterns and meanings as well as categories of data as the referencing framework in coding and categorising data, thematic analysis ensured the identification of main themes on the effects of PR campaigns on consumers' perceptions and purchase intentions. This selection of the methodological approach was based on the nature of the data collected as well as the focus of the investigation, which was to describe differences in personal experiences; however, credibility, dependability, transferability, and trustworthiness remained a priority in the analysis of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

3.5. Ethical Considerations

In this study, informed consent, confidentiality, non-maleficence, and data protection laws were ensured during investigative procedures using Arellano et al. (2023) guide to ethical considerations in research. Participants were asked to provide their consent for this study, which included the details of the study's aims and activities as well as its possible risks. The respondents were informed that they would not be identified in the study, and any data gathered at the study site would be reported in general and not linked to individuals. Moreover, ethical standards were observed to prevent force or pressure in executing recruitment or collecting data. The research conformed to beneficence, non-maleficence, and

justice and attempted to cause the least harm while helping participants in this study (Liamputtong, 2019). Further, data handling, particularly collection and storage, was done in a very proper manner to protect the identities of participants and, more importantly, meet the requirements of data protection laws (Bryman, 2016). These ethical practices highlighted the aim of carrying out research in a proper and ethical manner, which in turn increases the credibility of the study results.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this research, thematic analysis has been used to provide a thorough examination grounded on participant replies. Themes in this research have been developed in line with the objectives of the study and are investigated in great length below;

4.1. Impact of PR Campaigns on Consumer Attitudes

During the interview, participants were asked to reflect upon their experiences concerning PR campaigns' role in influencing their attitudes towards a brand, upon which participant 1 responded;

“I think PR campaigns are very important in shaping my desire to purchase a product, you can say, it gives me a sensation of fulfillment. I believe a brand can build my interest by giving me a product that I like to use, for which they have to target me with my cultural values and needs. Have you heard of Dove Real Beauty campaign? that is what I am saying, that is a proper use of campaign to attract audience don't you see? they killed racism there, impacted people with diversity and reduced my anxiety of being black or white. You are just beautiful the way you are! that is how it should be done.”

Participant 5 responded slightly different to the questions,

“Public relations campaigns are very successful I believe, only when the marketers know what they are doing. Like, you will not buy from a campaign that doesn't reflect your needs, right? now, if you look at “Dream Crazy” campaign by Nike, why wouldn't any body want their dreams to come true. I wanna lose some pounds that's for sure, so that is my dream, they are targeting me with motivation do you get me? Yes. That is how you use it, PR is a great weapon once people know exactly what they use it for”

Participant 1 pointed out the fact that PR campaigns shape consumers' wants, noting that the fulfillment of a particular need results from a positive response to the cultural deployment of the campaign if it is associated with a particular societal issue. They used the Dove campaign, which is popular for its Real Beauty campaign, to demonstrate how campaigns

against racism facilitate and encourage the promotion of diversity among the audience and positively shape their perception of a particular brand. In this respect, the claims reflect the Emotional Contagion Theory, which postulates that emotional messages trigger empathic outcomes that in turn have an impact on consumers' attitudes. Participant 5 was of the same opinion as Participant 4, affirming that good PR campaigns tend to ring a bell whenever the latter correlates with one's needs and goals in life, as it was Nike's 'Dream Crazy' campaign that motivated a person to achieve something in his or her life. This can be explained by the social learning theory, through which consumers learn to imitate behaviors featured in campaigns that are in line with their needs and preferred standards. Saudi firms can use such revelations to design PR campaigns that resonate well with cultural values and/or the dreams of the people in a particular society by appealing to their emotions when interacting with branded messages.

4.2. PR Campaigns Influencing Consumers' Purchase Decisions

As questions were asked to participants regarding pr campaigns' influencing their purchase choices, all of them offered similar perspective, below is participant 4's response as it covers most of the details;

"PR campaigns influence everybody, I cannot find any one that doesn't feel impacted. You can see examples of Apple, Samsung, TESLA. These companies make you buy by making stuff desirable, like I will buy iPhone or Note Series because it fits me being shown as a wealthy person in society. TESLA is extremely comfortable ride, also its ecofriendly, so yes same principle is applied there too. Personally, I would say that ease of purchase, installments, and inclusion of novel features captivate me the most when it comes to cars and technology."

