School of Design and Art

Quality in Saudi advertising design

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature……………………………………………………………..

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Abstract

This research investigates reasons for differences in quality between advertisements created by local and international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia. It focuses on the investment in, and use of, computer technology as a factor in creating these differences, along with other factors such as work practices, skills, organizational structure, education and design strategies.

The objectives of this research are to identify the causes of differences in quality of advertising design outputs between local agencies and international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia; to compare the advertising design processes, practices, resources and difficulties of local and international advertising agencies; and to identify strategies that may improve the quality of local advertising design.

The research uses a multi-method approach, using both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect data from 223 professionals working in the field of advertising design in four major cities in Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam and Khamis Mushait). Participants were selected to provide a balance between local and international advertising agencies. These data confirm that advertisements created by local advertising agencies are commonly considered lower in quality than those of international agencies; it also quantifies participants' understanding of the reasons for the differences. These reasons, rarely operating alone, include the skill of local staff in using modern computer technology and design software; weaknesses in professional processes and business structures; insufficient design education and training of local designers; limited investment of financial resources in local agencies in terms of technology, management and employment; low investment in novel ideas and concepts; and over-involvement of clients in creative processes.

Several strategies and policies to improve the quality and strength of the local advertising industry are identified. In particular, improve the take up and use high performance computer hardware and appropriate professional design software in the field of local advertising; this research also identifies the

importance of improving Saudi design education and training, with particular note made of the lack of training in this field for males in Saudi universities. Local Saudi media have a significant role to play in helping to improve visual cultural awareness in Saudi Arabian society. This research offers insights and suggestions that will have positive benefits for local advertising agencies and their clients.

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Chapter 1/ Introduction

Saudi Arabia has experienced two economic booms in the past fifty years, both influenced by rapidly increasing oil prices (Soraya, 2007). The first was at the beginning of 1970; the second, more recent, began in 2002 when the oil price rose dramatically to historically high levels (Alkwari, 2009). The resulting economic development affected many fields in the country, and the advertising industry was one of those (Orham & Secil, 1998). The advertising market underwent great expansion, to reach about $one billion US (3,7 billion Saudi Riyals) during 2006 (Alaboad, 2007). In 2008 the Saudi advertising market was estimated to be worth approximately $1.2 billion US (4.5 billion Saudi Riyals) (Alziaadi, 2010, p. 12). Saudi advertising became one of the largest, and fastest growing, advertising markets in Arab countries and the Middle East (Jaber, 2008). The volume of Saudi advertising has increased even more since 2008 because of massive new projects across the country. These include the establishment of many new universities (with the King Abdulla University of Science and Technology, KAUST, being the biggest), the King Abdulla Economic City covering 186 sq. km, other economic cities, and hundreds of other major projects throughout the country (Ministry of Planning, 2010). These projects use advertising campaigns as part of their development processes, leading to increased demand for advertising.

In response to the rising demand for advertising in Saudi Arabia, international advertising agencies began to enter the Saudi market in 1970s (Alyusuf, 1989). Nowadays, there are about 12,000 advertising agencies competing in the Saudi market both local and international agencies (Ashiwan, 2010). Although most are local, the international agencies dominate because they have global experience in advertising design and use the latest computer technology to create their advertising (Alaboad, 2007).

Computer technology plays a key role in modern advertising design, for its advanced features permit designers to deliver advertising messages in a fast, simple way (Whale, 2002, p. 65). Computer technology has triggered a

revolution in the output and results of design (Dennis, 2008). Professional advertising agencies compete for clients, and strive to produce the best designs and satisfy their clients. They are very keen to train their personnel in modern computer technology, and provide them with the latest design software. The function of computer technology in advertising design can be seen by the generally effective designs created by international agencies (Alhamaad, personal communication, February 10, 2009). On the other hand, it is common for local agencies to pay less attention to computer technology, and to create advertisements without regard to the latest computer programs or using software designed for relevant tasks (Indijani, 2007). This is reflected in local Saudi advertising design, which is of lower quality and less effective than international advertising design (Orham & Secil, 1998). Nevertheless there is intense competition among advertisers, and a huge number of advertisements displayed almost everywhere (Alaboad, 2007).

Research Problem

The problem this research investigates and seeks strategies to resolve is the apparent significant difference in quality of design output between local advertising agencies and international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia. This difference in quality has resulted in local Saudi Arabian advertising businesses becoming less profitable, while their employees are confined to working on low-budget, 'bread and butter' assignments using suboptimal technology, while international companies with employees from other countries deal in high-tech, cutting-edge concepts and design materials. This research focuses on identifying the factors that create this anomaly, and identifying potential solutions and strategies for improvement.

Advertising design in Saudi Arabia is created by three distinct commercial groups: local Saudi Arabian advertising agencies; international agencies, both operating within Saudi Arabia; and, less commonly, foreign agencies operating outside Saudi Arabia.

This research focuses on the visual design of advertising, and on printed advertisements in particular. Visual design is one of the most important elements determining the success or failure of an advertisement. Viewers and consumers are attracted first by the visual design of advertising and then by the way the messages are delivered persuasively (Dupont, 1999).

The visual form of commercial advertising is a challenge to all designers and advertisers, local and international, because Saudi society is generally considered a conservative society (Alyusuf, 1989). The country's regulations and legislation require that published formal advertising has to be compatible with the beliefs, culture and values of Saudi society (Luqmani et al., 1989). Designers need good skills and good tools to help express their ideas. Computers are a key tool in helping designers achieve the best possible advertising design in this context because of the benefits and efficiencies they offer.

Awareness of the differences in quality of output in the Saudi advertising world, especially in the print media, is clearly widespread amongst commentators.

Observations about the lower quality of local Saudi advertising design are found from many sources:

- The President of the Commercial Advertising Department in the Chamber of Commerce in Saudi Arabia stated in 2007 the Saudi market was dominated by international agencies creating advertisements of high quality compared with those created by local agencies (Alaboad, 2007).
- There are currently only a small proportion of Saudi advertising designers working in the area of advertising design in Saudi Arabia, and they appear to lack the experience and skill to compete with foreign designers (Orham & Secil, 1998).
- After reviewing more than 500 advertisements created by local agencies in Saudi Arabia in preparation for this research, the researcher found it is identically obvious they are less attractive compared to global

advertising designs, or to advertisements created by international agencies operating in Saudi Arabia.

- In the Saudi Adverting world specialists can observer significant differences in quality (Alaboad, 2007).

- Some local advertising agencies are aware of the low level of designs produced by their designers (Orham & Secil, 1998).

- Professional designers' observations: designers working in the field – whom the researcher met – recognise the low quality of many local Saudi advertising designs.

- Through the researcher's experience in Saudi advertising and also through field visits, obvious differences between the quality of local and international advertising design are clearly noticeable. There is a gap in quality between adverts of high quality in terms of visual design, concept and attraction, and those of low quality (Sami, personal communication, January 16, 2009). When tracking the sources of some of those advertisements, a clear pattern emerges: most of the powerful and effective advertisements are created by international agencies.

- Most of the lower quality advertisements are the work of local agencies (Alhamaad, personal communication, February 10, 2009). They advertising outcomes of local advertising agencies appear appear in general weaker, less powerful, and less effective.

The quality of advertising design depends upon innovative advertising ideas and the skills, practices and resources of the advertising designers employed to create the advertisements (Almarwai & Jayahree, 2010). The observations above indicate there are distinct differences between the quality of advertising designers working in local and in international advertising agencies. This research investigates these differences in advertising design practices and considers how they might be improved.

Contemporary best practice in graphic design and advertising design processes is now highly dependent on the skilled use of computers, the Internet and specialised software (O'Barr, 2005).

The use of computers improves creativity and quality of outcomes, primarily by improving design processes; this gives those advertising organisations that use computers a competitive edge. Advertising agencies that use computers effectively gain commercial and creativity and quality advantages. For a fixed-price advertising project, this can be vital: the use of computers reduces costs in many parts of the design process, enabling savings in time and resources that can be redirected to creative thinking and development, improved quality of production, improved creative resources for the future, and increased salaries and profits. Whilst high-quality advertising design may be achieved without the use of computers, this computerless path appears to be available only to high-status advertising agencies with high spending clients or, at the lower end of the advertising market, to 'budget' agencies where low costs from low levels of investment in computing can provide a slight financial competitive advantage for jobs in which the required quality is low and competitive pricing is crucial to obtaining contracts.

One of the more obvious potential reasons for lower quality of advertising design outputs from local advertising agencies is lack of familiarity with, and use of computers by, designers in local advertising agencies. This role of computers in quality advertising along with other factors is explored in this research.

In summary, the research focuses on identifying the breadth and significance of the reasons for different quality of advertisements produced by agencies from the three different advertising industry groups local Saudi Arabian advertising agencies and international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia, and international agencies based outside the country. The central purpose is to identify factors and strategies to improve the quality of advertising design outputs from the local industry and support the economic growth of this sector.

The research focuses on:

- Identifying causes of the disparities in quality between advertising designs created by local Saudi Arabian agencies and those of international agencies.
- Identifying the types of sources used by designers from local and international agencies when creating designs.
- Identifying the range of design processes used by local and international agencies.
- Identifying the relative balance of use of the most common graphic design software programs by local and international agencies.
- Identifying difficulties facing advertising designers in local and international agencies and identifying strategies to overcome them.
- Identifying the influence of education and training on local advertising design.

Research Questions

The two questions that have guided this research are:

What are the reasons for the lower quality of local Saudi advertising design?

How can Saudi advertising design be improved?

Research Objectives

The above two questions led to the research focusing on acheiving four objectives:

- The identification of the reasons for the low quality of advertisements created by local Saudi advertising agencies.
- The comparison of differences in processes, practices and resources of local and international agencies working in Saudi advertising design to determine deficiencies in local practices.

- The identification of improvements that could be made to local advertising design activity, and their potential benefits for Saudi advertising design.

- The identification of changes to the supply of education, training and resources of advertising designers that would improve the quality of local advertising design in Saudi Arabia and the of the future Saudi advertising design sector.

Research Significance

As described earlier, the Saudi market is one of the largest and fastest-growing markets in the Middle East and Arab countries in terms of the volume of commercial advertising (Jaber, 2008). This growth has not been accompanied by a parallel increase in the levels of research into and theory about Saudi advertising design (Zeyad, 2004), particularly, in terms of its role in the local industry and its development. The preliminary preparations for this research revealed a scarcity of information directly related to Saudi advertising design practices and development, both for local and international agencies in the country.

Local Saudi advertising designs appear less powerful, less effective and of lower quality than those of international agencies. The reasons for the lower quality of the local Saudi Arabian advertising industry are unclear, and it appears that no previous research has addressed this issue.

The term 'quality', though common and, apparently, widely understood, is not unproblematic. There are many ways in which the term 'quality' is conceived that might apply to this research context. The use of the term 'quality' in this research focuses on the judgement of professionals:

'Quality' is a measure of worth based on the judgment of professional advertising designers about each other's work and its likely outcomes'

A more detailed discussion of differing perspectives and conceptualization of the idea of 'quality' is found in Chapters 2 and 3.

Contributions to Knowledge

This research has contributed to new knowledge relating to Saudi advertising design in the following ways:

- Confirmation by advertising professionals from local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia in Saudi Arabia of generically lower quality of outputs of local Saudi advertising agencies compared to international agencies operating in Saudi Arabia.
- Identification of the main reasons for the relatively lower quality of advertisements created by local Saudi advertising agencies to date.
- Increased understanding of the roles played by computer technology in Saudi advertising design both for local and international businesses.
- Identification of key difficulties facing the development of local Saudi advertising designers and agencies, and some strategies for overcoming them.
- Adding to the body of research about Saudi advertising design activities and industry development.
- Identification of specific challenges facing local Saudi Arabian advertising designers, and tentative identification of strategies to overcome them.
- Increased understanding of gender-specific aspects of Saudi Arabian secondary and tertiary education and its impact on the development of the local advertising design industry.
- Identification of specific roles and benefits of training centres in the field of advertising design, and educational changes that will help improve outcomes for the local Saudi Arabian advertising design industry.

Definition of Key Terms

Local advertising agencies: local Saudi advertising agencies or companies located and owned in Saudi Arabia.

Local Saudi advertising design: advertising design undertaken by local agencies/companies

International advertising agencies: international and multinational advertising agencies and companies operating in Saudi Arabia and owned overseas.

International advertising design: advertising design undertaken by foreign, international and multinational advertising agencies and companies operating in Saudi Arabia

Advertising design: design for print advertising that includes graphic design and images.

Local participants: research participants who were surveyed and interviewed drawn from professionals working in local Saudi advertising agencies.

International participants: research participants who were surveyed and interviewed drawn from professionals working in international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia.

Impact of computers on advertising: the effects of using computer technology in creating and producing advertisements. These effects include resolution of colours, clarity of design elements such as lines, shapers and images, accuracy of design elements, which are important for small details, and the positioning of Arabic words. The formation of Arabic letters follows specific rules that require accurate copying devices or the work of a professional calligrapher. The impact of computers also includes the effect of computers in the larger processes of creating and producing advertising. Does computer technology conserve designers' time? Does computer technology cost less traditional methods of production? Does computer technology facilitate the advertising process?

Quality of advertising: the research relies on a simple and general meaning of quality which is based on the level of satisfaction experienced by the advertisement's viewer. The focus of the term 'quality of advertising' used in the research has two aspects: visual design, and the idea of the advertisement. Visual design includes the general principles and elements of design. The idea of an advertisement is the conceptual narrative that underpins its rhetoric effectiveness as an advertisement as judged by its originality, and links with the visual design to attract and positively affect viewers. In other words, quality is a judgement of the advertisement's fit with its purpose. Quality will be discussed in a detail in Chapter 2.

Background Context: Saudi Arabia, the Land and People,

Saudi Arabia, known as 'The Kingdom', is located at a geopolitically strategic intersection of the Middle East, Africa and Asia. It is connected to and separated from Africa by the Red Sea. It connects to Asia through its land to the north, and across the Arabian Gulf to the east. Saudi Arabia is large in area. It has a land area of about 2,150,000 square kilometers: equivalent to a quarter of the United States of America and just under a third of Australia, and deserts cover more than half of it (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006). The location of Saudi Arabia in the Middle East, relative to its neighbours and with its main internal regions can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The location of Saudi Arabia.

Source: GCC, 2001

In 2010, the Kingdom's population was 27,137,000 people; 67.1% of the Saudi population was aged under 30 years (Ministry of Planning, 2010). Saudi society is considered conservative, both culturally and religiously, and the holiest places

to Muslims are on Saudi land, namely Makkah (Mecca) and Medina (Alyusuf, 1989). Makkah was the birthplace of the Prophet Mohammed and the holy mosque containing the Ka'aba, the most holy place for Muslims, is located there (see Figure 2). Medina is known as the place from which Islam originally spread and is also the site of the death of the Prophet Muhammad. It contains the Prophet's Mosque, the second holiest place for Muslims (see Figure 3). Every year, millions of Muslims from all over the world visit these two holy places in Saudi Arabia.

Figure 2. The Ka'aba is in the middle of the Holy Mosque in Makkah.
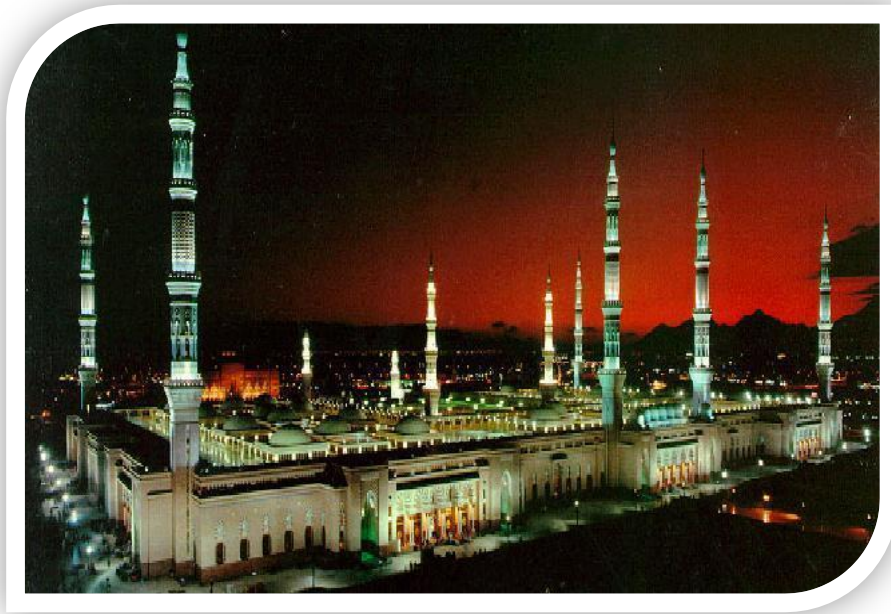
Figure 3. The Prophet's Mosque in Medina.

Saudi Economy

Saudi Arabia possesses the largest oil reserves in the world (about 25% of total known reserves) and also has other natural resources (Ministry of Planning, 2010). Oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia in 1938. Before that date, the Saudi economy was weak, depending mainly on the agriculture of the Southern and Alhasa Regions and to a lesser degree on trade and pilgrimages to Makkah and Medina (Soraya, 2007). After the discovery of oil, economic and social conditions changed, and over the next forty years Saudi Arabia became a high-income country (Ministry of Planning, 2010). The oil and the petrochemical industries have played a key role in lifting the Saudi economy. The consequent increase in Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth has transformed the Saudi economy into a modern economy, providing the finance for improved national infrastructure in many areas (Ministry of Planning, 2010).

Over thirty five years since the 1970s, the average per capita income increased tenfold, from about 5083 SAR (US $1044) in 1971 to 55,216 Saudi riyals (US

$14,724) annually in 2006 (Ministry of Planning, 2010). In 2010, the estimated revenue of Saudi Arabia was 470 billion riyals (US $125 billion) (Ashiwan, 2010).

Saudi Arabia is the largest open economy in the Middle East and North Africa (Ministry of Planning, 2010). International companies compete to enter this market to increase their profits. Hence, the significant recent growth in the role of advertising in Saudi Arabia and the importance of developing the local Saudi Arabian advertising industry.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the research problem addressed by this research: the lower quality of local Saudi advertising design outputs compared to those of International advertising agencies and the adverse consequences for the development of the local advertising design sector. There is intense competition between advertising companies and agencies in the Saudi advertising market. International agencies dominate the industry and advertisements created by local agencies are of lower quality than those by international advertising agencies. This offers the opportunity, through research, to identify strategies to improve the local Saudi advertising sector

The two research questions that have guided the research are:

- What are the reasons for the lower quality of local Saudi advertising design?
- How can Saudi advertising design be improved?

The next chapter will provide a review of the relevant literature to identify the data that needed to be collected and analysed to answer these research questions.

Chapter 2/ Literature Review

This chapter investigates the literature relating to the research problem and the research questions and objectives. It has five main sections. The first section reviews specific conceptual issues in the graphic design literature, providing the conceptual grounding that underpins the discussions and analyses presented in this work. The second section reviews the advertising literature relevant to the research, especially in terms of considering the practical realities of using the principles, theories and concepts of graphic design in advertising by local advertising agencies in the country and their use in international advertising agencies. The third section reviews the history of the use of computer technology in the production of visual design in advertising. It reviews the historical use of computer technology in visual design, the impact of computer technology on visual design practices and typical software used in the design and production of advertising. Section four reviews the literature concerning the practical aspects of advertising processes, in particular the roles of creative processes within the industry. The final section reviews the literature relating to the organisation and structure of advertising agencies: the business milieu within which all of the above issues are played out. The chapter concludes by drawing out the implications of this review of literature in addressing the questions and achieving the objectives that define this research.

Graphic Design

This section covers the definition of graphic design, graphic design history, graphic design uses, graphic designers and graphic design in Saudi Arabia as it relates to local and international advertising design, the focus of this research. The first use of the term 'graphic design' was in 1922, by William Addison Dwiggins (Cordeiro, 2001; Beltran, 2000). He applied the phrase to the use and layout of graphical shapes, words, and colours on a page. From that date to around 1960, the usage of the term, 'graphic design' was limited to a small number of fields including designing books, calligraphy and some advertisements (Arntson, 2003). Since the sixties, the idea of graphic design has extended, and the term 'graphic design' is now widely applied across all media, mass media and modern communication technology to refer to all visual aspects of such design work (Beltran, 2000).

In the 1960s, courses in graphic design began to be offered in higher education institutions worldwide (Swanson, 2004). Initially, these occurred in Art and design institutions and vocational training colleges and more recently in universities. Along with this educational initiative quickly emerged a discipline of Graphic Design, with the rapid establishment of attendant national professional associations, and the overarching International Council of Graphic Design Associations (ICOGRADA) in 1963 (see, for example, Woodham, 2011). As a professional practice, graphic design expanded rapidly into multiple areas of human endeavour. In part this was a result of the earlier establishment of the field of Public Relations that showed the power and effectiveness of graphic imagery in governments' mass communications to their citizens (Swanson, 2004). Other factors that supported the rapid development of Graphic Design as a professional field included the outcomes of research identifying ways of improving sales for businesses through the use of graphic imagery. The field of Graphic Design has 50 years later expanded to the point where specialisation is occurring within the field of graphic design, giving rise to new terminology and sub-fields such as 'visual communication' and 'visual design' (Beltran, 2000).

Definitions and scope of graphic design

Older definitions of graphic design focus on 'the promotion of products and services'. For example, Hochuli and Kinross (1996) defined graphic design as 'visual art activities created for commercial purposes'. In a slightly different direction, Hollis (2001) stated that graphic design may be defined as the art of choosing and arranging visual elements in a layout – which may contain shapes, images and written texts – for the purpose of delivering meaning effectively. Graphic design was traditionally viewed as finding solutions for creating visual shapes on two-dimensional or flat surfaces. More recently, increasingly, graphic design professionals are involved in the production of designs for three-dimensional and even four-dimensional (including time) outcomes (Arntson, 2003).

Currently the main areas the term 'graphic design' applies include the use of graphic design-specific skills and knowledge in, and the utilisation of skills and knowledge from areas of drawing, painting, printmaking, etching, illustration, diagrams, symbols, geometric design, maps, photography, computer graphics and similar fields (Arntson, 2007). Recent definitions of graphic design focus on its role in visual communication to 'inform, produce, convince, effect, educate or illustrate aiming to communicate messages to a target through art and technology mediums' (Resnick, 2003). To some extent the differences between these earlier and later definitions reflect the evolution of the field, and its academic refocusing following the transition of graphic design education in many Western countries from its earlier 'home' in colleges of art and craft into universities (Calvelli, 2011). The requirement for those teaching graphic design to create university-level courses and to undertake research and write about graphic design in an academic manner has led to it being observed more critically; and that in turn has led to changes in how it is conceived and perceived.

Because graphic design has moved from just the 'promotion of products and services' to something beyond, it now has an influence in many areas of sciences

and the arts and has become an important factor to inform, convince and educate people through its illustrative effects. This has been helped by the entry of graphic design into the academic field in western countries, as mentioned previously. It is likely that graphic design would not have reached this level of influence had it not entered the western academic field; it is still absent from the Saudi education system. Visual arts and graphic design in particular have not found a clear position in Saudi education, as we will see in the next sections.

Definition of 'graphic designer'

Over time, the definitions of what it is to be a graphic designer have reflected the changes in definitions of graphic design itself. A definition typical of the end of the 20th century is that a graphic designer plans and creates organised visual elements to communicate a visual message to a target viewer (Resnick, 2003). In a similar vein, Newark (2002) has suggested that a graphic designer is someone who is continually making sense of his/ her material, and mediating it through the forms and codes of visual language.

Contemporary graphic designers work in many fields including business, education, culture, medicine and industry. Their outputs are used in mass media to communicate messages through print, film, CDs, DVDs, multimedia, website, and other electronic media (Resnick, 2003). Typically, graphic designers have roles within a larger enterprise to support its aims, whether in the development of packaging, promotional material, advertising, documents, public relations, safety and legislation or any of the wide number of fields in which the use of graphic imagery contributes to improved outcomes.

The objectives and uses of graphic design

There have been many transformations in everyday life characterised by changes in peoples' lifestyles and preoccupations, business and governance over

the last century. The use of graphic design has been a major factor in many of these transformations since the middle of the 20th century (Newark, 2002). The speed at which many changes have been adopted around the world has depended on the rapid dissemination of ideas and information and this has demonstrated the important role played by graphic design in delivering messages containing new ideas and information in a concise, fast, persuasive, informative and beautiful way (Khaddar, 2000). For example, graphic designs are often arranged to accompany texts and help explain them more clearly, and sometimes to complement them (Minaeva, 2007). For the above reasons, graphic design has become one of the most important commercial fields in the arts world due to its ability to explain, decorate and 'identify' (i.e. give 'identity' or meaning to) a wide range of everyday objects (Newark, 2002). Perhaps the most important focus and/or objective of graphic design as a professional activity is its contribution to clear and effective communication used to help increase the awareness and acceptance of messages that are chosen and presented by professionals (Arntson, 2007; Khaddar, 2000).

The use of graphic designers is a fundamental part of business because of the widespread use of graphic design in documents and media used in trade promotions and advertising. Graphic designers are employed in political circles to provide graphic support for campaign messages, in designing flags or politically-motivated cartoons and poster art (Minaeva, 2007). Graphic designers today compete to produce visual images that successfully market a product, and to create designs for commercial advertising that will communicate with consumers (Khaddar, 2000). Graphic designers also have an important role in education, by providing a visual pathway to learning through, for example, illustrations in textbooks (Newark, 2002). They have become increasingly involved in peripheral areas of medicine by providing graphical design solutions to help improve the communication of medical information, for example, the 'readability' of radiology and medical images (Richardson, Eric & Stern, 1995) as well as fulfilling their more obvious roles in creating graphics for documents and visual communications intended for medical practitioners,

medical students, patients, administrators and a wide range of other medically-related constituencies. In the entertainment field, graphic designers create imagery and are vital to the production of films and other visual media (Minaeva, 2007).

History of graphic design

Graphic design is a natural extension of the ancient creation of marks and graphics for communication that date back to around 35,000 B.C. when drawings were engraved and painted in caves (see Figures 4 and 5) (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). Inscriptions known as pictograms, markings whose meanings were communicated by their pictorial similarity to reality, marked the dawn of both drawing and writing (Stock, 2008). Pictograms and marks provided an early method of asynchronous communication, enabling the recording and exchange of ideas, experiences and information (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). Ancient Egyptians used coloured graphics in hieroglyphic writing in 3100 B.C. (Cordeiro, 2001) (Hieroglyphs were a more advanced pictographic system because they represented abstract ideas and could be linked together into narratives.). Many other steps helped in developing graphic design, such as the invention of paper in 105 A.D. in China and the invention of relief printing in 770 A.D. (Cordeiro, 2001). After the printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg in Germany in 1440, graphic design developed further (Arntson, 2003).
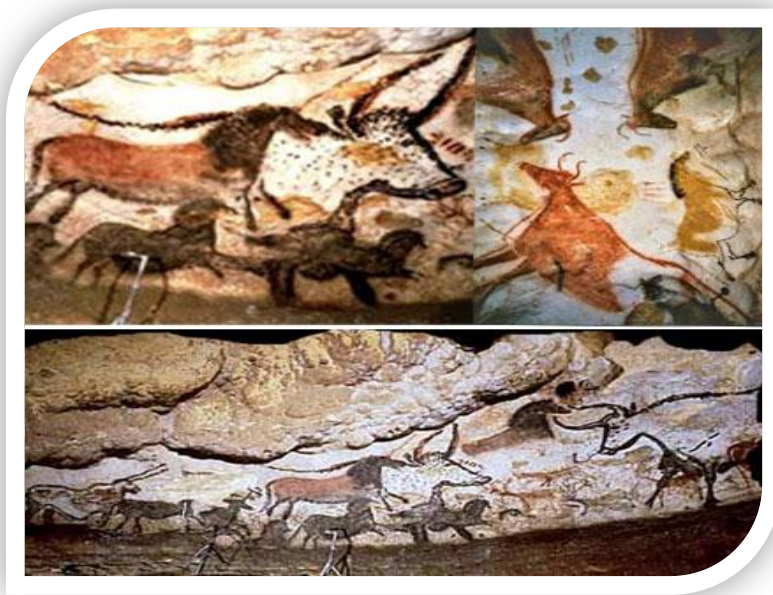
Figure 4. Graphic paintings, Lascaux caves 15,000-10,000 B.C. (Source: Meggs & Purvis, 2006, p. 5).

Figure 5. Graphics on a rock from San Raphael Swell, 2000-1000 B.C.

(Source: Meggs & Purvis, 2006, p. 5)

From the 19th century onwards, the need for graphic design increased and its influence on all aspects of life became more obvious (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the use of graphic design in many

fields increased, to include the domains of science, industry, trade and advertising (Cordeiro, 2001). The invention of photographic cameras in 1822 by Joseph Niepce was significant, because photographs can be used in many ways to reinforce the effects and influence of graphic design (Meggs & Purvis, 2006).

Graphic design became increasing important in almost all knowledge domains because it was an illustrative means to communicate the findings of many branches of science (Cordeiro, 2001). Furthermore, it assisted in the renaissance of culture and education by contributing drawings to books and illustrations to pamphlets (Stock, 2008). Graphic design became an essential partner in trade through the advertisement industry (Meggs & Purvis, 2006).

The arrival of computers was another leap forward (Cordeiro, 2001). Competition between Apple and Microsoft in the graphic design arena started in the early 1980s, and focused on developing graphs and designing (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). In 1985, Adobe joined the competition, introducing programs that linked graphic design to the digital revolution (Meggs & Purvis, 2006).

Graphic design in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, Visual Arts as a studio practice was not seen as important as other arts such as the literary arts of poetry, oratory and prose. This was, perhaps, because Saudi Arabia has until recently been primarily an oral culture (Alswaian, 2010). Until recently, oratory and oral communication were the most popular and dominant ways to communicate and exchange information, and the primary means of mass discourse (Orham & Secil, 1998). The increase in wealth and the increased adoption of technology, along with the exposure of Saudi citizens to the business, industry and social practices of other countries, resulted in significant changes to Saudi life in almost all social areas (Tuncalp, 1994). Of specific interest to understanding advertising and graphic design practices are the ways that Saudi society began to shift towards becoming a more visually-based culture. This rapid recent shift towards visually-based

interactions is the most obvious reason for the relative absence of contemporary and historic literature relating to Saudi visual art, graphic design and advertising; this in turn makes any historical review of the origins of graphic design in Saudi Arabia difficult. The researcher, for instance, has found it difficult to determine precisely the beginning of graphic design in Saudi Arabia. Historical reference points are limited primarily to records of institutional events. For example, one significant reference point is the opening of courses in graphic design, and the development of visual arts education programs. Only since 1965 has the Art Education Institute in Riyadh offered courses in adornment design and decoration, craft, and the more technical printing processes used by graphic designers and visual artists (Alrosaiys, 2010). These courses were provided as part of the professional training for teachers and have been the primary way for artists and graphic designers to obtain education in their fields in Saudi Arabia. All these courses in the Art Education Institute, however, were all closed around 1990.

It may be argued Saudi graphic design is an extension of Saudi contemporary art, which derives from local folklore, Islamic art and modern international arts (Alzahrani, 2004). Since the commercial revolution and the accompanying cultural openness of the 1970s, however, Saudi students have been studying arts and art education abroad, and after they qualified, some of these students have come to play an influential role in the graphic arts in Saudi Arabia (Alsolaiman, 2002). The first mission of Saudi students to study visual arts and art education abroad was to Italy in 1960, followed in the 1970s by students being sent to the United States (Alrosaiys, 2010). Later, this was followed by missions to France and Britain. The Western styles, technical skills and social experiences all affected these students later teaching and art production in their home country (Alsolaiman, 2002).

Although the beginnings of academic arts education in Saudi universities started less than forty years ago, it had been twenty years earlier introduced into lower levels of public education in the early 1950s (Zeyad, 2004). In 1975, the first Art Education Department was established, for male students of King Saud

University in Riyadh. In 1985, this was followed by the establishment of a section within the Art Education department for female students (Alhamood, 2004). Despite this, at the time of writing this research, there is no dedicated college or school for the teaching of Design or Graphic Design to male students at Saudi universities. This means there is an absence of locally trained graphics designers, and, not surprisingly, it is common to find local advertising designers with Mathematics or Physics degrees rather than Design degrees (Indijani, 2007). Specialists in the Saudi advertising industry such as Zeyad (2004) pointed to this issue as important to be resolved and Zeyad, in his study identified a significant need for establishing Fine Art colleges in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to the Art Education Department at King Saud University, there are some departments of art education in colleges of education for teachers, where the students are prepared to become art teachers for primary and secondary schools. This currently means individuals interested in studying for a career in design or fine arts must enrol in Art Education programs in an education college, primarily to become artists or designers and only incidentally to learn how to teach (Zeyad, 2004). However, the need for skilled craftsperson in applied and practical applications such as graphic design for advertising has become more apparent. The argument for developing training in graphic design has both professional grounds, because the Saudi market has witnessed a tremendous growth in creating and producing advertising (Luqmani et al., 1989), and the competition of international advertising companies requires improvement in the output of local designers and design companies. As a result of these factors, in 1990, an initial department of graphic design was established at Dar Al-Hekma College, a private college for female students only (School of Graphic Design, 2007). At around the same time, the Department of Art Education in King Saud University began to offer some units of graphic design.

Modern Saudi society became aware of the need for graphic design with the increasingly prominent role of graphic design and advertising in contemporary life, and because of the growing need for graphic arts expertise in education, modeling, creating engineering drawings, designing computer interfaces,

interior architecture, simulation, medicine, presentations and prototyping (Maqulah & Khayat, 1999). In 2008, the Art Education College at Princess Noura University (for girls) was restructured and transformed into a Design and Art College with four departments: Production Arts, Visual Communication Design, Painting, and Interior Design (Alryadh, 2008). Recently, another two Design Colleges were established for female students, in King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah and in Dammam University in Dammam in 2010. At this point there are no equivalent colleges of design and art education for males in Saudi Arabia.

Clearly, the support for visual arts and graphic design in particular is weak in Saudi education. Even today, no college of design exists for male students. Is the lack of attention to teaching graphic design and advertising design in the Saudi educational system one of the reasons leading to the low level of local Saudi advertising design? This is an important aspect of the questions this research answers.

Advertising

This section reviews the background of advertising in Saudi Arabia and more generally. It reviews definitions of advertising, the roles of advertising, types of advertising, the history of advertising, advertising in Saudi Arabia, the volume of advertising in Saudi Arabia, the roles of advertising in Saudi Arabia, and advertising design.

Definitions and objectives of advertising

There are many definitions for advertising. For example, it is 'paid persuasive communication that uses mass media – as well as other forms of interactive communication – to reach broad audiences to connect an identified sponsor with a target audience' (Wells et al., 2006). It comprises certain messages that aim at informing, convincing or motivating people towards a certain product, service or issue (Landa, 2004); and a form of communication through which people are provided with information about a certain thing for the purposes of bringing it to the attention of the people (Mackay, 2005). According to Moriarty (1991), it is a communication with a target audience to draw attention, give information, or induce a person or people to buy or do something, while Amadi (2004) has stated that advertising is a paid form of communication by a medium about products, services or ideas.

People are attracted to advertisements because they illustrate their needs, desires, problems and ambitions and propose ways to fulfil them (Lane, King & Russell, 2005). The general aim of advertising is to promote or sell certain things (Amadi, 2004). Hiam and Schewe (2008) have stated that contemporary advertising has three essential objectives: announcement, persuasion and reminding. In advertising, announcement or telling implies delivering a particular piece of information to the public, whether about a product or a service rendered to customers. The second objective is persuasion, which is an attempt to convince people how much they need the product or service depicted. The third objective is to remind the consumers of a commodity or a

service that has been previously advertised or is already known. This way of reminding people aims to link consumers with the article being advertised, since a consumer may shift to another competitive commodity if not reminded of the former one (Hiam & Schewe, 2008). A successful advertisement is the one that catches attention, delivers its message, persuades the public of specific things and continues to link with them (Arntson, 2003).

Advertising in Saudi Arabia has kept pace with the above definitions and objectives only in the modern period. This is especially true of the period since the introduction of modern advertising to the Saudi market in the 1960s, as before the arrival of modern advertising agencies, advertising was only by word of mouth, which has been demonstrated in the history of advertising in the country. Now, however, modern advertising has gone beyond information, keeping pace with global advertising's expanded functions as informing, persuading, motivating, inducing, and beyond that to educating.

Types of advertising

There are seven main advertising types listed by Wells, Burnett and Moriarty (2006, pp. 17–18) as 'brand advertising, retail advertising, direct response advertising, business to business advertising, institutional advertising, non-profit advertising and public service advertising'.

Advertising can also be divided into four types:

- By *target*, which includes consumer and business advertising.
- By *geographic area*, which includes international, national, regional and local advertising.
- By *media used*, which includes print, electronic, outdoor or mail format.
- By *purpose*, which includes product or non-product, commercial or non-commercial, primary demand or selective demand and direct action or indirect action (Bovee et al., 1995).

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These types of modern advertising became present in the Saudi market after the entry of advertising agencies in the 1960s (Orham & Secil, 1998) then played an important role in the organisation and development of Saudi advertising, as we will see later. The experience of the researcher in the local advertising market, and his field visits, have indicated the most prominent distinctive facet of advertising in Saudi Arabia is the choice of media used. Those agencies that specialise in creating and producing printed advertisements represent the majority; others such as Dar Al Muawiyah specialise in creating and producing outdoor advertising,; still others create and produce electronic advertising.

History of advertising

To draw a clearer picture of the history of Saudi advertising, it is appropriate to briefly review the history of advertising in the world to identify the most important developments from the beginning to the modern period. This will provide a clearer picture of the development of Saudi advertising, which in one way or another is an extension of global advertising, most obviously since the entry of international trends and techniques in the 1960s.

Advertising occurred even in ancient times. For example, Babylonian civilization witnessed one of the earliest examples of advertising around, 3000 B.C., when advertisements were written on leather (Lane, King & Russell, 2005) and businessmen used clay tablets to display goods and attract customers (Rulli, 1999). Ancient Egyptians (Pharaohs) used papyrus to create wall posters, some of which were for commercial communications and official announcements, and used engraving and drawing on rocks to address commercial issues (Burde, 2008). 'Advertising' as public promotion and communication was undertaken by government employees walking round the streets to announce the king's decrees (Rulli, 1999). Town criers were also one of the earliest commercial advertising mediators used in many countries (Lane, King & Russell, 2005): Greeks used them as human advertisements to announce incoming ships that were carrying goods, cloth, spices, and metals. Those ancient public

communication methods were the beginning of advertising in the world and many of are still in use today.

Advertising as a discipline and professional practice went through several phases to reach the current stage that uses technology to be created and mass media to be shown. Relevant sources, however, differ in identifying the beginning of modern advertising. In the West, O'Barr (2005) has argued, modern advertising began in Europe, in the form of notices on coloured wooden boards, and then advanced in its development primarily in the USA (Rulli, 1999).

In the 1600s advertisements appeared in British newspapers to encourage people to move to the New World (USA now) where they could find their dreams (O'Barr, 2005). In 1657, an advertisement on handbill appeared in London to introduce coffee (see Figure 6) (O'Barr, 2005, p. 3).
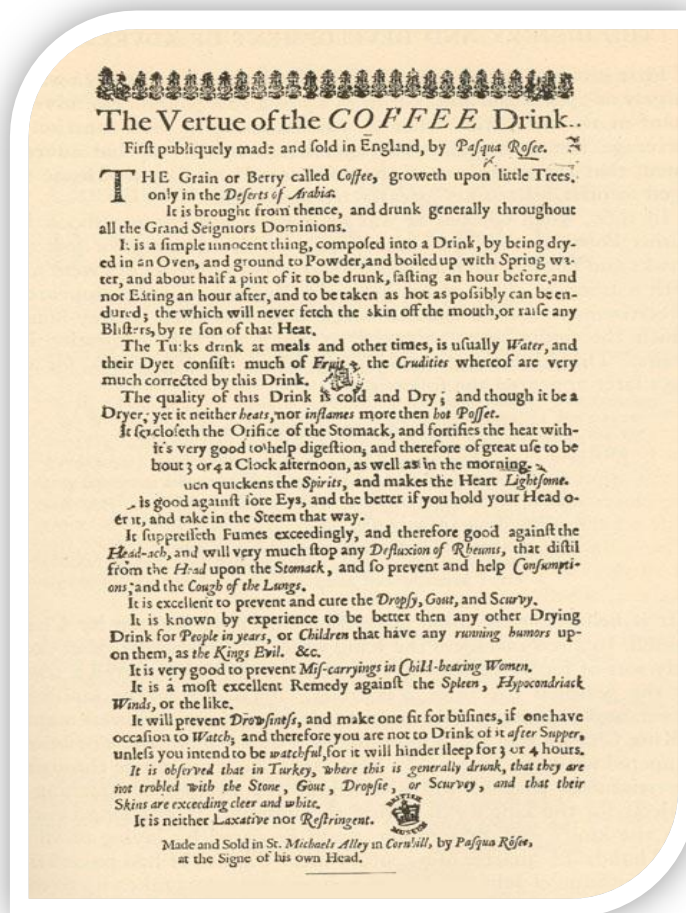
Figure 6. A handbill advertisement from 1657.

Source: O'Barr, 2005

In the late 1700s, a significant change in the field of advertising occurred when an American newspaper, *The Philadelphia Gazette*, began using illustrative pictures (see Figure 7) (O'Barr, 2005). Advertisements became more effective when they included both writing and illustrations (Rulli, 1999). The middle of the 1800s became the age of newspaper advertisements as trade in the United States increased and commercial systems began to evolve (O'Barr, 2005), but the French were the first to publish paid commercial advertising, in *La Presse* in June 1836 (Burde, 2008). Some of the most famous advertisements of this time were the English 'Pears soap' series of the 1890s, some of the earliest in which coloured images were used (see Figure 8) (O'Barr, 2005).
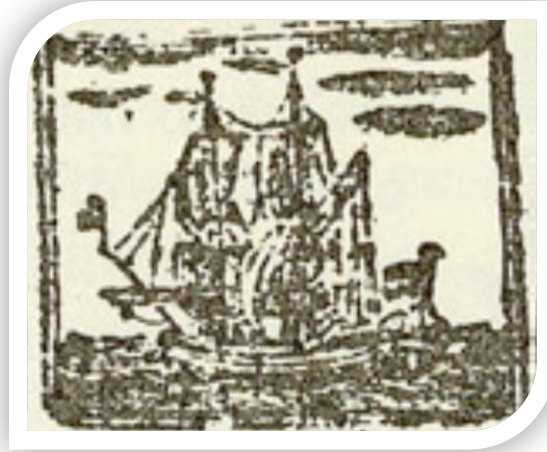
Figure 7. Part of one of the earliest illustrative advertisements 1700s.

Source: O'Barr, 2005
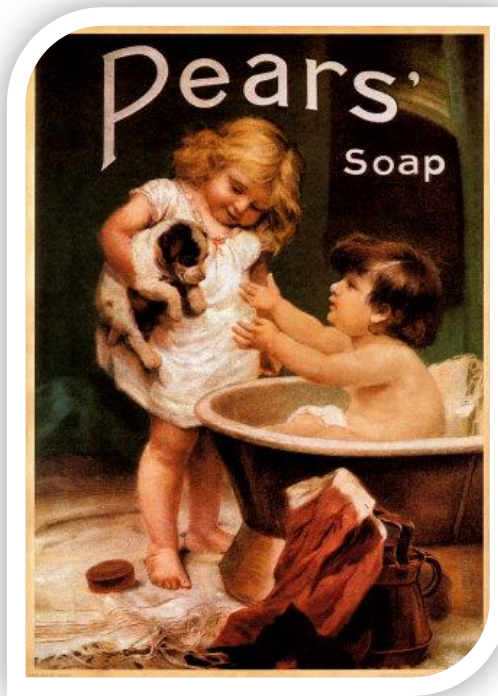
Figure 8. Poster for Pears soap.

Source: http://www.allposters.com.au

Advertising took on new importance in World War I (1914-1918) when British, American and German governments used advertising methods to encourage their people to participate in the war. They also used advertising in propaganda to manipulate public opinion (see Figures 9, 10 and 11) (Heimann & Heller, 2004).

Figure 9. British poster from World War I.

Source: http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/27747

Figure 10. James Montgomery Flagg's famous poster, 1917.

Source: Fenton, 2003, p. 5

Figure 11. German poster from World War I.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_bond

In 1920, the commercial demand for advertising increased and the focus of advertising was to attract more customers (Lane & Russell, 2001). Advertisers and advertising producers began to pay attention to the forms of mass media (Bured, 2008). In the 1920s they started to use radio (O'Barr, 2005). In the 1950s, advertising appeared on TV in the USA (Bured, 2008; O'Barr, 2005). These changes developed rapidly in the 1970s to 1980s when advertising was transformed by technological advances. The promotion of services and products became international: promotion moved beyond the country that produced the service, and advertising expanded to target customers in other areas of the

world (Orham & Secil, 1998). In the 21st century, advertisements appear almost everywhere. Advertisers use modern technology, electronic advertising and unusual techniques to make their impact on people (Wells et al., 2006).

It is clear that one of the most important stages in the history of advertising was the entry of advertising to daily newspapers in the late 1700s, which quickly became the preferred place for advertisers to publish their announcements. Another important evolutionary step occurred when advertisements were published in mass media in the 1920s, first spreading to radio and then years later to television. In the twenty-first century, modern technology again played an important role in the development and spread of advertising around the world. This has generated one of the most important phases in the development of advertising around the world; and it is just as important in Saudi Arabia, where modern technology has an important role in developing modern advertising in the Kingdom.