Upon questioning direct impacts of PR campaigns, participant 3 responded in detail;

"My purchasing depends on a brand's Unique Selling point, and therefore I prefer Tesla. Tesla is a symbol of sustainability, comfort and innovation, what more can a person want from a car? it gives you a comfortable ride, you don't need to refill it after few kilometers, and when supercar blondie explained its sustainability benefits, I was stunned, as it has a lot more to offer apart from its lavish design"

These views about the role of PR campaigns in consumer buying behavior have established the important function of public relations in consumers purchase decisions. Participant 4 gives examples of Apple, Samsung, and Tesla. As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, the PR campaigns build up informational and psychological demands and

compel people to buy things they might not necessarily need. This corresponds with Cognitive Dissonance Theory, as consumers' behavior and perception regarding products are attached to their beliefs, culture, and ethics. Through aspects such as sustainable development, novel trends, and societal benefits, companies target individuals to buy their products, as seen in the example of TESLA illustrated by participant 3. This marketing tactic also shows that PR campaigns not only educate but also influence consumers' decisions in terms of eco-friendliness, also, use of influencers is essential for the success of these campaigns as "supercar blondie" has been illuminated by participant's response. The results support the values of PR in creating the image and association of products and, therefore, making emotional bonds with consumers. From the examples given by these respondents, PR campaigns place trade products as assets to be desired and as trends that change consumers' perceptions and buying behaviors.

4.3. Effectiveness of Traditional and Digital Media Channels in PR Campaigns

Investigating participants upon efficacy of media channels gave insights upon which medium is most preferred. Since, participants 2, and 8 responses were most detailed, therefore, these are shared below;

"From what I observed, digital media is the most effective in persuading viewers. I have always noticed that, other than me brother and younger sister, my friends and everyone else I know, donot really pay attention to TV advertisements these days. They pay attention to digital media advertisements since, since we use YouTube, we may skip the adverts after a brief period of time and watch the majority of the advertisement there. I will purchase a product if it aligns with my values, beliefs, and needs. In addition, Instagram advertisements grab my attention the most. I believe that my friends who follow a few influencers find inspiration from them, and certainly, when PR campaigns focus on culture and ethics. Like I will buy a brand that condemns murders in Palestine, I will most likely buy it, because my money is not going to waste there"

Participant 8 responded;

"I love posters alright! because, I am a working woman and I don't have much time to scroll ads on my phone. Billboards, street marketing, and public messages on TV where most brands add their logos, I am in to all this style. So yes, I am more of a conventional marketing person, I don't like or prefer digital marketing ads and for me, its sort of an ethical, cultural and an emotional connection to things, which are elevated by PR campaigns I suppose"

Participant 2's choice of digital media channels supports Social Learning Theory, which suggests that people replicate specific behaviors they witness others performing and recommending, such as watching videos on YouTube or posting on Instagram. This underlines the need for Saudi firms to use PR campaigns with specific references to cultural values as well as ethical issues when presenting their messages on digital media, hence appealing to the target tech-savvy consumers. On the other hand, Participant 8's preference for billboards and TV advertisements can be seen to match emotional and cultural switches where one endorses what the other disapproves, supported by the theory of contagion of emotions, where one's emotions rub off on the other. For Saudi firms, this implies the necessity of including emotional appeal and culturally meaningful messages within the frameworks of the media and addressing the target audiences that value authenticity and the definitions of the community. Thus, by integrating the possibilities of digital and traditional media, Saudi firms can increase the number of consumers and improve the reception of their PR campaigns by targeting niches and resonating with the maximum number of potential audiences.

4.4. Cultural and Emotional Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior

When participants were asked to convey their perceptions upon cultural and emotional factors influencing their purchase decisions, participant 7 responded;

“As PR campaigns on digital media more easily accessible and provoke involvement among technology users like me, I watch them and gain my inspiration to buy from them. I like Youtube and Instagram platforms and often buy from these click-to-buy ads, and I don't like to buy things which are trending on TikTok, as it is one of my most hated social media platform. I depend upon my college friends to guide me when shopping, because they know where I can get what I want, like last month I went to Levi' for shopping because I only like regular jeans. So, it is a mix of ethical values, culture, word of mouth and a bit of YouTube that impact me in PR campaigns.”