History of Advertising in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has become one of the most important consumer societies in the world (Al Khateeb, 1998). Since 1938, when oil resources were discovered, the economy of Saudi Arabia has increased rapidly and with it individual incomes of citizens have increased (Soraya, 2007). Before this time, most Saudis led simple lives and their needs were limited (Al Khateeb, 1998). By the 1960s the standard of living had changed and consumerism had grown, influenced mainly by USA and Western Europe (Soraya, 2007). By the 1970s Saudis had become efficient consumers (Al Khateeb, 1998). American-style consumption influenced Saudi society through the American media and through contact with Americans who worked in Saudi Arabia, especially those who worked in Aramco, the biggest oil company in the Kingdom, and through the experiences of Saudis who studied in the USA (Soraya, 2007).

Early commercial advertising in Saudi Arabia was by word of mouth. Typically, pairs of men walked among the people in markets and public places, and announced goods (Orham & Secil, 1998). This verbal approach to advertising reflected Saudi culture, which largely depended on oral rather than written or visual communications (Alswaian, 2010). Visual commercial advertising began in the 1960s (Orham & Secil, 1998,) when foreign commercial and industrial companies entered the Saudi market and began to promote their products (Al Khateeb, 1998). As demand for advertising increased in the 1960s, Saudi businessmen began founding local advertising agencies (Orham & Secil, 1998). At this stage, however, most of Saudi Arabia's advertising was designed in Lebanon, as it was for other Arabian countries, until the Lebanon wars in 1975 prompted advertising companies there to move to other areas or close their doors (Orham & Secil, 1998). The Saudi market remained attractive to international companies, many of which established branches and produced advertisements specifically for Saudi society (see Figures 12 & 13) (Soraya, 2007).

Figure 12. LandCruiser Car advertisement, March 1960

Source: *AlBilad* Newspaper, 1960

Figure 13. Car ad 1974.

Source: Al Jazeerah, 1974

The size of the advertising market in Saudi Arabia

In 1980, the volume of advertising in Saudi Arabia was around US $200 million (750 million Saudi Riyal) and advertisers preferred newspapers, billboards, television, magazines and brochures as the media of communication with their customers (Tuncalp, 1994). Printed advertising represented about 74% of advertising volume in Saudi Arabia at that time with newspapers accounting for about 80% of all printed advertisements, and the Arabic language used in around 80% of advertisments, with just 20% of Saudi Arabian advertisements in English (Tuncalp, 1994). By 1990, the number of advertisements had

increased, and Saudi Arabia and the other Arabian Gulf countries shared about 75% of the advertising industry sales in the Arab World (Soraya, 2007). Printed advertising was still the key medium (Secil, 1997) with the three main advertising areas in 1990 being food, cosmetics and cars (Orham & Secil, 1998). By 2006, the advertising market in Saudi Arabia was estimated to be worth one billion US dollars (3.7 billion Saudi Riyals). Advertising in newspapers had fallen to around 71% of the total, billboards and magazines made up 16%, television took 10% and radio about 3% of the market (Alaboad, 2007). Two years later, in 2008, the volume of advertising in the Saudi market had increased to about 1.2 billion US dollars (4.5 billion Saudi Riyals) with approximately 10% year on year growth. By this time, the balance of advertising had changed with the main three areas of advertising being telecommunications, real estate and cars. Advertising in newspapers still was in highest demand, now representing 75–80% of the total market (a significant increase from 2006 – illustrating the volatility of the advertising market) with television and billboards coming second and third (Alziaadi, 2010).

This raises two important points: that the Saudi advertising market is a large and rapidly increasing market in the Arab world and Middle East; and advertising in printed newspapers has had the largest share of this market since its emergence. Despite the limited number of printed newspapers (only 13), newspaper dailies are favoured over other forms of media because Saudi newspapers receive support and funding from the government, and advertisements in daily newspapers can be expected to reach a large segment of readers. Other forms of mass media such as the radio and television are less preferred by advertisers because there are hundreds of channels available to Saudi Arabia homes. Printed newspaper is still the first choice for advertisers in the Saudi market because there are comparatively fewer viewers per television or radio channel due to the large number of channels.

Why is the Saudi advertising market so attractive?

To recap, Saudi Arabia is considered the most important advertising market in the Arab region (Soraya, 2007). The Saudi market is attractive for three main reasons:

- Saudi Arabia is a rich country
- Saudi society is a consumer society
- The Saudi market is an open market

Consequently, the Saudi market has become a target for advertising companies.

Saudi Arabia is one of the richest countries in the region, with about 25% of the world's proven oil and gas reserves (Ministry of Planning, 2010). In the early 70s, development in the Kingdom raised individual citizens' incomes significantly. It transformed the nation from a simple agrarian society to one of the richest in a short time, concurrently improving the living standards of Saudis (Al Khateeb, 1998). The increases in income and living standards were allied to a considerable increase in material consumption, and the Saudi market became one of the most important for foreign imports, receiving around US $30 billion of imports in the 1990s. These comprise, about 80% of consumer goods and a similar percentage of the country's overall needs (Soraya, 2007). The main competitors for the Saudi market were the United States, Japan, England, Germany and China (Bhuian, 1997 & Tuncalp, 1994). In 2005, the World Bank ranked Saudi Arabia as the 21st biggest economy in the world and Saudi people as having the 26th highest purchasing power (Alclick, 2007). This has established Saudi Arabia in a good position to develop a consumer-focused society; and it has become one of the most consumer-oriented societies in the world, driven by its demographics, with 67% of the population aged under 30 years (Ministry of Planning, 2010). These young people form an enormous consuming group with increasing levels of disposable income (Soraya, 2007).

 The Saudi market is open, with many benefits attracting companies to compete for a share of the Kingdom's business (Ministry of Planning, 2010). The

administrative and economic reforms that started in Saudi Arabia in 2005 encouraged foreign companies to bring their business in the Kingdom; many came to rely on advertising to increase their sales (Alaboad, 2007).

In 2007, Saudi Arabia was one of the world's top reformers, ranked 23rd (NCC, 2007). In 2010, the World Bank ranked Saudi Arabia as 11th for 'ease of doing business' (directly after Australia), and the Saudi market was recognized as the best place for business in the Middle East and Arab World (World Bank Group, 2011) especially as it was almost completely tax-free (Alclick, 2007). It remains one of the few markets with no commercial or industrial taxes, making it very attractive to foreign companies. Compared to other economic jurisdictions it is cost-effective with the main requirements for economic success being for companies to market their products in a sophisticated way. For businesses establishing themselves in Saudi Arabia the primary roles of advertising has been to promote the business and make a foothold in the market, in contrast to other markets where the main role of advertising is competitive.

For local and international investors, the Saudi advertising market is attractive both because it is open market and it is located in a rich consumer country, opens the door to a wide range of potential investors in the advertising industry. This may be considered a healthy phenomenon, or it may be viewed as negative in terms of the quality of advertising because anyone, even non-specialists who may produce lower quality advertising, may be encouraged to enter such a lucrative market. This may be a partial explanation of why some published advertisements seem less than professional and may contribute to explaining in part the differences in advertising quality addressed in this research.

Role of advertising in Saudi Arabia

During and after the economic revolution in Saudi Arabia in the 1970s, Saudi society changed radically in its consumer behaviours (Al Khateeb, 1998), and advertising played a major role in changing Saudis' tastes and preferences.

People's desire for consumer goods increased, transforming the population into a society where non-essential goods were made to seem essential through advertising (Soraya, 2007). Saudi society no longer primarily based its diet on dates and milk or lived in stone houses or tents scattered in the desert. It became common to live in new and modern houses, drive the latest car models and use the latest technical gadgets (Anzi, 2007; Luqmani et al., 1989). The researcher remembers when the first generation of mobile phone (pagers) were introduced to the Saudi market at a significantly higher price than elsewhere and also, accompanied by expensive service costs. Ordinary people competed to buy them, their desire driven by unending advertising placed by mobile companies in newspapers and on billboards. Even though the device was only a pager, capable of showing the caller number but not of making calls through the device itself, many ordinary members of Saudi society were eager to get one because the advertising promoted it as a necessity of contemporary life. Advertising thus encouraged consumerism in Saudi Arabia (Soraya, 2007). It has played a significant role in changing the tastes of Saudi people and turning them into first-degree consumers (Soraya, 2007) by affecting their perceptions of what is appropriate, or necessary. This effect is not surprisingly: advertising is, after all, designed to make an impact and to affect the reader or viewer in terms of their attitudes, feelings, thoughts and behaviours (Wells et al., 2006).

The role of advertising has played in increasing consumerism in Saudi Arabia expands the more consumers are exposed to advertising. This raises an interesting social question for the development of Saudi consumer society: are Saudi consumers in their turn affecting the style of advertising they receive and are they having a positive or negative role in the evolution of advertising and its quality? This issue will be discussed later in the thesis.

Role of graphic design in Advertising design

The practices of advertising designers involve identifying and transforming ideas and information into a rhetorically persuasive and informative visual

language to attract viewers and persuade them to a particular point of view or behaviour (Resnick, 2003; Moriarty et al., 2009). It involves presenting an idea carefully defined in all aspects through to its smallest detail (Frankel, 2007).

Graphic design is the visible front-end of advertising (Resnick, 2003). It is an important part of this advertising process because it can decide the success or failure of an advertisement (Cuffaro, Vogel & Matt, 2002). The visual design of an advertisement is intended to create an interaction between a viewer and the other components of the advertising strategy (Moriarty et al., 2009). The graphics of an advertisement present a facade intended to encourage viewers to move their eyes (and minds and feelings) elsewhere – the 'elsewhere' being predetermined by the advertising designer (Cuffaro, Vogel & Matt, 2002). An effective design is one that fosters such interaction between the viewer and the contents of the advertisement (Moriarty et al., 2009). Advertising design gives the viewer a vision of what the product is promoting and generates an impression about it. Wright et al. (1971) have noted that advertising design and form present the consumer with a full perception of the product, and the importance and success of advertising design is it leads consumers to want to possess the product as advertised and shown. The advertising design creates dreams that the advertisement attaches to the product—what the Americans call selling the sizzle, rather than the steak.

Saudi advertising designers

One aspect of the work of an advertising designer is to solve problems in respect to visual communication related to customers' needs (Resnick, 2003). In Saudi Arabia, understanding local deeds and cultural norms is essential and would be expected to require knowledge and expertise of Saudi locals. Yet, Saudi designers make up only 1 in 5 of those working in advertising agencies, although there is growing demand because Saudi designers are better informed of the needs of the Saudi consumer, and how to attract them (Orham & Secil, 1998). Local advertising agencies are aware of the shortage, mainly caused by a

lack of educational programs that provide skilled and qualified Saudi designers (Orham & Secil, 1998).

On particular group of Saudi Arabian designers, calligraphers, offers perhaps the clearest insights into the problems Saudi Arabian designers have in participating in the advertising industry. Calligraphy is important in Saudi advertising because calligraphic expertise in Arabic advertising has a similar role to typographic expertise in Western advertising. Calligraphers working in the Saudi advertising industry have faced many difficulties related to communication, clients, creative, computer technology, financial, administrative and cultural issues (Zeyad, 2004).

The issue of advertising designers' needs and difficulties will be discussed in more detail later in this research.

Quality

The idea of quality has become an important factor in the improvement of outputs and outcomes in business, education, medicine and industry (Arzola, 2008). The idea of quality, however, is not undisputed or unproblematic (Burrill & Ledolter, 1999).

The following sub-sections review five key issues relating to the idea of quality as they pertain to this research's focus on improving advertising design in Saudi Arabia:

- Definitions of quality
- Quality in advertising design
- Criteria of advertising quality
- How can quality of advertisements be best judged?
- Quality in graphic design.

Definitions of quality

There have been many definitions of quality (Arzola, 2008). One of the most appropriate definitions in the context of this research defines quality as meeting a client's needs and adding value to the outputs received by the client (Pike, 2005). This definition by Pike is a special case of the idea of quality defined by the International Standard ISO 8402 - 1986 as: 'the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs' (Eurostat, 2003, p. 3). The focus on 'the ability to satisfy' can be seen as an important part of any definition of quality that includes the concept of achieving satisfaction in advertising design: to satisfy clients, consumers and the advertising team in achieving the advertisement's goals.

Although Pike's definition is broad, it touches one of the main aims of advertising: providing benefits to clients. A primary purpose of creating and producing advertising is to meet consumers' needs, including informing, and

reminding consumers about a product or service provided by a client, as well as persuading them to purchase it.

The American Society for Quality (ASQ) has defined quality in a more constrained manner as 'the degree to which performance meets expectations' (Chandrupatla, 2005, p. 2). This definition focuses more on 'satisfying' than 'adding benefits'. Again its realm contains issues both of performance and expectations. This latter concept, 'reaching expectations', has emerged as an important aspect of quality that marks quality as independent of absolute standards (e.g. of physical measurement such as 'straightness' or 'circularity'.

In advertising design, defining quality as the performance of an advertisement to achieve the expectations of the advertiser aligns well with the goals of commissioning, creating and placing an advertisement. This implies quality can be measured directly by the degree to which the advertisement achieved its intended goals. For example, following this approach, if an advertisement is to encourage sales of a product, quality may be measured by the quantity or number of sales.

Such assessments, however are not readily available in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the local advertising industry. Instead, judgments about the quality of advertisements are more typically made informally based on the expertise of advertising designers and other professionals. This approach is well established in many other professions. Although often the only option, it is subject to criticism on many levels compared to more data-driven approaches (see, for example, discussions about professional judgement of quality in higher education in Cooper, 2002).

Evaluation of quality in advertising design: A critique

Advertising is a creative process with different perceptions of acceptance from person to person and from society to society (Moriarty et al., 2009). The quality of advertising also is judged differently from person to person, and this renders

discussion of quality complicated because of differing views, even between specialists, about the concept of quality and the exact quality of particular advertisements (Burrill & Ledolter, 1999). Meanings of quality and criteria of quality have changed over time and differ across cultures and social and professional groups (Total, 2009). This presents difficulties when interpreting participants' informal comments about quality in the surveys and interviews undertaken in this research, as each participant may hold different ideas of what quality means. In advertising design, advertisements that are more 'successful' are typically regarded as having 'higher quality' than ones that are not. A problem is to define what is 'successful', and to consider the wide range of cognitive and social biases that influence participants' comments about the quality of an advertisement. In the subjective evaluation of quality, many factors are at play, including society, culture, beliefs, level of education and background experiences. All these can affect an individual's understanding of and judgement about quality in advertising and the concept of quality in general.

In this research in particular, the idea of quality is an important aspect of the research problem in that the research draws on informal yet commonly-held judgments by advertising professionals and senior civil servants about characteristic differences in quality of output between local advertising agencies and international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the collected data includes informal judgments about quality made by the research participants.

Formal criteria to evaluate the quality of an advertisement have been proposed by White (1993) and Allerton (2012), including:

- Does the design attract people to consider it?
- Is the idea of the design new and unique?
- Is the design of the advertisement linked to the product or service?
- Does the design give viewers a good impression?
- Does the design make a positive impact on viewers?

- Does the advertisement design urge viewers to demand and purchase the product or service?
- Does the advertisement capture the attention of viewers?
- Does the advertisement promise a reward? And is the promise specific?
- Does the design of the advertisement adequately support the promise?

Is the advertisement easy to understand?

This list formalises many of the criteria by which professionals evaluate the quality of an advertisement, with all their personal subjective cognitive biases, to determine whether an advertisement is likely to be one that will result in better sales.

In spite of there being precise definitions, criteria and measures of advertising design quality, professionals in advertising design have not been taught them and do not use them. This has led to widely held belief throughout the advertising and graphic design professions that quality can be objectively assessed by professionals' subjective judgments.

This assumption conflicts, however, with understanding of the limitations of self-report and personal opinions as data sources due to for example, cognitive and other biases associated with subjective judgement.

The challenge is whether formality of judgment of quality (in some quantitative sense) is essential to identifying whether there exist significant differences in quality between the local and international parts of the Saudi advertising industry. The alternative, which is held to apply in this research, is the views of advertising design professionals, civil servants and participants in the research, although founded on different understandings about quality in advertising design, share a conceptual basis that provides sufficient uniformity to permit the use of their comments as a measure of quality for the purposes of this research.

Assuming the above foundation between participants, it remains that self-reports and individual subjective opinions can be problematic as the basis for

evaluation of quality where they evaluate quality in a limited fashion or in a biased way. Faulty evaluation occurs, for example, if participants make a judgment of quality based on a partial view (Baron, 1994). This is a recognised concern in this research: what if some participants focus only on one specific aspect of quality, such as aesthetics or ideas, or some other issue in the advertisement? Other examples of evaluating quality in a limited way include, when individuals evaluate an advertisement's quality only the basis of its aesthetic appearance or its ability to give the participant a sense of surprise.

There are many conditions that can lead to evaluation of assessment in a biased way when it is based on individuals' self-reports or opinions. Participants may for example judge quality on the unconscious basis of semiotic signals sent by an advertisement that suggest a lot of money and effort have been spent on it. Another is if participants judged the quality of an advertisement only by whether it contained (or not) the characteristics of being created by an international advertising agency. This is an example of 'essentialism' in the shaping of judgments about quality according to inclusion and exclusion of particular social and professional groups (for a parallel argument see Mahalingam, 2003). This would occur if participants put the quality of (say) all advertisements created by local agencies in one basket and advertisements from international agencies in another, and then judged their quality as different en masse, on the grounds that the essence of local and international advertising agencies differ and hence the quality of the advertisements of each group must differ Overconfidence may influence some participants, especially those from international agencies, to rank quality, because they have made a prejudgment that their work is better than that of local agencies or that that international agencies are better than local agencies. This latter is an example, of the 'Semmelweis reflex': 'the tendency to reject new evidence that contradicts a paradigm' (Edwards, 1968, p. 17).

If these latter biasing factors were the only means by which advertisement quality was evaluated by participants it would obviously significantly undermine the reasoning about quality given by participants in the research

and the research findings. The data from triangulated questions in the survey and of responses during interviews, however, indicate these factors are not dominant in shaping the judgments of participants.

Another problematic cognitive bias of the assessment of quality is whether the evaluation of the quality of an advertisement, is shaped by the topic of the advertisement (i.e. the product or service advertised) for example the quality of the advertisement being judged on the basis of whether the advertisement was for a cheap rather than an expensive item. Another example of cognitive bias shaping evaluation of quality is the widely encompassing 'myside bias' that results in a potentially skewed evaluation when the outcome of each individual participant's evaluation of quality is judged in a manner biased toward their own opinions rather than on specific external or objective criteria (Hale, 2011).

Understanding such biases provides a conceptual foundation that enables the analysis of the responses of participants and the interpreting of their opinions, especially as they relate to their judgment of quality in advertising. The knowledge of the above biases, and the ways that they might emerge in participants' responses, became a significant factor in the analysis of responses given in the interview and the questionnaire.

Quality of graphic design

Graphic design is a central aspect of visual advertising. Every advertising designer aspires to create high-quality, effective designs, which will have a strong impact on viewers. The graphic design of a creative work of advertising may be effective and influential and reach the goal it was created for, or it may be weak in its effectiveness. 'Good [quality] graphic design not only achieves a desired effect, but shapes our expectation of what the experience can be' (Brown, 2000, p. 3). Best practice in contemporary graphic design is often defined formally in terms of design principles and elements. The adherence to

these provides a possible basis for assessing quality in graphic design outputs, and by implication may contribute to assessing quality in advertising design.

A typical definition of best practice (i.e. high-quality) graphic design is provided by Khaddar (2000), who argued good graphic design is organising elements in a space in a harmonious and coherent unit to produce interaction between several elements, each of which complements the others. The 'organising of elements' is via 'design principles'. This definition focuses on the aesthetic element of the advertisement, 'graphic design', which is an important medium between advertisement and viewer. In other words, a good graphic design takes into account the current understanding of best practice (e.g. Frankel, 2007) relating to general principles of layout and composition in the areas of

- balance,
- harmony,
- contrast,
- unity,
- variety,
- repetition, and
- rhythm.

The graphic design elements arranged according to the above principles are:

- lines
- shape,
- colour,
- form,
- size, and
- space.

Professional best practice in the use of these graphic design principles and elements offers one set of criteria that can help evaluation of the relative quality of an advertisement.

Computers and Visual Design

Today, almost everywhere, images compete for our attention and send messages to persuade us to consider or do something (Resnick, 2003). The role of graphic designers and visual artists is to efficiently in a cost-effective manner, create the images that will communicate thoughts and ideas (Newark, 2002). The increased use of computers in the graphic design world has led to qualitative and quantitative changes in the outputs of graphic design and outcomes (Mahgoub, 2008). Over time, the evolution of computer software and hardware technology has enabled new dimensions to design (Newark, 2002). Computers have been an important medium for creating and delivering messages and ideas (Joy, 2000), and one of the most important creative tools humans have developed, with significant benefits in the fields of graphic design and visual art.

The history of computer-based graphic design activity

Weisberg (2008) noted that the first attempt to build a digital computer for graphic design purposes was in 1945 when Jay Forrester was leading the Navy's Airplane Stability and Control Analyzer (ASCA) project at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The ASCA system appeared in 1951 in the flight simulation environment, and was only for American military use (Weisberg, 2008). This system was the first to show simple graphs, time and text on a large oscilloscope screen (Carlson, 2003). This project was called 'Whirlwind' and was very important beginning step in the Computer-Aided Design field (see Figures 14 & 15) (Weisberg, 2008).
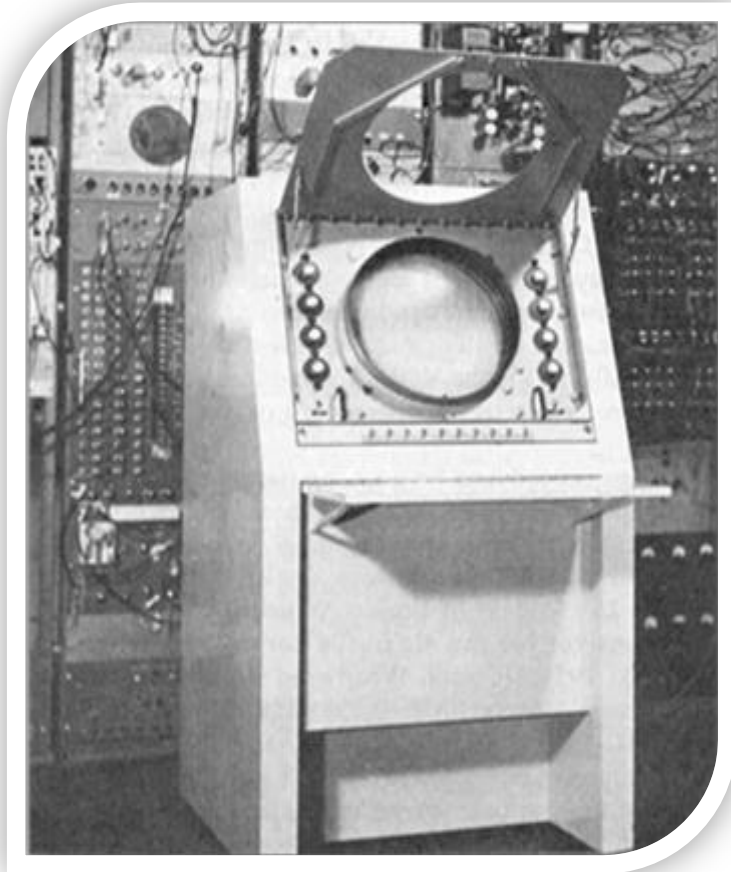
Figure 14. Whirlwind Display Console.

Source: Weisberg, 2008
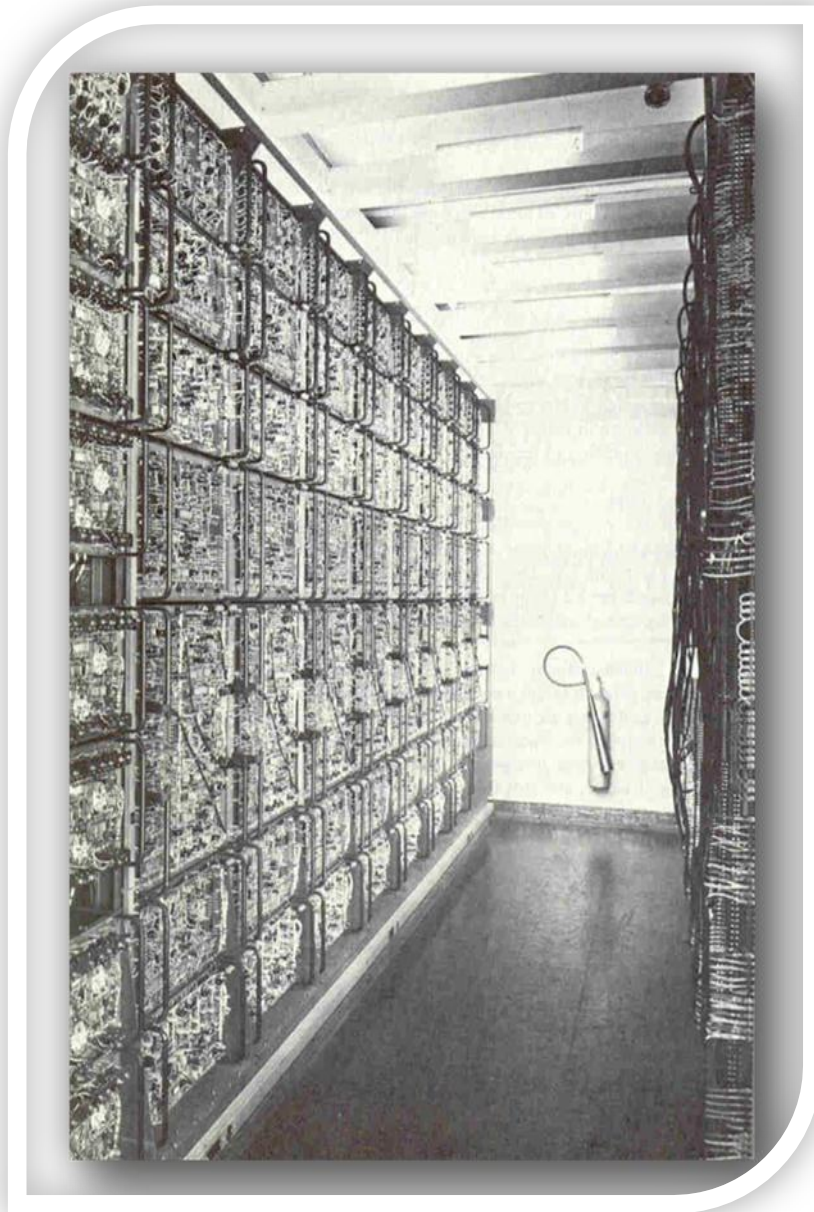
Figure 15. Whirlwind Arithmetic Unit.

Source: Weisberg, 2008

In 1960, the term 'computer graphics' was coined by William Fetter, a graphic designer for Boeing Aircraft Company; it referred to charts formed by dots (Stock, 2008; Carlson, 2003). Also in 1960, Ivan Sutherland created the Sketchpad program for computers at MIT Lincoln Labs (Grudin, 2006). This was the first graphics program to use a Graphical User Interface (GUI) (Carlson, 2003). In 1962, a computer at MIT was the first to have a video screen that

enabled users to draw with a light pen (Arntson, 2007). During the early 1960s, William Fetter drew the first computer model of human figures (Fetter, 1982; Impagliazzo, 2004).
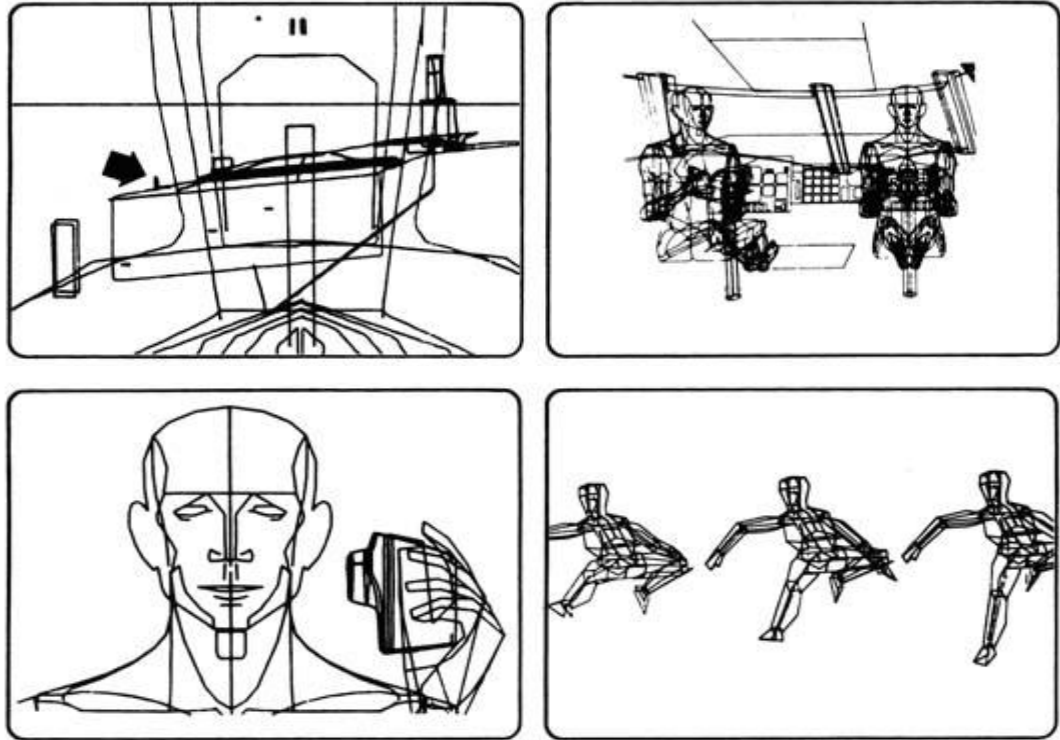
Figure 16. Computer graphs by William Fetter during 1960s.

Source: Impagliazzo, 2004

In the 1960s, IBM introduced the first commercial graphics computer, the IBM 2250, and in 1968 the DigiGrotesk digital font system was created by Hell Design Studio (Spina, 2004). This was followed later in the year by the introduction of the CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) visual display system (Stock, 2008), whose use became widespread. By 1972, computers were able to offer direct storage. Also, although it had been invented in the 1960s, the 1970s saw increasing use of the 'mouse ball' in conjunction with a keyboard, and of computer interfaces which made graphics easier to work with (Edwards, 2008; Impagliazzo, 2004). Because monitors were still mono-coloured, the graphics quality for professional graphic design users remained low (Stock, 2008).

In the 1960s, John Whitney, a computer motion graphic pioneer, started to use computer technology in his films (Carlson, 2003). Initially he produced titles for films as well as some commercial graphics, before later turning to computer technology as an art form (Stock, 2008). In 1968, Whitney released an animation, 'Permutations'; five years later in 1973, John Whitney and Gary Demos produced the first movie to use digital image processing, entitled 'Westworld' (Daniels, 2011). Only 2 years later, Whitney's famous animation work 'Arabesque' was produced (Carlson, 2003). In the TV world, the first introduction of graphics appeared on TV screens in 1970 when the CBS and Bell Telephone channels started using computer graphics (Daniels, 2011). In the same year William Fetter created perspective computer graphics for TV commercials (Carlson, 2003). This was one of the earliest instances of the use of computer-based graphic design techniques in mass advertising.

Throughout the 1970s, traditional lead typesetting and phototypesetting were increasingly replaced by computer-based stored-data systems for font display. This system was a group of digital lines and dots that formed shapes (Stock, 2008). The sonic pen table was introduced as an input computer tool to draw shapes and graphics on external sheet that would appear on a computer screen (Carlson, 2003). Later, the pen operated directly on the visual display screen (Daniels, 2011).
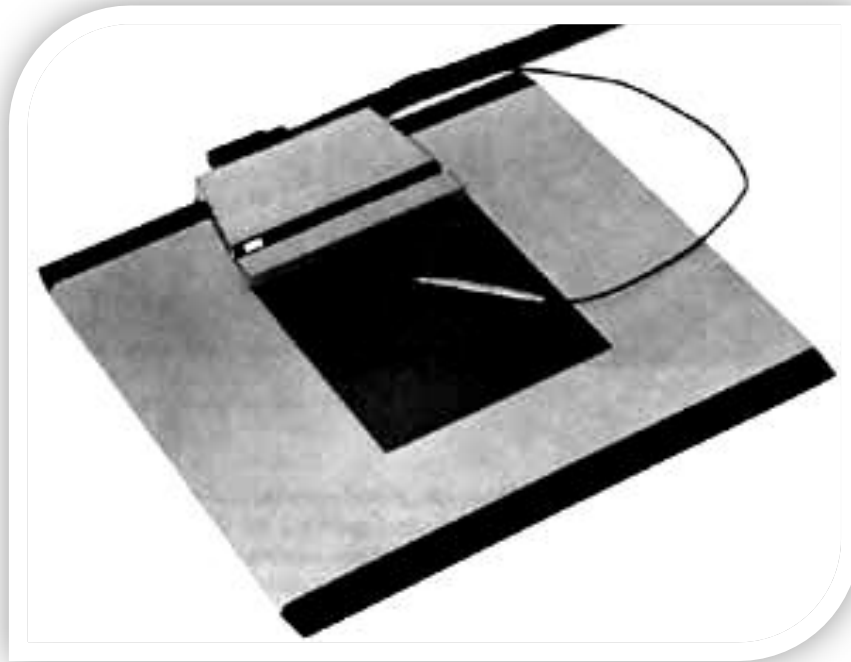
Figure 17. Sonic pen input.

Source: Carlson, 2003

In 1975, Bill Gates and Paul Allen founded Microsoft and revolutionised the computer software industry and computer graphics systems (Daniels, 2011). In 1976, Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs established Apple Computers, producing the Apple II PC (Hamelin, 2010). In 1977, Apple introduced colour graphics (Impagliazzo, 2004). By the 1980s, computers had transformed all graphic fields, including business, industry, media, education and medicine (Cleveland, 2004). In 1981, Graphical User Interface (GUI) systems were first introduced to public consumers, enabling computer input and output to contain graphics as well as text, which was often also represented as graphics (Stock, 2008). A landmark in 1982 was the establishment of Silicon Graphics Inc. (SGI), specialist developers of computer graphics systems (Daniels, 2011). In the same year the movie *Tron* was released by Disney: a science fiction film that contained three-dimensional images and extensive computer graphics effects (Impagliazzo, 2004). In 1984, Apple introduced the first commercial personal computer with a

graphic interface under the name Macintosh (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). In 1985, the first personal true multimedia computer appeared, the Commodore Amiga (Hamelin, 2010).
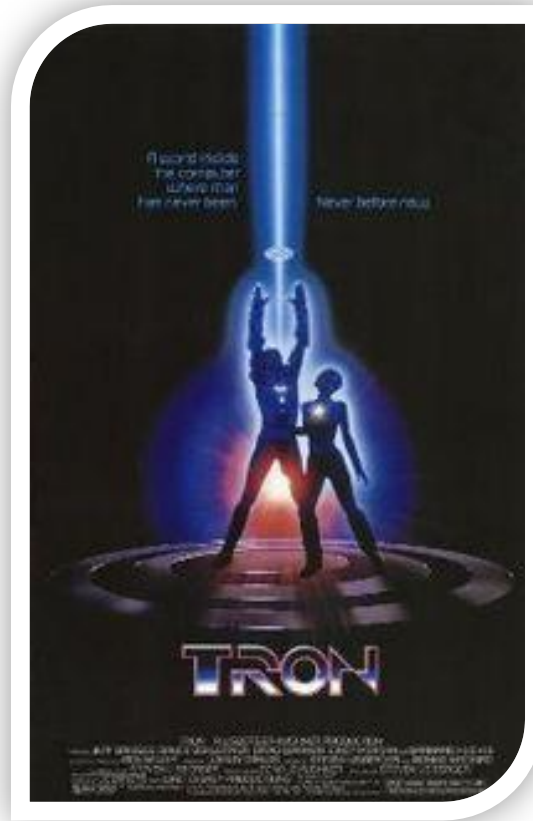
Figure 18. Tron movie poster 1982.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tron

In 1985, Adobe developed the PostScript system, which was licensed by Apple Computers, to create vector art, work that could be enlarged, minimised and transferred into printable format (Meggs & Purvis, 2006).

In an attempt to find ways and tools by which they could produce advanced digital graphic designs (Meggs & Purvis, 2006), researchers, graphic designers, and computer programmers at IBM undertook research to produce computer systems that would provide support for designers wishing to use computers for coloured graphic design, eliminating the need for traditional colouring, brushes and pens. This resulted in new approaches that offered designers the ability to

insert graphics and photographs into their designs. Colour rendition was also improved, to produce colours similar to those in nature. In 1987 Adobe introduced the graphic design software Illustrator; the GIF image file format was produced by CompuServe in the same year (Hamelin, 2010).

In the 1990s, the Open Type technique was produced through co-operation between Adobe and Microsoft (Adobe, 2003, p. 2) so that computers could work with 56,000 single fonts; this was later called Adobe Pro. The software gave computers high efficiency in dealing with curves and shapes and was adaptable to all world languages (Stock, 2008). In 1990, Adobe Photoshop was released after many years of development started from 1987 by the Knoll brothers (Hamelin, 2010; Jackson, 2005). In 1991, Adobe introduced the Premiere video editing software (Hamelin, 2010). This enabled Broderbund in 1993 to produce 'Myst', a high-resolution CD-ROM game that sold more than 6.3 million copies (Hamelin, 2010).
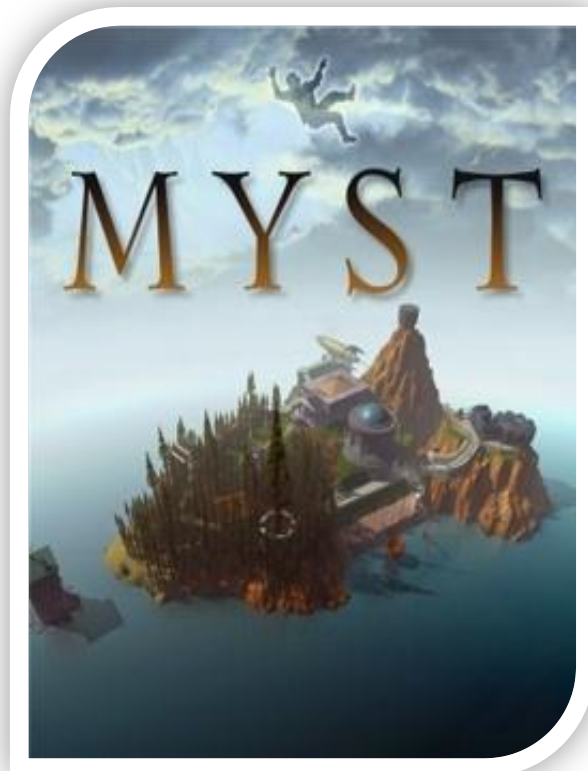
In 1995, after four years of production, *Toy Story* was released by Disney and Pixar (Hamelin, 2010). It was the first feature-length movie totally created by computer graphics (Daniels, 2011). Also in 1995, Sony introduced PlayStation, a game system that featured high-end computer graphics (Hamelin, 2010), while Nintendo released a high-resolution graphic home game system; the console was introduced in 1996 as the Nintendo 64 (Daniels, 2011). In 1998, Adobe produced ImageReady to help create graphics for web sites (Adobe, 2003).

Figure 20. Toy Story poster.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toy_Story_1

During the first decade of the 21st century, the most common storage technology for films and large amounts of data was the Digital Video Disk (DVD), which built on and extended the abilities of the Compact Disk Read Only Memory

(CDROM) disk format (Bennett, 2004). In 2006, the HD-DVD format was introduced as a development technology for DVD (Hamelin, 2010). All DVD and CDROM disk technologies were limited by the wavelength of the light used to read and burn them; DVDs used the longer wavelength red laser light. In 2006, the Blu-ray Disc – technology using shorter wavelength blue laser light – became competitive with HD DVD (Beaumont, 2008), and it is the current high-definition disk formatting standard (Hamelin, 2010). From 2001 till 2010, these years witnessed competition in graphics games between PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo 'Wii' (Daniels, 2011).

All of these stages of development in computer graphics influenced the growth and character of the Saudi design industry. International agencies in Saudi Arabia in particular have played an important role in ensuring advertising has reflected the use of the latest technology, and encouraged its use in the Saudi advertising market.

Computers' effects on visual design

There have been many significant changes in the ways in which computers are used in daily and commercial life (Arntson, 2007). In particular, designers have made use of computer technology to the extent that now computers are regarded as vital to the field (Joy, 2000). Some of the visual effects and efficiency advantages offered by computers in the processes used by designers are reviewed in this section because an important aspect of this thesis is the investigation of the effects of computers on Saudi advertising design. Here, the background context of the effects of computers on visual design is discussed with specific focus on their advantages for individuals and for local agencies that still use manual methods.

Some of the effects of computers on visual design include:

- Computers working with objects
- Mass production

- Working with virtual visual layer system

- Real world scale

- Speed of function

- Effect of the design process

- Object repetition with the same value

- Interaction with clients

- Creating 3-dimensional drawings and models

- Modifying photographic images

- Effects on quality and efficiency

- Effects of the use of design software on layouts

- Improved access to information within and about the worlds of graphic and advertising design

- Risk-free visual design experimentation

- Effects on text and font

Computers working with objects

Hand designing depends on drawing lines. Lines with different thicknesses and directions form meanings that can be perceived by the human brain (Mahgoub, 2008). Lines, which are formed by dots, are the basic element in the process of drawing and designing (Whale, 2002); in theory drawings also can be made only using dots, but this is more difficult and takes more time and effort. Drawing with computers, however, focuses primarily on more complex objects than lines and dots (Khaddar, 2000). Typically, computer programs used by designers enable them to construct designs out of more complex graphic geometric primitive shapes. This transforms drawing with a computer into a process of arranging, transforming and building these highly editable objects (Mahgoub, 2008). This approach also extends to the management of colour and visual appearance in which one geometric object can be transformed using a large number of variations such as black and white, colours, negatives etc. (Bradford, 2002).

Mass production

Hand drawing depends on adding lines to other lines. In contrast, drawing using a computer depends on processing graphical objects that can be reproduced in large numbers and with high accuracy (Mahgoub, 2008). This provides a 'mass production' dimension to drawing activities using computer technology because it permits the same accurate organisation for each drawing element or group of elements. If a project needs mass copies with a few changes in some versions, this is easily achieved; many objects can be copied and pasted into other parts of the design (Khaddar, 2000).

Working with a layer system

A single design can be made by graphical elements arranged on several different layers, in the manner of computer controlled transparencies. By grouping objects on different layers, a designer can manage them as individual groups of graphical shapes each within a separate layout, dealing with items on each layer separately, then seeing all of them together as one image (Mahgoub, 2008). Designing with layers subtly affects the final outcome quality of a design because it enables designers to see their design in different ways (Wang & Adelson, 1994), and because they can deal separately with the layers in the design, they can make revisions on a target object without affecting other elements, and can test and change the objects' colour, shade and position separately or as a whole (Bradford, 2002).

Real world scale

Many traditional hand-drawn advertising designs are small representations of large objects drawn in relative sizes, using drawing scales of 1:10, 1:50, etc. according to the size of the advertisement required (Mahgoub, 2008). Using computers offers designers the opportunity to work in real-world scale, using units such as centimetres or feet, while the design is scaled to fit the screen (Whale, 2002). Editing or adding to the design is done at the real world scale, and so the computer enables the designer to change size in accordance to the result sought.

Speed of function

One of the most important advantages of using computers is their role in reducing the time needed to create and complete designs (Meggs & Purvis, 2006, p. 488). When members of creative design and production teams master computer designing, they become faster and more efficient in executing creative tasks (Whale, 2002). Using computers, designers can more quickly create, change, delete, and add to an image, in a few easy steps, in ways that are either longer or not achievable using traditional design drawing tools; in this way, time, effort and money are saved (Mahgoub, 2008).

Effect on the design process

The process of creating and producing designs are affected by computer technology in a wide variety of ways (Arens, 2006). The computer-based approaches available to designers in the realm of graphic design can enable designers to cut out or modify many traditional drawing stages (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). Using computers can reduce or remove some stages while maintaining the quality of creation and production (Cleveland, 2004).

Object repetition with the same value

A key benefit of the use of computers for designers is that it is possible to copy any part of a design and accurately place it elsewhere (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). Computer technology permits copying and pasting elements whilst holding all their characteristics identical (Hollis, 2001). This addresses an essential issue: efficiently and effectively creating and modifying designs is significantly difficult using traditional design drawing tools, as copying and moving objects is literally done by eye, and by physically cutting and pasting one section of a drawing onto another. Copying and pasting design elements are central to all areas of design, and particularly graphic design, where designers need to repeat elements elsewhere in the layout (Martin, 1991).

Interaction with clients

The use of computer technology by designers can also help designers improve the quality of their interaction with clients, particularly as it offers several additional ways to help achieve the results a client desires (Landa, 2004). Traditional graphic design methods are more restricted in the ease and scope of modifying graphics. Typically, designers using traditional, hand-drafting techniques produce an image by drawing, and usually will make one set of modifications if a client is not satisfied – a process that wastes a lot of time. Instead, using computer-based design methods, the designer can discuss directly every detail of the design with the client whilst viewing it on the computer while working on the design and modifying details of the design 'live', with the client reviewing the changes (Mahgoub, 2008). The use of computer-based design also solves problems of distance. Where the client is remote from the designer, traditional design approaches require the designer to post or deliver physical drawings (often originals) to the client, with all the risks that entails. Using computer-based design approaches, clients can examine proposed designs at another location; receiving stages of the design via their email; through access via the web; or even by being connected to a computer network with the creative team (Landa, 2004).

Creating 3-dimensional drawings and models

Computers can be used by designers to create 3D shapes and to transform two-dimensional drawings into 3D graphics and models (Arens, 2006). Design software can now render drawings to create an effective illusion of 3D, to give a realistic and accurate expression to design and advertising concepts (Mahgoub, 2008). Examples of this software include Autodesk 'AutoCAD', 3ds Max, AC3D, Blender, Cinema 4D, Electric Image Animation System and Houdini. Computers have opened up new fields for designers in the 3D and related realms (Head, 1991). Additionally, software offers dynamic outputs which some companies claim as 4D (3D plus time). Recently, an additional dimension was added to the ability to create new forms of design to give it a sense of setting through interactive visual effects (Arnston, 2003).

Figure 21. 3D computer graphic.

Source: http://en.topictures.com/fluorescence

Modifying photographic images

One of the earliest developments in computer-based design was to modify pictures (Murphy, 1983). The next step was creating image editing software to modify photographs. This software was based on digital 'paint' software that enabled designers to create images from scratch, pixel by pixel (Schewe, 2000). This origin is reflected in the names of some software, such as Corel's Photo-Paint (Huss, 2001). In its earliest forms, digital photo manipulation required conventional photographs to be digitally scanned into a form that could be read and manipulated by computer software (Schewe, 2000); this turned them into the equivalent of digital paintings. Over the last decade the use of digital cameras has become ubiquitous in almost all situations, and these enable

photographs to be transferred directly from the camera to the computer, where all aspects of colour, shape and position can be modified (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). This manipulation of photographic images has been enhanced over time though a variety of additional effects, to the point where now designers can, use software to add effects to photos beyond what was photographed (Cleveland, 2004). The consequence has been the development full circle into painting-like design possibilities of digital art (see Figure 22). The appropriate software also has the ability to gather many scenes in one picture in ways we might never imagine (see Figures 23 and 24).

*Figure 22.*Computer-modified design of photographs to create digital art

Source: Gliebster, 2010

*Figure 23.*Computer-processed image by Erik Johansson.

Source: Johansson, 2009

*Figure 24.*The impact of computer technology on photographs.

Source: http://www.designdazzling.com/

Effects on quality and efficiency

The increased use of computers in designing has made the creation and production of visual designs more effective and efficient (Meggs, 2006). Design software has become an important tool to assist designers in transferring their ideas into 2- and 3-dimensional shapes and to explore and explain their ideas (Mahgoub, 2008).

The quality of visual design objects such as images, colours, shapes and lines are also raised and given more quality and clarity, affecting the whole design (Cleveland, 2004). Computer technology improves the quality and value of visual design through increased resolution of images and design elements.

Effects of the use of design software on layouts

Computer technology provides many tools that offer varied solutions to design problems, which can be applied simply on design layout (Cleveland, 2004). The task of laying out a design using specialised software is different from traditional physical methods, although the software designers typically emulate traditional design practices and terminology to make the transition to computerised design activity easier for designers (Khaddar, 2000). Perhaps the main benefit current graphic design software offers in terms of layout is that they permit freer manipulation and experimentation.

Improved access to information within and about the worlds of graphic and advertising design

Websites and web-accessible databases offer information about new developments in graphic design and graphic software (Arntson, 2007). Ready accessibility to the Internet enables designers to learn about the latest theories and methods of creating visual designs and to explore virtual graphic training workshops (Whale, 2002). Significantly, for smaller design businesses many of these graphic programs and workshops are provided free.

The increasing use of computers and the Internet has enabled designers to keep in contact with other professionals, and to the world of design more generally, to exchange experiences and develop ideas (Hollis, 2001).

Risk-free visual design experimentation

The tools and materials involved in traditional ways of creating and producing graphic design and art typically encourage a visual conservatism, discouraging experimentation and exploration of new graphic opportunities because of the problems of reversing mistakes (Mahgoub, 2008). In addition, experimentation is more difficult with traditional graphic design tools and processes because of physical difficulties and risks (Bradford, 2002). Experimentation may endanger designers and artists because, for example, some traditional tools are sharp and some graphic design processes involve toxic chemicals that must be handled in prescribed ways (Mahgoub, 2008). In general working with a computer to create graphics and art is safer for, and more encouraging of, visual experimentation than using traditional graphic design and art tools.

Computers and contemporary software programs, by contrast, have become both easier to use and more tolerant of mistakes by users; many enable users to backtrack and reverse changes they have made (Mahgoub, 2008). Some modern graphic design software can be managed even by children. This has two significant advantages, in learning the software and in experimentation to get unusual creative effects. Using computers and contemporary software in graphic design and visual art encourages risk-free experimentation by users (Bradford, 2002).

Effects on text and font

Practical graphic design situations typically demand designers to have facility with text. Computers and graphic design software provide extensive possibilities for experimenting with sizes and types of font, including 'artistic' text that can include the use of drawing brushes with different forms for different effects (Hollis, 2001). This latter can be especially important in Middle Eastern contexts where calligraphic 'brush'-created text is the norm.

Significant design software in the Saudi Arabian advertising industry

In Saudi Arabia, advertising designers use several software programs. The following are the most popular.

Photoshop

Photoshop is the most common software for advertising design in Saudi Arabia (as the findings of this research confirm). Photoshop is specialised to modify images and backgrounds. As its name implies, its original focus was photographic image manipulation. In 1987, Thomas and John Knoll developed a program to work with images (Smith & Smith, 2005). In 1989, Adobe Systems purchased the program and developed it further, releasing Photoshop 1.0 the next year (Jackson, 2005).

Photoshop is a pixel-based system that enables designers to modify and create images and shapes (Smith & Smith, 2005). It enables designers to separate and manage different groups of elements of a design using layers (McCathran, 2008). The newer versions of Photoshop give designers a wider range of options in dealing with images than those offered by other software (Ronald & Postel, 2002), and are characterised by speed and efficiency of application from the perspective of the designer's workflow. For example, it includes options for designers to save samples and snippets of designs for reuse in other circumstances (Ronald & Postel, 2002). It shortens many basic steps that designers follow compared to other software: for instance, the command 'Content-Aware Scaling' automatically adjusts scale of images and shapes (Bray, 2009). Photoshop facilitates access to design files, and offers many effects and masks that make changes and application easier (Jackson, 2005); gives special options to add aesthetic touches to images and shapes using filters (Ronald & Postel, 2002); and provides extensive options of colours and tones to be added to designs (Bray, 2009). Recent developments include 3D imaging (McCathran, 2008), saving time by removing the need to transfer to different software (Bray, 2009). It also integrates well with vector graphic and document creation

software in the same suite (Illustrator and InDesign) so a designer can work on a design using the three software programs seamlessly and simultaneously (McLean, 2002).

A limitation of Photoshop is that it works with pixels, which does not easily support the process of image enlargement because the design looks blurred if magnified, due to the limits of the information in the original image (McLean, 2002). This limitation is avoided if designers work in vector-based graphic design software such as Illustrator and Corel Draw (Ronald & Postel, 2002).

Illustrator

Illustrator represents graphics as vectors. The first version of Illustrator was produced in 1987 (Smith & Smith, 2005) and has since gone through a number of changes. Illustrator offers an environment for dealing with drawings, with multiple options to assist designers. Illustrator has rich text and editing options, especially those that enable modification of designs (Alspach, 2009, p. 2). For designers who fully master this software, it can feel almost as if the designer is using pencils and colours. Illustrator can minimise and maximise shapes, colours and dots with no loss of resolution, whatever the size (Bray, 2009). Illustrator is considered as one of the best software for designing logos (Smith & Smith, 2005). It facilitates drawing with great accuracy, enables the magnification of shapes and photos, preserving their original resolution. Font resolution is not affected by minimising or magnifying a design, and designers can work on multiple pages (Bray, 2009) The working environment is similar to Photoshop (the most ubiquitous graphic design software in Saudi Arabia), but its file sizes are small compared to those of Photoshop; it also offers appropriate tools and conversion elements to make it useful in web design (Alspach, 2009). The more recent versions of Illustrator support designers working on 3D designs (Smith & Smith, 2005). There are many Arabic websites that instruct in the use of Illustrator, and many dedicated forums accessed by designers working in Arabic contexts (Ahmed, personal communication, January 29, 2009).

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Advertising designers in the Saudi market have identified some disadvantages of Illustrator when used in an Arabic context. For one, the range of colours (i.e. the scope of the colour gamut) is less than that available to designers using Photoshop (Sami, personal communication, January 16, 2009). Illustrator cannot handle images efficiently (Alhamaad, personal communication, February 10, 2009). For the graphic designer working with special effects, Illustrator does not provide tools such as the airbrush that is widely used in hand-created visual designs, and is available in Photoshop. Reflecting on the name of the software, Illustrator, this is not surprising. Perhaps more significant for Saudi Arabian local design companies and designers, Illustrator is expensive (Sami, personal communication, January 16, 2009).

CorelDraw

CorelDraw is one of the oldest and most common software programs, used by Saudi designers before Adobe products arrived and took over (Sami, personal communication, January 16, 2009). It is commonly in the advertising design industry because it offers many functions that are useful for Arabic printing needs (Sakeek, 2002). The software offers a good degree of accuracy. It is also capable of linking font intersections without being affected by any sort of magnification issues leading to problems with pixilation (Corel, 2002). It can also remove empty cuts existing between letters in a word, which is especially useful in designing and editing Arabic letters (Ahmed, personal communication, January 29, 2009) and this software can increase, and decrease spaces existing among letters within a single word (Sakeek, 2002). Like Illustrator, CorelDraw is a vector-based software. It is easy to use and needs fewer steps for many operations than Illustrator (Corel Corporation, 2002). Typically, CorelDraw is used by older Saudi Arabian designers who work in local advertising agencies. It is cheaper than Adobe software in the Saudi market (Sami, personal communication, January 16, 2009).

CorelDraw has, however, some disadvantages. Designs made using Corel Draw have to be converted if designers want to work on them using Photoshop or InDesign (Corel Corporation, 2002), although other Adobe software is

compatible (Smith & Smith, 2005). In addition, Sami (2009) has noted that working with shortcuts in CorelDraw is more difficult than in Adobe (although this may be because the Adobe software shortcuts are well known to those trained on Adobe software). Second, there are no Arabic educational materials that teach designers how to use CorelDraw (Ahmed, personal communication, January 29, 2009). This may be not much of a handicap in practice as many local design firms have learned to use it without training materials.

InDesign

A primary focus of the InDesign software from Adobe is the layout of documents, although it also contains vector and bitmap image manipulation functionality (Bray, 2009). InDesign works to coordinate the design elements and to process the layout of the final form (McCathran, 2008). It is considered one of the best programs for working with page applications in long documents (Bray, 2009), and is compatible with Photoshop and Illustrator (Smith & Smith, 2005). In addition, it can amend deformed letters (McCathran, 2008). As expected of any part of Adobe's integrated stable of graphic design software, the commands In InDesign are similar to those of Photoshop and Illustrator, which enables designers who use those to easily work with InDesign; and the integration allows a designer to work across all three programs simultaneously (McLean, 2002).

Like other graphics design software such as CorelDraw, InDesign can identify errors likely to cause problems in the print production workflow, in this case using the Live Preflight command (Bray, 2009). Like other graphic design software, InDesign also works very well at designing interactive documents, through exporting InDesign files to Flash or HTML (Bray, 2009). Shortcuts in InDesign are easy to use and compatible with other Adobe software (Ahmed, personal communication, January 29, 2009).

The disadvantages of InDesign are that it is expensive in the Saudi market, and there are few Arabic educational materials that teach it (Sami, personal communication, January 16, 2009).

Advertising Processes

This section discusses advertising processes in general along with other creative processes, to provide a background for the discussion in Chapter 5 of the same issues relating to the data collected and analysed about advertising processes in Saudi Arabia.

General advertising processes

Before the Industrial Revolution, a typical advertising process was simple (Arens, 2006). The advertiser would come up with an idea, then go to someone with good handwriting – calligraphy – who would write the phrase that the advertiser wanted on a timber board, piece of cloth or something similar that could be hung in an appropriate place (Rulli, 1999). Nowadays, advertising is more complex and has many different role specialisations: idea creators, planners, designers, copywriters, photographers, media strategists, and others all play a part (Arens, 2006). The modern advertising process differs between advertising agencies depending on what is being advertised and the media that will publish it, and according to the size of the project (Landa, 2004). Larger advertising agencies, typically full service agencies, use different, typically more complex and specialized, processes than those of small advertising agencies, however, all advertising processes regardless of complexity comprise combinations of similar stages, some of which may be repeated (Arens, 2006).

Typically, the first of advertising stage begins when a person or organisation contacts an advertising agency to advertise something. The remainder of the stages of the advertising process are employed until the advertisement is published.

The following list outlines common stages of the advertising process in advertising agencies whose work is undertaken by separate departments:

- Meeting with client

- Preparing brief

- Planning

- Creating / Creativity

- Production

- Publishing in media

Meeting with client

Since the 1960s, advertising teams have typically included an art director and copywriter who are responsible for meeting with the client and creating and implementing the advertising (Mackay, 2005). The art director is responsible for form and designing aspects in advertising, and the copywriter is responsible for the wording (Landa, 2004). Some larger advertising agencies have a 'project team' consisting of an account director, a planning director, an art director and a copywriter who meet with the client to discuss advertising details (Landa, 2004). For efficiency and to reduce costs, other agencies streamline this process by authorising the account director or customer service manager alone to meet with the client. Together, they discuss advertising details, advertising form and the media in which the advertising will be published (Mackay, 2005). The account director or customer service manager determines how much the advertising will cost (Arens, 2006). After meeting developing the brief, the account director/customer service manager briefs a 'brand team', which usually consists of the art director, copywriter, planner and media director (Landa, 2004).

Preparing the brief

The account director establishes a work team consisting of a planning director, media director and creative director to create a workable general brief and timeline for the advertising campaign (Landa, 2004).

Planning

The planner, sometimes also titled planning director, and the other members of the planning team undertake preliminary research into each project and create

a project plan that focuses on the target market and the target consumer (Mackay, 2005). The purpose of this research and planning is to reach the right consumer at the right time in the right place, with the right media and the right budget (Lane, King & Russell, 2005). This team also sets the project budget (Wells at al., 2008), gathers information and data about the market and consumers, and analyses them. This information provides a foundation and reference point for the creative process and planning media use (Mackay, 2005). In this planning stage, appropriate media for communicating the advertising are chosen, following an assessment of what is available and the project's characteristics, and obtaining any necessary licenses.

Creativity

Following the planning research, budget setting and media choices in the previous stage, the creative director draws up a plan that includes advertising targets and forms, using the data provided by the planning team (Landa, 2004). The creative director also determines the timeline for the project (Moriarty et al., 2009) and passes this information to the art director and copywriter (Landa, 2004). The details of this creative process will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Production

At this point in the process, the physical form of the advertisement is developed and produced in way that is suitable for the media in which it will be published (newspaper, magazine, brochure, poster, billboard etc.), in the final shape in which it will appear to its intended audiences (Arntson, 2007). In the case of print-based advertising, the graphics are sent to the printer after a final adjustment to the four colours to ensure that they are printable (BBC, 2008). This production stage is not always straightforward. The quality of the printing machines, inks, and paper used, as well as the skills of the printing staff, play a role in how the advertising appears in its final form (Wells et al., 2008). In the past, a physical film was given to the production department to print. As technology has advanced, the production process now more efficiently uses

digital files developed by computers, and these are sent directly to the printer (Lane, King & Russell, 2005).

*** Publishing in media ***

After finalising the production process, the advertisement is ready to be sent to the appropriate media organisations for distribution: these will have been previously contacted (Wells et al., 2008). The advertising now reaches the audience, its final destination. For some agencies, however, there is an additional step: evaluation. The last stage in the process is assessing and analysing the advertising after it has been published (Cohen, 2006).

Creative processes in advertising

The quality, process and skills used in creating and designing advertising are important because their success or failure can lead to the acceptance or refusal of the advertised product or service by consumers (Moriarty et al., 2009). There are several stages in the creative aspects of advertising design, although not all designs go through all of them, depending on the type of advertising being designed (BBC, 2008):

- Creative brief
- Creative research
- Brainstorming
- Emergence of and selecting an idea
- Sketches
- Preparing layout
- Rough
- Comprehensive layout
- Proof

Creative brief

In most advertising organisations, the account director provides the creative director with a brief that includes the details of the advertising (Landa, 2004). This brief helps the planning and creative teams identify the intended market(s), typical consumer types, the message of the advertisement, how the advertisement will be presented, and in what media it will be published (BBC, 2008). The importance of the creative brief is that it gives information on how and why people use the product or the service being advertised (Altstiel & Grow, 2010).

Creative research

The creative team undertakes visual research about the advertisement based on the research provided by planning team (Arntson, 2007). In some specialised agencies there is a department to gather and analyse the information for the project (Mackay, 2005). The creative team considers previous and current development in relevant advertising (Altstiel & Grow, 2010), locally and internationally, to build upon what has been previously achieved or to come up with new ideas (Arntson, 2003).

Brainstorming and idea generation

Some agencies use brainstorming, whereby members of the creative team generate many ideas about the advertising subject (Wells et al., 2008). The best way to brainstorm a subject is to turn the goals of advertising into questions and try to find answers for them, and write down or draw everything that might provide answers to these questions (Landa, 2004).

The left hemisphere of brain tackles tasks relating to reason, logic, verbal skills and data organisation, skills are often referred to as 'left-brain thinking' (Moriarty et al., 2009). Some left-brain thinking skills are important parts of the copywriter's tasks, especially those related to reason and persuasion. In contrast, the right hemisphere tackles tasks relating to intuition, creativity, non-verbal thinking and art and colour perception, often referred to as 'right-brain

thinking' (Altstiel & Grow, 2010). These skills are characteristic of the creative team, including the art director and copy writer (Lane, King & Russell, 2005). Creative advertising needs both hemispheres to create interaction between product and consumer (Altstiel & Grow, 2010). Thus, art director and copywriter complement each other and are the creative minds behind the advertising. If they brainstorm together, the ideas for the advertisement are likely to be innovative and original.

Emergence and selection of an idea

After creative idea generation such as brainstorming has been used, it is necessary to select the best idea. At this stage, embryonic concepts are developed to suit the creation methods available and to turn them into accepted ideas (Lane, King & Russell, 2008,).

Successful advertisements commonly depend on a successful concept or idea (Altstiel & Grow, 2010). Typically, the concept is a simple one, because audiences do not recall details in advertising but may recall the concept if it doesn't require much thinking (Lane, King & Russell, 2005).

Sketches

Drawing sketches is an important step in creative advertising, as it turns ideas into visible shapes. The art director or designer makes several sketches for the advertisement and finds solutions and alternatives for problems in the early design (Arntson, 2003). The art director or designer sketches out an initial design draft to illustrate the idea and to test more ideas during the preparation phase (Butt, n.d).

Preparing layout

The elements included in the advertisement are added to the graphic layout, and rearranged to compare and identify the best form of the layout (Lane, King & Russell, 2005). At this stage, the art director has a variety of options techniques affecting how different elements might appear in the final format. A

computer may be used, as it offers a range of abilities and many technical solutions that may improve the layout.

Rough

After arranging the elements in the layout, it is created in order for the elements to appear clearly (Lane, King & Russell, 2005). The layout is shown to members of the creative team to identify any difficulties or problems and they adjust the layout to conform to the goals of the advertisement (Mackay, 2005).

Comprehensive layout

The layout is now processed using computer software and takes its final form, with all its elements assembled together (Lane, King & Russell, 2005). Graphic design software plays a major role in adjusting the layout and placing each element precisely. Any modifications requested by the client or the accounts director can still be made at this stage (Wells et al., 2008).

Proof

The final layout of the advertisement is signed by the creative director after a review every detail (Altstiel & Grow, 2010). The resolution of the design is chosen using computer technology; clarity depends on the number of pixels per square inch (Lane, King & Russell, 2005). Final approval from the client is obtained after making all the modifications indicated in previous stages. The client signs the final proof and the work moves to production (Arntson, 2007).

At this point the advertising design is ready to move to the production department.

Advertising Agencies

Advertising agencies are organisations specialising in creativity and marketing, offering these services along with planning, creativity and engagement with the media in order to publish or broadcast an advertisement at the right location(s) (Landa, 2004). Advertising agencies are typically independent businesses run by creative, executive and artistic teams in order to develop and create advertising and transmit it through the media to promote products or services to consumers at the request of the advertiser (Lane & Russell, 2001).

This research is concerned with two types of agencies working in the Saudi market: local and international. Before turning to advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia, it may be helpful first to write a modest background about the development of advertising agencies around the world as an entry point to advertising agencies in the Saudi market and to provide a better understanding of agencies' work in Saudi Arabia. This is because some of the agencies operating in the Saudi market are not only international, but are amongst the oldest and biggest agencies in the world.

This section reviews the following aspects of advertising agencies: their history, roles, types, and structure, it then focuses on advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia.

Historical perspective on advertising agencies

In the past, the need for advertising agencies was limited because the advertising process was simple: business owners wrote their own billboards or have them written by a calligrapher and hung them out for passing folk to see (Rulli, 1999). Today, advertising has become more complicated. It now is a process to which many fields contribute, including art, media, psychology, sociology, and economics (Arens, 2006). Specialised advertising agencies have

emerged to act as intermediaries between advertisers and audiences (Moriarty et al., 2009).

In 1786, William Taylor established the first advertising agency in London, followed by Jem White & Son advertising agency in London in 1800 'later, it was named White Bull Holmes' (Mackay, 2005). In 1843, the first American advertising agency was opened in Philadelphia by Volney Palmer. The purpose of the agency was to sell space in newspapers to advertisers (Stock, 2008), taking over a task performed by post offices, which used to act as middleman between a client and the newspaper he wished to advertise in (Russell & Lane, 1991). In 1869, N.W. Ayer and Son in Philadelphia established the first full-service advertising agency in the world (Burde, 2008). By 1917 American Association of Advertising Agencies AAAA or 4As was established to regulate the burgeoning agencies in the USA (Moriarty et al., 2009).

Until 1940, advertising agencies' work was mainly limited to major companies (Mackay, 2005). After World War 2, many smaller companies and businesses also found it advantageous to use organisations specialising in research, advertising and marketing to expand the scope of their work (Mackay, 2005), and by 1980, the fierce competition among the many agencies resulted in coalitions and alliances between many international advertising companies and agencies (Landa, 2004).

Roles of advertising agencies

Advertising agencies have the primary role of delivering advertisements for clients in a suitable form for consumers. Advertising agencies are professional mediators between clients and consumers, acting to link clients' products and services to consumers. There are three important facets to this: providing the client with advice on how best to identify their goals and reach consumers; offering professional expert services to create the advertisements; and managing the broadcasting of the advertisements to target audiences via the

media (Wells at al., 2008). An additional extended role of advertising agencies is to manage and create unique values, typically brand values, and imbue the consumers' view of products and services with these values to enhance the effectiveness of the channels of communication between the companies seeking to advertise, the advertising agencies and the target consumers. The conception, production and delivery of an advertisement are only part of these products and services (Wells, Burnett & Moriarty, 1995).

Advertising agencies need to have a leadership role if they are to provide the best solutions for how to deliver clients' products or services to end-users. Do advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia play this role properly? This will be discussed later in the thesis.

Types of advertising agencies

Organisations within the advertising field conceive of the field as being subdivided into different categories or 'types' of agency. The most common, and most significant, types of advertising agencies are:

- Full service agencies
- Creative boutique agencies
- Specialised agencies
- Media buying shops
- In-house agencies
- E-commerce agencies
- Rolodex agencies
- Virtual agencies

Full service advertising agencies

Full service advertising agencies provide all services connected to advertising: planning, creativity, production and execution, and dealing with the media (Landa, 2004). This requires that they have a team or teams of specialists

dedicated to four different activities: account management; planning and research; creative services including the creative generation of concept and copy and production, and media purchasing and management, including all activities that involve specialised interaction with media companies (Becker, 2008; Wells et al., 2008).

Creative boutique advertising agencies

Creative boutique agencies primarily focus on the process of creating ideas for advertising, up to and including the production of advertisements ready for delivery through the media (Landa, 2004). Typically, creative boutiques have a small number of employees, some as few as two or three members, including the art director and the copywriter who concentrate on creating and developing the ideas for each advertisement (Wells et al., 2008). Occasionally, full service agencies may seek the help of a creative boutique agency to develop new ideas for their clients' advertisements (Mackay, 2005). Some clients prefer to commission creative boutique agencies directly because interacting with them is simpler and the client can more easily follow their project's passage through the developmental process; they are preferred by many small businesses (Landa 2004).

Specialised advertising agencies

Specialised advertising agencies work to assist the industry or clients with specialised services (Smith & Zook, 2011). There are many different specialised agencies, including, for example, those that specialise in advertising within a specific industry. Specialised agencies may work with particular products or services, such as motor vehicles, rail transport, buildings or real estate, products for children, fashion, clothing, make-up, jewellery, books or gardening equipment (Ogden & Rarick, 2010). Some focus on certain target consumer demographics, typically defined by gender, age, language, culture, work, income, responsibilities, location or assets; they these are known as 'audience-focus agencies' (Smith & Zook, 2011, p. 184).

Media buying shop

Media buying shops specialise in buying or renting advertising spaces in the media, and selling it to other agencies (Wells et al., 2008). They focus on providing the best price and placement for advertisers, but they also provide media advertising solutions, including consultations and evaluating the various media available for advertisements (Ogden & Rarick, 2010).

In-house advertising agencies

Some large companies, whose business is not advertising, have an in-house advertising department to manage their advertising activities and campaigns (Landa, 2004). They are responsible for planning and developing advertising campaigns to market the company's products. In-house agencies have the advantage of being well-informed about the products and services of the company of which they are a part, so know how to bring out the benefits of such products in their advertising (Mackay, 2005). They are fast in creating and running the company's campaigns because all decision makers are close and available; and it is cheaper for the company than buying their advertising from a full service agency (Smith & Zook, 2011).

Some smallest companies also develop their advertising and marketing in-house. In this case, it is a matter of financial economy because they are unable to afford the fees of professional companies, although they may seek the services of graphic designers to create their artwork (Mackay, 2005).

E-commerce advertising services

As a result of advances in on-line technologies, there have emerged new types of agencies specialising in e-advertising and making use of modern forms of media to broadcast advertising. They use such media as CDs, DVDs, the Internet and cell phones (Mackay, 2005). The most common examples of e-commerce advertising service providers are eBay, Gumtree and Amazon and these are currently instrumental in restructuring advertising as an industry.

Rolodex advertising agencies

Rolodex was originally the manufacturer of a widely used card-based contact and address recording system. Rolodex advertising agencies are named as such because of their use of a database of contact and address details of skilled advertising industry specialists (Koekemoer & Bird, 2004). Such an agency depends on hiring specialists for each advertising project (Lane & Russell, 2001); they do not have a permanent team of employees. Their competitive advantage comes from being able to change size to respond to the size of the market, by employing planners, designers, copywriters, marketers or photographers on temporary or project-based contracts (Koekemoer & Bird, 2004).

Virtual advertising agencies

Virtual advertising agencies are a phenomenon that has emerged with the increasing use of on-line technologies and the World Wide Web since the mid-1990s (Becker, 2008). This type of agency does not need employees to work in a particular physical place, and in some cases there are no 'bricks and mortar' premises for clients to meet members of the agency; this offers virtual advertising agencies a competitive advantage in pricing. As much as possible, all transactions relating to the commissioning, creating, testing and delivery of advertising are undertaken on-line (Wells et al., 2008) Employees work from home, from cyber cafes or by mobile access to the internet (Becker, 2008), or at the client's premises. These agencies rely on modern technology, in many cases holding meetings via the Internet, carrying out their work in a virtual office or 'team work room' (Wells et al., 2008).

Although no independent research on the types of agencies in the Saudi market has been found, the researcher observed through field visits that most international advertising agencies are full-service agencies. This may partially explain why international agencies dominate the market: ease of use: clients prefer to deal with a single specialised and well-versed organisation that can

create, produce, and organise the publication of their advertisement rather than dealing with these numerous tasks separately in many places.

Organisational structure of modern advertising agencies

Modern advertising agency businesses are structured according to range and type of specialist departments they use. The structure of full-service advertising agencies is the most comprehensive, typically including all advertising agency roles, most of which are specialised.

Full service agencies typically have the following departments:

- Management
- Accounts department or customer service.
- Planning and research
- Creativity
- Production
- Media

Management

The management of a full-service agency is responsible for running the agency and managing its finances (Lane, King & Russell, 2005). Management typically includes a board of directors, with a general manager and chief executive for some agencies.

Accounts or customer service

Members of this department provide the personal link between the agency and its clients (Wells et al., 2008). This department answers client's questions and provide them with solutions and suggestions to improve their advertising initiatives and campaigns (Bruce & Katz, 1999).

Planning and research

This department provides other professionals in the agency with general and specific information about advertising and target consumers, and provides statistics, research and analysis of the market relevant to particular clients and advertising projects as well as more generally (Smith & Zook, 2011). The planning department works to understand consumers' preferences, developing creative strategies, media planning and measurement and evaluation of advertising and media (Mackay, 2005). It is responsible for planning the advertising, and carries out research on markets and target consumers to that end (Wells et al., 2008). It develops advertising and communication strategies that link products and services for sale with the consumers who are being encouraged to buy them. In some cases, the department undertakes visual research to benefit the creativity department (Mackay, 2005).

Creativity department

Some experts believe the creative department is the most important section of an advertising agency because it is in charge of creating the message of advertising to attract and reach consumers (Arens, 2006). The department usually has a team with a high level of creativity because of the real challenges in delivering advertising messages to the largest possible number of consumers (Smith & Zook, 2011). This department is responsible for finding an idea, then coming up with a design and producing it in the forms required by the media in which it will be published (Lane, King & Russell, 2005). It typically consists of a working group headed by creative director, art director and copy writer, who design and write text to make advertising attractive and enjoyable for viewers and achieve the advertiser's goals (Mackay, 2005).

Production department

This is responsible for preparing the advertisement to be suitable for the media that will carry it (Arntson, 2007,). In print-focused advertising, the production department prepares advertising in the four separation colours suitable for printing, and develops computer treatments to be used in the final form (Wells

at al., 2008). The department works in close coordination with the creative department, and has several roles including being responsible for the final shape of the advertising, overseeing coordination between project processes, and following up work to deliver the project on time, in coordination with the accounts department (Mackay, 2005).

Media department

This rents or buys advertising space, coordinates with the media and evaluates the efficacy of the media used by the agency (Wells et al., 2008). It is the direct point of contact with all media companies that do business with the agency (Mackay, 2005), and is responsible for commercial interactions with companies that supply access to public media such as television time, rental of advertising hoarding space, sections within newspapers, and radio time (Cohen, 2006). It is also responsible for the delivery of advertising to the media companies.

In summary, departments or divisions are used to help advertising agencies create and produce better advertisements because using specialist departments for each part of the advertising process can be more efficient and effective at the individual tasks. The departments / divisions described above are the main elements in the organisational structure of a modern full-service agency as shown in Figure 25.
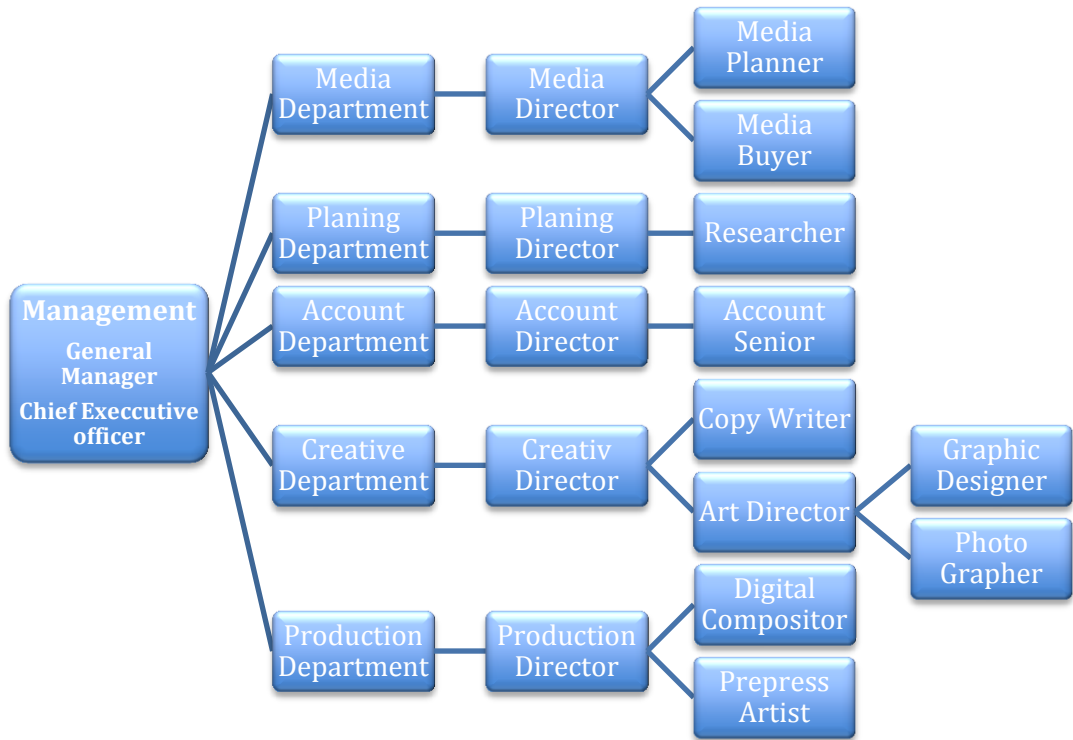
Figure 25. The structure of a modern advertising agency

Source: Lane, King & Russell, 2005; Bruce, 1999 & Author's diagram.

Advertising Agencies in Saudi Arabia

There are currently approximately 12,000 advertising agencies in the Saudi Arabian advertising market (Ashiwan, 2010). These comprise a mix of local and international agencies that have been subject to very strong inter-agency competition since the Kingdom joined the World Trade Organization in 2005 (Alaboad, 2007). Many of these businesses would not have survived had it not been for the high demand for advertising that was a consequence of the new industrial, commercial, and construction projects undertaken after the oil price boom of 2002 (Alkwari, 2009).

International agencies have dominated the Saudi advertising market for a number of reasons: their high level of competence; the high standing of their designs from a world perspective; their strong links to international advertising networks; their long experience in advertising; their preparation of strategies for the future – many of these qualities are not found in local advertising agencies. They also benefit from the openness of Saudi Arabian consumers to domestic and global products (Alaboad, 2007).

Before the 1960s, the Saudi market was too small to be a target for foreign or international advertising agencies. Advertisements were typically visually and conceptually simple, and were delivered to the public by only a few, simple media avenues such as billboards and advertisements in newspapers (Orham & Secil, 1998). After the oil boom and economic revolution of the 1970s, the Saudi consumer market became attractive to producers of goods and providers of services (Al Khateeb, 1998). Advertising agencies became essential to promote new products and services with the enormous increase in Saudi consumption and expansion of the markets (Soraya, 2007).

In the early 1960s the Saudi marketplace first witnessed advertisements by agencies that produced abroad, especially those in Lebanon (Orham & Secil, 1998). With the increase in demand for goods and services, new Saudi advertising agencies were formed to take advantage of the commercial opportunities (Alyusuf, 1989). This resulted, over time, in an established

industry working inside Saudi Arabia and consisting of both local agencies and branches of internationally-based agencies (Alaboad, 2007).

The agencies based in Saudi Arabia and developing advertisements for its market includes full service advertising agencies (Orham & Secil, 1998) and specialist agencies that provide partial services, as described previously. Typically, these partial service agencies carry out simple advertising; their role usually revolves around the creative stage of the advertisement (Orham & Secil, 1998).

The following section reviews a sample of the national/local and international advertising agencies that work and compete in the Saudi market. This gives a basic perspective on the typical history and roles of Saudi Arabia advertising design businesses.

Local Saudi advertising agencies

The largest local Saudi advertising agencies are:

Raied Marketing and Advertising

This is one of the oldest Saudi advertising agencies, founded in 1963, and is located in Jeddah. The agency was reorganised and reopened in 1971, when it began collaborating with the Sergey Pasatine agency in Paris and New York to support the development of advertisements in Arabic (Orham & Secil, 1998).

Marwa for Advertising and Marketing

Another of the older Saudi advertising agencies, it was founded in 1968 under the name 'Makkah Advertising' and changed its name in 1979. The agency has branches in the most important Saudi cities (Orham & Secil, 1998).

Tihama for Advertising and Publicity

This is now one of the biggest and most important of the local agencies. The company was established in Jeddah in 1974 (Orham & Secil, 1998) and now has

more than 20 branches. It has the right to advertise on some highways by means of transport billboards, as well as in stadiums and airports (Tihama, 2008).

Transworld Publicity

Established in 1976 in Riyadh to provide multimedia solutions to the local Saudi advertising market (TWP, 2009), this is one of the most reputable national agencies in the field of TV advertisements with branches in many Saudi cities (Orham & Secil, 1998).

Saudi Advertising International

Founded in 1978 in Jeddah, this agency specialises in producing newspapers and magazine advertisements, and is the sole media representative for a number of national newspapers (Orham & Secil, 1998).

United Outdoor Advertising Company

This was established in 1979 with its head office in Jeddah and branches in other cities in the Kingdom. The company is owned by the Toyota agency in Saudi Arabia, and provides advertising primarily for outdoor media. Toyota's sales to the Saudi market increased by about 20% after this agency was established (Orham & Secil, 1998).

DDB

This was established in 1988 in Riyadh, and has a branch in Jeddah. This local agency has had a good reputation for creating new ideas and concepts for the Saudi advertising market (Araboo, 2007).

Al-Khaleejiah

This was established in 1990 in Riyadh and has offices in Jeddah, Dhahran, Dubai, London, and Paris; the head office is in Riyadh (Alkhaleejiah, 2007). Al-Khaleejiah is the advertising section of The Saudi Company for Publishing and Research, which publishes both newspapers and publications from London (Orham & Secil, 1998).

3 Points Advertising Agency

A local full-service advertising agency, it was established in 1999 with offices in Jeddah, Riyadh, and Dubai. The agency has been awarded seven national and one international prize (Araboo, 2007). In 2002 it undertook a massive advertising campaign on the theme 'Perform your prayers' ('Aqim salatak') that was distributed throughout the Kingdom (3 Points, 2011). In 2009 it ranked as one of the 100 fastest-growing companies in Saudi Arabia (AME, 2009).

Dar Al Muawiyah

This agency was established in Riyadh in 1997 (Alhamaad, personal communication, February 10, 2009). It has specialised in outdoor advertising, like the United Outdoor Advertising Company, and has been considered one of the leading agencies in this field in Saudi Arabia. It contains specialised departments for designing still and animated advertising. It has created roadside advertising that has appeared in the most influential locations in the major cities, and at high-traffic crossroads covering more than 135 main roads in 18 cities (Alhamaad, personal communication, February 10, 2009).

In addition to the above, there are a number of other national advertising agencies such as Zoom Creative, Talawin, Main Line, Makana, Murad that also provide a significant contribution to Saudi advertising from local/Saudi national advertising businesses.

International agencies in Saudi Arabia

Leo Burnett

This agency is old in Saudi terms, having been established in the USA in 1930. It has 96 branches in 84 countries, with two offices in Saudi Arabia, one in Riyadh and one in Jeddah (LeoBurnett, 2008). It is a full service agency with long experience in advertising across the world.

Promoseven

Founded in Beirut (Lebanon) in 1968 at much the same time as the early group of Saudi Arabian advertising agencies, this agency has 19 offices in 17 countries, with local offices in Riyadh and Jeddah (Araboo, 2007). It has become one of the most famous advertising agencies in the world. Its work has received gold prizes in outdoor advertising and journalism advertising, and two silver prizes in printed advertising, at the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival in 2008 (Saida, 2008).

Saatchi & Saatchi

This is one of the most famous adverting agencies in the world. It was established in 1970 as a small creative boutique (Smith & Zook, 2011) and now has around 150 offices in 86 countries, with offices in Saudi Arabia in Riyadh and Jeddah (Saatchi & Saatchi, 2008). Since its establishment, the company has won around 4000 awards (Saatchi & Saatchi, 2008).

Impact BBDO

Established in 1971 and opening branches in Jeddah in 1986 and Riyadh in 1998 (Nady, 2008), this company has an extensive international presence with 287 offices in 100 countries (Mayor, 2006). In 2007, the company was selected from 3600 international advertising agencies and companies to receive the London International Award for one of its Saudi advertisements (Nady, 2008).

Ogilvy

Ogilvy is one of the larger international advertising and publicity companies in the world (Moriarty, 1991, p. 5). It was established in the 1980s and now has branches in almost all countries, including a Saudi branch in Riyadh (Ogilvy, 2008). The company is famous for creativity in advertising design.

Other significant international companies and agencies working in the Saudi advertising market include Grey World, Propaganda, Deep, Focus, Intermarket and JWT.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed five areas of the advertising and related literatures that have confirmed the importance of undertaking the research and provided the basis for identifying which data to collect and analyse. The first concerned graphic design issues. The second was advertising, including its use in Saudi Arabia. The third was the use of computer hardware and software on visual design and advertising. The fourth reviewed advertising processes with particular attention to the creative process. The final section focused on the advertising agencies and the advertising industry in Saudi Arabia.

The next chapter will discuss research methods, including data collection, participant selection, data analysis and ethical issues.

Chapter 3/ Research Methodologies: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods, Bias and Ethics

This research used a mixed-methods approach comprising an integrated combination of self-administered questionnaires (348 delivered, 193 returned completed for analysis) and semi-structured interviews (30 participants) to gather information about the design practices, processes, computer technologies, education and resources used by graphic and advertising designers in local and international agencies in the Saudi advertising design sector. Mixed methods were used in the study enabling breadth (questionnaires) and depth (interviews) 'to provide a unified understanding of a research problem' (Katsirikou & Skiadas, 2010, p. 11). The data collected was primarily qualitative, and was collected in part using Likert scales questions and closed questions that offered a quantitative basis for analysis. The content and structure of questions provided a means of triangulation to ensure the validity and reliability of the data, and to identify bias, errors and other limitations.

The qualitative approach was predominant because the research focused on gathering information using individuals' judgments, and perceptions and their explanation of those perceptions to realise an integral understanding (Creswell, 2007) of multiple aspects of advertising design in Saudi Arabia,. This primarily qualitative focus for data collection provided rich data about the researched situation (Addington-Hall et al., 2007). The semi-structured interviews, especially, were appropriate for eliciting rich qualitative information in response to 'what, why, when and how' questions central to addressing the research questions and fulfilling the research's objectives. Using a primarily qualitative focus to gathering data about participants' judgments and perceptions was particularly valuable because it facilitated the gathering of the information from participants with expertise in the field. Experience indicates the culture of this participant group would likely have presented significant problems to the use of more technical quantitative approaches to data collection.

Using interviews of expert participants has the advantage that the data collected has a 'high validity within a specific context' and provides the basis for understanding the range of issues within the specific situation being researched (Bastick & Matalon, 2007, p. 5). In general, the use of a qualitative focus to data collection and analysis is characterised by flexibility and development potential (Key, 1997 & Addington-Hall et al., 2007): both are useful in this research.

Within this qualitative focus for data collection, quantitative Likert scale questions and closed questions were used where possible for collecting data where numerical analysis offered clarity and the possibility of a visual basis for understanding the distribution of individuals' responses (Creswell, 2007). Quantitative Likert scale questions and closed questions were used to map the distribution of participants by the type of agencies at which they work; the balance of participants across the four major cities from which participants were invited; the distribution of participants in terms of their years of experience in design activity, and profiling the distribution of opinions on particular issues, e.g. by graphs of frequency counts of responses (Bastick & Matalon, 2007). The use of quantitative analysis of responses to Likert scale questions and closed questions enabled the researcher to identify the average responses across the participant sample along with their standard deviations where relevant (Creswell, 2007) to enable the outcomes of the analyses from the questionnaires to be generalised (Bastick & Matalon, 2007) subject to interpretation that took into consideration the potential for cognitive and other biases and variations in participants understanding of the concept of quality as described earlier in Chapter 2.

Data collection methods

The two data gathering methods used, in addition to data gathered from existing literature, were an anonymous, self-administered questionnaire survey of advertising designer professional (193 completed questionnaires from 348 distributed) from local and international advertising agencies in the Saudi Arabian advertising industry, and in-depth semi-structured interviews (30 participants) with local and international experts in the industry, selected across four cities in Saudi Arabia. In this multi-method approach the methods were arranged to complement each other as described in Creswell (2007) by collecting different data addressing the same issues, thus helping improve research quality and enabling the researcher more deeply to understand and interpret the relationships between factors emerging from the elicited data (Denscombe, 2003).

Anonymous self-administered questionnaire

The self-administrated questionnaire consisted of a mix of open-ended and closed questions chosen to elicit specific information about advertising design practices and outcomes in Saudi Arabia. A significant proportion of the questions required participants to provide personal judgment or opinion on particular issues relating to advertising design in Saudi Arabia. The data for issues whose focus was exploratory, for example, 'assessing the difficulties faced by designers' were best done with open-ended questions. Open-ended questions allowed respondents to phrase their answers any ways they wished (Leung, 2001), permitting respondents to explore and address the research question in whatever depth was appropriate to them. This strategy permitted the researcher to gather a wide range of details about issues and to identify important considerations that could have been overlooked or hidden by closed question responses (Creswell, 2007,).

The use of Likert-scale questions and closed questions for other items in the survey had the advantage of offering simplified and tightly codified responses

(Reja et al., 2003) that could be analysed quantitatively. Likert-scale questions and closed questions are easier and faster for participants to answer (and hence participants can be asked to address more issues); easier to code; and easier to analyse because the data can be converted into numbers and frequencies of responses graphed to provide a visual indication of the shape of the distribution of responses. They provide a simpler basis for eliciting results than do open-ended questions (Leung, 2001), and this reduces data collection problems, and reduces discrimination against less literate respondents (Reja et al., 2003).

The questionnaires were initially distributed to 348 potential participants by email and post. This proved unsatisfactory in the Saudi Arabian context (see later explanation). The questionnaires were then delivered by hand and completed questionnaires were received from 193 professional advertising designers from local and international advertising agencies in the four largest cities of Saudi Arabia: Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam and Khamis Mushait. These four cities are the most productive advertising centres in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has an area of around ¼ of Europe and driving distances between Saudi cities are similar to the distances between London and Rome or Paris and Budapest. Riyadh is the capital, the largest city, and the most important for the advertising industry. It is the academic heart of the country, with the largest number of universities, and a population of about 4,700,000 (Alriyadh, 2008). Jeddah is the primary commercial centre of Saudi Arabia; an important port located on the west coast of the country, and the gateway to Makkah. Jeddah is located about 900 km west by road from Riyadh with a population of 3,400,000 people (Alriyadh, 2008). Dammam is the administrative capital of the eastern province of the Kingdom, and has the largest reserve of oil in the world. Dammam is 400 km from Riyadh and 1300 km from Jeddah, and has a population of 1,000,000 people (Alriyadh, 2008). The fourth city, Khamis Mushait, is in the south-west about 1000 km from Riyadh and 1400 km from Dammam. It is considered the fourth most important commercial city in Saudi Arabia, and is a popular tourist destination. Its population is about 754,000 (Shahrani, 2009).