Participant 6 also responded uniquely; therefore, it is included below;

“I react emotionally to PR campaigns, like if you had seen the P&G 'Thank You Mom' commercial, which ran throughout the sports season, it just touched a lot of my emotions. They deeply explained the importance of moms in the lives of young children, and therefore, I search for P&G products in the super market and buy mostly these because I have faith in them. I feel like those who know moms' worth will never make anything bad for my children's health”

Participant 7's perception of targeted media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram demonstrate their importance in engaging consumers in PR campaigns. This preference also proves today's realities of social media networks, as they greatly influence young consumers' perceptions or buying behaviors. The consumer beliefs and culture shaping peers' recommendations, as well as the participant's avoiding trends that are popular on TikTok, show how cultural values and ethical considerations influence their consumer decisions. Hence, cultural beliefs should be targeted for the PR campaign to be successful, also, a company should research upon which platform and celebrity is famous in the targeted nation prior to utilise PR campaigns in marketing. Furthermore, the research findings from Participant 6 on the P&G 'Thank You Mom' campaign show how emotional PR strategies trigger demographics' emotions and cultural values, which is consistent with the postulates of the theory of emotional contagion. Both of these responses expand on the part that states that it is crucial to include such aspects as emotions, cultural values, and ethical values due to their influence on consumers' attitudes toward a specific brand in the PR campaigns. These concepts bring out the need for PR practitioners to develop campaigns that appeal to the cultural aspects of consumers' self-identities and their emotions to control their purchases.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Interpretation of Findings

The results of this research offer the following insights regarding the role of public relations (PR) campaigns in affecting consumer perception and behaviour in Saudi Arabia. The impression gained from the opinion of the participants is that properly coordinated PR activities result in changes in attitude and consumerism patterns. Firstly, PR campaigns have a huge say in changing the attitude of consumers towards various brands. As mentioned by Participant 1, advertisement campaigns such as 'Real Beauty' by Dove touch and influence society through campaigns based on social issues such as the inclusion of all women which in turn make them affect consumers. This supports Franzak et al. (2014) works that attach importance to PR in establishing emotional strategies to increase brand attractiveness among customers. Nike's Dream Crazy campaign mentioned by Participant 5 proves the effectiveness of motivational messages in PR to appeal to consumer needs and desires, which aligns with the findings of the current study supporting the role of inspirational stories in marketing.

Secondly, PR campaigns have a significant impact on affective factors and decisions made when purchasing products. Concerning the factors that influence buying decisions, participants recorded that campaigns that articulate unique selling points (USPs) and reflect personal values are key to influencing their purchase decisions. For example, Participant 4 and Participant 3 mentioned that they liked Tesla's PR appealing to sustainability and innovation which they deem important to their lifestyle. Other similar primary findings have been revealed by Panda et al. (2020), who observed that consumer loyalty increases when brands meet consumers' ethical and environmental standards. The media channel effectiveness also came out as another mediating factor. Over traditional means of communication, participants chose digital media for the reception of PR messages because it provides more interesting and individual content. As noted in the discussion by Participant 2, there has been increased incorporation of advertisements on YouTube and Instagram, which coincides with the trend identified in the literature by Varghese et al. (2021) that social media is becoming more influential in consumer behaviour.

However, there was also the understanding of traditional media, as seen in the statement by Participant 8 who preferred billboards and TV because they presented trustworthy and appealing emotions. This is in agreement with Komodromos's (2016) assertion that while PR has embraced the digital age and media, traditional media is a valuable tool in the resource of a public relations practitioner. Individualities of culture and emotions play an important role in

Saudi Arabia's consumers' behaviour. Hence, in this regard, participants underscored the informational aspects of PR campaigns and the applicability of culture-sensitive appeals that triggered an emotional response from the target audience. It is important to notice, how, for instance, Participant no 6 got emotionally involved in P&G's advertising campaign "Thank You Mom." This is in agreement with Choudhury (2019), who noted the significance of appealing to cultural reference points and appealing to people's emotions in PR messages for brand consumers' trust and loyalty.