The choice of anonymous self-administrated questionnaires delivered to advertising design professionals as the means to gather data in this research was predicated on multiple reasons:

- Such a questionnaire is an efficient, speedy, and economical way to gather data. It gathers information with no need for interaction or dialogue with the respondents (Denscombe, 2003).

- It can help minimise bias introduced by the researcher's beliefs (Leung, 2001, p.188). In that sense, data from anonymous questionnaires act as a way to check any bias by the researcher that will assist in phrasing the questions in the semi-structured interviews.

- Communication efficiency and effectiveness is important in data collection. The data was collected in Saudi Arabia from a large number of individuals in four cities 1400 km apart. It is physically and temporally difficult to meet so many participants; but questionnaires can be mailed or emailed or provided on the Internet (see section later on problems of using post and email for questionnaires in Saudi context) (Leung, 2001; Addington-Hall et al., 2007).

- Questionnaires efficiently obtain data from large numbers of respondents (Addington-Hall et al., 2007).

- Answering a self-administered questionnaire gives respondents the choice of answering in the place and time they prefer. This is especially important if respondents are busy (Addington-Hall et al., 2007), as were most of the advertising design participants. Self-administrated questionnaires also give participants the opportunity to fully review and understand the question and information before answering (Reja et al., 2003).

- The design of the questionnaire did not contain names or means of identifying respondents. The anonymity of self-administered questionnaires is helpful in two ways: It allows respondent to express their thoughts and answer questions without reservation, and lets them feel more comfortable about expressing views that might cause

embarrassment or concern in a setting where they could be identified: for instance, if they wished to express negative comments about the use of computers in their place of work.

- The questions of self-administrated questionnaires are subject to standard formats (Leung, 2001). The questionnaire used in this research was planned by a team of the researcher and supervisor before being revised and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit two kinds of information. The first was information about the context *within which* Saudi Arabian advertising designers undertake their work. The second was information *about differences between the ways* different individuals and groups undertake advertising design as an activity, including their educational background, resources and use of computer technology. Participants were selected to provide a broadly representative sample of the range of advertising design professionals in Saudi Arabia.

The information gathered from participants included:

- Background data about participants.
- Sources and resources that designers used when creating advertising designs.

- Personal judgments and perceptions of the relative quality of advertising designs created by local advertising agencies compared with those created by international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia.

- Reasons for any disparities in quality between advertising designs created by local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia.

- Specific differences in processes between individuals and between businesses, particularly between local and international businesses.

- The use of computers, with particular reference to perceived differences in their impact on design practices and the quality of output in local and international businesses.

- The types of software used in advertising design agencies in Saudi Arabia and their relative distribution between local and international businesses.

- Difficulties facing advertising designers in both local and international agencies in Saudi Arabia, and how participants thought particular difficulties might be overcome.

- The role of education and training in the professional formation of local advertising designers in Saudi Arabia.

The structure of the questionnaire and its questions were designed to elicit this information in ways that were easy to answer, and also gave participants the opportunity to answer more fully as they wished. It did this by using a combination of open-ended questions when the information being elicited was more variable, unbounded and unknown; single and multi-choice questions where the information was bounded and Likert-scale questions where relative levels of opinion on specific issues were being identified for comparison. .

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather qualitative information from thirty expert participants. This was undertaken for four reasons: to complement and triangulate the data collected via the questionnaire; to enable greater depth of data to be gathered; to gather comparative data; and to provide an additional means to triangulate the data to identify potential, bias and errors in responses to ensure the reliability and validity of the outcomes of analyses. The semi-structured interview is regarded as an appropriate method to provide the researcher with these sorts of high-quality, dependable information that can be analysed comparatively (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

The researcher gathered information from 30 interviewees who were experts in the Saudi advertising industry. The interviewees were selected for their extensive experience in Saudi advertising and high status in the advertising field. This combination of criteria was to ensure the interviewees had sufficient

background to answer questions regarding differences between local and international advertising agencies operating within Saudi Arabia. These experts were also in a position to identify the impact of computers, and to identify specific details of advertising design processes and methods. They could also suggest, and discuss potential options for, how local design methods and industry could be improved. The interviews were conducted face-to-face rather than remotely (e.g. via phone or video-conferencing or Skype).

This form of in-depth semi-structured interview was used in this research because:

- Semi-structured interviews offer the possibility of identifying ways to improve local product through the opinions and suggestions of experts in the field of advertising. This was of particular benefit as one of the research objectives of this study was to identify ways to improve Saudi advertising design. They also offer the possibility of participants identifying ways that improvements might be implemented.

- The semi-structured format is a well-tested means of acquiring specific information from specialists (Leung, 2001). It gives the opportunity to get in-depth information on a subject because basic questions are carefully prepared in advance of the interview.

- The format gives the researcher the opportunity to steer the conversation towards the focus of the into irrelevant areas (Reja et al., 2003).

- Interviews can be used to gather detailed information about the practices and processes of designers. Semi-structured interviews in particular can elicit rich information from knowledgeable participants (Addington-Hall et al., 2007).

- The use of in-depth semi-structured interviews gives the researcher the opportunity to seek clarification if answers are not obvious or clear (Leung, 2001).

- In-depth semi-structured interviews are one of the best ways to gather research information from individuals and small groups (Reja et al.,

2003). The format gives participants time to provide detailed opinions during the discussion (Social Analysis, 2008).

- The format gives the opportunity for the researcher to identify and obtain additional useful information on issues that emerge during interviews by asking supplementary questions (Leung, 2001).

- The semi-structured interview format provides the researcher with opportunities to re-pose questions to interviewees if there are internal contradictions in their responses or contradictions with the responses of earlier interviewees (Addington-Hall et al., 2007).

- The semi-structured interview format also provides a means for the participant interviewees to develop considered, reflective responses to questions because they know the questions in advance and can prepare their answers (Neuman, 1997). This was especially relevant in this research, where questions about the best ways to improve advertising design in Saudi Arabia received thoughtful reflections on possibilities. Interviewees had thought through the implications of different ideas before settling on a response for the interview.

- Semi-structured interviews are useful to compare opinions of specialists and experts (Social Analysis, 2008). This was appropriate to this research because there was a perceived potential difference in expertise between local firms and internationals; hence, the data analysis depended on having a valid basis by which to compare the opinions of designers and design managers working in these different forms of agencies.

- Many research participants are comfortable providing information in a semi-structured interview format because it is like a conversation and provides an informal, relaxed atmosphere (Social Analysis, 2008) compared to, say, completing a complex questionnaire or online survey.

- The semi-structured interview method can be especially useful in dealing with practical subjects. An important part of the research was the identification of specific advertising design processes and resources used by different advertising organisations. Using semi-structured interviews

was helpful in obtaining specific and practical details of individuals' and organisations' design processes.

- Using semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to elicit fine details of known issues and the particulars of unexpected issues because the open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate and gave them freedom to talk about details (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

- The interviews had the potential to identify unconsidered issues (Leung, 2001).

- The interviews complemented the questionnaires used with other participants. Where issues emerged there, they could be explored in more detail by asking the experts and specialists to elaborate on them (Neuman, 1997).

- The interview format encouraged respondents to provide more complete and comprehensive responses because the interviewer was able to explain the importance and significance of their answers (Neuman, 1997).

To recap, the information from the semi-structured interviews was used to identify the reasons for quality differences between advertising design created by some local agencies and the international ones. The respondents' information from the interviews was used to identify the impact of computer technology on Saudi advertising design wither the effects are positive or negative. Furthermore, the interviews were used to provide suggestions and recommendations to improve local Saudi advertising design, an important part of the research objectives.

Participant selection

This research gathered data from a total of 223 participants, all professionals working in local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia. They participated either by completing a questionnaire (193) or by undertaking a

semi-structured, one-on-one interview (30). All participants were selected from those with high status in Saudi advertising design, with professional expertise and knowledge, experience in Saudi Arabian advertising design and a personal background in the field.

Three hundred and forty eight (348) questionnaires were distributed to potential participants and 250 were returned. Of these, 57 were set aside because they were unfinished or had significant and obvious errors. This left 193.questionnaires available and suitable for analysis Local agencies accounted for 107 of the completed questionnaires, and eighty-six 86 were from international agencies. This provided an approximate balance between the submissions from participants from local advertising agencies (55%) and those from international advertising agencies (45%) or (50% + or – 5%).

Thirty additional participants were interviewed, closely balanced between local and international agencies of 50% + or – 3.5%. Fourteen (47%) worked in local agencies and sixteen (53%) in international agencies. All interviewees were creative directors, art directors, or graphic designers working in Saudi Arabian advertising; some with over 30 years' experience in the field. All interviews were face-to–face and one-on-one.

Four methods were used to select participants for the questionnaire and interviews:

- Through advertising design business' websites on the Internet.
- Through the Chamber of Commerce in Saudi Arabia.
- Through telephone directories and trade guides.
- Through the snowball approach in some cases, in which participants guided the researcher to other potential participants. This approach was useful to identify smaller and less well-known agencies.

A key underlying assumption the research tested was whether local advertising design agencies produce output of lower standard than that of international agencies operating in Saudi Arabia. The participants, whether from local and international agencies, were asked the same questions. They provided

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information about their levels of computer skills, the sources they used when creating advertising designs, and their explanations of the differences in quality between by locally- and internationally- created advertisements. Each person provided information on their advertising design process and the impact of computers on design. They also provided information on the positive and negative aspects of using computers in design. They identified the most important graphic design software used in their agency, and the difficulties faced by designers whether working in local or international agencies. They also provided opinions about the influence of education and training on local advertising in Saudi Arabia, and ideas for how local design might be improved.

Distribution of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed

- By post.
- By E-mail.
- By personal delivery to agencies and designers, and personal collection after a period of time.

Postal delivery of questionnaires was completely ineffective. No replies were received to questionnaires sent by post. Email delivery was only slightly more effective, with a single reply.

Personal manual distribution and collection of questionnaires proved to be the only effective method. This consumed considerable time, money, and effort to travel to every participant in each of the four cities: an overall distance of several thousand kilometres. For this research, however, it proved the only method of collecting the data.

The above failure of remote approaches to gathering survey information is potentially significant learning in terms of professional research practice. It may that this failure of survey data collection by post and email relative to personal

distribution and collection by the researcher is characteristic of research in Saudi Arabia, and perhaps also in other Arabic-speaking countries. If so, it indicates that significantly higher data collection costs, time and personnel resources must typically be budgeted for survey research in these contexts.

Permission issues: Collecting data in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has rules governing the activities of student researchers that require several additional activities to be undertaken also with time and resource implications for the research. The candidate had to seek approval through Curtin University by way of an official letter to the administrators at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia, to obtain and confirm permission for the candidate to start data collection in Saudi Arabia. When the researcher arrived in Riyadh, he obtained an official letter from King Saud University addressed to advertising agencies, permitting the researcher to hand out questionnaires and to interview agency members for research purposes. Formal appointments with both local and international agencies had to be made to distribute questionnaires. After the collection of the questionnaires, formal appointments had to be made to undertake the interviews. The process of collecting data extended from December 2008, through to April 2009.

The additional activities needed for collection of research data in Saudi Arabia offers similar learning about conducting research in the Middle East and the need for higher research budget allowances. Research budgets and time planning for research undertaken by PhD students (and for other researchers) must allow travel, time and accommodation costs associated with arrangements for permissions to collect data.

Data recording methods

For the semi-structured interviews, the researcher used hard copy and digital audio-recording methods to record information from participants. The researcher recorded detailed notes of each interview; for twenty-four of them, the notes were backed up by audio digital recordings (six participants preferred not to be recorded). The recordings were later transcribed by the researcher to supplement the researcher's notes. Most participants answered the questionnaires on the questionnaire paper, but a small number returned the responses via Internet.

Difficulties faced at data collection

Data collection took six months including preliminary paperwork for permissions. There were some obvious and some unexpected difficulties:

- The researcher was undertaking the PhD study at an Australian university and the data collection was undertaken in Saudi Arabian cities. This presented some difficulties (see above) that were only partly alleviated by the researcher being a fluent Arabic speaker.
- The distance between the four cities from which the research information was collected is great, as has already been noted.
- Initially, it was proposed to use modern technology such as the Internet and e-mail to reduce the problems of distance, terrain and climate; but these methods proved unsuccessful; questionnaires sent by any remote means (post, email or Internet) were ignored by almost all recipients. The only successful way to elicit the research information was by delivering them personally to participants. This was expensive in costs and resources, due in part to the time taken for this approach, in part to the need to travel between four cities, and, in part, the cost of accommodation.

- Delays, particularly in the completion of the questionnaires by the participants in the advertising design agencies, and in some cases from participants in interviews, proved to be a significant problem.
- Some interviews had to be held late in the evening after work. As many of the participants worked until 9 pm, this presented significant practical problems. Often interviews were held in whatever public facilities were open at that time, such as cafes near agencies. It was not uncommon for these interviews to extend late into the night.
- Undertaking the research in Saudi Arabia with participants who were primarily Arabic speakers resulted in additional complications in the data collection. The researcher had to translate the questionnaire and interview questions into Arabic, and have an Arabic language specialist compare the Arabic and English versions and confirm that the Arabic version had the same meaning as the original. Once the data had been collected, the researcher himself had to translate Arabic participants' answers into English before analysing it.
- When conducting the interviews, in many cases considerable time was needed to contact participants and establish a trusting relationship with them before they would talk freely to the researcher.

Data analysis methods

The analysis of the data was undertaken using three primary methods: critical analysis, comparative analysis and content analysis

Critical analysis

The analyses in this research were undertaken from the perspective of critical analysis. That is, the literature being reviewed, the data collected, and the findings being developed, i.e. the thinking, concepts, ideas, opinions, and analyses, were all subjected to critical review in terms of their consistency, coherence, validity, accuracy and reasoning, and attention was paid to identify

fallacies and irrelevant or incoherent information, and to ensure valid reasoning (Toit, 2008). Critical analysis was used because the research and findings bring together qualitative and quantitative information, and this process crucially depends on logical argument (Forsyth & Crewe, 2006). This use of critical analysis helped the researcher to identify and clarify his own point of view when considering the results that emerged from analysing participants' data. Critical analysis assisted in gaining improved depth of understanding of the many contextual considerations that related to the focus of this research: for example, of how educational factors shaped the quality of local advertising design. Using critical analysis to analyse that information alongside the relevant data from participants exposed underlying links between the Saudi education system and the quality of local Saudi advertising.

Critical analysis also played an important part in reviewing participants' data, and in determining which implications might reasonably be drawn. For example, the suggestions about how local Saudi advertising might be improved were varied, complex, but often partial. The critical thinking approach was helpful in clarifying these responses and identifying ways they could present a coherent whole.

Comparative analysis

A primary analytical challenge in this research was to identify differences between local and international agencies' operations in terms of their use of processes, activities, output qualities, resources, educational preparation and professional formation, social networks, business structures and ICT (Information and Communication Technology). In fact, of any reasons that might help to explain why their outputs differ, and how local agencies might improve. This required comparative analysis of the information gathered from representatives of both groups, whether by interview or questionnaire. The comparative method also helped focus on participants' understanding of situations, their views and values (Neuman, 1997). Comparative analysis provides a perspective focusing on observation of *differences* between concepts,

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ideas and patterns, giving the researcher knowledge, and a way of identifying patterns in the data and responses, and so offering the ability to make predictions (Pentti, 2007). Comparative analysis was used in this study to determine similarities and differences on many issues, as seen by the two groups of participants (Neuman, 1997). Furthermore, the role of comparative analysis to test two or more cases, patterns, incidents, processes or conceptions and ideas to providing intelligible results that can be used with other approaches (Neuman, 1997) was useful to obtain a more comprehensive comparison between a numbers of issues. The approach proved rather complex because the information about the differences between local and international advertising design businesses and professionals was gathered from members of both groups who were obviously likely to have biased views that distorted the information. This meant that a second layer of analysis was necessary to identify and compare differences between the groups about issues relating to the groups themselves. This was partially accomplished by focusing on the concepts underpinning the information from each group: how power, status and self-interest shaped the way representatives of each groups saw a situation and reported it. Surprisingly, in this research, the differences between the information each group provided in the questionnaires were relatively straightforward, and in most cases had relatively obvious explanations.

Content analysis

Content analysis is used in recognising meanings, presence and relationships inside words and texts, and thus deducing text-implied messages (Busch et al., 2005). The focus of content analysis is in creating a 'clean' justified interpretation of the information that has been provided (Neuman, 1997, p. 31). This is prior to analyses of that information, such as the comparative analysis described above. Content analysis is used to investigate the information provided by a specific source about a specific issue through a careful critical analysis that may involve other perspectives, such as cultural analysis, to distil the information into a coherent, justified 'meaning' expressed conceptually in ways that are then open to justifiable analysis as data (Neuman, 1997) . It also

helps in the later quantitative analysis of the information extracted from the raw data of the questionnaires and interviews, offering further opportunities for the researcher to perceive inferences implicit in the data and confirm the validity of the information (Steenkamp & Northcott, 2007).

Effective content analysis potentially offers a more direct view of the relations and relationships implicit within raw data (and the relevant literature), making these more accessible and easier to use in further analysis.

Issues of Bias in Interviews and Questionnaires

The methods used for data collection were semi-structured interviews and a self-administered questionnaire. Standard processes were followed in developing these protocols, that is, asking directly for required data, avoiding leading questions and ensuring triangulation between a proportion of questions to test reliability and validity (Adams & Cox, 2008). In addition, all participants who took part in the research were volunteers, and fully informed about the research. The researcher explained to participants how the information they gave would be used for the purposes of the research, their identity would remain anonymous, and they had the right to withdraw at any time. In view of the national context of the research, it was made clear to participants there was no pressure from the government or any organization for the participants to participate in the research, because this offered participants more freedom in answering the questions (see e.g. Northrup, 1996).

In theory, if participants behave as perfect data sources, they would provide accurate and valid data. Participants are human, however, and both semi-structured interviews and questionnaires in this research involved participants in self-report and subjective opinions, which are both associated with several forms of bias and error (Yu, 2010; Adams & Cox, 2008). Some obvious forms of bias that might apply in this case are:

- Social desirability and similar sources of bias;

- Bias due to tacitly held professional beliefs;

- Colonialistic bias;

- Internationalist bias;

- Education/status bias;

- Midpoint bias;

- Acquiescence bias;

- Negative-affectivity bias.

Errors may be also due to a less than 100% coefficient of stability in data from some respondents, in that answers they give at one time may alter once they have had time to reflect on the questions and on the situation (Baiba, 2009). This is likely, because the research offers a potential learning process. Respondents were being asked at one time, in detail, about issues to do with common professional practice that typically they would otherwise rarely consciously consider. The potential exists for some participants to reconsider the questions over time and review their personal position: a form of professional learning that might result in their providing different answers if they were asked again. Alternatively, and more simply, tiredness and pressures of work might lead them to have different responses at different times.

Several forms of potential bias have social or cultural foundations. Social desirability bias occurs as a result of a 'tendency for people to present themselves (or their attitudes) favorably according to the current cultural norms' (Dodd-McCue, 2010, p.4). This can happen with responses from both local and international participants. One obvious consideration is that participants may have provided answers that would not result in significant tension with their professional peers. Similarly, participants may have felt that they needed to give the answers they thought the researcher wanted, to avoid personal tension with the researcher (see e.g. Dillon, 1994).

Respondents' answers may also be biased by beliefs common to their profession or professional group. For example, it may be a commonly held assumption

among international advertising designers that local advertising designers are of lower quality (and vice-versa). At a larger, nationalist scale, a similar effect occurs via a 'colonialist' type of bias common in Saudi society; what might be termed 'superiority looking to foreigners' 'colonial mentality', or 'colonial domination', by which people in Saudi Arabia regard professionals coming from developed foreign countries as better than local professionals working in similar fields. The Australian concept of 'cultural cringe,' is similar in meaning (Phillips, 2006). This is reinforced by an opposite internationalist bias in which individuals working for international organizations may feel a sense of superiority over those working for local organizations (as above). Again at the professional level, bias about individual or group value may also be associated with individuals' levels of education, qualifications and membership of professional organisations.

The practical aspects of questionnaire and interview questions can also bias outcomes. In this case, there may be some individual proclivity to withhold particular information; or some respondents may not understand some questions well. For example, some participants tend to weight their responses to the middle of any scale (mid-point bias) (Dodd-McCue, 2010, p.3) or try to identify the answer that the research might want and answer in line with that (acquiescence bias) (Razavi, 2010). This is most likely encountered in questions that include an 'agree' choice among their answers.

Self-reports from tired, overworked or stressed participants may result in a negative affectivity bias, in which participants' answers may be biased by their emotional state (Razavi, 2010). In the Saudi advertising industry, staff in leading advertising agencies are under pressure, their designers busy, and high levels of work-related stress are associated with delivering their projects on time.

At a practical level, answers from respondents depend on their understanding of the questions, and their responses depend on their education level, culture, mood and experience. In the skill levels involved in dealing with computers in the advertising design section, self-ranking depends on the understanding of the participants of the words 'beginner,' 'average,' 'good,' and 'expert'. There is no

standard criterion for each, and respondents' answers will depend on their personal understanding of the terms.

In theory, it would be possible to evaluate in detail the levels of these and any other forms of bias in individual participants' responses by asking many additional questions. Practically, however, it is not possible to do this at the data collection stage given the limitations on the time and goodwill of the participants. Instead, awareness of the potential for the various forms of bias has been incorporated into the analysis of the collected data.

There are always bias issues in data collection; these are not necessarily reasons for avoiding using self-report and personal opinions in research. Dillon (1994) concluded the advantages of using self-reports by experts more than outweigh the problems.

Limitations of the research method

Beside the cognitive biases associated with self-report discussed earlier, the data collection methods have two practical limitations.

The number of variations of types of advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia is larger than might be expected. In part, this appears due to advertising having developed in a relative ad-hoc manner in Saudi Arabia, which is a country whose tribal-based cultural norms do not align well with the commercial culture on which modern advertising agency development is typically developed. The research participants were chosen to represent the main types of advertising agency in Saudi Arabia, and there provide good representation for the focus of the research: explanations of differences in quality of output between international and local advertising agencies. At a more granular level, however, the research does not guarantee to have representatives from every configuration or type of advertising agency organization found in Saudi Arabia. The implication is the findings may not exactly apply to the small number of

advertising agencies that differ significantly from the mainstream of local and international agencies represented in the data.

The second practical limitation concerns the gap between the professional knowledge of participants required to practice advertising design, and the reflective, critical conceptual skills needed to accurately understand and comment on those professional practices. This is a common problem in research involving practitioners in any field. It is the reason, for example, why professional sports people employ sports scientists to help them improve their game. Sports persons typically lack the theoretical basis for understanding what they are skilled at practicing. The implication for this research is the theoretical detail of what it has been possible to ask participants has been bounded by the need to ensure that the questions have a good match with the professional knowledge and skills of participants. This has meant the more detailed conceptual issues that emerged have been left to be investigated at a later time using research methods suited to more tightly focus on those issues.

Ethical issues

This research has a small number of potential ethical implications and considerations, as does any research in which the researcher gathers information from individuals and social groups. Prior to the start of the research, the researcher submitted a detailed description of the research and its data collection protocols to the Human Research Ethics Committee at Curtin University describing how perceived ethical issues had been addressed. The Committee approved the ethical basis of this research before its commencement. During the data collection processes in Saudi Arabia, King Saud University took over responsibility for ethical conduct of the researcher.

Participants in the research were provided with an information sheet that informed them in detail about the research and their right to withdraw at any time without loss. The data from the respondents and companies were

confidential, and the questionnaires were anonymous. The researcher and his supervisor had access to the contact details of the respondents, and these contact details were kept separate from the data. The information from the respondents was used for the purposes of this research only. All intellectual property of others used in this research and thesis has been acknowledged and referenced. All electronic and paper records related to the interviews and questionnaires are de-identified to contain no names or address. The data will be held in a secure place for five years or destroyed after the examination of this research, in keeping with Curtin University policies.

Summary

This chapter has provided a critical overview of the research methods used in this PhD research. The chapter has identified and discussed the data analysis methods used: critical analysis, comparative analysis and content analysis. In the penultimate section of the chapter, ethical issues were discussed.

The data collection and analysis was mixed-method: primarily having a qualitative focus and using quantitative Likert-scale questions and closed questions when relevant. The data collection comprised a self-administered questionnaire (193 valid responses) plus semi-structured interviews of expert participants (30) to gather data from professional participants working in local and international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia. The practical and theoretical aspects of how the questionnaires were distributed and collected and the semi-structured interviews were undertaken have been described in detail. The particular difficulties of data collection in Saudi Arabia specific to this research have also been described.

The following chapter will describe the outcomes of the analyses of the data from the self-administered questionnaire survey and the semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 4/ Data Analysis

The chapter presents the information provided in response to the questionnaires and interviews by professional advertising designers from both local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia.

Section 1: Questionnaire Survey

Data was collected from a self-administrated questionnaire issued to 193 participants from local and international advertising agencies in four cities in Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, Jaddah, Dammam and Khamis Mushait). The questionnaire focused on: participants' experience and skill in using computers in advertising design; the choice and use of software in advertising agencies; sources of information used by designers; design training, the comparative quality of advertising from local design businesses compared with the international presence of advertising agencies; areas of difference between local and international businesses; reasons for any quality differences between local and international businesses; identification of the most important advertising-related concerns of agencies' clients; impact of computers on Saudi advertising design; Saudi education for advertising designers and those in related fields such as graphic design; design and art training in Saudi Arabia; specific difficulties encountered by advertising designers in Saudi Arabia; and potential solutions to all or any of these issues.

In this section, the reporting of the information from each question has the same structure:

- Topic heading
- Description
- Question
- Description of information gathered, with any comments on interpreting the information.

Balance of Participants between Local and International Advertising Agencies in Saudi Arabia

This section reviews the distribution by business of the participants who completed the questionnaire.

Q. Do you work in a local or international advertising agency?

Table 1 and Figure 26 indicate the distribution of participants according to the type of advertising agency in which they are employed. The distribution of participants who completed the questionnaire was weighted 5% from the mean towards those employed by local advertising. Of the total of 193 participants, the participants from local Saudi Arabian advertising agencies numbered 107 (55%) and the participants from international advertising agencies numbered 86 (45%).

Table 1.

Type of agencies at which participants work

Employer	Frequency	Per cent
Local Saudi advertising agency	107	55.4%
International agency operating in Saudi Arabia	86	44.6%
Total	193	100%

Research access to participants from local advertising agencies was easier than for international advertising agencies. Hence, their numbers were higher. There were approximately 5% fewer participants from international advertising agencies. This difference is of relatively low significance for most questions in

the survey, however, because, in most cases, the information from each group of participants shows strong agreement. In what follows, attention will be drawn to the relevance the difference in balance between participant numbers in specific questions where the interpretation of the information may be significantly shaped by it.

It would have been useful to compare the ratios of participants against the relative sizes of local and international businesses, for example in terms of the numbers of employees or levels of business. This was not possible because such general business and industrial figures are not available in Saudi Arabia at this time.

Participants' agencies
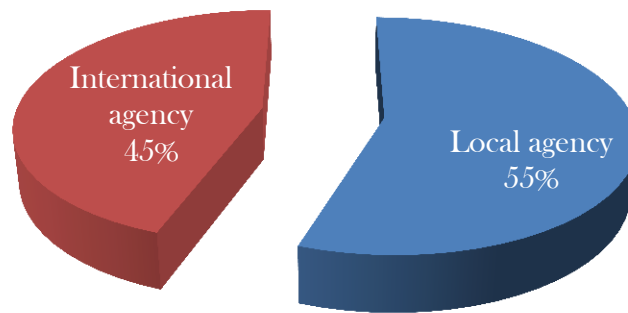
Figure 26. Proportion of participants from local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia.

Participants by City

Participants from the four main cities of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam and Khamis Mushait) undertook the questionnaire. These four cities are significant in advertising design terms because they are the most important in the economy and advertising industry in Saudi Arabia (see Chapter 3).

Q. Where is your work location: Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam or Khamis Mushait?

Table 2 indicates the relative distribution of participants from the four cities Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam and Khamis Mushait. There were 95 participants from Riyadh, representing 49.2% of the total participants. The population of Riyadh is 4,700,000 and this represents about 48% of the total number of the four cities' population. There were 61 participants from Jeddah, representing about 32%. The population of Jeddah is 3,400,000 and this represents about 34% of the total population of the four cities. There were 25 participants from Dammam representing 13%. The population of Dammam is 1,000,631 and this represents about 10% of the total of the four cities' population. There were 12 participants from Khamis Mushait representing about 6%. The population of Khamis is 754,000 and this represents about 8% of the total population of the four cities. Figure 27 visually displays the proportion of participants from each of the four cities.

Table 2.
The study's cities, participants and population

City	Frequency	Per cent	Population	Per cent total cities' population
Riyadh	95	49.2%	4.700.000	47.70%
Jeddah	61	31.6%	3.400.000	34.50%
Dammam	25	13.0%	1,000,631	10.10%
Khamis M	12	6.2%	754.000	7.70%
Total	193	100%	9.854.631	100%
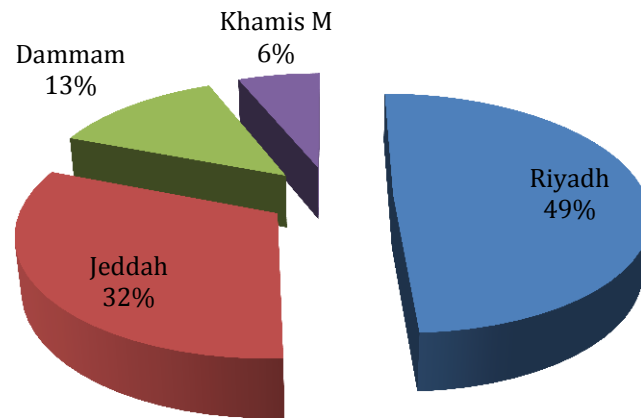
Figure 27. Balance of participants by the four cities.

The percentage of participants from each city closely echoes the population size and importance of each of the four cities, lying within 3% of the population of each. Reflecting this, participants who completed the questionnaire were mostly from Riyadh and Jeddah with much smaller numbers from Dammam and Khamis Mushait.

Number of Years' Experience of Participants in the Advertising Design Industry

In advertising design in general, and for this research in particular, the relative length of experience of employees is significant because longer experience implies more knowledge and better judgment. The profile of participants' years of experience provides a reference point for interpreting the responses to other questions in the survey.

Q. What is your experience in years: 1-5; 6-10; 11-15 or more than 15?

The participants were asked to identify their advertising design experience by choosing from a range of four options. Interestingly, the responses indicate participants from local agencies have longer experience in the field of advertising design than participants from international agencies.

The relatively short history of development of the modern advertising design industry means the numbers of personnel with several decades of experience is low. The figures below show the majority of participants have less than 10 years' experience, whether they are from local or international advertising agencies. There are a number of explanations such as burnout or that advertising design may be a pathway or lie on a pathway to another industry; or advertising design is typically a profession of a particular age group. It was not possible to confirm or deny this last hypothesis as information about the ages of participants was not collected.

Table 3 and Figure 28 show about 35% of the participants from local agencies have 1–5 years' experience. More participants (40.7%) from international agencies had that much. About 38% of the participants from local agencies had 6–10 experience, as did 37.2% of the international participants. A small number of participants from both groups had more than 15 years' experience: about 12% from each group.

Table 3.

Experience in years of participants

Experience in years	1-5	6-10	11-15	More than 15	Total	Average
Local advertising agency	37	41	16	13	107	6.9 Y
	34.6%	38.3%	15.0%	12.1%	100.0%	
International advertising agency	35	32	9	10	86	6.3 Y
	40.7%	37.2%	10.5%	11.6%	100.0%	
Total	72	73	25	23	193	6.6 Y
	37.3%	37.8%	13.0%	11.9%	100.0%	

Figure 28 shows the experience of participants from local and international advertising agencies respectively. The profiles of both are similar, but the shape differs. The peak of years of experience for locals is between 6–10 years. In contrast, international agencies appear to have greater representation among those with 1–5 years' experience (new advertising designers) and those with over 15 years' experience. This may be shaped by the realities of expatriate life. The majority of participants from local advertising agencies have 6–10 years' experience, while the majority of participants from international agencies fall in the 1–5 year bracket. The most striking result to emerge from these responses is the average experience of designers from local agencies who took part in the study is greater than of designers from international agencies. Ignoring the small number of participants from local agencies with more than 15 years of experience (12%), the peak is in the 6–10 range; the average experience of local designers is about 7 years. In contrast, also ignoring the similarly small number of participants in the 15 years plus range (12%), most international designers fall in the 1–5 range, with an overall experience of about 6 years.
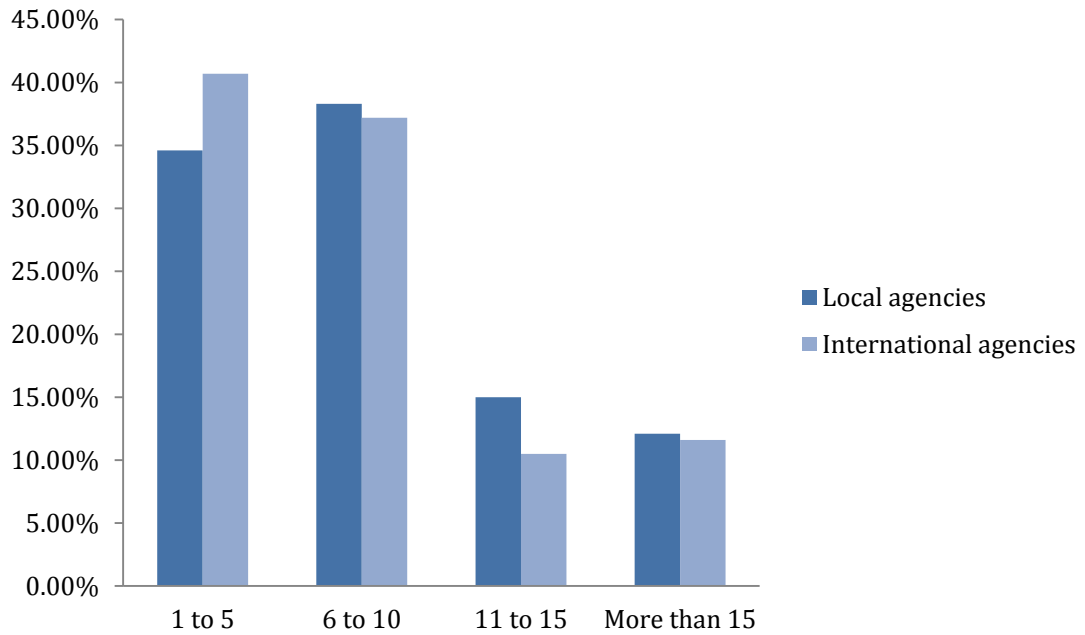
Figure 28. Years of experience of participants.

Overall, approximately three-quarters of the designers who took part in the study had 1–10 years' experience in advertising design.

The responses to the questionnaire confirmed the researcher's observations whilst undertaking the field visits: the advertising industry in Saudi Arabia attracts younger professionals in both local and international agencies. International agencies tend to focus on young, skilled designers, teaming them with experienced designers to help them acquire experience.

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Self-assessment of Skill Level in Using Computers in Advertising Design

This section reviews the skill level of computer users among the participants.

Q. What is your skill level in dealing with computer in design?

The participants were asked to identify their skill with computers by choosing one of these options: 'not used', 'beginner', 'average', 'good' or 'expert'. Table 4 and Figure 29 indicate participants' responses. Only 2.8% of those from local agencies did not use computers in advertising design. This contrasts with the much lower proportion (1.2%) of participants from international agencies. It is unusual nowadays for advertising designers not to use computers. The 1% return in this category suggests   some international firms may be using designers who specialise in hand sketching. For local businesses, the reason is more likely to be a matter of technical practice. The proportion of older designers is higher here, and from observation this is especially true of small local agencies; in addition, some older designers who own their business still design by hand because they do not want to learn new or difficult techniques, regardless of potential benefits.

The same trend is found in the results for the 'beginner' category. The number of participants from international advertising agencies who have 'beginner' skill levels in using computers in advertising design is much lower (4.7%) than in local agencies (11.2%). This smaller proportion is expected because in general, designers in international agencies are highly educated. However, these figures, like others in this series, could be biased by politeness or modesty on the part of local participants, who may regard their skill levels as lower than 'international experts' due to a perception similar to that known in Australia as the 'cultural cringe': by which professionals in one country regard their work as less than that of similar professionals in a more dominant country (Phillips, 2006).

Table 4.
Numbers and percentages of participants in each of five skill levels in computer use in advertising design

Level	Not used	Beginner	Average	Good	Expert	Mean
Local advertising agencies' participants	3 2.8%	12 11.2%	27 25.2%	44 41.1%	21 19.6%	3.6355
International advertising agencies' participants	1 1.2%	4 4.7%	3 3.5%	34 39.5%	44 51.2%	4.3488
Total	4 2.1%	16 8.3%	30 15.5%	78 40.4%	65 33.7%	3.9534

Of those who consider their computer skills 'average', the ratio between participants, from the types advertising agencies, approximately doubles from ~1:3 in the 'not used' and 'beginner' categories to ~1:7 for those who consider themselves to have 'average' computer skills in advertising design. The situation is more balanced for those regarding themselves as having 'good' computer skills, with 41.1% local and 39.5% international participants in this category. The proportions then strongly reverse, with only 19.6% of local participants claiming to have 'expert' computer skills, compared with 51.2% international participants. Table 4 also shows about 66% of the local participants feel they have 'average' and 'good' computer skills, whilst about 90% of international participants are of the opinion they have 'good' and 'expert' skill levels. These findings might well be expected in the light of the higher levels of education of the latter.

The balance of computer skills is more easily seen in a visual format. Figure 29 shows the profile of local participants peaks around the 'good' computer skill level, while international participants are more typically 'expert'.

In general, the data shows the majority of designers in local advertising agencies who responded the questionnaire have good and average skill levels in using

computers for advertising design, whilst those in international agencies have expert levels. These are just indications, not prescriptive assessments of the skill levels of computer use by the participants: these assessments are the result of self-ranking by the participants, and as mentioned earlier, the ranking may be skewed by politeness or modesty on the part of local participants who may regard their skill levels as lower than 'international experts' due to the perception that professionals in one country regard their work as less than of similar professionals in a more dominant country. In addition, the ranking depends on the participants' understanding of the words 'Beginner, Average, Good and Expert"'. These words may have different meanings to each participant because there are no standard criteria to explain each one. It might have been better to add year numbers to explain each word in the questionnaire.
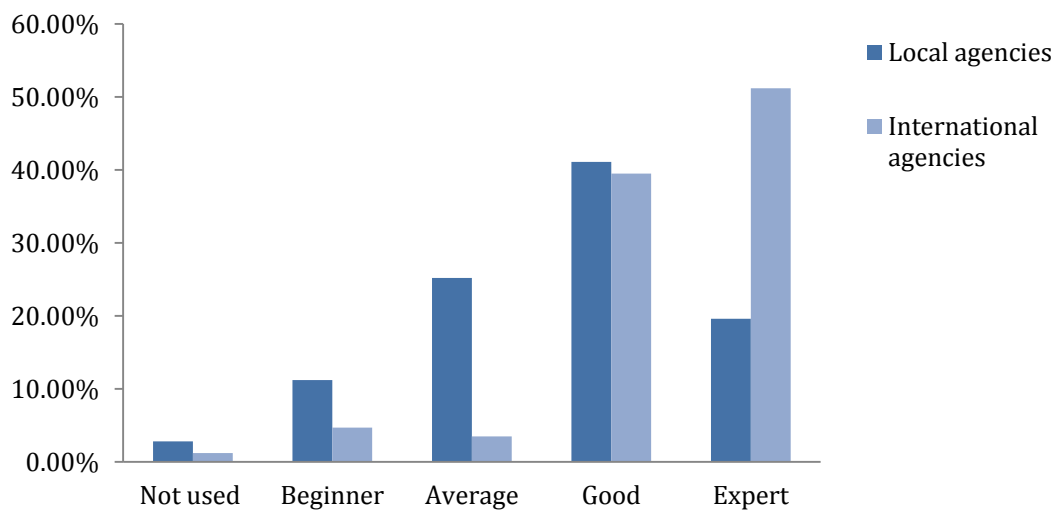
Figure 29. A visual representation of the self-identified computer skill levels of designers from local and international advertising design agencies in Saudi Arabia.

Software Used in Saudi Advertising Design

This section reviews participants' opinions about the most widely used software used to design advertisements in both local and international advertising agencies. Participants were asked to identify the computer software they normally use to create advertising designs. They were able to identify more than one type of software.

This section of the thesis was presented at and published in the proceedings of the Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2010.

The question used in the survey was open ended:

Q. Which computer programs do you use in advertising design?

Table 5 and Figure 30 indicate the responses.

Table 5.
Software used in Saudi advertising design

	Photoshop	Illustrator	In Design	Corel Draw	3D Studio Max	M S Office	Quark Express	Other
Local advertising agencies	102 95.3%	63 58.9%	36 33.6%	36 33.6%	9 8.4%	5 4.7%	4 3.7%	40 37.4%
International advertising agencies	82 95.3%	77 89.5%	69 80.2%	5 5.8%	5 5.8%	5 5.8%	5 5.8%	5 5.8%
Total	184 95.3%	140 72.5%	105 54.4%	41 21.2%	14 7.3%	10 5.2%	9 4.7%	45 23.3%

Most participants indicated they used some form of Adobe Photoshop. Unusually, the percentage of participants using Photoshop was identical (95.3%) in both groups of participants. Adobe Illustrator and InDesign are used much less by designers from local advertising agencies in creating advertisements than by the participants from international advertising

agencies. The number of participants from international advertising agencies who use InDesign is more than double the number of participants from local advertising agencies. InDesign was developed for long documents and the above responses suggest InDesign is the preferred software for long documents by international advertising agencies' designers in Saudi Arabia. In turn, this may indicate   local designers may primarily work with shorter documents, or use a different program for long documents. This is also implied by the data about software choice. Participants from local agencies reported using software other than Adobe much more than designers from international agencies. Six times as many local participants reported they used CorelDraw than did international participants. The relative use of 'other' software by the two groups showed a similar disparity: 37% compared to 6%. While most design companies predominantly use Adobe products, when choosing alternative programs local companies are around six times more likely to use software from other manufacturers.
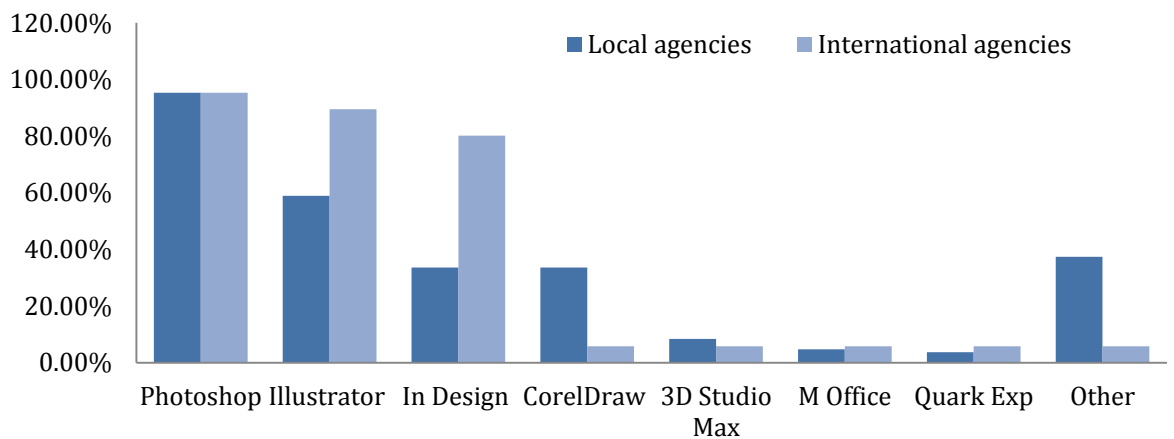
Figure 30. Software used in creating Saudi advertising design.

Figure 30 illustrates these responses. The participants from local agencies typically used software programs as follows: Photoshop first, typically used by more than 95% of participants; Illustrator next, used by 58%; InDesign and

CorelDraw less often, with 34% of participants using each of them. The previously dominant publishing software, QuarkXPress, is used by only 4% of participants. Quark failed to keep up with hardware developments a decade ago, and was reworked into server-based intranet publishing software (Barrette, 2010). Almost certainly, the limited use of QuarkXPress is associated either with the use of very old hardware (pre-2002 and before Mac OS-X) or with amending publications initially produced using this software. Apart from QuarkXPress, 37% of participants indicated they used 'other' software in addition to the most common software from Adobe and Corel.

The responses of the participants from international agencies indicate the most common programs they use are also drawn from the Adobe stable: in particular, Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, with 95%, 89% and 80% respectively of participants indicating their use of these as shown in Figure 30. Their use of other software is negligible.

An overview of Figure 30 indicates participants from international agencies report they predominantly use three Adobe design software packages: Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign.

Participants from local advertising agencies predominantly use Photoshop. Other software has a lesser role, yet it is clear Corel Draw and 'Other' software are sometimes used instead of other common Adobe software products. It may be that designers are hampered by a lack of adequate supporting software; may be that these alternative software products are less costly. It may be that they have been designed for PCs rather than Macs – a PC-based design office is cheaper to run. Or it may be that they work well on older PCs; this finding is an important issue and will be discussed in the next chapter.

Use / Not Use of Sources in Advertising Design

This section identifies the relative proportions of participants who use web-based information, books and other sources to support their activities, and the types of sources they use.

Q. Do you use sources to support your advertising design?

Responses indicate approximately three times more participants use sources in their advertising design than those who do not. The situation is similar for both local and international agencies. Broadly, most participants from both groups use sources as inspiration for their designs; slightly more participants from international agencies did so than local participants, but the differences between the two groups are small enough to indicate there are significant similarities in at least some practical aspects of their advertising design processes.

Table 6.
Designers who use sources in advertising design

Do you use sources to support your advertising design?	Yes	No
Local advertising agencies designers	80	27
	74.8%	25.2%
International advertising agencies designers	67	19
	77.9%	22.1%
Total	147	46
	76.2%	23.8%
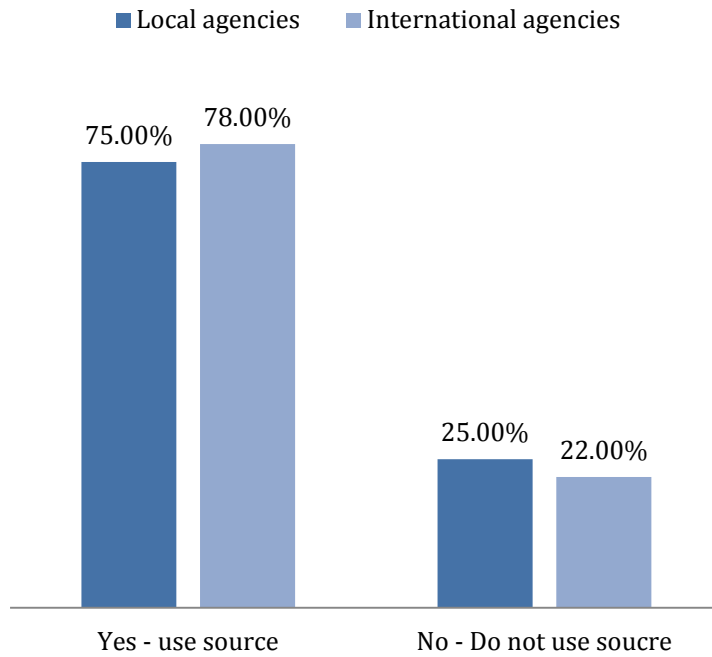
Figure 31. Designers who use sources in advertising design.

Almost 25% of the participants from both kinds of agencies do not use any sources to support their advertising design. This proportion seems unusually high, and there are several possible reasons, for it. It may be some participants had an unusually narrow concept of what should be included as a 'source' in the question; or the cultural status of 'individual genius' in the advertising industry discouraged individual participants from indicating their outputs were based on anything other than their personal 'creativity'; or some participants were not involved in the creative idea generation aspects of design.

Types of Sources Used in Advertising Design

This section identifies the relative proportions of sources participants used to support their design activities.

Q. Which type of sources do you use in advertising design?

- The Internet
- Books
- Specialised magazines
- Advice from design experts
- Others...describe please.

Participants were able to choose one or more options. The information from this question is drawn only from the 75% of designers who use these sources, based on the last question.

Perhaps the most interesting observation to emerge from the data is, comparatively, participants from local advertising agencies depended much more on the Internet as a source of influence for their advertising design than on books, magazines, advice from experts or other sources. On the other hand, Participants from international agencies used more expensive sources to inspirit their design, referring to books, magazines and expert advice. Both groups depended on the Internet as an important inspiration. Table 7 shows about 70% of the local participants used the Internet as a primary source and, a similar proportion, 73%, of international participants did the same.

Table 7.
Sources used to support advertising designs

Types of source	Internet	Books	Specialised Magazines	Advice from design experts	Other
Local advertising agencies	75 70.1%	34 31.8%	29 27.1%	27 25.2%	0 0%
International advertising agencies	63 73.3%	34 39.5%	35 40.7%	32 37.2%	0 0%
Total	138 71.5%	68 35.2%	64 33.2%	59 30.6%	0 0%

There is more difference between the two groups in their use of books, with 32% of the local participants using books to support their advertising design. A third more, about 40% of international participants did the same. Similarly, 27% of local participants reported they used specialised magazines as sources, but around 40% of international participants did so. A more divergent picture emerges with about 25% local participants indicating they used design experts as a source, compared with about 37% of the international participants. Surprisingly, neither group indicated they used other sources of inspiration or influence to inspire them. This is odd because there are many other sources advertising designers can and do use: advertisements, products, services, theories about human behaviour, their own previous work and so forth. The fact no participants indicated they used other sources than those specified provides support for the proposal in the previous section participants may have had an unusually narrow concept of what should be included as an 'other' source. It may also be participants preferred multiple choice questions because their time to fill in the survey was very limited; in which case they preferred to choose one of the given choices instead of answering open questions.
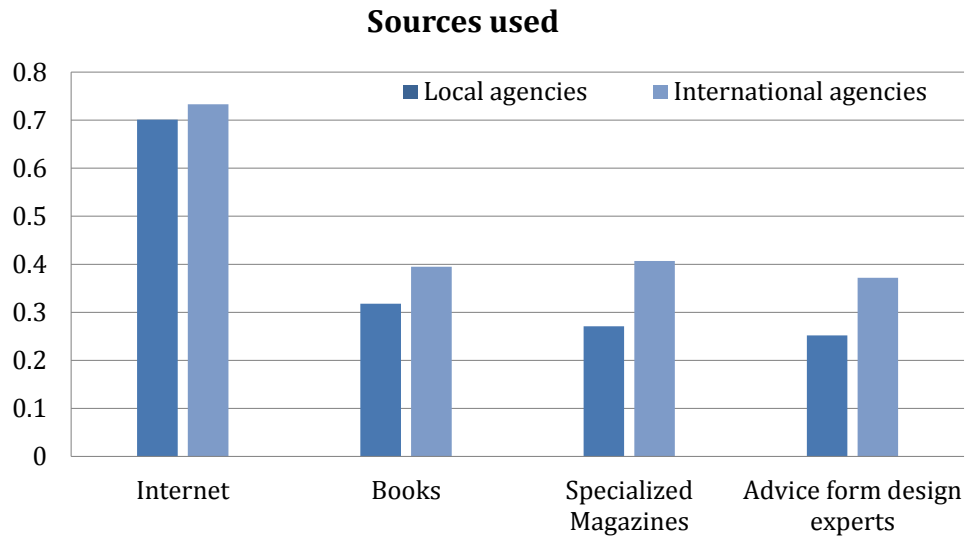
Sources used

Figure 32. Design sources used to support advertising design.

Clearly, the first choice as inspiration source for creating advertisements is the Internet, one of the cheapest and most readily available resources for designers in Saudi Arabia; local participants depend on it alone to support their advertising design more than international participants, who also refer to other, more expensive sources of inspiration. This may positively inspire designers in international agencies to develop modern and creative ideas, affecting their advertising design.

The second source for local participants is 'books', whilst for international participants it is 'specialised magazines'; these are reversed as the third choices of local and international designers. The fourth choice for both set of is 'advice from design experts'.

Design Training

This section identifies the relative proportions of participants who undertook any design training during the last two years.

Q. Have you undertaken any design training during the last two years?

What is perhaps most interesting to emerge from participants' data, as Table 8 and Figure 33 show, is only a small number of participants undertook ongoing design training.

More than 75% of local participants did not undertake any design training in the previous two years. Even fewer international participants (> 80%) did so. In professional terms, this indicates relatively weak commitment to professional development. This reflects the semi-professional status of the field, and the lack of professional accreditation required to practice. In fields such as engineering and medicine, all professionals would be expected to participate in professional development courses several times each year, and without it would lose their accreditation to work (see imeche.org).

Table 8.
Designers who received design training during the last two years

	Yes	No
Local advertising agencies	26	81
	24.3%	75.7%
International advertising agencies	17	69
	19.8%	80.2%
Total	43	150
	22.3%	77.7%
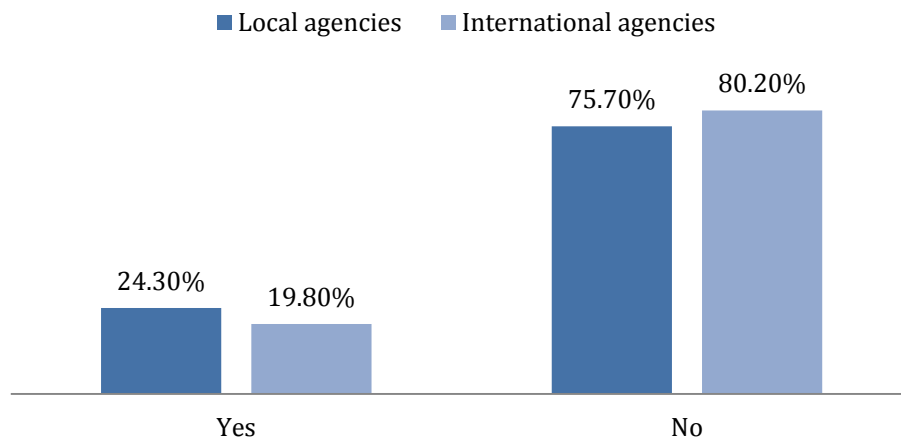
Figure 33. Designers who received design training during the last two years.

Both local and international participants indicated during the two last years they had received slightly different amounts of design training. In both cases, however, the proportion was low. Observations and discussions with participants and many executives during the researcher's field work made it clear international advertising agencies have an alternative approach to the continuing education and professional development of their designers. They start by selecting highly skilled designers who already have professional standing. Instead of sending them for training, International agencies arrange new designers work alongside or in collaboration with senior and expert designers to gain experience. This process of team–based work, internal and informal, complements designers' self-teaching from software and books, and from the semi-formal training on specific software and design issues available on the websites of software providers such as Adobe.

Quality of Saudi Advertising Design

This part of the questionnaire was designed to explore participants' views on differences between the quality of advertising design created by local and international advertising agencies.

This is a difficult issue to assess. There are many different concepts of 'quality' that are held in different ways by different individuals, and in different ways by the same individual in different situations. At a larger scale, individuals' judgements of quality may be influenced by the social groups, cultures and nationalities to which they belong. Analysis of these issues is addressed in more detail in other chapters, particularly Chapters 2 and 3. In Art and Design, however, there is a cultural consistency and characteristic assumption, in part a result of a lack of emphasis on measuring outcomes, in which the idea of quality held by many follows the Greek 'ideal' of *arête* (roughly 'excellence') and contrasts with the more formal measure of 'quality' found in other fields (ushistory.org, 2008).

The participants' responses indicated their judgments about quality, in whatever way it has been conceptualised by them. Potential bias of response by local and international participants is discussed.

Q. How do you rate the quality of advertising design by local Saudi agencies compared to advertising design by international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia?

Participants were asked choose an option on a scale from 0 (low) to 5 (high).

In effect, this was a mini-benchmarking assessment of quality because participants were asked to rate the local agencies against the perceived quality of international advertising design agencies in Saudi Arabia. Not unexpectedly, the views of both groups differed. Figure 34 below displays the relative distribution and balance of responses from the two groups.
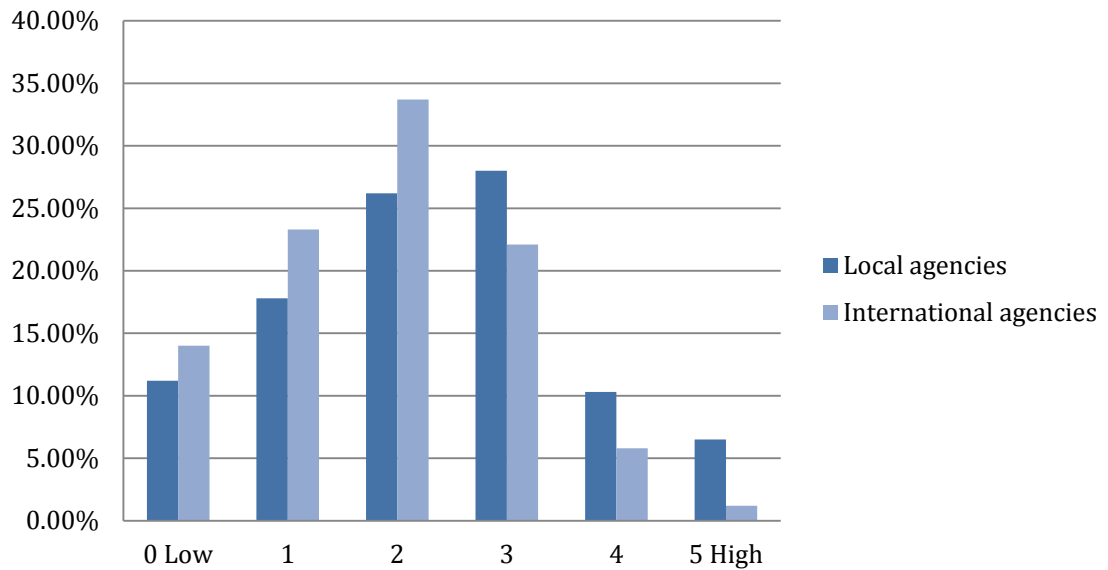
Figure 34. Quality rate of local advertising design.

The responses from both groups follow an approximately normal distribution. Not surprisingly, the peak frequency count of responses of local agencies was at a slightly higher relative quality (just above the mid-point on level 3) than of international agencies (just below the mid-point on level 2). This difference is relatively small. Significantly, the shape of the frequency count curve of local participants' responses is heavily biased away from the 'higher' quality end of the spectrum. In contrast, the frequency count curve for participants from international agencies is more symmetric.

Table 9 shows a total of 12% of participants from both groups rated the quality of Saudi advertising design at the lowest level, while the majority of local participants rated it at levels 2 (26%) and 3 (28%). On the other hand, the majority of participants from international agencies rated the quality of Saudi advertising design at level 1 (23%) and 2 (34%). In fact, most participants, both local and international, rated the quality of local advertising design poorly. Although the peak of local participants' assessments fell at level 3, more chose 2, 1, and 0; this drew the mean to just 2.2.

Table 9.
Rating of the quality of local Saudi advertising design

	0 Low	1	2	3	4	5 High	Mean	Std. Deviation
Local advertising agencies	12 11.2%	19 17.8%	28 26.2%	30 28.0%	11 10.3%	7 6.5%	2.2804	1.35837
International advertising agencies	12 14.0%	20 23.3%	29 33.7%	19 22.1%	5 5.8%	1 1.2%	1.8605	1.15974
Total	24 12.4%	39 20.2%	57 29.5%	49 25.4%	16 8.3%	8 4.1%	2.0933	1.28760

Although the data indicates most participants from local advertising agencies see their advertising design as of a lower quality than of the international agencies – an opinion shared by the international contingent – it is difficult to extract absolute results from this data to rate the level of local advertising design against that created by international advertising agencies: First, some participants from local agencies may have rated their advertisements lower than the 'real' level (if it were possible to have some objective measure). This could be based on politeness or modesty. Second, participants from international agencies may assume they create and produced better advertisements than those of local agencies because they work in 'better', 'international' agencies. This attitude can be observed relatively widely across Saudi Arabia whenever there is competition between local and international companies.

Local and International Advertising Design Differences in Forms and Concepts

This section reviews differences in forms and concepts (ideas) of local and international agencies designs. This question is exploratory, and is intended to provide a starting point for further exploration of the details of such differences.

Q. The differences between local and international advertising design are in forms, concepts or both?

Research participants were asked to identify differences, particularly in the forms or concepts, of designs (or a combination of both) created by local and international advertising agencies.

There are two aspects to the information that came from this question. The first is the general agreement between the two groups about the differences in outcomes of local and international agencies. The second is the varying explanations for the differences given by the two groups.

In general, both groups of participants indicated differences solely due to the forms of advertising produced by local and international agencies were insignificant. Rather, they suggested differences were due to a combination of the concepts and ideas used, and the form advertisements took. Interestingly, local participants seemed more certain than their international confrères the main differences were in concepts.

The data in Table 10 and Figure 35 indicates only about 8% of the local participants believe the differences between local and international design lay in form of design. Similarly, only about 6% of the international participants see the differences to lie in forms Almost 31% of local participants feel the differences are in concepts; only about 22% of international participants agreed with this.

As the data in the table and the figure reveal, there is significant agreement between the two groups that differences are a function of both form and

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concept. More than 60% of local and 72% of international participants held this opinion: about two thirds (66%) of all participants.

Table 10.
The differences between local Saudi and international advertising design

	Forms	Concepts	Both
Local advertising agencies	9 **8.4%**	33 **30.8%**	65 **60.7%**
International advertising agencies	5 **5.8%**	19 **22.1%**	62 **72.1%**
Total	14 **7.3%**	52 **26.9%**	127 **65.8%**

These data in one way or another support and explain the findings of the previous section, which assessed the quality achieved by local advertising agencies compared to that of international agencies. Based on the indications there that the quality of local advertising is lower than that of international agencies, the data here explain the differences. Because the quality of advertising design includes form and concepts, the data indicates that differences in quality between by local and international advertisements exist in both forms and concepts.
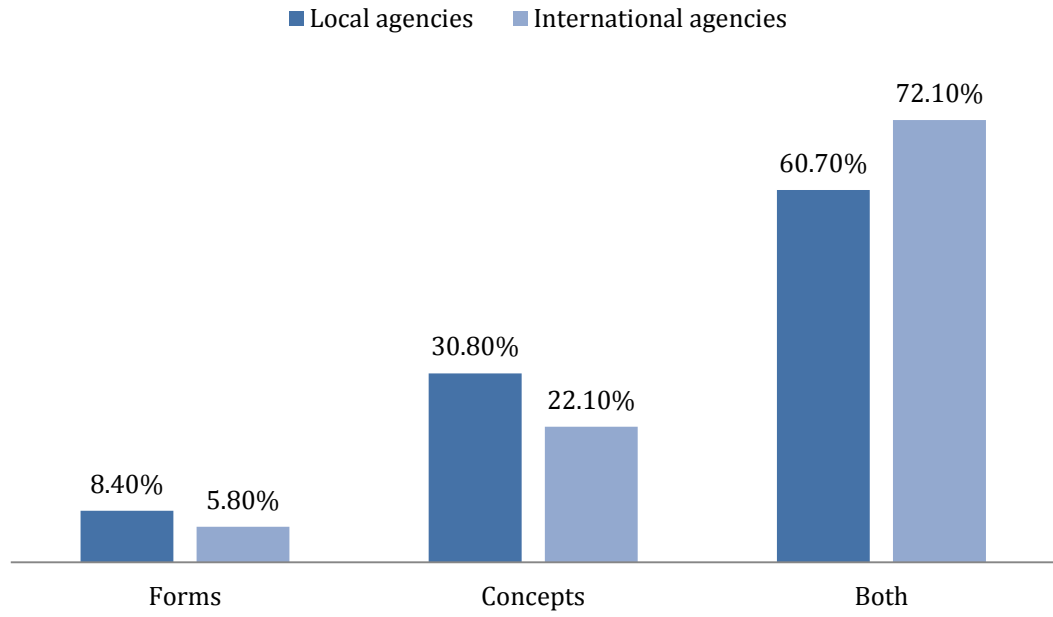
Figure 35. The differences between Saudi local and international advertising design.

Reasons for Quality Differences between Local and International Advertising Design in Saudi Arabia

This question in the survey was the most explicit request for participants to identify the reasons for quality differences between local and international advertising design in Saudi Arabia. The question guided the discussion via an initial set of options. As part of the preparation of the questionnaire, it was felt guidance would help overcome the natural reluctance to be critical. An expert in Saudi advertising was consulted to advise on the options indicated in the question.

Q. What are the reasons for quality differences between local and international advertising design?

- Computers are not used in design at all.
- Lack of familiarity with modern computer design software.
- Clients do not care about designs.
- Advertisements are created by non-professional designers.
- Other....describe please.

The participants were asked to choose one of these options and, in the case of 'other', describe the other reasons.

Table 11 and Figure 36 show there was substantial agreement on all responses. This is significant, as it suggests participants from both groups know what causes differences in quality of outputs. The four points seem to be the primary focus of differences, as the proportion of 'other' responses was unusually low (~1%). An alternative explanation might be participants had some resistance to thinking of 'other' reasons. Review and exploration of other reasons will be covered in the interview analysis' section.

The first option, 'computers are not used in design at all', does not appear to be a significant reason for quality differences between local and international advertising design in Saudi Arabia. In contrast, both groups of participants agree lack of familiarity with modern design software by local advertising agencies is

the dominant reason for their inferior quality of work. About 44% of local participants selected 'lack of familiarity with modern computer design programs and software', as did about 38% of international participants. This does not mean lack of familiarity with modern design software is the only reason for different quality between local and international advertising design. It seems there is a variety of reasons for differences in quality, and lack of familiarity with design software is only one of them.

Participants were also concerned differences in quality could result when 'clients do not care enough about design'. This was a significant finding in both local and international participants, with about 25% of local and 30% of international advertising participants regarding this an important reason for differences in quality. The additional emphasis placed on this issue by participants working in international agencies is perhaps the result of increased awareness about these issues, but may be due to a different kind of working connection between local designers and their clients.

At about the same level of importance was the feeling differences were due to advertising designs being created by non-professionals, that is, designers who are not professionally trained and accredited. These are more common in local advertising agencies. There was substantial agreement from both groups of participants about the scale of this problem, with about 28% of local and about 29% of international participants agreeing the use of non-professional designers is a significant reason for differences in quality between advertisements created by local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia.

Table 11.
The reasons for quality differences between local Saudi and international
advertising design

	Computers are not used in design at all.	Lack of familiarity with modern computer design software.	Clients do not care about designs.	Ads are created by non-professional designers.	Other
Local advertising agencies	1 0.9%	47 43.9%	27 25.2%	30 28.0%	2 1.9%
International advertising agencies	2 2.3%	33 38.4%	26 30.2%	25 29.1%	0 .0%
Total	3 1.6%	80 41.5%	53 27.5%	55 28.5%	2 1.0%
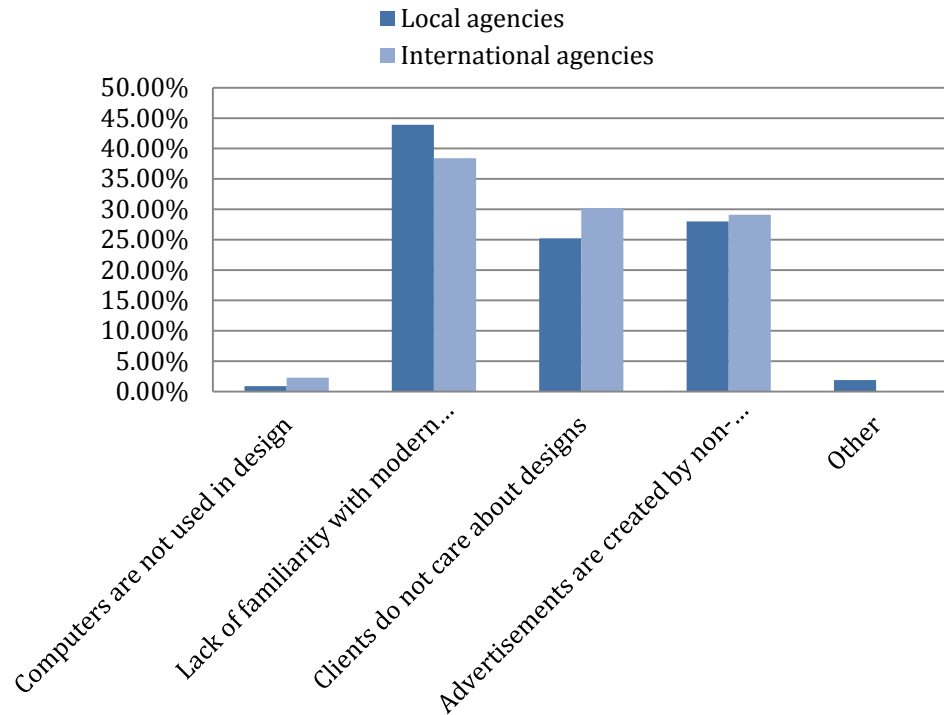
Figure 36. Reasons for different quality between local and international
advertising design.

Professionalism is obviously a significant issue, as it includes familiarity with
modern software. In the advertising field, professional designers should be
skilled in using all the tools and devices needed in creating advertisements.
When designers are unfamiliar with computer technology and design software,
this indicates a lack of professionalism. Taken together, the responses on
professionalism and familiarity with modern software comprise around 70% of
participants' reasons for differences in quality: about 72% of local and 68% of
international respondents chose these options.

Importance of Design Form, Design Concepts, Price and Delivery Speed for Advertising Agencies' Clients

This section reviews participants' opinions on the importance of four elements for the clients of local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia: design form, design concept, price and delivery speed.

Two parts intentionally separate the focus of the question into local and international. The first part reviews the importance of the elements for local agencies' clients, as seen by the local participants. The second part reviews the importance of the elements for international agencies' clients, as seen by the international participants. All were asked to rank the importance of the same four elements by their clients' preferences, on a scale from 0 (not important) to 5 (very important).

Q. What is the importance of these elements according to advertisers in the Saudi market?

Design form, design concept, price and delivery speed.

Part 1: The importance of elements for local advertising agencies' clients.

An unexpected and interesting result to emerge is, according to participants from local agencies, the most important concerns of clients are *delivery speed* and *price;* with *delivery speed* appearing regarded as 'very important' by 65% and *price* as 'very important' by 53%. This may give an initial indication that the type of client attracted by local advertising agencies should be considered one of the reasons for differences in advertising level between local and international agencies, because these clients focus on price and delivery speed as first priorities.

Local participants also regard *design concept* as 'important' for their clients, but attitudes were more evenly divided across the positive spectrum, with about 75% of responses distributed evenly across items 3, 4 & 5 of the 6-point Likert scale, with 5 being 'very important'. In contrast, they have mixed opinions about the importance of *design form* to their clients, in general regarding it as 'somewhat important'. The weight of responses is high for item 3 (36%) on the Likert scale, representing the peak, as can be seen in Figure 37, but item 5 also is an important weight with (28%). Only 9% of participants chose point 4. This suggests *design form* is important, but the degree of importance varies among participants. The relatively high standard deviation of 1.36 for this item supports this, when compared to (0.9 for delivery speed.

Table 12.
The importance of elements for local advertising agencies' clients as seen by participants

	0 Less important	1	2	3	4	5 Very important	Mean	Std.D
Design form	3 2.8%	7 6.5%	18 16.9%	39 36.4%	10 9.3%	30 28.1%	3.2710	1.35681
Design concept	2 1.9%	7 6.5%	17 15.9%	30 28.0%	25 23.4%	26 24.3%	3.3738	1.29238
Price	1 0.9%	2 1.9%	9 8.5%	18 17.0%	20 18.9%	56 52.8%	4.0943	1.16724
Delivery speed	1 0.9%	0 0.0%	2 1.9%	13 12.3%	21 19.8%	69 65.1%	4.4528	.89583
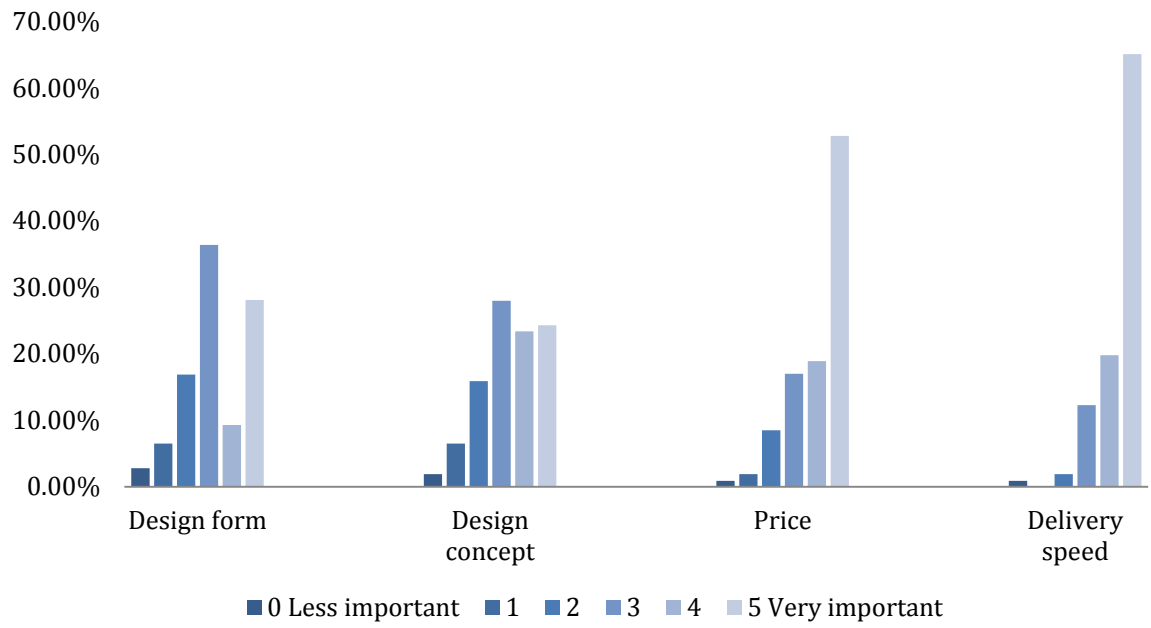
Figure 37. The importance of specified elements for local advertising agencies'
clients as seen by local participants.

Part 2: The importance of the elements for clients of international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia

The comments on the interests of their clients from international participants are broadly similar to those of their local counterparts (shown in part1). The most important issues to their clients (the advertisers) are also *delivery speed* and *price*; again, *design form* and *design concept* are less important.

From the data displayed in Table 13 and Figure 37, d*elivery speed* appears the most obviously important element for clients of the international agencies. About 58% of international participants regard *delivery speed* as 'very important' for their clients. This represents the highest peak amongst the four elements. They also regard *price* as 'very important', to their clients, with about 44% ranking it 5 on the Likert scale. This represents the second highest peak, as can be seen from Figure 37. The situation with regard to *design form* is obviously important to some degree, but the responses reveal a noticeable variety. About 97% of responses were distributed across items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the 6-point scale, with most falling on 3 (27%) and 4 (21%). The responses are variable, as indicated by their deviation of 1.41.

The situation with regard to *design concept* is unusual. About 25% of the participants ranked it 5, 'very important' for their clients, whilst 23% considered it 1, 'less important'. This gives a large spread of responses and indicates large a difference of opinion between international participants. The variability is reflected in the standard deviation of 1.91, which is unusually high compared to the standard deviation of 1.1 for price. The mean of the responses is 2.4.

This contrast in the group's answers in this matter may be a reflection of two different types of clients international advertising agencies deal with, distinguished by the professionalism of the client's approach.

Table 13.
The importance of the elements for international advertising agencies' clients

	0 Less important	1	2	3	4	5 Very important	Mean	Std.D
Design form	2 2.4%	14 16.5%	12 14.1%	23 27.1%	18 21.2%	16 18.8%	3.0471	1.41342
Design concept	5 5.8%	20 23.3%	14 16.3%	8 9.4%	17 19.8%	22 25.4%	2.4419	1.91345
Price	0 .0%	2 2.3%	8 9.3%	15 17.4%	23 26.7%	38 44.2%	4.0116	1.10074
Delivery speed	2 2.3%	3 3.5%	4 4.7%	11 12.8%	16 18.6%	50 58.1%	4.1628	1.25427
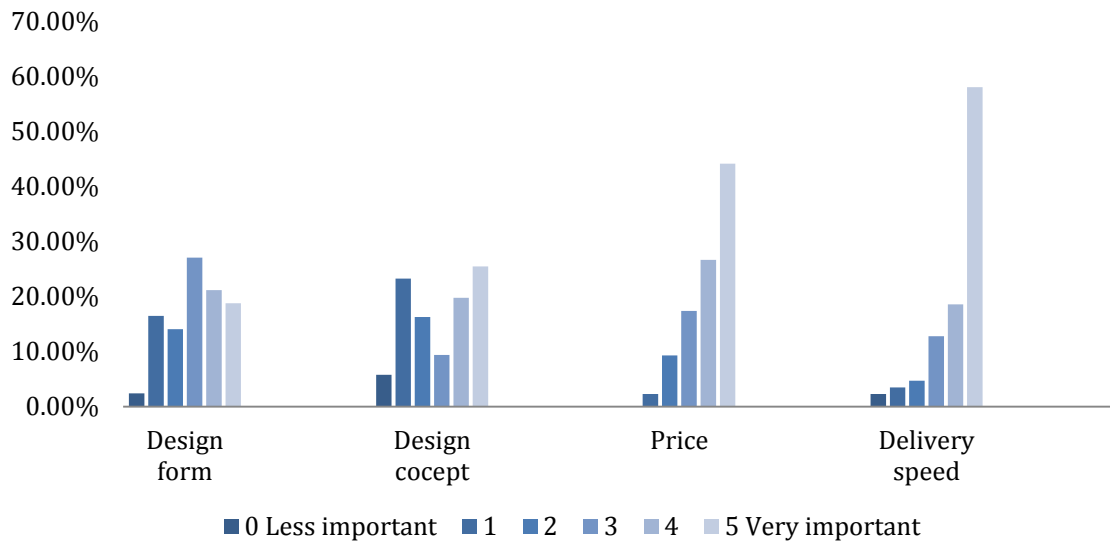
Figure 38. The importance of specified elements for international advertising agencies' clients in Saudi Arabia.

Overview

The two parts of this section of the survey reveal significant agreement between the two groups of participants, who both consider *delivery speed* and *price* more important issues for advertisers in the Saudi advertising market than *design form* and *concept*. Advertisers are almost certainly more concerned about *delivery speed* because, from observation, many advertisers do not have long-term plans for their advertising campaigns but decide to create an advertisement and publish it in a short time; this offers a potentially fruitful avenue for future research.

Price emerged as the second most important element for clients of both groups. This issue is related somewhat to *delivery speed* because Saudi advertisers seek quick profits and look for cheap or reasonable prices and rapid delivery so they can complete the project and start another one (assuming there are more market opportunities). In general, participants indicated *design form* and *design concept* are much less important in the eyes of clients of both local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia. This may indicate that many clients in the Saudi advertising industry play a negative role because they care little about the quality of design, including the forms and concepts behind advertisements. This may indicate many clients in the Saudi Arabian advertising market could benefit by improving their own professionalism in the ways they undertake and contract advertising.

Impact of Computers on Saudi Advertising Design

This section reviews the responses of all participants regarding the impact of computers on advertising design. It provides information to complement that derived later from the semi-structured interviews. In Chapter 5, the implications of the findings distilled from both data sources (survey and interviews) will be discussed.

Conceptually, this question parallels and triangulates earlier questions about causes of differences in quality that implicitly include the uses of computers.

Q. The impact of computers on Saudi advertising design is in:

Form, Concepts, Both or Other…

The participants were given the above statement followed by the four options to choose one of them or describe in case of other.

There was substantial agreement on all options by all participants. Echoing the findings of earlier questions both groups strongly identified (>70%) computers influenced both the *concept* developed for advertising (i.e. the underlying 'idea' of an advertisement) and the *form* the idea took (e.g. the visual appearance of the advertisement). Again, less than 2% of participants identified any 'other' option, strongly suggesting neither group felt there were other ways computers contributed to advertising design. This is unusual, and is perhaps explained by participants preferring to choose from the options provided in the questionnaire and do not like to explain or elaborate on their answers; as they may be busy and do not have much time to write; or they may not see any personal benefit in explaining. The impact of computers on advertising design will be covered in detail in the interviews section.

Only a small minority of survey participants felt the impact of computers on Saudi advertising design was primarily on either *concepts* or *form.* Responses to these items were not equally distributed, and the impact of computers was felt by participants to affect *form* around twice as much as *concept.* This is

understandable in terms of the early use of computers in graphic design as a way to digitally create the *form* of visual images and to access the significant efficiencies of digitalised graphic workflows. Over the last three decades, computer technology has increasingly contributed to advertising design worldwide by improving the digital management of lines, shapes and colours in terms of clarity, resolution, accuracy and visual effects. Against this, they have been far less suited to the development of concepts behind the design for an advertisement. Concepts are readily, and perhaps more efficiently and effectively, generated in other ways, such as through conversation and hand-drawing. In this light, the impact of computers on *concept* is secondary to their function in creating the *form* of a design. While this does have a subsequent if incidental impact on *concept* because it facilitates the design of more quickly and easily illustrated concepts and messages, particularly when sophisticated special visual effects are needed, it also gives more time to spend on concepts for a contract that has fixed hours, because the hours spent on production are less (providing the cost of the computers and software does not take up the equivalent hours). Computer technology primarily enables advertising designers to turn concepts into visible forms and messages.

More about the effects of computer technology on Saudi advertising design will be discussed in the interview section and in Chapter 5.

Table 14.
The impact of computers on Saudi advertising

The impact is on	Form	Concept	Both	Other
Local advertising agencies	16	9	80	2
	15.0%	8.4%	74.8%	1.9%
International advertising agencies	17	7	62	0
	19.8%	8.1%	72.1%	.0%
Total	33	16	142	2
	17.1%	8.3%	73.6%	1.0%
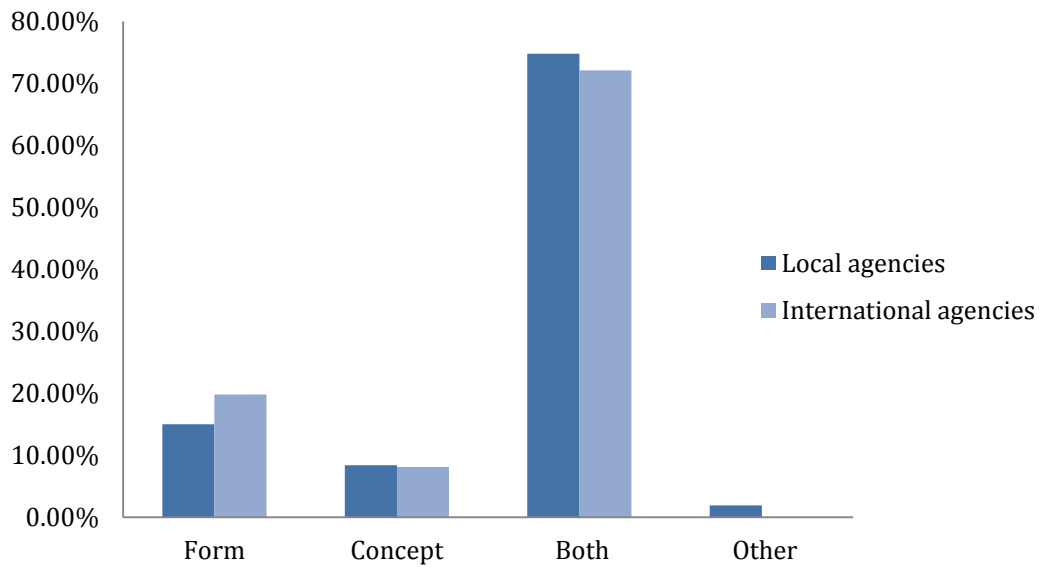
Figure 39. The impact of computers on Saudi advertising.

Overview

The ratios between the responses of both groups were close, suggesting the impact of computers on 'other' factors is not significant. Instead, participants emphasised the primary contribution of computer technology to design outcomes through its positive effects on forms and concepts. In part this is because many concepts are easy for designers to create and present using specific technology that enables the integrated location of visual images and shapes.

Manual Advertising Design

Some traditional advertising designers, typically in local advertising agencies, continue to use only manual, i.e. non-computerised, design methods. Survey participants were asked why this was so. Again participants were supported with the presentation of options.

This question also acted to provide some triangulation and testing of previous responses.

Q. Why do you think some advertising designers in local Saudi advertising agencies use manual design, i.e. by hand, not using a computer?

Participants were given the following options:

- Designers cannot use computers effectively
- Lower cost
- Save time
- At advertiser's request
- Other, describe please...

Table 15.
Reasons some designers in local advertising agencies use manual design

	Designers cannot use computers effectively	Lower cost	Save time	At advertiser's request	Other
Local advertising agencies	45 42.1%	19 17.8%	13 12.1%	18 16.8%	12 11.2%
International advertising agencies	54 62.8%	14 16.3%	3 3.5%	12 14.0%	3 3.5%
Total	99 51.3%	33 17.1%	16 8.3%	30 15.5%	15 7.8%
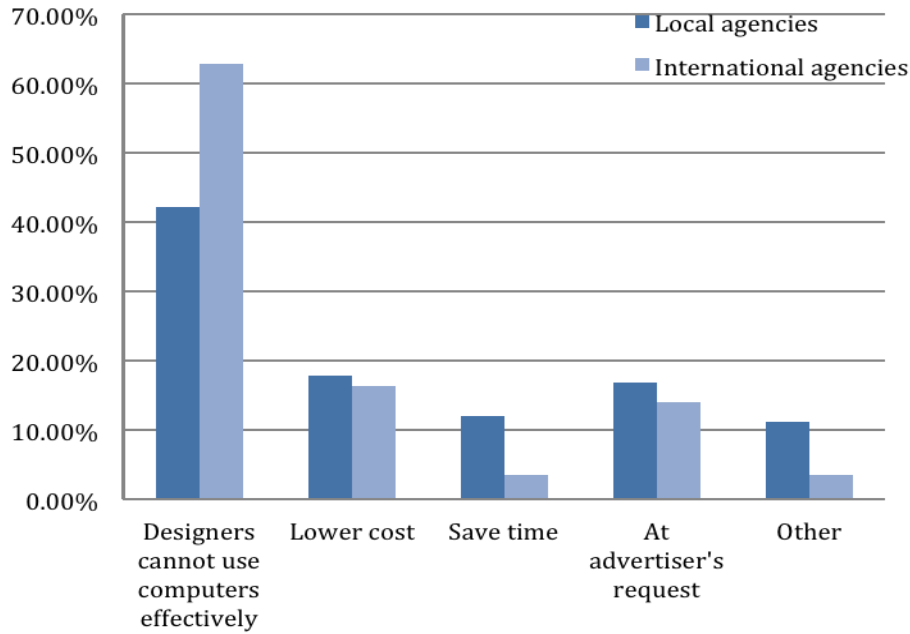
Figure 40. Reasons some advertising designers in local advertising agencies use manual design.

Participants' responses, as shown in Table 15 and Figure 40, suggest the primary reason some designers in local agencies use manual methods is they cannot use computer design software effectively. Approximately 42% of participants from local agencies and 63% from international agencies believed that. This was expected, because this opinion is linked to the reason for using manual design instead of computer software to create advertisements. The difference in response suggests there may be some tension between the two groups on this issue. The remaining survey participants believed the reason was *lower cost, at advertiser's request, save time* and *other,* respectively. Survey responses were not equally distributed.

There was reasonable agreement from about 17% of both groups that some local agencies use manual (as distinct from computer-based) design methods, to reduce costs and because some clients request designs are created manually (e.g. hand illustrations or paintings). For example, *lower cost*, which emerged as the second most important reason for using manual design, may reflect strategies some agencies use to keep outgoings low and grow the business.

Interestingly, there is a significant difference in opinion between the two participant groups concerning whether the use of manual design saves time; the percentage of international participants asserting this is much lower. This is perhaps a reflection of their commitment to computer-based procedures.

Unexpectedly, a total of 15% of participants from both groups felt that the reason some designers in local advertising agencies use manual design is 'at advertiser's request'. The reason for choosing this option is not clear. The researcher thinks this opinion may lack credibility, and needs to be reviewed. Advertisers in Saudi Arabia may interrupt the advertising process and impose their opinions on the idea of advertisements, but they are unlikely to have the knowledge of – or access to – the processes where the best devices and tools to create advertisements are decided upon.

Saudi Advertising Design Quality

At this point in the questionnaire, participants were explicitly asked whether the quality of advertisements created by local agencies compared to those of international agencies in Saudi Arabia. Participant engagement with the question was supported by asking them to calibrate their judgment in terms of a Likert Scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' in five steps. This question was developed to triangulate with other questions in the survey and provide a check on the information participants gave about this important issue.

Q. Local advertising design is of less quality than international advertising design in Saudi Arabia.

Participants were asked to choose one of the following options: 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree somewhat', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. These options were replaced in coding in SPSS by the ordinal numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

The findings were interestingly different for both groups of participants. The means for both groups were similar and indicated, on average, broad acceptance of 'agree' (4) ('strongly agree' is 5) the quality of local advertising design was lower than produced by international agencies. The distribution of responses, however, for the two participant groups was very different. Those from international agencies formed an approximately normal curve, peaking at and approximately symmetric about, 'agree' (Likert 4). In contrast, the responses of participants from local Saudi advertising agencies formed a double peak with a lower count at Likert 4, suggesting a split in opinion between those who find no difference in quality and those strongly believe local agencies produce inferior output. The two peaks can have several explanations. One is some local participants may be uncomfortable suggesting local design is of lower quality. This would be likely in any similar survey where respondents are queried about their professional ability. It may be some local participants were reluctant to agree more strongly, choosing 'agree somewhat' instead and so accounting for the first peak. They may not have felt knowledgeable about

designs created by international agencies; or they may not have paid enough attention to feel competent about making a comparison. Some may lack knowledge of the distinction between high and low quality design, leading them to choose the mild middle 'agree somewhat'. The situation offers opportunity for clarification through future research.
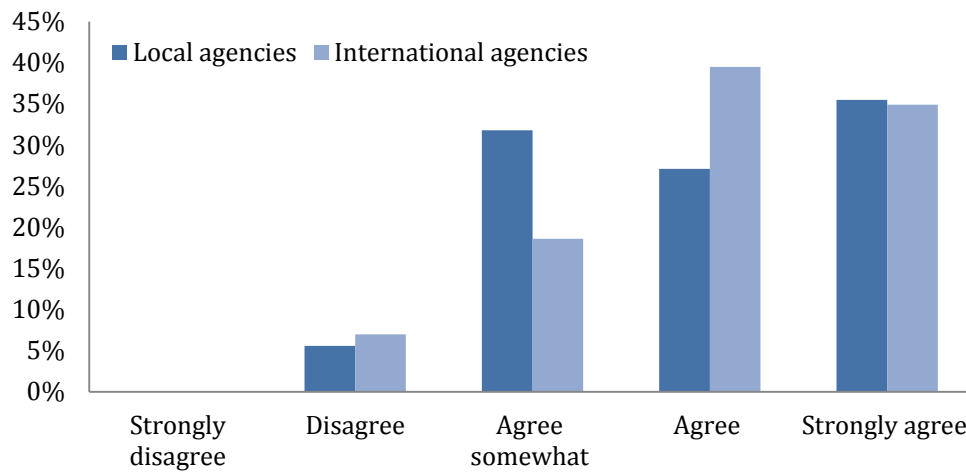
Figure 41. Local advertising design is of lesser quality than international design in Saudi Arabia.