Therefore, from this current study's findings, it is analysed that PR campaigns should be sufficiently conceived so that they address the perimeters of consumer values, media choice and cultural and emotional appeals to change consumer attitudes and actual buying behaviour within the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

5.2. Implications for Theory and Practice

It is important to note that there are significant empirical, theoretical, and practical consequences associated with the findings of the research. Consequently, this study provides theoretical support to the existing models on the impact of PR campaigns on consumers' behaviour, concerning the cultural and environmental context of KSA. In terms of the theoretical framework, the work supports the hypotheses on the significance of emotional and cultural appeal in PR campaigns. The results support the uses and gratifications theory stating that consumers purposefully engage in using specific types of media. The responses given by the participants confirm that PR campaigns which capture cultural values and appeal to the emotions of the targeted consumers are likely to change the consumers' perceptions and facilitate their decision-making. This aligns with the arguments of Brennen (2021) to the extent that they affirm that small details cannot be appreciated without the use of qualitative research to comprehend how media affects consumer behaviour.

In terms of practical implications, the study provides several important pieces of advice that might be useful for PR practitioners seeking to develop efficient campaigns in Saudi Arabia. First of all, cultural intelligence should be the primary step and the focus of PR specialists to cover the main aspects of the targeted audience (Smith, 2020). Campaigns with these ethical values will be more effective. For instance, popular campaigns such as Dove's "Real Beauty" campaign and P&G's "Thank You Mom" appealed to society because the former reflects social problems faced in society and the latter, appreciates culture. Secondly, it emerges that marketing must use multiple channels which are not necessarily limited to media, to communicate with consumers.

Even though the role of digital media is of immense importance to some extent, traditional media retains its importance as well for a specific group of communities. It means that PR professionals should implement the advantages of digital and traditional media to affect a maximum number of people. Concerning the emerging market, it is apparent that engagement through digital media YouTube and Instagram should be accompanied by engagement through conventional media like Television and billboards especially where the aim is to trigger emotional and cultural appeal (Rietveld et al., 2020). Further, the study emphasises the actuality of ethical standards as a critical factor in PR campaigns. Consumers tend to prefer brands that are not only truthful but also possess high levels of ethical value. This is more relevant in the Saudi Arabia culture where religious and local users' preferences matter much in consumption patterns.

PR professionals should thus ensure that their campaigns not only sell their products but also pass the message of integrity and social responsibility. Thus, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the present research stress the relevance of cultural sensitivity when dealing with PR in Saudi Arabia and the utilisation of multiple PR channels. Thus, by recognising the distinct features of Saudi consumers' values and one's preferences, PR specialists can develop campaigns that would cause specific shifts in buyers' mindsets.

5.3. Contextual Considerations

The Saudi Arabian market is characterised by certain contextual factors that affect the impact of PR campaigns to a considerable extent. Such considerations pertain to the culture, society and economics of the public an indication that different aspects of their lifestyles will be influenced differently. As a culture, Saudi Arabia has a distinct and established culture and tradition that goes a long way in influencing the consumers' behaviour. Therefore, the result of this analysis indicates that PR campaigns should reflect the cultural orientations of the society. For instance, the response of Participant 6 to P&G's "Thank You Mom" campaign demonstrates the emotional response that culture-sensitive narratives generate. In support of this assertion, Abdul (2015) noted that campaigns associated with cultural beliefs are likely to be effective in culturally conservative markets such as Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia, the culture of the family and the community plays a critical role in the lives of Saudi citizens.

According to Participant 7, word of mouth and advice received from other people is essential for deciding on a purchase. This supports the social influence theory that necessarily states that people have a high tendency to be influenced by the people closest to them (Oc et al., 2013). The PR campaigns that are connected with social proof and other people's approval,

including endorsements by other people and celebrities, would have a higher level of effectiveness in most cases. Economically, it is seen that the population's buying capability and consumption pattern in Saudi Arabia are affected by this nation's economy and its government rules and regulations. In line with Vision 2030 focuses on the diversification of the economy through creating new sources of revenues other than oil such as consumer spending and the middle-income population has grown. This type of economic change affects PR campaigns because brands are expected to align their images with the nation's vision and support economic renewal.

Therefore, some aspects of the cultural and social environment of Saudi Arabia may be more beneficial for PR campaigns than others, so they should be taken into consideration by companies. Awareness of these contextual factors is therefore central to the development of contextually appropriate and impactful PR campaigns.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1. Summary of Key Findings

To this end, the present study aimed to examine the role of PR campaigns in modifying consumers' perceptions and thus their consumption behaviours in Saudi Arabia. The study employed qualitative research methods, particularly interviews and yielded several findings providing insights into PR influence on consumer behaviour. First of all, it is imperative to state that PR campaigns affect the buyers' attitude toward brands most noticeably. Potential regional campaigns mentioned by the participants included campaigns that are culturally sensitive and tap into existing social causes, like Dove's "Real Beauty" and Nike's "Dream Crazy" campaigns as they appeal to societal causes, make an emotional connection with their target markets, leading to improving the brand perception and customer loyalty. Secondly, PR campaigns are very important when it comes to the purchase decision. Regarding communications, respondents were asked what influences them in the ease and decision to purchase products, they noted that the USP's campaigns and those that reflect their values are essential factors that affect reactions.