Table 16.
Local Saudi advertising design is of lesser quality than international design

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. deviation
Local advertising agencies	0 0%	6 5.6%	34 31.8%	29 27.1%	38 35.5%	3.9252	.94869
International advertising agencies	0 0%	6 7.0%	16 18.6%	34 39.5%	30 34.9%	4.0233	.90718
Total	0 0%	12 6.2%	50 25.9%	63 32.6%	68 35.2%	3.9689	.92931

Table 16 shows the low weight of responses for both groups was on 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree'. None of the participants, local or international, selected 'strongly disagree', and only about 6% of local and 7% of international participants 'disagree' design created by local agencies is of lesser quality than of international agencies. However, about 32% of local participants 'agree somewhat' with the statement. This represents one of the most important choices by this group. About 40% of international participants 'agree' local design is of lesser quality; this is their prevailing opinion, and the peak, as can be seen in Figure 41. About 35% of local participants 'strongly agree'; this represents their prevailing opinion, and the peak, as can be seen in Figure 41.

Although the means for both groups are close, the distributions are different in character. This is obvious in the 'agree somewhat' choice. Figure 41 shows two peaks close in value – 'strongly agree' and 'agree somewhat' – for local participants. Their mean lies between the peaks at a value of 3.92, approximately in the area of 'agree'. Figure 41 also shows the answers of international participants concentrated in 'agree' and 'strongly agree', with a single peak in the 'agree' area with a mean of 4.02.

It is apparent from the table and the figure the majority of the participants from both groups chose one of the agreement options. In general, about 94% of local participants' responses cluster around 'agree somewhat', 'agree' and 'strongly agree', while about 93% of international responses fall in the 'agree somewhat', 'agree' and 'strongly agree' area. Generally, the majority of local and international participants, are of the opinion, to a lesser or greater extent, advertising design created by local Saudi Arabian advertising agencies is of a lower quality than created by the international agencies in Saudi Arabia.

The data here offers more evidence to confirm the opinion of Saudi officials and observations and research of the researcher that the advertising created by local agencies is of lower quality than created by international agencies.

One of the reasons for this, as we have seen, lies in the relative unfamiliarity of local agencies with modern computer design programs. The dual peak of local

participants' answers is perhaps an indication of the effect of cultural influences on interpretating the concept of quality, subjective judgements about quality, or inbuilt biases due to assumptions about the relative quality of locally- and internationally-designed advertising.

The next question provides triangulation with other forms of information participants gave about this issue.

Modern Design Software and Local Advertising Design

Participants were asked to judge the veracity of the following statement to determine a major cause of the differences in levels of advertising design created by local and international design in the Saudi advertising industry:

Q. Unfamiliarity with modern design software is a major cause of the disparity between the levels of advertising design created by local and international advertising agencies.

Participants were given a choice of one of the following options: 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree somewhat', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'.

The distribution of responses to this question is spread across the scale, although the general weight of opinion is in agreement with the premise. Very few participants from either group 'strongly disagree' use of design software is a major cause of the disparity. The majority of international participants 'agree' with the statement, with the peak for at about 35%, as shown in Figure 42. In fact there are two peaks in international group, one being 'disagree' (20%) and the other 'agree' (35%). The second peak, which is 'agree', is compatible and harmonious with what the researcher expected, and is in line with the local participants' responses. However, the first peak for international advertising agencies, which is 'disagree', was not expected. It may be some international participants may not have much idea about what happens inside local agencies, or do not see struggling with modern software could be a major cause of the low quality. They may also see other causes as having greater impact than the use of modern design software. About 34% of local participants 'strongly agree' with the statement and this represents the peak, as can be seen in Figure 42. The mean for local participants' choices is 3.8, and of international participants is 3.4.

The most significant result emerging from the data is the majority of participants from both local (86%) and international (72%) agencies in Saudi Arabia feel unfamiliarity with modern design software is a major factor in the

local production of comparatively low-quality advertisements. This reason, however, does not alone explain the disparity between the levels of advertising design created by local and international agencies.

Table 17.

Unfamiliarity with modern design software is a major cause of lower quality of advertisements created by local advertising agencies

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. deviation
Local advertising agencies	4 3.7%	11 10.3%	25 23.4%	31 29.0%	36 33.6%	3.7850	1.13294
International advertising agencies	7 8.1%	17 19.8%	16 18.6%	30 34.9%	16 18.6%	3.3605	1.22631
Total	11 5.7%	28 14.5%	41 21.2%	61 31.6%	52 26.9%	3.5959	1.19128
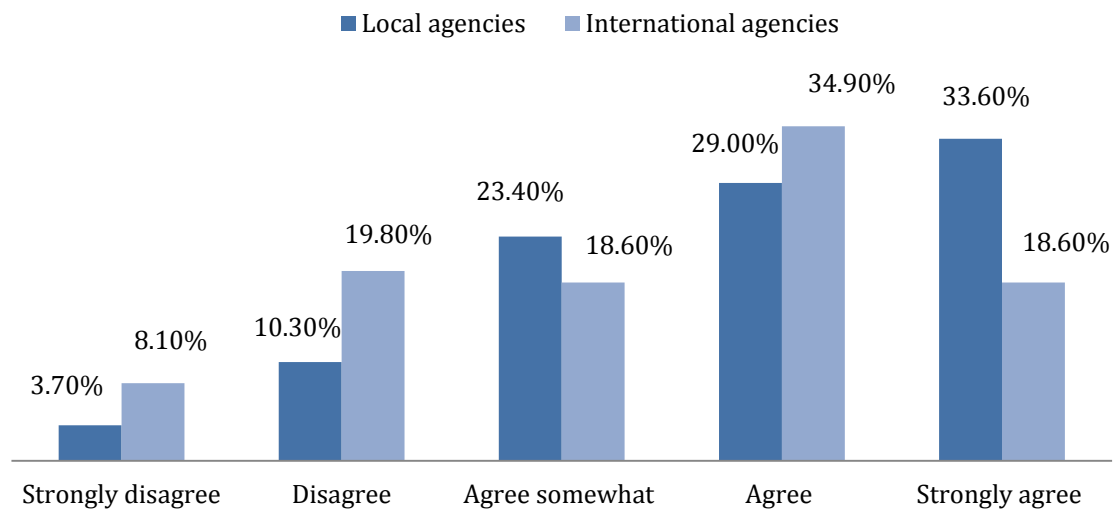
Figure 42. Unfamiliarity with modern design software is a major cause of lower quality of advertisements created by local advertising agencies.

Using Computers in Saudi Advertising Design to Attract Advertising Agencies' Clients (the Advertisers)

This section of the questionnaire explored participants' agreement with the statement:

Q. The use of computers in Saudi advertising design is an attractive factor to agencies' clients.

All participants were asked to give their opinion via a five-step Likert Scale: 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree somewhat', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'; these were coded in SPSS by the ordinal numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, and the cumulative frequencies of the answers were graphed and analysed.

The majority of participants both local and international felt the use of computers in advertising design attracts prospective clients to agencies. The correlation of the two groups is, however, slightly different in a number of respects. Although there was significant agreement among the participants from both local (90%) and international (85%) agencies, the graph makes it clear local participants very strongly believe the use of computers in advertising attracts clients. In contrast, the distribution of opinion from international participants is, whilst in general agreement, less emphatic, more distributed and, perhaps, more nuanced.
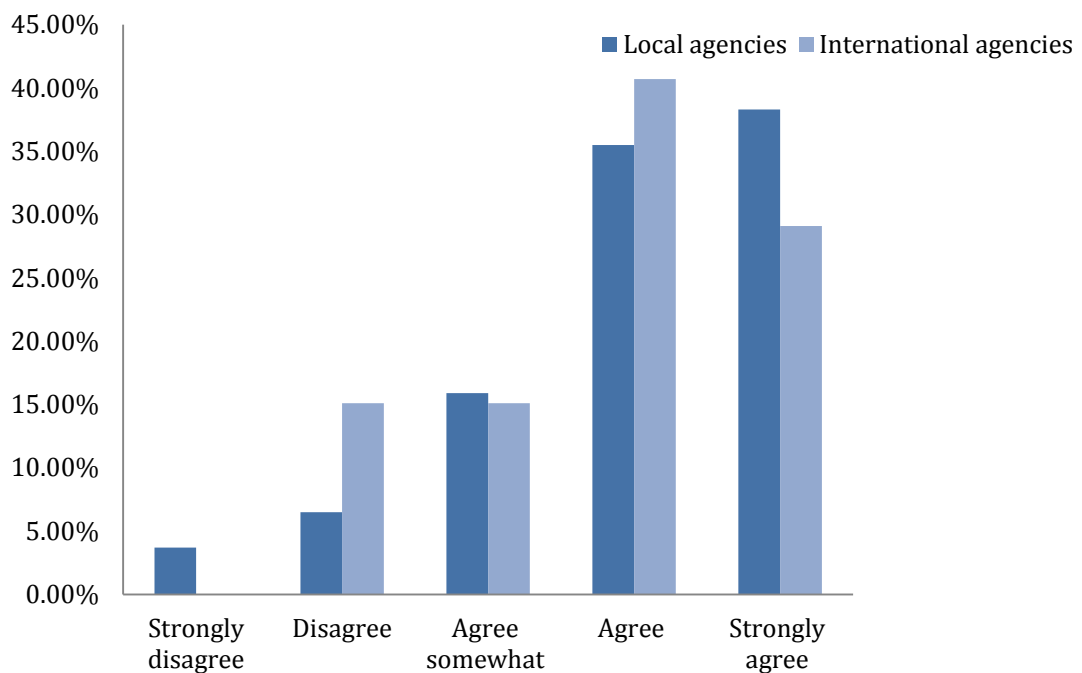
Figure 43. The use of computers in Saudi advertisements design attracts advertisers.

From the table below, from which the above figure is created, it can be seen about 38% of local participants 'strongly agree', representing the peak for local agencies. Only about 29% of international participants 'strongly agree' the use of computers in Saudi advertising design is attractive to clients. As the table and figure show, more international than local participants chose 'agree': about 41%. This represents the peak in the international group. About 35% of local participants chose 'agree', giving a mean of 3.9, while the mean for the participants from international agencies is 3.8. This suggests agreement among all participants on the use of computers as a drawcard for clients.

A minority from both groups disagreed with the statement, although only about 4% of local, and no international participants, 'strongly disagree' the use of computers in advertising design is a factor in attracting clients.

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Table 18.
The use of computers in Saudi advertising design attracts clients

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. deviation
Local advertising agencies	4 3.7%	7 6.5%	17 15.9%	38 35.5%	41 38.3%	3.9813	1.07266
International advertising agencies	0 .0%	13 15.1%	13 15.1%	35 40.7%	25 29.1%	3.8372	1.01588
Total	4 2.1%	20 10.4%	30 15.5%	73 37.8%	66 34.2%	3.9171	1.04750

Saudi Advertising Designers and Modern Styles in Advertising Design

This section reviews the extent of agreement or otherwise of the participants from local advertising agencies and international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia regarding the following survey question:

Q. Saudi advertising designers follow the latest modern design styles.

Participants were asked to give their opinions about this statement, choosing from a five-point Likert Scale in which possible answers were 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree somewhat', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. The data showed broad agreement from both groups of participants, centred on the third (central) item in the Likert scale, 'agree somewhat' (see Figures 44 and 45).
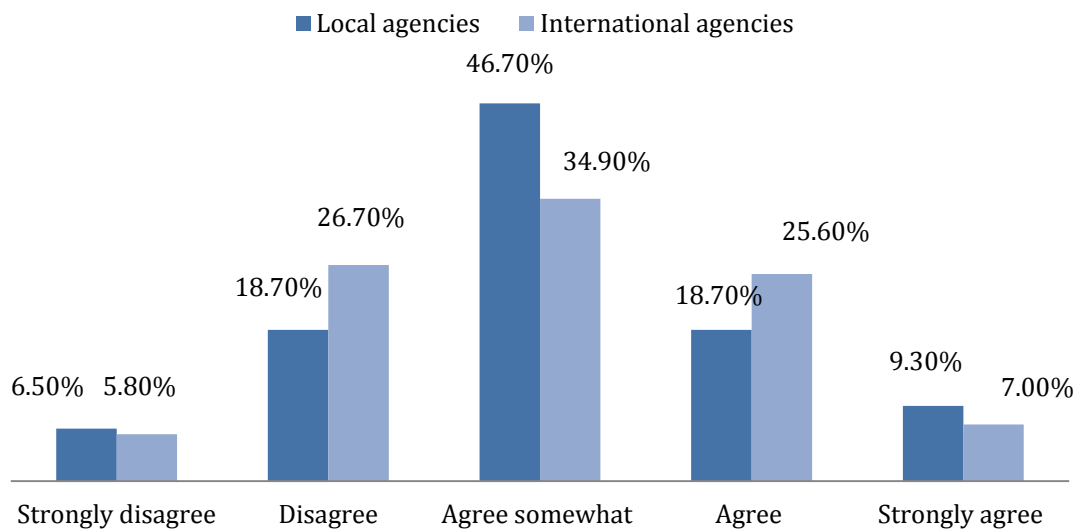
*Figure 44.*Saudi advertising designers follow the latest design styles (Bar Chart).
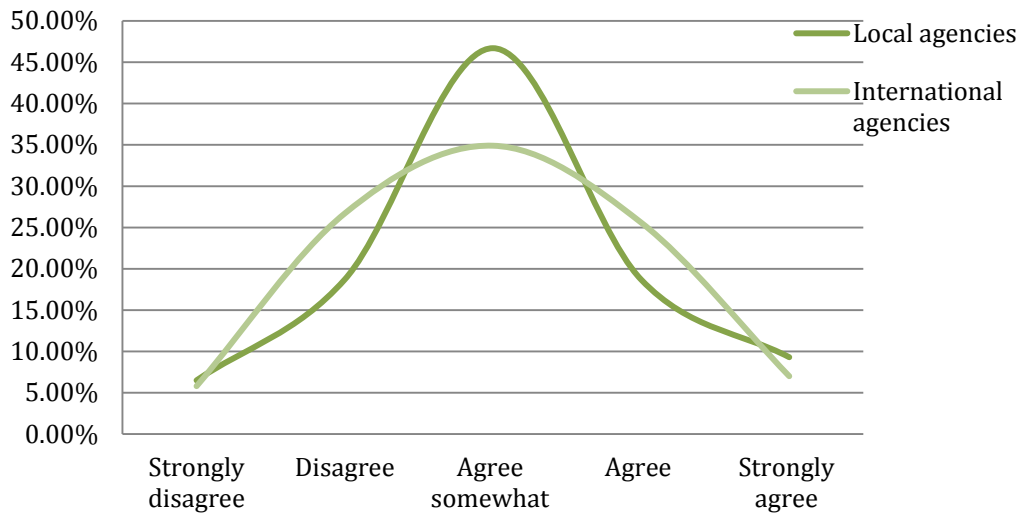
Figure 45. Saudi advertising designers follow the latest design styles (Line Chart).

Both groups display a clearly balanced, ambiguous position with the local participants quite tightly focused on the single rather measured 'agree somewhat' response. The distribution of responses from international participants is broader, with a higher standard deviation yet still evenly distributed about the central position. The participants generally chose a midpoint response style. This suggests a variety of explanations for the distribution of responses, which may include:

- There are social, political or other pressures on participants to give a neutral response.
- Participants may not have understood the question and so 'played safe' with their answers.
- The situation is much more complex than the question allows, and participants are forced into making the best of it, with responses that at least do not contradict their understanding: i.e. a neutral response.

Looking at the figures in more detail via Table 19, about 47% of local and 35% of international participants 'agree somewhat' with the statement. These two groups represent the peak, as shown in Figure 45. As is obvious from the figure,

the mean for both groups is 3, in the 'agree somewhat' area. International participants have a more distributed opinion located around the neutral point, with the distribution of opinion following a smooth curve. Their responses were more distributed, their agreement and disagreement were almost equal, with about 27% for 'disagree' and about 26% for 'agree'. The data shows few participants from either local or international agencies 'strongly disagree' or 'strongly agree' with the statement.

Table 19.
Saudi advertising designers follow the latest modern design styles

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. deviation
Local advertising agencies	7 6.5%	20 18.7%	50 46.7%	20 18.7%	10 9.3%	3.0561	1.00782
International advertising agencies	5 5.8%	23 26.7%	30 34.9%	22 25.6%	6 7.0%	3.0116	1.02319
Total	12 6.2%	43 22.3%	80 41.5%	42 21.8%	16 8.3%	3.0363	1.01228

Contrary to the researcher's expectations, no significant results were found in the investigation of whether Saudi advertising designers follow the latest, modern, design styles. Most participants agreed somewhat with the statement that was given to them, 'Saudi advertising designers follow the latest modern design styles'. As mentioned earlier, this may be because they were trying to be neutral in their responses. Perhaps there were social, political or other pressures on participants to come to a neutral response. It also could imply it was difficult for the participants to make decisive judgments about this statement. They might not have had enough information about local designers. Some participants may never have met or worked with a Saudi graphic designer, as their number is very limited. There are no official figures on the number of Saudi graphic designers, but during visits to the field to collect data, the researcher found few working in advertising. The researcher estimated the proportion of local Saudi advertising designers in the Saudi advertising industry at about 15–20% and this number is in agreement with that by Orham & Secil in 1998 (Orham & Secil, 1998). When there is not enough information to make a solid judgement, participants may well choose to be neutral.

From the researcher's point of view based on his field visits, most local Saudi advertising designers are young and keen to be up-to-date, using the latest advertising styles. Some are very talented: one local designer had created two advertisements that won competitions over hundreds of other designers in Saudi Arabia. Saudi designers need a chance to get training at high quality centres in order to have the opportunity to improve their design skills.

The data, for whatever reason, indicate most participants from both local and international agencies 'agree somewhat' with the statement Saudi advertising designers follow the latest styles in advertising. This may reflect the situation in the Saudi advertising industry, as some advertising designers follow the latest style while others still use old styles. This is obvious in advertisements published in the Saudi market: some of them are modern and others are repeated and old.

Local Education and Training and Competition in the Advertising Market

This and the next three sections review local design education and training to understand the link between education and training and Saudi advertising. In the survey, this section explored participants' agreement with the statement:

Q. Local specialized education and training courses received by Saudi advertising designers are sufficient to compete in the advertising market.

Participants were asked to give their opinion by selecting a single item from five Likert options: 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree somewhat', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'.

The collation of the responses in Figure 46 shows strong agreement across both groups there is a problem with education of Saudi advertising designers, which is insufficient to equip them with the skills needed to compete in the advertising market. The weight of opinion of all participants from both groups is around 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.
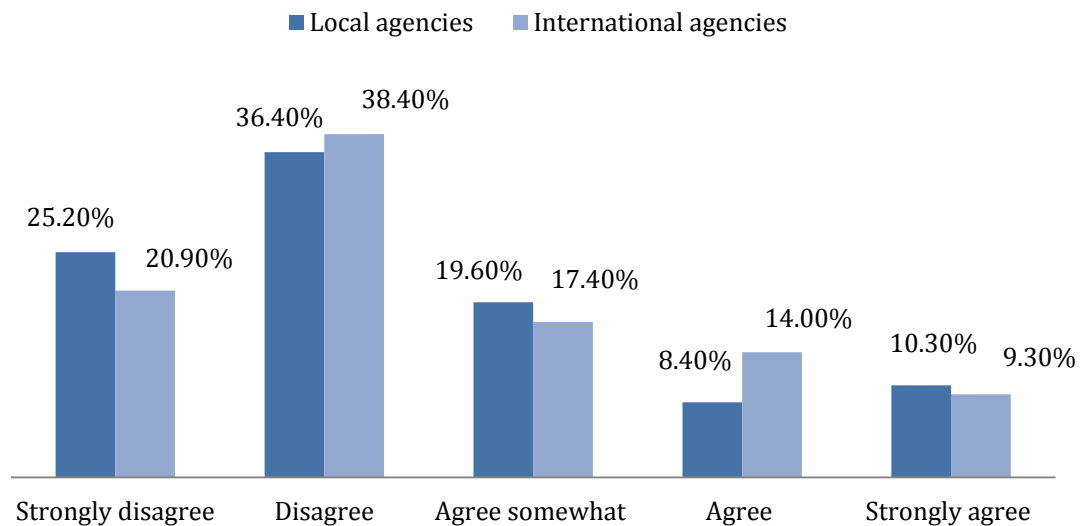
Figure 46. Saudi specialised education and training courses are sufficient to compete in advertising market.

Table 20 shows about 36% of local and 38% of international participants disagree with the statement local specialised education and training courses received by Saudi advertising designers are sufficient to compete in the advertising market.

Table 20.
Saudi specialised education and training courses received by advertising designers are sufficient to compete successfully in advertising market

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. deviation
Local advertising agencies	27 25.2%	39 36.4%	21 19.6%	9 8.4%	11 10.3%	2.4206	1.24414
International advertising agencies	18 20.9%	33 38.4%	15 17.4%	12 14.0%	8 9.3%	2.5233	1.23409
Total	45 23.3%	72 37.3%	36 18.7%	21 10.9%	19 9.8%	2.4663	1.23750

The 'disagree' choice represents a peak for both groups, as shown in Figure 46. The mean also emphasises these results for both groups, with 2.4 for local and 2.5 for international participants. As the table and the figure show, 'strongly disagree' was the second choice for both groups from local and international advertising agencies. About 25% of local participants 'strongly disagreed', while about 21% of international participants did so. The rest of the responses varied between 'agree somewhat', 'agree' and 'strongly agree', and were clearly less popular choices for both groups.

There was a clear correspondence between the two groups' responses, with the weight of responses indicating all participants believed Saudi education and

training courses received by local advertising designers were not sufficient for them to compete successfully in the advertising market.

Education and training are important factors in Saudi advertising design. The next sections will go deeper, to clarify the education and training issue.

Saudi Universities' Programs and Professional Advertising Designers

This section considers whether Saudi universities' programs are able to provide professional designers for the advertising industry. In the survey, this section explored participants' agreement with the statement:

Q. Current programs in Saudi universities are able to provide professional advertising designers

Participants were asked to select a single response from a five-point Likert scale with the following options: 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree somewhat', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'.

This survey item was included as the issue emerged strongly in informal discussions with designers. There was a perception Saudi universities have not played a positive role in the field of advertising, and to date there has been little interest in providing appropriate graduate-level advertising design programs.

Table 21 and Figure 47 show the participants' responses and the extent of their agreement or otherwise. The majority of responses of participants of local (88%) and international (86%) agencies 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' current programs in Saudi universities are able to provide professional advertising designers. Figure 47 shows around eight times as many local participants judge support from Saudi Arabian universities is insufficient as those who believe it is adequate. For participants from international agencies, the balance of opinion was around 7 times as many in the same direction.

For statistical analysis, the Likert values were converted into numerical values from 1 to 5 on in which 'strongly disagree' =1 and 'strongly agree' = 5. Table 21 shows the outcome of the numerical conversion. Approximately 56% of participants from local agencies and 51% from international agencies 'strongly disagree' with the proposition, with 'disagree' representing the second largest proportion for both groups (local 32% and international 35%). The mean is 1.6

for local and 1.7 for international agencies. This gives the balance of opinion near the middle of the Strongly Disagree and Disagree Likert metric.

Table 21.

Saudi universities' programs are able to provide professional advertising designers

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. deviation
Local advertising agencies	60	34	9	3	1	1.60	.832
	56.1%	31.8%	8.4%	2.8%	0.9%		
International advertising agencies	44	30	7	4	1	1.69	.895
	51.1%	34.9%	8.2%	4.6%	1.2%		
Total	104	64	16	7	2	1.64	.860
	53.9%	33.1%	8.3%	3.6%	1.1%		

Around 12% of all participants 'agree somewhat', 'agree' or 'strongly agree' current universities programs provide adequate professional training. Those participants represented a minority, possibly of those participants who did not have good knowledge of education programs at Saudi universities, and specifically they do not yet offer graduate design programs for males, who represent the vast majority of workers in the advertising design field. Some may think art education departments provide sufficiently skilled designers.
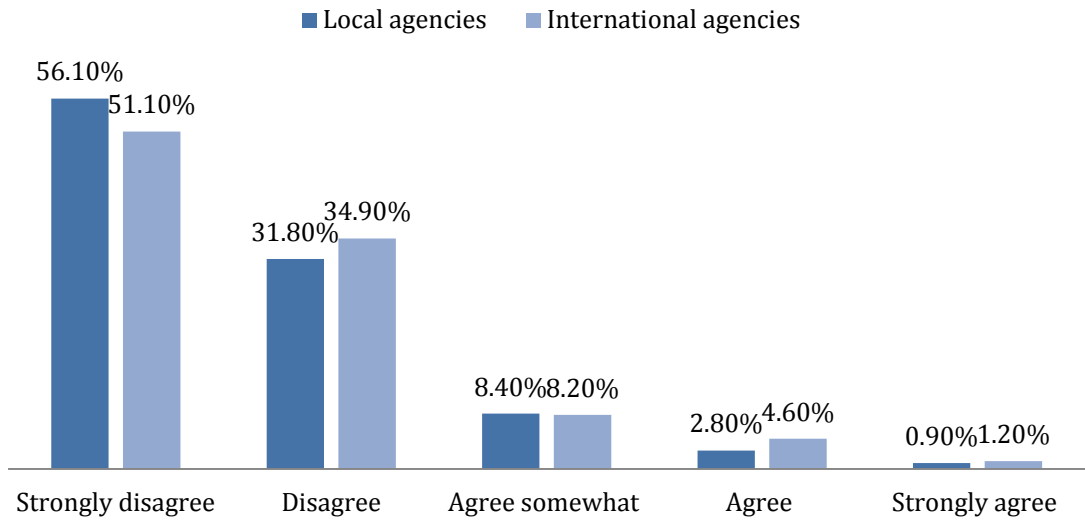
Figure 47. Saudi university programs are able to provide professional advertising designers.

Overall, the majority of all participants (about 87%) believed current programs in Saudi universities have been unable to produce professional advertising designers. The most obvious reason for this has been the absence of specific advertising and graphic design programs for males. Anecdotally, the alternative programs available have been considered to contribute to the low quality of local Saudi advertising design.

Need for Design Colleges in Saudi Arabia

Participants in the survey all are professionals in Saudi advertising and know the industry's needs. This part of the survey complemented the previous question by exploring whether participants felt the need for design colleges in Saudi Arabia.

Q. There is a need for the establishment of design colleges in Saudi Arabia.

Participants were asked to choose one of the following five Likert scale options: 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree somewhat', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'.

A similar question was asked in a previous study by Zeyad (2004, p.81) of calligraphers in Saudi Arabia about establishing a Fine Art college in Saudi Arabia.

There was significant agreement between the two groups in this study about a need for design colleges in Saudi Arabia. The bar chart in Figure 48 shows the majority of participants from both groups either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' there is a need to establish design colleges in Saudi Arabia.
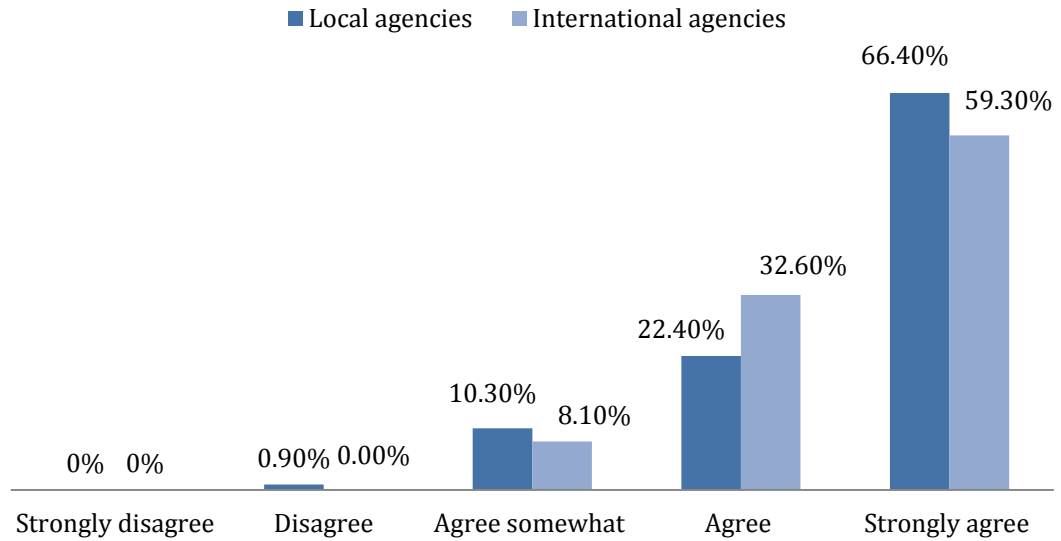
Figure 48. There is a need for the establishment of design colleges in Saudi Arabia.

More than 66% of local and 59% of international participants 'strongly agree' with the proposition. This clear weight of opinion may be because participants are aware there are no design colleges in Saudi Arabia for males, who must go abroad to study advertising or any other field of design.

To conduct basic statistical analysis on the Likert data, the five Likert data points were converted into numerical form from 1 to 5 with 'strongly disagree' = 1 and 'strongly agree' = 5. The numerical data are represented in Table 22.

Table 22.
There is a need for establishment of design colleges in Saudi Arabia.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. deviation
Participants of local advertising agencies	0 0%	1 0.9%	11 10.3%	24 22.4%	71 66.4%	4.5421	.71744
Participants of international advertising agencies	0 0%	0 0%	7 8.1%	28 32.6%	51 59.3%	4.5116	.64615
Total	0 0%	1 .5%	18 9.3%	52 26.9%	122 63.2%	4.5285	.68501

A strong and significant finding is shown in Table 22. The table shows the mean for responses from both local and international participants is located between 'agree' and 'strongly agree' at 4.5, with a standard deviation close to 0.7. These indicate an almost unanimous agreement on the need for design colleges in Saudi Arabia. Only 1% of participants from local agencies 'disagreed' there is a need for design colleges in the country; there was no other source of disagreement at any level. Perhaps the single dissenter has no design education and does not know the benefits of studying design at specialised collages or schools. The statistical analysis gives a clear message about a need for design colleges in the Kingdom.

Need for Graphic and Advertising Design Training Centres in Saudi Arabia

This part of the survey explored whether participants felt the need for training centres for graphic and advertising in Saudi Arabia. The previous question explored participants' views on the need for university *design colleges* for students. This question focuses specifically on the training of advertising and graphic designers, for those who do not want to study at universities or those who work in the field and wish to improve their skills, and explored participants' views on the need for a subset of these centres.

Q. There is a need for specialised training centres for graphic and advertising design in Saudi Arabia.

Again participants were asked to respond via a five-point Likert scale with 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree somewhat', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'.
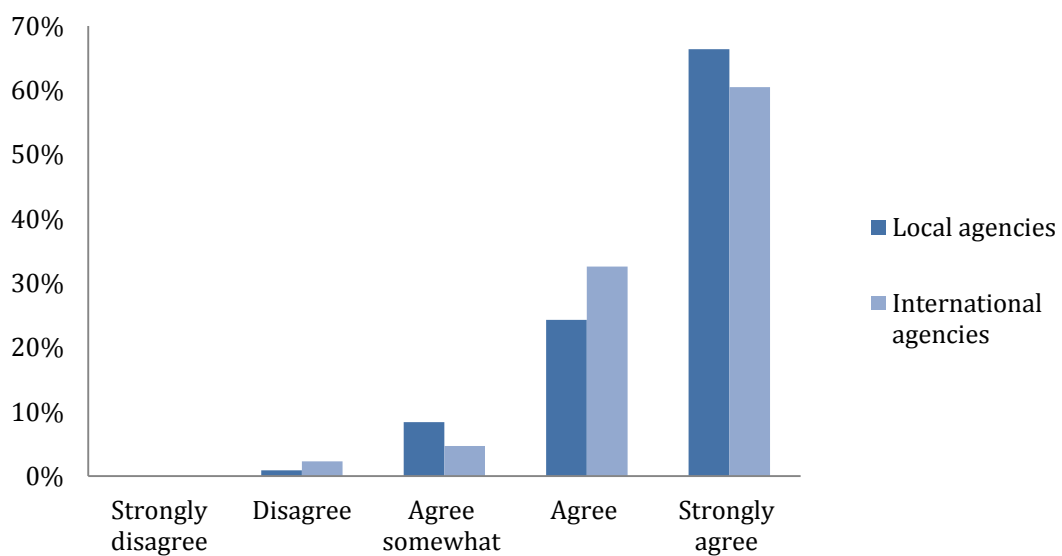
Figure 49. There is a need for specialised training centres for graphic and advertising design in Saudi Arabia.

As in the previous question, there was significant agreement among participants about the need for specialised training centres. The majority of participants

from both groups 'strongly agreed' there is a need, and this represented the dominant position for both groups (66% from local agencies and 60% from international agencies), as can be seen in Figure 49. The second choice for participants was 'agree', with about 24% of local and 33% of international participants selecting this option. Only 1.6 of participants from both groups chose 'disagree' (1 participant from local and 2 from international agencies). Those from international agencies may have felt there is no need for specialised training centers because they have access to in-house training methods and find this is enough to obtain good training. The local dissenter may not have been aware of what specialised training centres offer, or of their role in offering training to improve designers' skills. None of the participants 'strongly disagreed'. The participants were professional designers working in Saudi advertising, and were fully aware of the importance of specialised training centres and their absence in Saudi Arabia.

The table of responses gives a quantitative picture of the situation in which the Likert options are converted to the numbers from 1 to 5: the mean of the two groups' responses are located between 'agree' and 'strongly agree', with means of 4.6 for local and 4.5 for international agencies. Fewer than 9% of participants chose any other option.

Table 23.
There is a need for specialised centres for graphic and advertising design in Saudi Arabia.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. deviation
Local advertising agencies	0 0%	1 0.9%	9 8.4%	26 24.3%	71 66.4%	4.5607	.68924
International advertising agencies	0 0%	2 2.3%	4 4.7%	28 32.6%	52 60.5%	4.5116	.69864
Total	0 0%	3 1.6%	13 6.7%	54 28.0%	123 63.7%	4.5389	.69206

The data from participants indicate strongly that professional advertising designers consider there is a shortage of specialised graphic and advertising training centres in Saudi Arabia.

Difficulties Encountered by Advertising Designers in the Saudi Market, and Solutions

Participants were asked their opinions about the difficulties and obstacles encountered by advertising designers; the responses of local and international were examined separately. The proposition solicited suggestions from participants as to how perceived difficulties might be overcome. Open questions and responses were used to give participants space to express their perceptions of both difficulties and solutions. This question echoes one asked in a previous study by Zeyad (2004) of calligraphers in Saudi Arabia. Comparison between the data from this study and the previous research by Zeyad offers a measure of triangulation and also an idea of progress in the seven years between the two studies. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Two conjoined open-ended survey questions were asked:

Q. What are the difficulties facing advertising designers in Saudi Arabia? and how can these difficulties be overcome?

The difficulties encountered by advertising designers in local advertising agencies and the solutions.

Table 24 shows the difficulties local participants identified, and their potential solutions.

Table 24.
Difficulties encountered by advertising designers in local advertising agencies and their solutions.

	Frequency of response by participants	%	Difficulties identified by participants	Potential solutions
Client (Advertisers). 30 participants = 29%	11	10%	Clients request advertising design to be rapidly finished. This can result in reduced quality of outcomes.	Providing designers with sufficient time to make advertising design. Advertising designers need to insist that they have sufficient time to create advertisements.
	10	10%	Clients interfere in the process of creating advertisements and impose their incorrect (often) opinions on the advertising designers.	Limit the amount that clients can interfere in the creation of an advertising design. Clients need to accept the advice of the advertising agency.
	9	9%	Some clients do not understand the advertisements created.	Advertising agencies need to provide clients with more information about each advertisement. If necessary, agencies provide short advertising education courses for clients.

Education and training 25 p = 24%	14	13%	Lack of training courses provided to advertising designers.	Establish centres to offer training courses for advertising designers to develop their abilities. Organise compulsory training courses and workshops for designers. Encouraging self-learning among advertising designers.
	6	6%	There are no colleges specialised in teaching different areas of advertising design for males in Saudi Arabia.	Establish colleges and departments specialised in advertising design in the Saudi universities.
	5	5%	Most designers in the local advertising agencies do not speak English and some foreign designers cannot understand Arabic well.	Advertising agencies need to provide incentives for designers who master both English and Arabic.

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Equipment and computer technology. 23 p = 22%	18	17%	There is a lack of fundamental design facilities in some advertising agencies such as up-to-date design software and specialised high quality images.	Advertising agencies need to supply designers with all recent design requirements. Local advertising agencies need to supply designers with up-to-date design software. It would be helpful for agencies to supply designers with high-quality photographs.
	5	5%	Some computer devices used to create advertisements in local advertising agencies are ineffective.	Advertising agencies supply designers continuously with up-to-date computer devices and update obsolete or obsolescent devices.

Society and regulations. 16 p = 16%	8	8%	Some Saudi customs and traditions do not accept all advertising concepts and ideas designers suggest.	Advertising agencies can utilise global expertise for the making of advertisements are compatible with the Saudi market.
	5	5%	Saudi society lacks a visual art culture.	Spread visual art culture and design understanding in Saudi society through media and education. Organise art galleries and exhibitions for the public.
	3	3%	There are some formal and legal restrictions on the Saudi advertising market.	Relevant officials need to review and renew the advertising regulations in Saudi Arabia.
Other. 9 p = 8%	4	4%	Advertising designers' salaries are low in local advertising agencies.	Local advertising agencies need to increase salaries of advertising designers.
	2	1.5%	There exists a lack of a harmonious working environment for advertising designers due to competition between them.	Advertising agencies provide a healthy working environment and support teamwork.

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	2	1.5%	There is a lack of mutual support organisations for designers such as unions, associations, societies and clubs for advertising designers in Saudi Arabia to gather and support themselves.	Advertising agencies need to found clubs, associations and unions that will support advertising designers in Saudi Arabia.
	1	1%	Very few exhibitions in Saudi Arabia are created to show the latest styles and technology in the field of advertising.	Agencies need to organise periodical national and international galleries and exhibitions for advertising design products.

The table above shows the difficulties encountered by advertising designers in local agencies, along with the solutions suggested by the participants. The main difficulties revolve around advertising agencies' clients, design education and training, design facilities and computer technology in the agencies; some aspects of Saudi culture and advertising regulations are also addressed.

The data from local advertising agencies show some unexpected results. For example, advertising designers from local agencies faced more difficulties from their clients more than from education and technology problems. This was unexpected; by digging into the details we find that some participants believe their clients do not understand the advertisements that have been created. In a professional perspective advertising designers have nothing directly to do with clients; customer service is the department that liaises with clients and presents

them with the agency's best suggestions. This includes the professional presentation of the advertisement's form and concept to the client.

Another interesting issue emerging from the data is that 8% of participants from local agencies clamed some Saudi customs and traditions do not accept all advertising concepts and ideas. This is normal in Saudi Arabia (or in any other country) because consumers and viewers in an open market have different beliefs, backgrounds and traditions; and it is the role of advertising agencies not to conflict with people's beliefs and culture when developing advertisements.

Some participants claimed there is a lack of mutual support organisations for designers in the Kingdom. This draws attention to the lack of unions, associations, societies or clubs for advertising designers. This issue will be discussed in greater detail, along with the benefit of establishing professional associations or unions for advertising designers, in Chapter 6.

The difficulties encountered by advertising designers in international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia and the solutions.

Table 25 shows the difficulties international participants identified, and their proposed solutions.

Table 25.
Difficulties encountered by advertising designers in international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia, and the solutions.

	Frequency of response by participants	%	Difficulties identified by participants	Potential solutions
Society and regulations 56 participants = 66%	25	30%	Saudi customs and traditions do not approve of all ideas advertising designers suggest.	Make advertisements compatible with the Saudi culture. Resort to symbolism in advertisements instead of being explicit.
	22	26%	Formal and legal restrictions are imposed on some advertising by officials.	Allow more freedom for advertisements. Enact clear and definite laws to be applied on all advertisements.
	6	7%	Saudi society cannot understand some modern advertisements.	Spread the culture of modern visual design and art in Saudi education and media.

	3	3%	Some foreign designers have a limited knowledge of Saudi culture and traditions.	Workshops and lectures covering the customs and culture of the Saudi society need be organised for the foreign designers before starting their jobs in Saudi advertising design.
Agencies' clients 16 p = 19%	10	12%	Some clients have a lack of experience in the advertising field; for example, some do not have clear definite objectives.	It is benefit for every advertising agency to have an advertising advisor who can convince clients with the agency's point of view and provide advice for them.
	6	7%	The client's interference in the idea and design of advertising can hinder a designer's creativity.	It is benefit for clients not to interfere in the designer's work. Instead, the client needs to contact directly with customer service. Clients need to have a specialised advertising agent to contact with the advertising agencies.

Education and training 13 p 15%	13	15%	There is a lack of colleges and centres specialising in teaching and training advertising design. This problem is noticeable when attempting to utilise some of the up-to-date design programs.	Establish colleges specialised in design, with departments of advertising design. Establish training centres that specialise in advertising. Organise continual online or in-class training courses and workshops for the modern design programs and applications.

The above table shows the main difficulties facing designers from international advertising agencies revolve around some aspects of Saudi culture, problems caused by agencies' clients, and the shortage of advertising and graphic design training centres in Saudi Arabia.

From the data, Saudi social expectations and regulations represented 66% of the difficulties encountered by designers in international advertising agencies. The details of those difficulties reveal unexpected issues. For example, 30% of the participants from this group noted that Saudi customs and traditions do not approve of all ideas that advertising designers create. This opinion was unexpected from such a significant number of advertising professionals, because it is normal for any society, in Saudi Arabia or elsewhere, to reject ideas that conflict with their culture. The same trend was observed with 26% of participants from international agencies claiming that 'formal and legal restrictions are imposed on some advertising by officials'. This opinion was also unexpected because the restrictions are legal as they claimed and officials have

the right to apply the law on advertising. Perhaps this shows insufficient knowledge of the Saudi social setting.

In general, it is obvious from the data gathered from all participants in this section of the survey local designers face more difficulties than the international cohort. These include difficulties created by their clients; shortage of good, specialised design education and training programs; an unhealthy and sociopathic work environment; low salaries; dealing with elements of Saudi culture in tension with some advertising approaches; a shortage of professional-quality facilities including up-to-date design software and computer technology; problems with Saudi advertising regulations; and a lack of advertising-related exhibitions in Saudi Arabia. The difficulties facing designers from international companies are more limited, and mainly relate to some aspects of Saudi culture, problems caused by clients, and the shortage of specialised advertising and graphic design training centres in Saudi Arabia. These issues will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Section 2: Analysis of Data from Semi- structured Interviews

Thirty semi-structured interviews were undertaken to triangulate and inform the analysis of the self-administered questionnaire. Fourteen (14) interviewees were from local advertising agencies and sixteen (16) from international advertising agencies.

This second section of this chapter reports the analyses of responses from participants' interviews to identify participants' perceptions of the factors causing quality differences in local and international advertising outputs. The analyses also offer improved understanding of the impacts on advertising design in the Saudi Arabian context of the use of, and access to, computers, software and computer-related technologies; the methods and processes of creating advertisements; and the opportunities for improving the quality of advertising produced by local agencies.

During each interview, the participants were invited through the structure of the interview questions to give their views on the reasons for quality differences of advertisements created by local and international agencies in Saudi Arabia.

This second section has the following structure. The responses to question are divided into two sub-sections. The analyses of responses from local interviewees are collated together, and then followed by a collation of the analyses of responses from the international participants. Within each of these sub-sections, the analyses are grouped according to themes or topics that emerged in the responses.

Reasons for Quality Differences between Advertising Designs Created by Local and International Agencies

Q. What are the reasons for quality differences between advertising designs created by some local advertising agencies and international ones in Saudi Arabia?

Part one: responses of interviewees from local advertising agencies

There were fourteen (14) interviewees from local advertising agencies. They offered eleven reasons for the different advertising outcomes of local and international agencies:

- Agency processes, practices and structure
- Computer usage
- Education
- Human resources
- Financial resources
- Clients
- Ideas, invention and novelty
- Training
- Expertise
- Society and Saudi culture
- Devices and materials

Agency processes, practices and structure

- Nine participants suggested quality differences were due to practices in local agencies. Often, the same staff member from the local advertising agency meets the client, creates the ideas and carries them out. This person is usually a graphic designer. In contrast, international agencies have a process involving multiple specialists.

This suggestion raises an issue about local advertising agencies, because the graphic designer is not the right person to meet the client and discuss advertising matters such as price, plan or marketing advice.

- Seven participants noted there are no specific specialist tasks for advertising designers in local agencies. In a local agency, the advertising designer may also be the creative director and account director. In contrast, in international agencies, each member of the advertising team has a specific role and undertakes specific role-related tasks. When there are no clear tasks assigned to local agency staff, graphic designers may also act as creative director or even account director. They may find themselves working in customer service, meeting clients and discussing matters such as price. They may find themselves working as creative directors, leading the process from beginning to end. In some local agencies, they work in areas they are not necessarily untrained for and may be unable to undertake competently. While in a few large local agencies a member from customer service deals with the client, graphic designers are likely to receive the request and discuss all matters regarding the campaign, the price, and the client's ideas and plans. This is not usually considered sound professional practice and it does not happen in international agencies. Only the customer service staff or account director are authorised to discuss matters such as the price, plan, and advertisement direction, which is seen as an important, specialised job. According to several account directors from international agencies, graphic designers often fail to negotiate well with clients, especially if the client's point of view is different from the agency. Graphic designers at international agencies, therefore, do not meet the clients because agencies do not want to lose the clients. Nor are graphic designers or other members of the creative department considered qualified to work with financial planning. They work only with creative matters.