Some of the brands that were mentioned continuously include Tesla and Apple due to the excellent PR strategies that they have embraced in their operations through the use of innovation, sustainability, and luxury products, which are noble values to Saudi consumers. Thirdly, the efficiency of media channels is not equal, however, several participants commented on their love for digital media. The informal setting of the information on preferred platforms like YouTube and Instagram was highly appreciated. Yet, such types of advertising as TV or billboards are still useful for targeting particular segments of people, who care about the emotions and cultural values which such media can evoke. Furthermore, culture and emotions influence the consumers in Saudi Arabia in the manner in which they act in the market. Cultural sensitivity and appeal to emotions are particularly effective means of changing consumers' attitudes and decisions concerning the products. Another factor that was highlighted was the role of authenticity and ethicality in PR campaigns since people are willing to pay more for products and engage more with companies that display high levels of corporate integrity and responsibility.

In summary, the insights presented in this paper therefore call for culturally sensitive, integrated communication strategies that reflect consumers' beliefs and perceiving modes. By analysing digital and traditional media characteristics concerning the Saudi population and

their needs, brands can successfully appeal to consumers by establishing trust within ethical boundaries.

6.2. Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations, which must be taken into consideration. Firstly, the fact that the study employs a qualitative research approach was beneficial in that it offered very rich data but at the same time, the study lacks external validity. Thirdly, emphasis on PR initiatives in certain fields of activity (technology, automotive) may not fully reveal PR efficiency indicators. Last, but not least, it is recognised that consumer behaviour and media choice in KSA can change over a period as the technological environment emerges rapidly, and thus, it may be that the implications deduced from this analysis may not remain constant. It is, therefore, important that future research recognises these limitations and seeks to employ a large sample size with participants from a diverse set of organisations while incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data.

6.3. Implications for Future Directions

Based on the observations of the presented study, several directions for further research can be outlined. First, a quantitative approach with more participants involved in this study could produce results that are more likely to be generalised, as well as support the results of this qualitative study. Secondly, extending research on PR campaigns over various sectors would provide clearer and more versatile insights into the strategies specific to sectors and the level of effectiveness of the particular campaign. Moreover, further research can explore how such PR campaigns affect the consumers' behaviour and the loyalty they have to a certain brand in the long run which would give the notion of the sustainability of PR strategies. The application of newer forms of social media and digital technologies including the application of AR and VR in PR campaigns is another area of further research because of the dynamic nature of the digital world. Last but not least, future research could involve cross-cultural comparison of PR campaigns that have been conducted in the Saudi Arabian context with other Saudi Arabian Cultural contexts as well as with other cultural contexts to identify similarities and differences in PR campaigns.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Theme	Question
Impact of PR Campaigns on Consumer Attitudes	
	How do you perceive the role of public relations campaigns in shaping your attitude towards a brand?
	Can you provide an example of a PR campaign that significantly changed your view of a company or product?
PR Campaigns Influencing Consumers' Purchase Decisions	
	Can you describe a situation where a PR campaign directly influenced your decision to purchase a product or service?
	What specific aspects of a PR campaign (e.g., message, delivery method, spokesperson) most impact your purchasing decisions?
Effectiveness of Traditional and Digital Media Channels in PR Campaigns	
	In your experience, how do traditional media channels (e.g., TV, radio, newspapers) compare to digital media channels (e.g., social media, websites) in influencing purchasing decisions of you, your friends or family?
	Can you share an instance where traditional media (e.g., TV, radio) influenced your purchase, and was it based on ethical or moral obligations?
	What media channels do you trust the most for receiving PR messages and why?
Cultural and Emotional Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior	
	How do cultural values and beliefs impact your reaction to PR campaigns?
	Can you give an example of a PR campaign that resonated with you emotionally and influenced your buying behavior?
	What role does authenticity and ethical behavior play in your perception of a brand through its PR campaigns?

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