A possible explanation for this issue in local agencies is that do not care about whether the practices conform to professional norms. They may feel this way of working is adequate as long as it is cheaper and acceptable to clients. This factor has an interrelationship with factors relating to how local agencies manage financial resources. One solution is local advertising agencies need to work professionally and direct staff members in the agency toward assignments and tasks based on their qualifications and skills.

- Four participants suggested differences were due to local agencies' lack of clear plans or a defined strategy comprising different stages of undertaking advertising. Typically, local agencies only undertake explicit planning activities if problems arise. In contrast, international agencies have clear strategies and plans for every stage in the design of advertisements.

  These four participants raised planning as a problem for local agencies. It may well be that planning does exist in all local advertising agencies in one way or another, because without a plan there is no outcome in advertising. Even if there is no specific planning department in a local agency, even if nothing is written on paper, there must be a plan for creating and producing advertisements. When the creative teams in local agencies discuss the objectives of an advertisement, how it will be produced and the deadline for submitting it, this is a plan. Advertising agencies of any sort would find it impossible to work without these minimum steps. It may be that some local advertising agencies have no planning departments and so work with old –fashioned or unprofessional plans; but they work with a plan in a way or another.

- Four participants felt the difference was due to the lack of departments for research in most local agencies. In contrast, it is normal for international agencies, to have specialists to undertake necessary background research to support each project.

  This suggestion, from four local participants, may be contrary to fact. Not all international advertising agencies have research departments. They seek help, instead, from marketing and research agencies. Local advertising agencies could do the same and utilise specialised research agencies in Saudi Arabia.

Computer usage

- Twelve participants suggested designers in local agencies are less skilled in using design software. It is common they only receive training in such essential software as Adobe Photoshop in short courses of no longer than a month. Most of their skill acquisition and expertise comes through on-the-job trial and error. International advertising agencies, in contrast,

require designers to have good knowledge and thorough training in design software.

This is an issue in local advertising agencies, and the researcher during field visits found many designers in local agencies are not specialists in design or advertising: they took short courses in Photoshop and Illustrator and became advertising designers! This could negatively affect the quality of their output.

- Three participants believed local designers do not make effective use of the Internet.

  This opinion may be in conflict with the results of the questionnaire survey, as the data there shows about 70% of those from local agencies who participated in the study use the Internet as inspiration for their advertising designs. Because the Internet is cheap, easy to use and available, it has become an important source for local agencies. Although fewer designers from local agencies use the Internet compared with those from international agencies, the Internet is still one of their important sources.

- Six participants felt most local designers do not know all the important features and secrets of design software. One of them estimated some designers use only 20% of the available features of design software when creating advertisements.

  This opinion is linked to the first point in this section, and is related to lack of design education, lack of software training and lack of experience with design software.

Education

- Thirteen participants noted most local designers do not have specialised degrees in advertising or in design. In contrast, international designers typically have specialised degrees in those subjects.

- Eight participants stated there are no design programs for males in Saudi universities. This means there are many unqualified and untrained Saudi designers working in the local advertising industry.

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Those two points are related to each other and present one of the significant difficulties in building the local Saudi advertising industry.

- Three participants suggested many local designers do not have good English, and so do not have access to the many English publications and websites about advertising. In contrast, international designers are mostly competent in English and can access a much larger pool of high-quality design resources. More details about this point will be discussed in Chapter 5.

- Two participants stated art education in Saudi Arabia stops at the end of middle school (Year or Grade 9), which means educational support for local designers' art knowledge officially stops at this stage of their education.

- One participant suggested general schools in Saudi Arabia do not include teaching in any field of design and this impacts negatively on students who want to work in advertising fields.

  For this last point, the lack of opportunity in the Saudi general school system to develop in the areas of design and aesthetics leads many students to choose pathways other than art or design in university. This results in the loss of many talented people who could have become world leaders in the advertising field.

Human resources

- Six participants claimed differences between local and international agencies in Saudi Arabia are due to many designers in local agencies not being specialists in advertising design, while designers in international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia are required to be specialised and professional in design, advertising and related skills.

- Three participants stated local advertising agencies, when recruiting designers, do not require have high qualifications, compared to those demanded of appointees by international agencies.

- Three participants felt the work of designers in local agencies was not subjected to periodic review. In contrast, the outputs of designers in

international advertising agencies go through periodic review and assessment.

These three points are related to other factors such as educational, professional and financial difficulties facing the local industry. These together with other difficulties (discussed below) have created the differences in the level of advertising designs created by local and international agencies.

Financial resources

- Eleven participants suggested quality differences might be pay-related: local agencies pay low salaries to designers, so less skilful, less experienced designers are generally employed at the local level. In contrast, international agencies pay salaries that attract experienced and skilful designers.
- In line with this, two participants suggested the selection of designers in local advertising agencies focuses on the minimum salary applicants will accept. In contrast, international agencies focus more on the applicants' experience, skills and qualifications.
  These two points are important, because if the focus of many local agencies is to attract lower salaried designers then the results and outputs may be unsatisfactory.
- Two participants suggested internal financial resource distribution within the advertising agencies is a factor in quality differences. They considered local advertising agencies assign relatively small budgets to the activities of creating and producing advertising designs. International agencies operating a much higher budget to those sections of the design process.
- One participant felt price competition between local advertising agencies damaged local quality. Local advertising agencies compete against each other by reducing advertising prices, and this leads to a reduction in the quality of output by limiting the funding for the designer's time, as well as to reductions in the quality of materials and devices used to create an advertisement. Competition has a direct effect on quality because many factors contribute to the quality of advertising depend on the quality of the resources assigned to each project: good advertising needs money for planning, researching, creating and producing.
- One participant believed demand-side issues influenced quality: clients of local agencies are not prepared to pay large sums for advertising, while

clients of international advertising agencies allocate huge budgets for advertising.

Clients

- Ten participants suggested an important reason for the poor advertising created by local agencies is some clients of local advertising agencies impose their opinions on the advertising design, and in fact control each detail of the advertisement. From this perspective, the agency is a producer, rather than a designer, of advertisements. Clients of international agencies do not have so great a direct influence, typically following the advice of the agency in all stages of creation.
Regarding this suggestion, one of the important roles of advertising agencies as we have seen in Chapter 2 is to provide professional advice and consultation for clients. This input of expertise from the agencies improves an advertisement over and beyond what the client might have envisaged. If local advertising agencies are to work professionally they need to provide their clients with advice and limit the extent to which the clients can dictate design (except if the clients have more experience in the advertising than the agency).

- Five participants felt there was a shortfall of client expertise in the advertising realm: most clients of local agencies have no, or very limited, backgrounds in advertising design, and some lack artistic and aesthetic sense. This obviously has a negative effect if the design output is micromanaged by these clients.

- Following from this, two participants stated quality differences might be due to clients lacking appropriate skills in liaising with advertising staff. Typically, clients of local advertising agencies do not have employees who are specialised in specific advertising sections (such as executive advertising) and who represent the client. Larger organisations that commission advertising from international advertising agencies are likely to have dedicated liaison personnel.

- Three participants suggested many clients of local advertising agencies do not readily accept modern or unusual ideas. To address this issue, local advertising agencies reduce this restrictive client pressure by imitating previously produced advertising. In contrast, clients of international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia often welcome innovative ideas in advertising.

The researcher heard some advertising designers talking about this point in side conversations. When he asked, 'Did you seriously try to persuade the clients to change their minds by providing them with professional advice and show them some successful and innovative advertisements?' they said no! The designers chose the easiest way to create the advertisement, by imitating previously produced advertising.

Ideas, invention and novelty

- Seven participants suggested differences in quality between local and international advertising agencies are at least in part explained by local agencies paying less attention to the underlying ideas and concepts of each project than do international agencies.
- Five participants claimed local advertising agencies are characteristically more direct in presenting the ideas of advertisements, while international advertising agencies typically adopt a less direct, more symbolic or suggestive approach to advertising.
- Two participants felt limited diversity and considerable repetition of advertising ideas were standard in local agencies, while international agencies tended to offer innovative and fresh approaches.
The previous points are related in various ways to the experience and talent of designers. When designers have good professional experience, the focus on advertising ideas and concepts likely will be increased because ideas and concepts are central to delivering massages to viewers. Professional experience may also help them avoid inappropriately direct presentation of an advertisements' message when subtlety is called for. In addition, experienced designers have less need to recycle old advertising because they can create new and novel ideas for each advertisement more easily.

Training

- Eleven participants suggested differences in quality were a result of the lack of good training centres in Saudi Arabia specialising in advertising. Local designers find it difficult to obtain training in advertising design, and this impacts adversely on the quality of output of the local industry.

- Three participants suggested local advertising agencies do not commit sufficient care and resources to training their designers. In contrast, some international agencies send their designers to undertake training courses abroad to update their skills and knowledge, including recent developments in the field.

  Training is an important issue faces many advertising designers in the Saudi adverting industry who want to improve their skills in the field. Many local advertising agencies just surrendered to this difficulty. International advertising agencies, however, address this problem by utilising in-house training approaches.

Expertise

- Eight participants believed local advertising agencies have limited experience in the field of advertising compared to international agencies. The oldest local advertising agency in the Kingdom was established in the 1960s. In contrast, some international advertising agencies in the Saudi market have much greater depth of experience: some were established in 1930 (see Chapter 2).
- Six participants suggested isolation is a factor that affects the quality of work produced by local agencies. Most international agencies use their overseas branches as resources of expertise and knowledge and as advisors. In contrast, the majority of local agencies have no branches abroad.
- One participant stated local advertising agencies, typically, do not seek help from international advertising experts. In contrast, international advertising agencies often resort to such experts. Some international agencies leverage their expertise in local contexts: those with branches in Dubai may test advertisements intended for Saudi Arabia there, before releasing them on the Saudi market. This is effective because the traditions and values in Emirati society are close to those in Saudi society. Being able to pre-test advertisements in this way offers permits designers to improve the advertising design. This is a facility not available to local advertising agencies.

Society and Saudi culture

- Two participants commented Saudi society is traditional and conservative, and limited in its ability to accept some of the more modern ideas of advertising design practice.
The researcher does not agree with this suggestion because any society in the world has its cultural shibboleths, and advertising should not be created to conflict with people's beliefs and culture. Instead, it should respect traditions and culture of the society.

Devices and materials

- Six participants felt most technology used by local advertising agencies, such as computers, printers, scanners, cameras and other materials, are typically of a lower quality than is available to international agencies.
This was obvious in some local advertising agencies. They used a PC to create advertisements; and some used cheap materials because, as mentioned before, they suffered financial difficulties.

Part 2: Responses of participants from International advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia

The sixteen (16) interviewees from international advertising agencies attributed the quality differences between local and international advertising agencies to factors in twelve categories:

- Agency processes, practices and structure
- Computer technology usage
- Education
- Human resources
- Financial resources
- Clients
- Ideas, invention and novelty
- Training
- Expertise
- Society and Saudi culture
- Devices and materials used

- Type and volume of projects

Agency processes, practices and structure

- Nine interviewees suggested differences in quality of output were underpinned by a lack of hierarchy and specialisation in many local advertising agencies where tasks were commonly assigned to unspecialised employees. In contrast, international agencies' employees are more specialised and specific tasks are directed to whichever advertising specialist is most suited to the task. This issue appears to be important, and participants from both local and international agencies pointed to the lack of specialisation in designers who create and produce advertising in local agencies. It echoes suggestions that local agencies may be less professional, which may reflect negatively on their advertising outputs.
- Eight interviewees drew attention to the smaller size of local agencies. The number of staff involved in creating and producing an advertising design is typically much lower in local agencies. This aligns with the previous point, as larger staff (along with access to overseas staff) enables international agencies to have higher levels of specialisation and expertise.
- Five participants pointed to the short production and evaluation 'loop' typical of many local agencies. They suggested this is common practice at local advertising agencies, in which a graphic designer meets the client, creates and produces the advertising design idea, and presents it to the client. This shortened creation and assessment cycle does not align with best professional practice, and in many cases would be expected to result in lower quality design outcomes.
- Five participants drew attention to lack of teamwork in local agencies. Teamwork provides a means to draw on the knowledge and expertise of multiple individuals. In international agencies, teamwork on design projects is extensive and highly valued. In contrast, in local agencies the making of an advertisement is typically relegated to a single individual. A possible explanation for this point is that most local agencies have a small staff: some have only two members. This may be the reason management in some local agencies encourages individual work – which is also a reflection of the preference in modern Saudi society for individual work. This point will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
- Four participants commented on attention to detail and suggested the commitment of considerable resources to provide substantial attention to

detail is a marker of effective international agencies. The limited resources of local agencies curtail the amount of attention and expertise that can be diverted to attend to details. This links with the differences in scale and specialisation of expertise already noted.

- Four participants believed the differences in quality are at least in part due to the lack of periodic reviews in local agencies: international agencies critically review their advertising outputs both internally and externally, to encourage continuous improvement in their creation and production processes.

  The lack of critical assessments and periodic reviews in local advertising agencies may contribute to the lower quality of advertisements they create because with no periodic reviews the agencies cannot know their level of progress.

- Three participants suggested the differences in quality are primarily a process issue: many local agencies have no pre-defined process to follow in creating advertisements, while international agencies work according to highly formalised and tested schedules and workflows, starting from the first contact with a client to finalising and carrying out assigned tasks.

  This may be over-simplistic. Local agencies may have pre-defined processes they follow in creating advertising, although their processes may not be professional, or may differ from those used in international agencies. However, it is possible that differences in process may contribute to the differences in quality.

- Three participants believed internal power politics in local agencies was a contributing factor. In many local agencies, the success of any advertisement is attributed to administration rather than to the advertising designer(s) who created the work. This has an adverse motivational effect, discouraging designers from produce higher quality advertising. In contrast, success in international agencies is attributed to the team involved in creating the advertisement and managing the relationship with the client.

  This is an interesting point; it happens in many fields, not just in advertising in Saudi Arabia. Compliments and rewards may go to bosses in cases of success. This may have an adverse motivational effect on the people who did the successful work.

- In line with the earlier issues attributing quality differences to scale issues, three participants felt a contributing factor to differences in

quality was the limitation of scope for local advertising agencies. Very few local agencies offer full services, in contrast to the majority of international agencies. This distinction advantages international agencies financially and attracts more clients to them. For the local industry, the shortfall in full service advertising agencies reduces their scope for inter- and intra-organizational learning and improvement both for the organizations and the advertising design staff they employ; hence they lose many potential clients.

- Two participants identified lack of focus on research as a contributing factor. Local agencies do not pay much attention to research, which contrasts with the generally enthusiastic attitude towards research found in international agencies – some of which have departments specialising in handling research-related tasks.

  The explanation of this is that some local advertising agencies may lack of knowledge about the importance of research to improve their advertising. Other agencies may know the importance of research, but the apparent reticence of the this branch of the industry towards engaging in research or cooperating with other parties to provide new research findings about the Saudi market is financially based: they do not have the capacity to cover the research costs. In fact, abstaining from research results in higher short-term financial gains, but this comes at the expense of quality in the mid- to long-term. International agencies actively and enthusiastically cooperate with other parties. This provides them with new research findings; and the increases in fees from better advertising outcomes funds further research.

Computer technology usage

- Fifteen participants believed designers in local agencies are less efficient and skilled with design software than those in international agencies. A number of local designers lack the knowledge to deal properly with the right computer technology required to create advertisements.

  There is an agreement between the participants' survey and the interviews that designers in local agencies are less efficient and skilled with design software than those in international agencies. This is an important factor, but hardly surprising: it comes as a result of other factors, including insufficient education and training and lack of professionalism in local advertising agencies.

- Twelve participants believed some local designers use only one form of

design software for all stages of creation. In contrast, international designers use software specifically designed for different stages of production. Moreover, one participant commented, local agencies use only about 15% of the available functions of their software. Typically, designers depend primarily on Photoshop and Illustrator.

The researcher during field visits found some advertising designers in local agencies used only Photoshop to create their designs. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

- Nine participants stated the majority of computer devices used in local agencies are of lesser quality and efficiency than those used in international agencies.

As mentioned earlier, some designers in local agencies use PCs to create and produce advertisements. Those computers may have less capability for doing this kind of job.

- Six participants believed some local agencies do not pay attention to upgrading their design software. In contrast, international agencies ensure they get the full benefit of up-to-the-minute software.

This factor may relate to designers more than their agencies, as they may not want to upgrade their design software because they do not want to learn new complicated processes and software. It may also related to cost – particularly for local advertising houses that use Macs. Upgrading software often is hampered by the need simultaneously to upgrade operating systems and replace the computer.

Education

- Fourteen participants attributed quality differences to the lack of programs for males in Saudi universities, in the fields of advertising or design. This means there is no place in Saudi Arabia to graduate male professionals for work in advertising; and it means some advertising staff in local agencies are not specialists in the advertising field. Most designers in international agencies are graduates of universities and institutions specialising in advertising and design studies.
- Ten participants suggested Saudi students who studied design or another field of advertising design abroad are very few. Scholarships to study design or visual art are rare.

This is true because there are no design or visual art schools for males in

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Saudi universities, but the universities (who control most scholarships) do not send students abroad to study design. Instead, they send students to study areas the universities need, such as medical areas.

- Four participants suggested general education in Saudi Arabia does not include instruction in any field of design.
  This prevents talented students from improving their skills in design, and they may choose another field to work in rather than advertising.

- Two participants felt there is a language barrier for most local designers because they do not speak English: most of the latest material and knowledge in the field of advertising is in English. It is rare to find a designer in an international agency who is not a competent English speaker: it is regarded as a necessary skill for gaining knowledge in the field of advertising.

Human resources

- Twelve participants believed the reason for quality differences between local and international output is some local designers are not specialised in design or advertising, while the international designers are specialised in advertising design and some are experts in the field. This may lead to a clear distinction between advertisements created by local and international agencies.
  This is a problem some local agencies suffer from as some of their staff are not specialised in advertising and their outputs are weaker than those of highly trained specialists in international agencies.

- Eleven participants suggested local advertising agency designers are less skilled and less professional, while international agencies tend to employ highly skilful designers.
  This point may relate to financial issues. Some local advertising agencies select their designers based on low salary demands rather than skills.

- Nine participants suggested some local designers are unqualified, with neither the skills nor the qualifications to work in the field.

- Seven participants attributed quality differences to local agencies being uninterested in employing skilful, talented designers because they do not see this as important; consequently, talented designers are not attracted to local agencies. In contrast, skilful and talented designers are in high demand in international agencies.
  It is difficult to agree with the proposition that local agencies do not feel

that attracting skilful and talented designers is important. It is perhaps more likely that they see it as important, but cannot pay the high salaries for such people, while international agencies can.

Financial resources

- Eight participants believed designers working at local agencies receive lower salaries than those working at the international agencies. As a result, local designers might put less effort and care into their work.
- Seven participants stated local advertising agencies offer low, limited inducements to their employees, while international agencies offer high remunerative inducements for good work.
- Five participants stated most local agencies do not pay their designers overtime wages; the international agencies pay for every hour above the usual working time.
- Three participants associated quality differences with local parsimony, in which the cheapest advertising design requirements, including photographs, images and tools, are often provided, negatively affecting advertising quality.

All these points may relate to financial difficulties encountered by local advertising agencies. If local agencies' financial standing is not good, they may select lower salary designers, offer lower inducements and provide them with the cheapest design requirements. Maybe also local agencies believe that they can save more money and make more profits in this way.

Clients

- Three participants felt international agencies worked with large professional clients, such as banks and telecom companies, with a good understanding of the nature of advertising and a willingness to accept new ideas. Local advertising agencies have difficulty in securing contracts with such clients.
  The researcher thinks international advertising agencies attract professional clients as they have consultants to provide their clients with advice and persuade the clients with the agency's point of view. Local adverting agencies may lack such a service.
- Three participants stated many clients at local agencies interfere in the

advertisement-making process, and insist all their suggestions are incorporated. Such intervention by international agencies' clients is unusual.

As mentioned earlier, advertising agencies need to provide their clients with professional advice and consultations.

- Three participants believed clients of local agencies are often financially weak, while those employing international agencies are often financially powerful and enjoy a good reputation in the marketplace – such as banks and huge corporations.
- Two participants felt local agencies are often forced by clients to apply whatever a client supplies, word for word. International advertising agencies can present a variety of thoughts and ideas to clients, and convince them to make better choices.
- One participant added a new reason: most clients of local agencies are transient and willing to switch allegiance. Those of international agencies tend to be both steady and regular.

Although only one participant mentioned this, it is an important point, because it suggests that the clients of local agencies who are not satisfied are willing to try other agencies. Clients of international agencies may be more often satisfied, and so wish to continue with the same agency.

Ideas, invention and novelty

- Seven participants attributed quality differences to local agencies paying little attention to ideas and concepts. Much attention is paid, effort exerted, and time dedicated to ideas in international agencies, which are interested in coming up with innovative outputs.
- Five participants felt few of the ideas generated by designers at local agencies are original or unique, while those from the minds of designers at international agencies are more likely to be distinctive.
- Five participants believed local agencies express ideas in advertisements directly, while international agencies convey messages using more subtle techniques such as symbolism, to great effect.
- Two participants stated local agencies use overly complicated ideas, while international ones resort to simple, expressive design.
- Two participants felt a great deal of advertising created by local agencies is out-dated and repetitive, and advertisements created by international agencies are innovative and cutting-edge.
- One participant stated diversity in advertising ideas in local agencies is

narrow due to the uniform nationality of the workers. Diversity of ideas in advertisements created by the international agencies may be attributed to the diversity of nationalities and cultures of designers. Regarding this opinion, the researcher thinks the diversity of nationalities and culture is an important factor in cross-cultural interaction and the emergence of new ideas in the advertising field. This opinion, however, cannot be taken as clear evidence for the lower quality of local advertising design because local agencies also have a diversity of nationalities and cultures.

The previous points relate to the experience and talent of designers. Designers with sound professional experience and a focus on advertising ideas and concepts likely will prosper because ideas and concepts are the core of good advertising. Designers with professional experience may avoid the direct presentation of advertisements' ideas when the situation requires subtlety. In addition, if designers are talented and creative they will not need to repeat old advertising because they can create new and novel ideas in each advertisement.

Training

- Eleven participants believed the lower local quality is because local advertising agencies pay little attention to providing training sessions for their designers. In contrast, international advertising agencies require their employees to be trained, and provide opportunities for this.
- Three participants stated international agencies, unlike local advertising agencies, motivate their designers to acquire more experience and knowledge. This additional experience and knowledge assists in improving the advertisements they create.
- Two participants said local agencies rarely commit budgets for training and developing of their designers. International agencies reserve a portion of their budget for this.
- Two participants believed local agencies do not pay enough attention to keeping their designers acquainted with up-to-date techniques and tools. In contrast international agencies are assiduous in keeping their employees acquainted with the up-to-the-moment developments, enabling their staff to use any new techniques and tools that might serve them.

These points about training advertising agency employees imply three possible conclusions about local advertising agencies. The first is a lower level of commitment to what is currently considered professional best practice; that is, they do not commit to training sessions for their designers. The second is that they may be aware of the importance of training but cannot afford it for their designers. The third is that local agencies should support self-learning or other low cost arrangement to encourage their designers. In each case, the outcome is a lack of training for designers in local agencies. In contrast, international agencies use in-house training approaches to solve the shortage of training courses.

Expertise

- Ten participants believed local agencies often have limited experience in advertising design. In contrast, international agencies have long-standing, accumulated experience. What experience local agencies do have is highly limited in both quantity and quality.
- Four participants stated local agencies are limited to in-house learning procedures between staff members. Some international agencies team their junior, less experienced designers with more experienced, expert and senior ones.
- Three participants stated most local agencies have no branches to support each other and share experiences. International agencies, however, have branches all over the world and can draw on full use of their expertise.
- One participant attributed the reason for quality differences to local advertising agencies depending on a limited variety of nationalities. In contrast, international advertising agencies have designers of many nationalities and diverse experience. As mentioned in the local interviewees section, the researcher thinks this may be an error, because local advertising agencies also employ designers from different nationalities and cultures.

Society and Saudi culture

- Six participants felt some Saudi Arabian social traditions and customs limit the way some designers at local agencies can apply their ideas, particularly if the advertisement involves women or cultural traditions.

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Designers in international agencies are usually experienced enough to circumvent these problems by expressing thoughts and ideas indirectly via symbolic means.

The researcher thinks Saudi society or any society in the world has culture-specific barriers, and advertising is not created to conflict with people's beliefs and culture. Instead, advertising needs to respect the traditions and culture of the society it is aimed at.

- Two participants stated there are some social and cultural obstacles to materialising ideas for some advertisements. To overcome these blocks, some international agencies have departments for research and problem solving that address these issues. These kinds of departments are absent in local agencies.

- Two participants felt Saudi society takes no real interest in issues of art in general, and visual arts in particular, and may be disinterested in the low or high quality of advertising.

  This suggestion cannot be taken or rejected at this time because no research was undertaken to gauge the interest of Saudi consumers towards advertising.

Devices and materials used

- Five participants believed the quality of advertisements is related to the quality of the devices and materials used to create and produce them. Local agencies do not pay much attention to the quality of their tools and devices. In contrast international agencies provide their staff with tools with high specifications.

  The issue of devices and materials may combine with other issues to explain the differences in advertising created by local and international agencies, because creating and producing advertisements with poor devices and materials can negatively affect many aspects of the quality of the final product.

Type and volume of projects

- One participant attributed the reason for quality differences to local designers carrying out advertisements primarily for small, simple, and limited projects. In contrast, international advertising agencies work on larger projects, typically in the business and government sectors. This

drives international advertising agencies to improve their advertising quality to enable them to competitively tender for large projects, which adds to their confidence levels and profit levels. Local agencies with simple projects remain at the same quality and profit levels.

From this point, the government sector could play a positive role to improve the local advertising industry by taking affirmative action to assign advertising projects to local agencies. The agencies would build their confidence and increase their profit levels, and this would reflect positively on the entire local industry. This point will be discussed in Chapter 6.

In general, both groups of interviewees agreed the quality of advertisements is related to many issues. These include: including advertising agencies' processes, practices and structure, the computer technology used in creating advertisements, education, training, human resources, financial resources, agencies' clients, advertising ideas and novelty, expertise, devices and Saudi culture and traditions. All of these, and possible solutions to them will be discussed in detail in the Chapter 5.

Impact of Computers on Saudi Advertising Design

The thirty (30) interviewees from local and international advertising agencies were invited to describe their views on the impact of computers on Saudi advertising design. This review of their responses is divided into two parts: the first reviews the responses of interviewees from local agencies; the second the responses of interviewees from international agencies.

Q. In Your Opinion, do Computers Have a Positive or Negative Effect on the Quality of Saudi Advertising Design? In what Ways?

Part one: Responses of *participants* from local advertising agencies

The study found fourteen (14) interviewees from *local* agencies identified both positive and negative impacts of computers on Saudi advertising design. Themes and items are listed in no specific order; they are divided into positive and negative impacts.

Positive impacts

- Twelve participants believed the use of computers directly and positively affects the quality of the final advertising product in terms of lines, shapes, colours, and images, which can be clearer, have higher resolution, and often appear more aesthetically pleasing. These twelve participants focus on the influence of computers on the shape and form of design; this is one of the greatest features of utilising computer technology in design.
- Eleven participants believed utilising computers makes creating and producing advertisements less time-consuming.
  This is partly at odds with the author's observations as a designer that complicated processes in some design software can take more time than undertaking the same tasks manually.
- Eleven participants felt computer technology reduces the efforts needed by designers to create advertising, because it enables an easier advertising design process in which designers no longer need to commit

so much effort in the design of advertisements compared the past.

Again, it is observed by the author that the opposing view is also widely held by advertising designers.

- Ten participants stated computer technology saves money because it replaces the previous use of raw materials and manual tools to create and produce advertisements.
  This is supported by the extensive take-up of computers in advertising design. Evidence of relative costs, however, is not yet well established.

- Nine participants believed computer technology supports designers finding or creating new ideas and concepts by access to the Internet in collaboration with graphic design software. Surfing the World Wide Web also facilitates getting users acquainted with up-to-the-minute developments in advertising techniques and styles.

- Similar to the earlier point, seven participants said computer technology facilitates the process of advertising design, which has become easier and shorter with access to many efficient computer-based tools.
  As described above, some designers may not agree with this conclusion. It accords, however, with the discussions the researcher has had with senior designers in the Saudi advertising market who started with manual (pre-computer) methods to create and produce advertising and who said modern technology facilitates the process of adverting design.

- Five participants identified that quality was improved due to the ability to use computer technology to add more high-level visual effects to advertising designs.

- Five participants felt computer technology allows improved accuracy to carry out the task of creating and producing advertising. Also, words and letters become more accurate. This is especially obvious with Arabic letters and words because their complex intersections require high levels of precision in their placement.

- Three participants stated computer technology permits more flexibility in experimentation with design, particularly with altering and substituting layout elements.

- Two participants suggested computer technology allows greater time for creativity at higher levels because computer software offers a range of ways for designers to quickly apply and test new ideas.
  This is supported by the parallel development of digitisation in movies.

- Two participants added computers enable more colour options and

arrangements than traditional methods.

- Two participants suggested the use of graphic design software offers greater opportunities to individuals to commence a career in advertising design because with the use of graphic design software does not require superior ability in drawing or painting.

  The researcher thinks this point may impact negatively on the advertising industry because computer technology may enable individuals with a lower level of visual skills to enter the field to be advertising designers.

- Two participants stated computer technology offers more solutions to potential problems designers might encounter.

- Two participants stated computer technology offers more applications and functions to serve the advancement of advertising design, such as filters.

- One participant suggested computer technology provides advertising designers with organised photo galleries that increase the options to add appropriate images to advertisements.

Negative impacts

- Eight participants believed completely relying on computer technology leads to a decline in manual graphic design skills.

  Some designers may disagree with this point because even with modern computer technology designers need to use sketches, so hand skills are still needed in designing.

- Two participants stated in using computers in design, designers and artists may lose the values of patience and diligence needed for manual design.

  This can be contrasted with the obvious requirement of design software for the values of patience and diligence.

- Two participants said depending on readymade custom shapes in computers restricts the creativity and imagination of designers.

  The author may see this is true if advertising design depends on readymade custom shapes; but modern advertising design depends on creativity and imagination.

Part two: Responses of participants from international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia

Sixteen (16) interviewees from *international* advertising agencies identified both positive and negative impacts of computers on Saudi advertising design. Themes and items are arranged in no specific order, but are divided into positive and negative impacts as follows:

Positive impacts

- Fourteen participants stated computer technology promotes higher quality of the final advertising product in terms of lines, shapes, colours, and images, which become clearer, have higher resolution, and often appear more aesthetically pleasing, making advertising design less messy. The effect of computers on the shape and form of design is one of the greatest benefits of utilising computer technology.
- Thirteen participants believed using computer technology in the process of advertising design saves time, compared to manual design methods.
  Some may agree with this idea, while others may say that complicated processes in some design software take more time.

- Ten participants felt using computer technology facilitates the process of advertising, from the planning stage to showing the advertisement to customers with the appropriate media.
  As mentioned earlier, senior designers in the Saudi advertising market who started with old methods to create and produce advertising said modern technology facilitates the process of advertising design.

- Seven participants believed computer technology adds more high-level visual effects to advertisement elements by enhancing filters, lighting, and shadow.
- Six participants stated computer technology allows them to carry out their roles more precisely, perfecting even tiny details, as every element becomes more accurate and disciplined. As mentioned before, this is especially obvious with Arabic letters and words.
- Five participants commented computers offer higher-level applications and functions to designers, such as the functions of blending, alternating, and substituting.
- Four participants suggested computer access to the Internet offers many

benefits to advertising designers. The Internet is useful for sending final products to clients for review. Also, searching in the field of advertising has become easier with online search engines, which save about 90% of the time previously spent on manual searches in books and magazines.

- Three participants said computer technology offers a range of design software to assist advertising designers express complicated ideas.
- Three participants noted computer technology facilitates adjusting the size of advertisements for various media.
- Three participants stated drawing three-dimensionally is easier and faster with computer technology.
- One participant added computers offer more options to designers when making presentations of the final advertisement to the agency's client to get final approval.

Negative impacts

- Thirteen participants believed computers encourage designers to depend merely on the applications and functions of design software. This may limit their manual faculties and abilities.

To recap, interview results found both groups agreed there are both positive and negative impacts of computer technology on Saudi advertising design. Both groups of interview participants agreed the positive impacts are greater than the negative impacts. More details are discussed in the relevant sections of the discussion in Chapter 5.

Methods and Processes Used to Create Advertising in the Saudi Market

This section reviews the responses of the thirty (30) interviewees who were asked to compare methods and the process of advertising design between local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia.

This section is divided into two parts: the first is a review of the responses of fourteen interviewees from local agencies; the second is a review of the responses of sixteen interviewees from international agencies.

Q. What are the advertising design processes and methods you use?

Part one: responses of participants from local advertising agencies

Fourteen (14) interviewees from *local* agencies described the major methods and processes they used in advertising design:

- Fourteen participants stated in local agencies the client sometimes meets a person from customer service, but very often a person from the creative and design department meets the client.
  This is an issue, the researcher found during field visits: in some local agencies advertising designers meet clients to discuss matters including price, delivery time and the advertisement's details. In this case advertising designers work in areas they are unqualified for and are unable to undertake competently.
- Eleven participants stated a request from the client is formalised and contains details regarding the advertisement.
- Six participants described holding team meetings, which usually comprise the creative team led by the art director.
- Seven participants stated the aim and message of the advertisement is most commonly dictated by the client.
- Two participants said few local agencies undertake research before creating the design of an advertisement. Visual research is conducted on similar advertisements to adapt them to the new advertisement. This is

common in local advertising agencies, and contributes to the similarity of local advertisements and the subsequent feeling of lack of creativity.

- Nine participants stated they get ideas for an advertisement from the client, or from older, similar advertisements. Sometimes new ideas come from one or more of the creative teams. The brainstorming process is limited.
This point and the previous one are related. If the ideas come from the client or an older advertisement, the designers just follow orders and imitate instead of being creative.

- Three participants stated they write ideas on paper.
- Eleven participants said they draw sketches for the advertisements manually.
- Twelve participants stated they copy the drawings to computer.
- Two participants said they collected elements for the advertising, such as images, slogans and phrases, and logos.
- Three participants stated they arranged and organised elements within the design layout. This stage went through several levels of change and some amendments to reach the final form.
- Four participants stated they developed the design and added visual effects.
- Thirteen participants said they presented the design to the client. Three to five designs were presented to each client. However, few agencies presented only one to three designs to the client.
Regarding this point, presenting larger numbers of designs to a client is expensive in time (to create them), and the same amount of time might be better used to develop fewer designs more carefully.

- Two participants stated amendments were made.
- Ten participants said final approval was obtained from the client.
- Five participants stated the advertising design was transferred to the production department.
- Five participants stated the advertisement was produced and prepared in the appropriate media form.

Part two: responses of participants from international advertising agencies

Sixteen (16) interviewees from international advertising agencies described the major methods and processes they use to produce an advertisement:

- Sixteen participants stated a representative from customer service or the accounting department met the client.
  This is an important point of differentiation.

- Ten participants stated the request from the client was formalised (and included all matters regarding the advertising).

- Eight participants stated preparatory research for the advertisement was conducted.
  Here is another important point of differentiation.

- Fourteen participants stated the customer service or accounting department transferred the client's advertising request to the creative director.

- Eleven participants stated the creative director prepared the design brief and formulated the basic concepts and general form of the advertisement.

- Eight participants said the creative director conferred with the art director about the brief and its conceptual solutions.

- Thirteen participants stated the work team (consisting of a creative director, an art director, a graphic designer and a copywriter) put the work details together. This may make a different in output, because in international agencies the staff work as a team and each one knows exactly his/her job.

- Twelve participants stated visual research was undertaken.

- Fourteen participants stated the work team performed collective brainstorming. This was seen as an important stage in international agencies, maybe because it encourages new ideas from the work team. However, as we have seen, brainstorming is limited in local agencies.

- Sixteen participants stated sketches of the advertisement were drawn.

- Thirteen participants stated the creative director compared, selected, and approved the concept.

- Sixteen participants stated the design was created on a computer.

- Thirteen participants said they arranged images, slogans, words, logos and phrases. Appropriate pictures were rented or photographers were hired.

- Ten participants stated visual effects were added to the design.
- Fifteen participants stated three different versions of the advertisement were presented to the client.
  Here is another important point. Fifteen interviewees out of sixteen from international agencies agree the number of advertisements presented to their clients are three. In local agencies the number is different: it could be one, or five.
- Ten participants said amendments were made, if required.
- Sixteen participants said final approval from the client was obtained.
- Seven participants stated the work was transferred to the prepress artist or (pre-flight checker) to approve resolution, clarity and accuracy, and to determine the final size.
  This is a noticeable point, as graphic designers in local agencies might also carry out the role of the prepress artist.
- Eight participants said the advertisement was sent to printing and then finally to the appropriate media.

When comparing the methods and processes of creating advertisements used by local and international advertising agencies, some clear, obvious differences emerge. The process for creating advertisements in international agencies appears more professional than the processes used by local agencies.

Improving Local Saudi Advertising Design

This section reviews the responses of thirty (30) interviewees who were asked to suggest and recommend ways to improve the quality of local Saudi advertising design.

The section is divided into two parts: the first reviews the responses of fourteen participants from local agencies; the second reviews the responses of sixteen participants from international agencies.

Q. In your opinion, how can local Saudi advertising design be improved?

Part one: Responses of participants from local advertising agencies on how local Saudi advertising designs can be improved

Fourteen (14) interviewees from local advertising agencies suggested several ways to improve local Saudi advertising design. These have been grouped in seven themes.

- Education and training
- Computer use and skills
- Professionalism and expertise
- Developing concepts and promoting creativity
- Exhibitions and contests
- Clients
- Society and media

Education and training

- Thirteen participants suggested establishing colleges in Saudi universities specialising in design, including graphic design, advertising, multimedia and theoretical and practical issues, to improve local Saudi advertising.

This is a significant suggestion as at the time of writing this thesis there is no design college, or schools for males in Saudi universities. This may contribute in the low level of local advertising.

- Eleven participants suggested establishing training centres specialising in the study of design for those who preferred to study over a short period or who wanted workplace-based training.
As mentioned before, many designers in the Saudi advertising industry reported a shortage of training courses.

- Six participants recommended both governmental and private education should focus more on graphic design.

- Four participants suggested sending high-achieving students to international universities to study design and graphic design programs would improve local advertising.

- Four participants suggested developing visual and artistic awareness through art education in Saudi general education institutions (pre-university).

- Three participants suggested organising regular workshops and training courses where advertising designers could develop and refresh their knowledge and skills.

- Three participants suggested organising special training courses on newly released visual design software would improve the quality of local advertising.

- Three participants recommended providing access to computer laboratories with the latest visual design software to help advertising designers develop cutting-edge skills in graphic design.
The researcher sees this point as a complementary step to the previous suggestions.

- One participant suggested developing an aesthetic sense and visual design skills through general education would improve the quality of local advertising in the long term.

- One participant recommended reintroducing art education into Saudi high school education to improve design skills for students, because the field of advertising design may benefit from these students in the future.

- One participant suggested increasing the availability of relevant sources of information, such as design books and magazines.

- One participant suggested including the study of creativity within the curriculum throughout school and university education.

- One participant suggested high school graduates who are talented in

design attend universities abroad that specialise in design.

Education was seen as an important factor in improving local advertising. This matter will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Improve computer use and skills

- Seven participants suggested local agencies needed to encourage their designers to develop their use of and skills regarding computer programs and modern design software. Also, special courses in the latest design software needed to be provided. This suggestion directly related to the training issue.
- Five participants suggested supplying advertising designers with up-to-date design programs and software.
- Three participants recommended utilising the Internet in the fields of advertising research and design. For example, designers can find examples of the latest styles and techniques of international advertising design on the Internet. This suggestion is worthwhile, and designers can also get training courses through the Internet.
- Two participants suggested creating advertising design websites to promote the ideas of designers and to share experiences between them. This could be developed by an official body like the Chamber of Commerce, to create the kinds of websites to attract advertising designers and provide them with professional advice and experience.

Professionalism and expertise

- Four participants suggested increasing specialisation and professionalism in the field of advertising design in local agencies. This could be applied by establishing an official body and developing standards for advertising activities, from the recruitment of new designers, through the advertising process, to the publication of advertisements.
- Two participants recommended utilising the high-level expertise of local and foreign advertising designers to improve advertising output.
- Two participants suggested selecting designers to work at advertising agencies according to their expertise and skills.
  This is an important step to improve the output of local agencies in Saudi Arabia because, as noted in many places in this thesis, unskilled designers are one of the difficulties faced by local agencies. To improve in this

regard, they need to select their advertising designers according to ability rather than cost

- Two participants suggested establishing associations for designers as a place for consultation, cooperation and exchange of expertise. This point will be discussed in Chapter 6.
- One participant suggested involving official bodies, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to encourage local advertising agencies to improve their designers' skills.
- One participant recommended establishing supervisory bodies to be responsible for controlling the level of advertising design in Saudi Arabia. This point is related to the last point.
- One participant suggested establishing organisations and business agencies specialising in the sale of resources for advertisements, such as high quality images, design software, filters and governmental and trade logos. This suggestion could interest someone in the private sector.

Developing concepts and promoting creativity

- Six participants suggested local advertising agencies would benefit by paying more attention to generating new, innovative, and useful ideas. This could be achieved by establishing special departments responsible for searching for ideas and developing them in local advertising agencies.
- Five participants recommended attracting and employing creative and talented designers – according to their output – at local advertising agencies.
- Two participants suggested improving or replacing current managers and directors whose abilities are no longer optimal, replacing them with younger, more creative and skilled managers.
- Two participants suggested replacing current designers who do not have the capacity to develop with younger designers who possess more creative ways of thinking.
The last two suggestions may be useful. The problem is, however, that most managers of local advertising agencies own the agencies. Maybe the solution is to seek help from specialists and professionals in advertising management to provide local agencies with advice, perhaps via consultancies.
- Two participants recommended encouraging simplicity in advertising design because modern advertising design depends on simplicity.

- Three participants suggested establishing exhibitions and fairs to display the best and latest in the field of advertising design.
- Two participants suggested organising competitive contests in the different fields of advertising.

Clients

- Three participants suggested bringing more awareness to clients by establishing departments for consultation at advertising agencies.
- Two participants suggested encouraging clients to employ advisers specialised in the field of advertising to liaise with advertising agencies.

Society and media

- Three participants suggested using local media to spread visual art and aesthetic culture in Saudi society.
  Both local media and education could play an important role in spreading visual art culture in Saudi society.

Part two: Responses of Participants from International Advertising Agencies on how to Improve Local Advertising

Sixteen (16) participants from international advertising agencies suggested ways to improve local advertising design. The data have been grouped in seven themes

- Education and training
- Improving computers use and skills
- Professionalism and promoting experience
- Developing concepts and promoting creativity
- Society and media
- Clients
- Contests and exhibitions

Education and training

- Thirteen participants suggested establishing colleges for males at Saudi

universities, specialising in design.

- Twelve participants suggested establishing high-level training centres concerned with advertising and graphic design to improve local advertising.

- Ten participants suggested providing local and overseas training courses for designers who work at local agencies. Also, local advertising agencies need to provide new designers with practical training in advertising design before they start work.

  This may be useful to improve the level of local advertising design. Overseas training for designers is costly, and local agencies may not be able to provide this kind of training.

- Nine participants recommended paying more attention to computer education in Saudi schools because modern advertising design depends on computer technology and design software.

  Officials in the Saudi Education Ministry need to be convinced by specialists to teach design in the school stages, and this may take time because, as mentioned earlier, Saudi traditional culture has no real interest in visual art and design. More details will be found in Chapter 6.

- Eight participants suggested focusing on teaching the latest visual design software applications in design colleges, design departments and training centres.

- Four participants suggested attracting staff members with the experience and skills to teach design majors at local universities.

  Design colleges for males need to be established first; these will attract staff members with appropriate experience and skills.

- Four participants suggested paying more attention to improving artistic skills in school education.

- Three participants suggested supporting and encourage self-learning for designers through specialised books, software and the Internet.

- Two participants suggested sending talented students in the field of design to distinguished international universities.

- Two participants suggested setting up training workshops for design.

- Two participants recommended encouraging and supporting specialised research into design and advertising.

- Two participants suggested requiring international agencies in Saudi Arabia to train Saudi students who wish to join the field of advertising design.

This is a sensible suggestion from the interviewees; the Ministry of Labour could coordinate this.

- One participant suggested learning English alongside mastering Arabic for advertising designers in Saudi Arabia.

Improving computers use and skills

- Eight participants suggested increasing proficiency in handling modern specialised design software by advertising designers.
- Seven participants suggested taking advantage of the high potential of computer technology and applying it to advertising design.
- Three participants suggested encouraging designers to take courses in advertising design software.
- Four participants recommended increasing the role of the Internet to assist design performance in advertising. The Internet currently is one of the best available ways to improve local agencies' designers' performance via training and to share experiences with designers around the world.
- Two participants suggested regularly updating the computers and design programs used to create advertisements in local agencies.

Professionalism and promoting experience

- Seven participants suggested appointing experienced and highly skilled designers in local advertising agencies. Unskilled designers are one of the difficulties in local agencies. To improve in this regard they need to select advertising designers according to skills and expertise.
- Six participants suggested ensuring each member of staff in an advertising agency has a specific task. This is important because in some local advertising agencies there is no clear task for advertising designers for example. They find themselves working in many areas they are not qualified to work in.
- Four participants suggested supporting and developing teamwork rather than individuality.
- Three participants suggested staff could benefit from the experience of international experts in the field of advertising.
- Two participants recommended collaboration between designers working in local and international agencies, to gain experience and new skills.
- One participant suggested paying attention to small details when designing advertising.

- One participant recommended priority be given to local advertising agencies to enter competitions and government projects.
  This is a generous suggestion from an interviewee from international agency. The government sector could play a positive role to assist the local advertising industry by assigning projects to local agencies.

Developing concepts and promoting creativity

- Six participants suggested attracting and developing the talents of local designers.
- Five participants suggested focusing more on advertising concepts.
- Four participants suggested more attention should be given to brainstorming.
- Two participants suggested local advertising agencies need to keep up with the latest international advertisements.
  Designers in local agencies could keep up with the latest advisements through the Internet and specialist magazines.
- Two participants suggested a focus on introducing new concepts rather than simply copying other advertisements and making minor changes.
- One participant suggested the use of diverse sources for design concepts.
- One participant suggested public libraries and local advertising agencies need to be provided with sources for concepts and designs free of charge or at affordable prices.

Society and the media

- Six participants suggested encouraging the spread of aesthetic and visual art awareness throughout society, using local media.
  This suggestion is viable, but only if the local media can see some benefit from presenting such things.
- Three participants suggested raising awareness for the importance of design in today's world and opening up Saudi society to modern designs.
  This could be managed though local media and education.
- Two participants suggested encouraging the media to be more involved with design and the arts to reduce the gap between Saudi society and visual art.
  This needs official effort to encourage the media into the design field.

Clients

- Three participants suggested advertising agencies need to educate clients visually and artistically through free consultations, advice, workshops and fliers.

Contests and exhibitions

- Three participants suggested holding contests and exhibitions to promote competition among designers.

Both groups of participants offered many ways to improve the quality of local Saudi advertising design. The suggestions related to different considerations, including improving design education and training, improving the use of computer technology in advertising, improving professionalism and expertise, improving advertising designers' creativities and improving Saudi society's knowledge of design and visual art through media, contests and public art exhibitions. These suggestions will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Summary

This chapter has described the outcomes of analyses of the data gathered from participants from local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia. The chapter was divided into two sections: the first analysed data provided via a *questionnaire*, while the second analysed data provided by *semi-structured depth interviews*.

The data indicates advertising designers from local agencies have lower skills in working with computer technology. This is also evident from the data concerning the quality of advertisements created by local agencies.

The data revealed differences in the processes used by advertising designers in local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia. They also revealed a lack of design education and training in Saudi Arabia with the suggestion this is a major stumbling block to the effective creation of quality advertisements by the local Saudi industry, and by implication may slow the development of the local Saudi advertising sector. The last section of data revealed many practical suggestions for improving local Saudi advertising design.

The next chapter will discuss these findings in more detail with a view to moving towards identifying coherent strategies for resolving the differences in quality of outputs of local advertising design agencies and international advertising design agencies operating in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 5/ Discussion

The questionnaire and interviews gathered relevant data to address the research problem and research questions. This data was described in detail in Chapter 4. This chapter, Chapter 5, reviews the data described in Chapter 4 to identify potential explanations for lower quality of advertising created by local advertising agencies compared with international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia. The analyses in this chapter draw attention to the complex and often reciprocally reinforcing nature of interrelationships between the factors that contribute to differences in quality of design output. Eight themes are identified, that focus on particular factors to explain the quality differences. A part of this chapter reviews the positive and negative impacts of computer use on Saudi advertising design in the local and international advertising design sectors.

Reasons for Quality Differences between Local and International Advertising Agencies in Saudi Arabia

The quality of individual advertisements varies substantially between agencies, and between designs from any individual agency. The data from this research provides strong support for the hypothesis that the typical quality of advertising design outputs created by local advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia is generally lower than the quality of advertising design outputs of international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia. The range and variety of quality, however, across advertising agencies is high. Some advertisements created by local advertising agencies may be of higher quality than some advertisements from international agencies. The data indicates that in the judgement of professional experts in advertising in Saudi Arabia the *average* quality across the local and international agencies of the Saudi Advertising industry differs.

There appears to be several combinations of reasons for the quality differences. These can be grouped in eight themes, each comprising combinations of interrelated factors, and each typified by a dominant factor:

- Level of familiarity with and skill in using modern computer technology and design software.
- Standard of professionalism.
- Amount of design education and training.
- Available financial resources.
- Type of clientele.
- Use of advertising ideas and novelty.
- Expertise in the advertising field.
- Saudi culture and traditions.

Within each theme, differences of quality are explained in terms of the effects of multiple causal factors reinforcing, interrelating with and often overlapping other factors that also provide their own explanation of quality differences. For example, poor use of computer technology results in lower quality, and such problems with the use of computer technology can be caused by inadequate training, which itself can result in lower quality of output for other reasons. The lower quality of training may in turn be caused by a lack of professionalism at individual, agency or sector level resulting in lack of resource commitment to skill formation of the local advertising professionals. The lack of professionalism by itself also has adverse quality implications. In its turn, lack of professionalism may be caused by lack of education in the field of advertising (itself perhaps due to lack of professionalism or even lack of computer resources – and hence reduced perceived need for design specific education), which may be the result of financial shortage, in itself shaped by lower profits due to lower competitive standing due to lower quality of advertising design outputs.

Level of familiarity with and skill in using modern computer technology and design software

The current research data aligns with Cleveland (2004), who found computer technology is a key element in creating and presenting modern visual design. This research data indicated that in the eyes of professionals in advertising in

Saudi Arabia best-practice in the use of computer technology has a significant positive effect on the quality of advertising. The data indicated designers in local advertising agencies were believed by participants to have insufficient training and design education to achieve the best quality design outcomes possible by using modern computer technology. It appears lack of technical skills and lack of familiarity with modern software is a significant reason for lower quality design outputs by local advertising agencies. The main driver for this factor seems to be lack of education and training in the appropriate computer software skills linked with lack of access to the necessary education and computing resources.

In contrast, most designers with international advertising agencies were 'expert computer users'. Designers at international advertising agencies are better trained. Most have received design education at universities and specialist design education centres outside Saudi Arabia that teach advertising design; the use of contemporary advertising design processes; appropriate organisational management; and with advanced skills in using design software. When they graduate, these students are highly skilled in professional advertising design practices. The lack of comparable skills among designers in local agencies is underpinned by factors relating to exposure to sufficient advanced design education and training in professional advertising design practices. Both may relate to financial issues, which will be discussed later.

A specific computer technology issue negatively affecting the quality of advertising outputs of local advertising agencies is the staff at local agencies commonly use a more limited range of design software than used at international advertising design agencies.

This is partly related to the availability of computers and partly a result of education and financial factors. Designers in local agencies have insufficient special training and education in using software to creating advertising, and may not use the appropriate software for a given task because the agencies do not provide training courses for them, or even provide them with the right software, for financial reasons.

Many designers in local advertising agencies use Adobe Photoshop as the primary means to create visual designs and, by observation, in some cases, Photoshop is used for all aspects of creating advertisements (a smaller proportion use Adobe Illustrator for vector diagrams to complement Photoshop's primarily raster/pixel-based output). The Adobe Suite of design software that contains Photoshop alongside around 20 other programs is currently the dominant software worldwide for all aspects of producing high-quality visual design and local advertising designers appear to be limiting the quality of their output by only using a small subset of the Adobe Suite. The main reasons Photoshop is the primary and often only software used in local advertising design agencies appears to be because it is the most common design software available to purchase in Saudi Arabia, and there are many commercial training centres in Saudi Arabia providing basic education in the use of Photoshop at cheap rates. Designers can learn to use this software in a short course of one month or less. Such courses, however, give designers only the elementary keys to using Photoshop; they must learn more advanced techniques through trial and error, on the job, or produce advertising using only elementary software skills. This latter situation is common according to comments by interviewees who revealed some designers at local agencies only use 15–20% of the features of design software. These factors reflect negatively on production of quality advertisements by local advertising agencies.

The sole use of Photoshop could be interpreted as a compliment to Adobe's software, but it would be a naive compliment. Photoshop software is primarily a tool for creating and editing at a pixel level two-dimensional raster-based images similar to photographs. There is much more to the commercial design and production of advertisements than creating, two-dimensional visual images. Photoshop (and Illustrator) does not, nor was intended to, provide the computerised basis for all the business and design processes of advertising. Additional software is needed to provide comprehensive computerised support for creating successful high-quality advertising designs.

Obviously, in a field such as advertising design in which quality of output and concepts and the management of the advertising processes are heavily dependent on software, it is important to use the best and most appropriate software for each task. Using old and less popular software or using only a single program, instead of using the right combination of software, is likely to adversely impact the quality of output. The observation that some local Saudi advertising design businesses use only a single software program indicates another reason for the observed difference in quality of local advertising businesses compared to the international agencies.

Designers with international agencies use a combination of Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and other software from the Adobe Suite to create their advertising designs. These Adobe programs seamlessly complement one another to together, offer the fullest range of software support for raster and vector-based images and for print layout, including detailed semi-automated typesetting. For simpler designs, particularly those that primarily consist of a single 2D image, the use of a single program from Adobe may be sufficient. The use of all the Adobe programs together, however, provides a more extensive foundation for undertaking advertising projects that are visually more complex across more media types accounting, in part at least for the higher quality of advertising created by international designers.

Another computer technology issue negatively affecting the quality of advertising created by local agencies is the quality of the computer equipment (rather than the software) being used. Commonly, by observation, computers in local agencies are older and of lower quality, with many unable to support recent versions of the most professional design software. This limitation in technology also contributes to lower quality outputs. This factor, less capable computer infrastructure, is in part at least shaped by the weaker financial position that typifies local advertising agencies compared to international advertising agencies. During data collection, the researcher asked designers about the kinds of computers used to create advertisements. The majority of local designers were using old personal computers, while the majority from

international agencies were using contemporary computers and state of the art design software programs to create advertisements. Using the right computer and specialised software for the relevant advertising design task helps improve the quality of advertisements. In contrast, using inadequate computer hardware and unspecialised software tools can limit the quality of advertising design outputs.

Although computer technology makes advertising design easier and more effective, some local designers use manual methods of design, such as hand drawing and layout. One obvious reason for this is a lack of skills to take advantage of the benefits of computers and design software. This reflects two important issues: education and training. One expert in the field of Saudi advertising suggested designers who avoid using computers are likely to have not received relevant education in using computers and software either during their studies, or during their careers. Some older designers at smaller local agencies may own their business, and do not want to learn new or difficult devices for design.

Manual design appears to be used by some local agencies because they think it is cheaper. This may have two causes. Some local agencies suffer from financial problems, and do not have the resources to purchase computers and up-to-date design software. This has a negative impact in the long term because although the agency may save some money, they risk losing the confidence of clients when they produce lower quality advertisements. Secondly, there may be a lack of awareness of the economic benefits by which using computers can reduce the expense of creating advertisements. According to Mahgoub (2008), one of the advantages of using computers in design is that a single device can replace many expensive design and drawing tools and materials and this can save money for advertising agencies and advertising designers.

Standard of professionalism

The differences in levels of professional practices of local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia appear to have a key role in explaining differences in the quality of their advertising outputs. The data from this research indicates staff at most local advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia have a more limited professional design background, as judged by international (Western) design schools and professional design organisations in many areas in advertising. This appears to emerge in lower levels of use of professional design practices in local advertising design agencies.

There are six aspects of this issue; these are discussed below:

- advertising created by non-professional designers in local agencies
- methods and process used to create advertisements in local agencies
- lack of planning in local agencies
- lack of teamwork method in local agencies
- lack of periodic reviews in local agencies
- types of sources used to support the creation of an advertisement.

In local agencies, advertising designs are often created by designers who do not have a professional design background. They are often less skilled and usually less professional than those working at international agencies. At many local agencies, designers have backgrounds other than in design or advertising. Some have mathematics or physics degrees rather than design degrees, and are working in advertising because they could not find jobs in their original field (Indijani, 2007). The researcher witnessed an interesting incident during the data collection process. While waiting in the reception area of a local agency in Riyadh, he conversed with the receptionist. The receptionist said that he would be learning to use design software programs to find a job as a graphic designer. When the researcher asked him why he wanted to work as a graphic designer, he answered without hesitation that he wanted more money and job security. This suggests that local agencies are limiting their judgement about competence to skill with software rather than professional skills in design when they select or recruit designers. The lack of professional design backgrounds of designers in

local advertising agencies is also linked to the education system in Saudi Arabia. There are no design schools or colleges for males to supply the Saudi advertising market with professional designers nor are there educational programs devoted to design during elementary or high school. This means that local advertising agencies must necessarily employ non-professionals in advertising design to work in the local advertising industry.

On a different tack, there are significant differences in the methods and processes used by local and international agencies for creating advertisements, and these differences in processes also contribute to the differences in quality of their output. The ways used to create advertising in local agencies appear typically 'out-of-date' compared to contemporary best practices in advertising design and production, which may be related to limitations in the financial resources that they are able to commit to training and education of staff in more recent professional practices.

The differences in approach extend to significant differences in business structure and business processes (i.e. operations). The overarching difference is the use of contemporary business theory. The operations of international advertising agencies are characterised by efficient scientific management; and recent developments, with specialisation of tasks (efficiency and effectiveness gained by dividing the process with specialised tasks allocated to departments or individuals specialised in particular skills) and work (specialising in a particular realms of advertising), and establishing hierarchies and processes to support this specialisation.

Lack of use of idea generation processes such as brainstorming by local advertising agencies is another professional practice issue (emerging from the data in Chapter 4) that may lead to lower quality in advertisements created by local advertising agencies. Brainstorming and similar idea generation techniques are important tools in modern creative advertising in international agencies because they result in new ideas. In local agencies, the use of brainstorming and ideas generation is more limited: it is not seen as important by some, and is neglected by most.

The majority of international agencies are full service agencies with separate departments, and specialists, for research and planning. Most local agencies are not full service, and have a very limited number of staff members, sometimes as few as two, who handle everything. The majority of local advertising agencies lack a separate department for advertising planning and research, which indicates they may not pay significant attention to this area. Many local advertising agencies have no clear plan or strategy for advertising. International agencies have clear strategies and plans for every stage in advertising, and pay attention to research. Some local agencies plan when they face difficulties in advertising (as some interviewees mentioned). In professional advertising, every stage of an advertising campaign is typically expected to be researched and planned. Working without a clear plan in the advertising field can result in unnecessarily high costs and delayed completion; it could also result in a reduction in the reputation of an agency.

Lack of attention in local advertising agencies to professional practices in collaboration and teamwork can impact negatively on the quality of advertisements created. In local advertising agencies, individuals are more likely to work alone, which may be part of the reason for the lower quality of advertisements. Local agencies often follow this individual method of working, whereas teamwork is a characteristic way of international agencies where every detail is under the care of a group of a team of people. A possible explanation for teamwork not being the preferred approach among local agencies is the management encourages individual work, which is a reflection of the preference in modern Saudi society for individual work. Saudi education is a significant factor in this trend. The researcher was very rarely encouraged to engage in team projects during his studies at Saudi schools. The Saudi education system generally avoids group projects and teamwork, and individual work is the favoured method for teaching Saudi students and, more broadly, Saudi society. As an observation, the researcher found when teaching at a Saudi university, the students generally did not like to work in groups or participate in team projects. Many difficulties and problems arise among students when working on group

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projects that do not arise in individual projects. Another possible explanation for the preference for individual work in local advertising agencies is there are not enough staff members to effectively facilitate group work. As mentioned earlier, local agencies suffer from a shortage of staff.

Critical assessments and periodic reviews are another aspect of professional practice influencing the quality of advertisements. Local advertising agencies have no periodic reviews, and typically do not formally evaluate the advertisements they produce. Critical assessment of advertisements is helpful to improving quality especially in a situation such as Saudi Arabia where which there is intense competition with global advertising companies, in which local agencies are struggling to find a place in the market. International agencies have found formally assessing their advertisements helps them improve their products. Local agencies, on the other hand, do not focus on this type of assessment. This is also related to the financial factor, because formal assessments and reviews by specialists require financial commitment.

The data indicates local advertising agencies do not make best use of their access to examples of current best advertising practice to inspire their creation of new advertisements. There are many reasons why this might be so, including the aforementioned Saudi cultural habits of individual work. It may include lack of education in the benefits of referring to examples of good solutions. Financial limitations may also play a part, in terms of access to printed books. This latter, however, is increasingly less relevant as access to good information on the Internet is readily available and almost cost-free. Most advertising inspiration and supporting sources, however, are in English, and this may explain in part the reduced use access to advertising resources typical of local advertising agencies because, as mentioned earlier, English language education is relatively weak in the Saudi education system and most local designers do not speak English. This prevents them from effectively using the Internet to learn from the best practice examples of advertising and gain inspiration for their own designs.

The Internet is an open source: a cheap, fast, and constantly updated source for advertising designers and the most common source of ideas and inspiration for

designers in the local advertising industry. Few designers from local advertising agencies use the Internet compared with those from international agencies. This is significant. Local designers effectively have a blinkered view of the world and use fewer sources of inspiration than international designers. The question is why: why do local designers choose to overlook the best practices of others? There appear to be three issues limiting local designers from making use of the best practices of others as inspiration for their own work. The first is an apparent lack of understanding that access to such source material could offer improvement of quality of advertising design outputs. The second is lack of English hinders some local Saudi designers from searching for and accessing advertising sites provided in English. There are some advertising source materials in Arabic on the Internet, but they are very limited. The third is financial:, the restricted financial resources of many local advertising agencies precludes them from providing their designers with the latest specialised sources such as books and magazines. These latter are expensive, and many local agencies cannot afford them. It is clear international agencies are aware of the importance of such sources in creating advertisements, and supply their designers with these resources as the norm, to encourage their designers to keep abreast of current trends.

Amount of design education and training

Weaknesses in education and training provide a substantial part of the explanation for differences in quality between local and international advertising agencies. Four aspects of education and training contribute to an education-based explanation for the lower quality output of local agencies. Some of these have been also identified as part of other explanations earlier:

- lack of design programs for males in Saudi universities
- poor art education in general schools in the Saudi education system
- poor English language teaching in the Saudi education system
- lack of design training centres in Saudi Arabia

The lack of Design programs in Saudi universities for males advertising designers means a shortfall in degree-level educated male local advertising designers. This reveals a contradiction. The Saudi local advertising industry primarily employs males, yet females are the highest-educated visual designers are. There is a strong demand for designers to work at in the approximately 12,000 advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia. The local advertising design sector has adapted to the lack of male advertising design professionals with appropriate degree-level Design education and the shortfall in degree-level trained designers by employing designers who are unqualified and inadequately skilled rather than employing females educated to degree level in Design and the Visual Arts. The expected consequence would be lower quality advertising design outputs than might be otherwise be expected if the designers were appropriately educated in advertising design, to degree level or above.

In the short-term, at least, the most obvious strategy to address the skill and staffing shortfalls and increase quality in the local Saudi advertising agency is to rapidly increase the employment proportion in local Saudi advertising design agencies of female advertising design personnel educated to degree-level in Design and Visual Arts.

Educationally, the current situation for males interested in a career in Advertising and Design, is there are no design departments or design schools in the Saudi education system and Saudi universities at which to be educated in Design. Male Saudis who have Design degrees have achieved them through study outside the Kingdom. Some designers at local agencies have not studied design at all, learning it only through on-the-job experience, and this lack of tertiary education would be expected to be reflected in the quality of their design output. The Saudi advertising industry is considered the most important in the Middle East and Arabic region, and it will need to continue to import design professionals; employ designers without design education, or rapidly and significantly increase the employed proportion of Saudi female designers with degree-level education in Design as long as there is a lack of specialised

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design colleges at universities at which male Saudi designers can receive degree-level education in Design.

The other source of aesthetic development, Art Education departments, exist only in some Saudi universities, and their primary focus is to provide training for teachers in how to deliver Art Education in elementary and middle schools. This situation is unchanged since earlier research by Zeyad (2004) and Indijani (2007). Zayed found at that time there was no specialised Visual Arts education in Saudi Arabia, and Indijani found no colleges in Saudi Arabia teach Advertising Design. Students interested in Visual Arts typically study at one of the departments specialising in training teachers to deliver Art Education in schools because these were the only degree level courses that provide lessons in Fine Arts and Design. The primary focus of these teacher training colleges, however, is necessarily elsewhere: training teachers. From the researcher's experience as a student and lecturer in one of the oldest and well known Art Education departments in Saudi universities, the programs in such departments are, as would be expected from their different role, not well aligned with preparing professionals to enter the design or advertising industries.

Although there appears nascent evidence of moves to increase the future availability in Saudi Arabia of degree-level Design and related Visual Arts education for Saudi males, to date such education is designed almost exclusively for females. Recently, females-only colleges teaching Design have been established at Princess Norah University in Riyadh, King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah and Dammam University in Dammam. There is also a department of graphic design at the private females-only Dar Al-Hekma College in Jeddah. The Dar Al-Hekma private college was in a position to establish a Graphic Design department because its Council is free to determine the courses it will provide on the basis of how these will add to the reputation and income of the college. The reasons for the establishment of female-only Design colleges at Princess Norah University, King Abdulaziz University and Dammam University have not yet been confirmed by the researcher. There is a need for similar education for males in Saudi Arabia, to supply the Advertising Design industry.

Based on the researcher's observations in advertising design organisations' offices, the proportion of females in the field of advertising design appears to be low: it appears about 5% of designers in the Saudi advertising market are female. It is not clear why this proportion is so low. There are some potential reasons:

- Females may not be particularly interested in working in advertising design, preferring to work in fashion, jewellery and interior design.
- The culture of advertising design in Saudi Arabia is male-dominated to the point where many female designers may not wish to be involved. The Saudi advertising market, advertising forums and websites where graphic designers gather, learn, and exchange experiences are generally male-dominated.
- The culture of advertising design in Saudi Arabia may be such that it prefers employing males regardless of their education to females with degree-level education in Design.
- The culture of Saudi Arabia may influence both advertising design agency managers and females with Design qualifications in ways that act to reduce the employment of females, regardless of their educational background.
- It may be males have more interest in working in advertising design.

At this stage, this thesis can only point to the gender imbalances in both education provision and employment in Advertising and related Graphic Design fields in Saudi Arabia, and the contradictions that result, especially in terms of quality of advertising outputs.

A more general education factor that negatively affects local advertising expertise is the overall weakness of Art Education in Saudi schooling. Typically, Saudi Art Education stops after middle school. High school students do not have the opportunity to build on this early education and improve their art skills or aesthetic skills. The lack of opportunity in the high school system to develop in the areas of Art and Aesthetics leads many talented students to choose pathways other than Design or Art in university. This results in the loss of many talented Saudi students who could have become world leaders in the advertising field. The problem is compounded because the interest in Art Education in elementary and middle schools is relatively low. In part, the

weaknesses described above in Art Education at school-level and beyond result from the general education policy in Saudi Arabia, in which Visual Arts are regarded as secondary to other subjects.

Poor English language skills amongst local designers is another education issue that may contribute to the lower quality of advertisements they create due to reduced access to training materials. Most advertising materials and sources including design software and relevant books and websites are primarily written in English. It is difficult for local designers to improve their professional and technical design skills because the level of their English may be insufficient. Materials written in Arabic on advertising knowledge and skills are limited, and often out of date. This factor is related to general education because teaching of English in Saudi schools is weak. Saudi students study over 500 hours of English during secondary (middle) and high school (from grade 7-12), however, their ability to communicate, read, or write short articles in English is limited (Alsagair, 2009). In general, the level of English language proficiency is low among Saudi students. Many designers at local agencies have low levels of English communication skills and this negatively affects local advertising outputs through the lack of access to professional advertising design material in English that could assist with their skill development.

A significant issue that came to light in this study was the lack of continuing professional development (CPD) (training in the local Saudi advertising industry). The quality of advertisements created by local agencies is adversely affected by the much lower levels of access local staff have to the kind of specialised work-based training available to staff in the international agencies. The majority of advertising designers in the local advertising industry lack formal design training. This is another issue that may negatively affect local advertising design. Although the Saudi advertising market is one of the most competitive in Middle East and Arab countries, including North Africa, there is little training provided to designers at local agencies. This problem is related to financial and professional factors. Some local agencies have financial difficulties and cannot afford to send their staff for training. The data suggests that the

managements of some local advertising agencies see such training as unnecessary, which reflects a lack of awareness of contemporary professional management practices.

Professional training programs are important for improving designers' skills and knowledge about developments in the field. Training problems at local agencies emerge for two reasons. First, there are no high quality advertising training centres in Saudi Arabia, and official intervention is needed to solve this lack. Investment in training centres is also needed. The second issue is that some local agencies do not budget for training programs for their staff. This is an issue that may need to be reviewed by the agency managers if improvements in quality are envisaged. Given the strong competition in the Saudi advertising market, it might be expected staff training programs would be a priority for local advertising agencies in order to stay relevant in the advertising market in the future.

These findings in regards to training are consistent with those of Al-Wakeel (2001), who found that a common problem facing the Saudi market in almost all fields is a shortage in trained personal. This is clearly occurring in the field of advertising design, and is directly related to the shortage of adequate training programs and centres.

There exist some commercial training centres in the Saudi market that offer graphic design software training, typically in Photoshop and Illustrator. These are training centres, however, that primarily have specialised in teaching international languages and office computer programs such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Interviewees' responses and the researcher's experiences in the field indicate many do not have staff who are qualified and skilled to teach graphic design software to the standard needed by professional designers. Their focus appears to be profitability rather than offering professional quality Design education training.

Designers from international advertising agencies who undertook professional training external their agencies typically did so in special Design training

centres in Dubai and Beirut. Their professional training was commonly supplemented by study using the Internet, for example on websites such as Adobe (which contains extensive tutorials – in English) or fee-charging graphic design sites that provided materials in English. This mix of formal and informal training gives designers in international advertising agencies a wealth of useful information and experience, and is reflected positively in their design output. This contrasts with very little on-the-job training offered to designers in local agencies, whose training (if any) was by Internet, visiting local Middle-Eastern design websites and forums serving the local community of graphic designers, usually free of charge and in Arabic.

Professional 'mentoring' provides an additional dimension of a Design professional's education. In field visits during this research, the researcher observed international agencies supported internal mentoring of their staff. They encouraged junior designers to work with senior or expert designers in the agency. Such formal and informal mentored learning gives inexperienced designers more than just training: it helps build their skills, confidence, and experience in an integrated way using real-world experiences.

This training issue links tightly with other issues, particularly financial constraints, and the English language problems identified earlier.

Available financial resources

In advertising design there is a lower-bound relationship between the quality of designs and the financial resources committed to producing them. In other words, a given outcome will typically require a certain minimum amount of finances to be committed to achieve, create and produce it. This is a lower bound, which is 'necessary' but may not be 'sufficient' or 'best' because while at least that amount of financial commitment must be made to achieve a certain quality of output, this does not necessarily guarantee that the intended quality of output will be achieved.

The questionnaire and interviews indicated shortage of financial resources and to minimise spending is characteristic of the local advertising industry to such a degree it commonly negatively affects the quality of work. The initial focus of many local agencies on simple and cheap advertisements places them on a growth trajectory in which minimising costs of designers' salaries and training, and minimising provision of software and resource investment, may provide maximum short-term financial benefits for the business owner, at the expense of quality, growth in the longer term and the ability to expand into higher-value contracts. Minimising costs impacts adversely on multiple factors that influence quality of design output: using single general-purpose graphic design software programs; employing cheaper staff that are not well trained; using older computers that have lower performance than are needed for efficient and effective visual design; minimising organisation structure and administration to the point that it is insufficient for the project management needed for quality outcomes; avoiding specialisation by having single individuals undertake all tasks of a project; design processes and tasks reconfigured to produce 'acceptable' outcomes without providing access to resources that might improve novelty, effectiveness and general quality of advertisements; and maximising reuse of design layouts and elements that have already been created to produce advertisements that are acceptable rather than highly effective and of high quality. Any of these quality-adverse factors encourages the adoption of the others in slide to lower quality outcomes. Individually and together they contribute to bounding or reducing the potential and actual quality and effectiveness of designs. For example, when local advertising agencies pay lower salaries for their advertising designers, this typically requires them to recruit less skilled and unskilled designers, or employees who are not-specialised or educated in the field of advertising design. Similar consequences happen when local agencies do not pay designers for overtime hours. Cheaper, lower skilled designers require more training and better software and computer hardware to offset their poor skill levels. When, as is common, they are not provided with these necessary aids, the outputs must naturally be expected to be limited in quality.

A further consequence occurs when clients who themselves have a cost-cutting mentality primarily employ these types of advertising agencies: together they contribute to lowering the average quality of advertising created in the local Advertising Design sector. Competition between local advertising agencies is at least partially driven by cost competition, which may lead to a downward spiral, a 'race to the bottom' of lowest cost, that results in advertisements that tend towards the limit of minimal acceptability rather aim in the direction of high effectiveness and quality. This inter-related collection of financial factors helps in part explain why Saudi Arabia was seen by international advertising agencies as offering a golden opportunity to dominate the Saudi advertising market.

Type of client

The previous section pointed towards advertising agencies' clients as an influence on differences in quality in advertising designs created by local and international agencies where they focused on minimising costs.

Advertising agencies client's influence quality of output in other ways. Local agencies reported problems with clients who interfered inappropriately in the advertising design process. It was reported some clients insisted on making decisions about designs at inappropriate places in the design process, attempted to manage the design process, requested work be finished quicker by omitting or minimising parts of the design process. It appears these forms of intervention are a common problem facing local agencies. In many cases, it is likely they are founded on the client's lack of understanding and knowledge of advertising. Such interventions by clients, however, hinder and often compromise the quality of designs, in part because portions of the design process are not satisfactorily completed. Designers need sufficient time to complete the different aspects of the design process, including time to search, prepare, create and produce an advertisement.

Advertising designers often regard interventions by clients as restrictions on their creativity. A typical comment by advertising or graphic designers was they needed more freedom to create and develop advertisements. This is a situation in which the reasoning and evidence are not symmetrical. Whilst it is true that clients may insist on an advertising design that is of lower 'quality' or effectiveness than might be created by the agencies if given free rein, this is not evidence that nothing must restrict designers' creativity and freedom. Creativity is limited by many factors. Designers' claims that clients are impinging on their creativity or freedom may be an ego-driven response to the fear that clients are challenging their competence, expertise and knowledge. When clients are experienced businesspeople and designers are inexperienced and unskilled, then intervention by clients may lead to more effective advertisements, even if these are of a lower visual quality.

Whilst the data indicates that clients have an influence on the quality of design output, the full details of that influence were not revealed by this research and remain open to speculation.

Use of advertising ideas and novelty

Novel and exciting associations between images, ideas, text and message are the essence of effective advertising (Khaddar, 2000). The ideas and concepts that define and shape these associations in any particular design result from the activities of the advertising design team during the advertising design process. Developing novel and exciting ideas and concepts that result in effective advertising designs and campaigns requires high-level design skills, effort and resources. The data gathered in this research indicated that designers at local agencies often do not, or are not able to, commit adequate time and resources to create novel ideas for advertisements. Instead, they often re-use ideas from previous advertisements, sometimes replicating an advertisement with minor editing changes. The consequence is an impression that advertisements created by local agencies are less exciting and novel than they might be. In one sense,

this can be seen as a weakness in professional advertising design practice. It can also, however, be seen as a result of the financial culture in local agencies, in which designers receive low salaries with no inducements for producing high quality creative, novel and effective advertisements.

Observation of local advertising agency outputs suggests lack of higher-level design education of designers at local agencies results in designs that are too direct in their persuasion to buy. This can have negative results. When designers present ideas over-directly, they may conflict with Saudi social traditions, leading to the advertisements being rejected. For example, advertisements about aphrodisiac products and women's sanitary pads in Saudi Arabia have offended their intended audiences because their messages were presented in too direct a manner. Strategies to avoid this are to use symbolism to present messages in ways that avoid conflict with societal traditions and personal attitudes. In parallel, the use of rhetoric, in language, symbol and semiotic methods, can offer novel, entertaining and exciting messages that are attractive to their intended audiences. To do this well typically requires designers to be trained to university-level in advertising design theory and methods, and to commit the necessary time and resources to achieve such designs. International agencies commonly pay more attention to using rhetorical approaches involving diverse, unique, novel, and positive ideas to create attractive high-quality advertisements, and make the commitment to supporting other aspects of their businesses (structure, education, resources, teamwork etc.) to enable these kinds of outcomes.

Expertise in the advertising field

In professional fields such as advertising design, quality of output depends both on the resources that can be brought to bear, and on the institutional memory of previously successful and unsuccessful advertising experiences. The more years and breadth of experience, the larger the pool of experience that can be drawn on, the more chance that experience contains knowledge that can contribute to

a complexity and richness of ideas to address current advertising design problems.

Local agencies typically have only limited experience in the field of advertising, and the majority have no branches abroad with which to share experiences. If local agencies in Saudi Arabia had branches in other countries, this would provide a depth of perspective and breadth of experience that could help seed improvements or at least provide impartial evaluation. For example, some international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia have branches in Dubai and send advertisements there to be reviewed and evaluated. This is effective because the traditions and values in the Emirati and Saudi societies are similar. However, the narrowness of outlook of local agencies commonly is compounded by their resistance to seeking assistance from international experts or other sources of expertise beyond what is available free on the Internet. Local agencies do not seek assistance from international experts because they think they do not need their help and do not want to allocate funds to consult them, as an expert in the Saudi advertising revealed to the researcher.

The limited experience of local advertising design businesses is primarily because Saudi Arabia does not have a long heritage of visual advertising. Although a number of local advertising agencies were established in the 1960s and 1970s, the majority are new and have no experience in the field (Orham & Secil, 1998). This is because the Saudi business market was relatively simple before 1960 and commonly used oral advertising methods (shouting and proclaiming in public places). After the economic boom of the 1960s, many foreign companies entering the Saudi market needed advertising campaigns for their businesses (Al Khateeb, 1998), and this need led to the establishment of a limited number of local advertising agencies with little prior professional experience in advertising.

Saudi culture and traditions

Historical and cultural factors in Saudi Arabia can limit the attitudes and aspirations of local advertising agencies' staff and owners, and their personal and business ambitions. Saudi culture and traditions is traditional and has a religious foundation. Some advertisers believe Saudi culture and traditions can limit the opportunities for creativity, novelty, quality and effectiveness of many forms of advertising because it can prevent some designers from expressing particular ideas when creating advertisements. One explanation for the difference in quality of local and international advertising agencies is these historical and cultural factors restrict the ways local agencies operate and this occurs more strongly than for international advertising agencies. The data indicates participants believe culture and traditions influencing a variety of the factors that lead to quality differences between the local and international advertising sectors (see Chapter 4). This can be seen in, for example, the ways that cultural attitudes towards visual imagery may influence the choice of images and advertising concepts that would otherwise enable local advertising agencies to create more novel and attractive advertising. This latter may also be shaped by clients (see later).

The researcher does not agree in full with these views. Although there are many difficulties with visual art in Saudi society and culture, international agencies in Saudi Arabia have successfully created high-quality, culturally-acceptable advertisements in the same society and culture. The issue is deeper than just Saudi culture: it is related to multiple factors: to education, professionalism and expertise. It is more difficult for advertising designers with little design and advertising education or training, with low skills in using design software and with little expertise in advertising to succeed in creating advertisements in Saudi culture, or any another culture or society. The reasons for low quality are thus likely to be related more to the breadth of reasons described in this chapter. This is not withstanding that Saudi culture and traditions do, however, represent difficulties for designers at both local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia.

The Positive and Negative Impacts of Computer Technology on Saudi Advertising Design

Computer technology, and graphic design software in particular, has contributed to improvements in the form and quality of advertising designs worldwide. The current study suggests in the Saudi advertising industry there are both positive and negative impacts of using computers in advertising design, although overall it appears the positive effects have been more significant.

The use of computers and appropriate design software in the Saudi advertising industry can positively contribute to the forms of advertising design by making it easier for the designer to achieve particular forms and details, various choices of shapes, lines, fonts, effects, filters, and colours that could not be created efficiently or cost effectively without computer software. In light of this, advertising designers' use of computer technology for creating the visual and aural aspects of an advertisement can help improve the quality, in part by enabling sharper and more complex layouts with more complex visual effects at any given advertising production price point. This finding is consistent with that of Cleveland (2004), who found that computer technology has improved the quality and clarity of visual design.

The findings in Chapter 4 indicated international agencies in Saudi Arabia have recognised the importance of using computers in advertising, and have attracted designers skilled in design software, trained them in the latest versions and also have provided their designers with the latest computer technology and design software to achieve the greatest benefits from such technology. This way of using modern computer technology, with other factors such as experience, a good financial situation, skilled designers and good design training and education, has helped international agencies create and produce high-quality advertisements and dominate the advertising market in Saudi Arabia. Many local advertising agencies, on the other hand, have paid significantly less attention to best practices in the use of computer technology in

advertising design, which appears to be (with other factors) negatively reflected in the quality of their advertising design outputs.

Designers can benefit by using computers when developing advertising concepts, the 'idea' behind an advertisement as distinct from the visual 'instance' of that idea that is placed in the advertisement. The concept of an advertisement is typically created through conversations and hand drawings. Computer software enables designers' concepts and messages to be illustrated more easily and quickly, particularly when special visual effects are needed. This aligns with Mahgoub's (2008) suggestion that computers have a role in assisting designers with exploring and explaining their ideas.

The use of computers in advertising design helps improve effectiveness and efficiency because it can shorten the process of making and creating advertisements, from initial planning to the final stages of choosing appropriate media and placing the advertisement. Using computers in all stages of the process can reduce the time and effort needed to create and produce advertisements, compared with traditional methods. In doing this, it also saves money because the costs of computer technology, software and training are relatively small compared to the overall financial flows related to conceiving, producing and placing advertisements. This is in agreement with Cleveland (2004) who suggested that computer technology reduces the length of the design process and eliminates many traditional design stages.

The relative ease of using computers for visual design, compared to traditional hand-based image-making and layout methods, encourages designers to become involved in creating advertisements, because working with graphic design software does not require them to commit effort, cost and learning to achieve the necessary high level of ability in drawing or painting, necessary traditional design skills. This feature of computer technology in the professional dimension of advertising design is likely to have two different effects in quality. It provides an opportunity for people with high capacities for creativity and innovation but less ability in drawing and painting, to enter the advertising design field. This is potentially, a positive effect. On the other hand, it creates a

demand for people to operate graphic design software competently, and enables individuals with a lower level of innovation and creative skill to produce competent outcomes after even a short course in operating the software. This latter has a potentially negative effect on quality. Both of these effects may be found in both local and international advertising agencies; it is the relative balance of the two that is important. The researcher observed during field visits that it was more common to find that designers working in local agencies had undertaken short courses in operating graphic design software without undertaking any particular education in advertising and visual design.

The Internet offers multiple positive benefits to designers and others in the Saudi advertising industry. Advertising designers are able to learn the latest in advertising techniques and styles directly via the Internet, where newly developed advertising ideas and concepts can be viewed, and also via professional advertising industry networks accessed through the Internet that provide leading examples in the field of advertising. Using the Internet also provides other advantages. For example, searching for information on advertising is much faster than traditional searches in books and magazines (as some participants in this study noted). In addition, the Internet now provides effective intradepartmental communication between advertising design team members, simplifies communicating with clients, for example by using the Internet to show the final product to clients remotely (see, for example, Landa, 2004).

In Saudi Arabia, consumers' adoption of technology is relatively recent and the technology adoption curve steep. In this context, extensive and skilled use of computers, websites and Internet by advertising design agencies can be an attractive factor to advertisers. By attracting clients to agencies, they can increase sales, which should lead to improved efficiencies of scale, reduced production costs and increased selling prices for those businesses. Currently, the international advertising agencies can tempt advertising clients in this way.

On the other hand, computer technology can have negative impacts in Saudi advertising. For example, two participants in this research suggested that using

ready-made custom shapes available on computers, could cripple, constrain, and limit the creativity and imagination of designers. This opinion from professional designers was unexpected. It is possible the participants were from local agencies, and felt that working frequently on ready-made forms and shapes available on computers could limit a designer's creativity.

Other potential negative effects are using computers extensively could make designers overly dependent on design software, and result in a reduction of their manual faculties and abilities; and that designers who depend totally on computer technology might lose some of the patience and diligence necessary to create and produce those advertisements that still require manual design input.

Summary

This chapter has described eight explanations of how the information gathered in this research about individual factors contributing to differences in quality between local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia interact in ways that create differences in quality. The primary explanations identified and outlined in this chapter are:

- Poor familiarity with and skill in modern computer technology and design software among local agencies' staff
- Lack of professionalism among designers in local agencies.
- Lack of design education and training in designers in local agencies
- Financial resources in local agencies
- Interfering clientele of local agencies
- Limitations in advertising ideas and novelty
- Lack of expertise of local agencies in advertising
- Saudi culture and traditions.

The chapter also discussed the positive and negative effects of using computer technology in Saudi advertising.

The next chapter presents suggestions to improve local Saudi advertising design.

Chapter 6/ Research Suggestions to Improve the Quality of Local Saudi Advertising

This research focused first on identifying the factors directly responsible for the lower quality of advertising designs from local agencies compared with those of international agencies. The information gathered from questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews with representatives of local and international agencies in Saudi Arabia was described in Chapter 4. The following chapter, Chapter 5 explored and developed explanations for differences in quality of design output, analysing how particular combinations of factors act together. Together, Chapters 4 and 5 weave together a gestalt of the characteristics of industry-wide differences in quality of outcome.

The focus of the current chapter, Chapter 6, is to review of potential interventions to improve local Saudi advertising output, which emerged from the preceding discussions on how individual factors together create differences in quality between local and international advertising agencies' output. These interventions offer a way forward, suggesting strategies for improving the quality of design in the local advertising industry.

Improving the Relative Quality of Advertisements from Local Saudi Advertising Agencies

This section reviews the explanations proffered in the earlier chapter, and outlines six areas of intervention to improve the quality of local Saudi advertising design:

- Improving design education and training
- Increasing computer technology use and improving skill levels
- Improving professionalization and expertise in the local advertising industry
- Improving advertising concepts and promoting creativity

- Establishing professional associations
- Improving the role of local media in relation to design

Improving design education and training

Improving specialised education and training for designers and other staff employed in local advertising design agencies appears to be one of the most effective ways to improve local Saudi advertising design. To achieve this, the research suggests, there are likely to be many benefits to establishing design colleges for males in Saudi universities. To be effective in international terms, these colleges and the education they provide require appropriately well-qualified and experienced staff in the classic areas of design, graphic design, advertising, and multimedia; they must also be able to address new directions in what is a rapidly changing field because of its close interaction with electronic information and communication technologies.

One of the most useful, and currently absent, roles of such design colleges would be to educate highly qualified design and related specialists to work in the domestic advertising industry. This supports the prior findings of Zeyad (2004, p. 214) that identified the benefits of establishing fine arts colleges in Saudi Arabia that 'could include commercial art, graphic design, interior design, photography, industrial design and interactive multimedia design'. The fields Zeyad (2004) mentions remain what the Saudi market currently needs; all would exist more appropriately within Design colleges than Fine Art colleges. The researcher believes the evidence is clear Saudi Arabia will benefit directly from establishing design colleges to fulfil the economic, industrial and commercial needs of Saudi Arabian society and industry. Zeyad's arguments for Fine Arts colleges fulfil this role only indirectly, because their focus is training practitioners of Fine Art rather than Design. The researcher is aware also there is some resistance to establishing better Fine Arts college education in Saudi Arabia from some quarters, particularly religious organisations (see later). There have been many attempts and proposals to establish Fine Arts schools or

Departments of Fine Arts at universities; all, however, have been rejected (Zeyad, 2004). This rejection may be because there is a philosophy in Islamic culture that strictly forbids making sculptures and statues of humans or animals, and many religious scholars in Saudi Arabia believe also that drawing and painting figures of humans or animals is forbidden too. Going back to the root of this issue, we find that Islam was born in an idolatrous society. People in Arabia at that time worshipped idols (idolised) they made, and one of the first goals of early Muslims was to eliminate these: hence Islamic prohibitions of sculptures or the making of statues of human or animal figures. By extension, some religious scholars forbid drawing or painting human or animal figures, to be on the side of caution. Establishing design colleges offers a solution supported by the Saudi cultural and economic contexts because there are no negative attitudes toward the word "design" in Saudi culture or religion, and graduates of colleges of Design colleges could support the Saudi economy and alleviate unemployment in contrast to the situation of graduates of Fine Arts colleges (were they ever approved).

This research has focused on issues affecting quality in the Saudi advertising design industry. During the research, it became clear to the researcher Saudi Arabia can benefit from almost all fields of design, such as graphic design, advertising, publishing, interior design, typography, multimedia, industrial design, illustration, photography, web design, animation design and digital production. Design colleges would provide an institutionalised approach that prepares professionals to produce high quality work in many fields of visual design; and to fill the large number of jobs in these fields that are currently suffering from a shortage of local professionals educated to international standards. The advertising sector, for example, suffers from a chronic shortage of such local professionals. Currently, local designers represent about 20%, of those working in advertising in Saudi Arabia, as estimated by the researcher on his field visits. A similar lack of representation can be inferred in all other design domains in the country.

In the longer term, improving the education of Saudi Arabian design professionals could be assisted by improving Visual Art education in elementary, middle and high schools. At this point, high school students in Saudi Arabia do not study any form of Visual Arts or Art education. It is widely accepted in many design fields, including engineering design, that sound visual and graphic skills established at school level improve the quality of design work in later life. The shortfall of appropriately educated entrants in local advertising design employment is likely to be improved by encouraging talented, art-educated students to study in the field of design in university and go on to work in the industry. Internationally competent and expert Saudi designers for the labour market would also benefit, according to the data from participants in the research, from improvements in other educational areas, such as improving the teaching of computer technology, the English language, and mastering Arabic. This combination of expertise is increasingly necessary to several areas of the modern Saudi labour market, not only advertising.

For those who have already passed out of the school system and are working in industry, this research (see Chapter 4) indicates benefits would be gained from increasing the availability of access to design-related training. This suggestion aligns with the findings of Al-Wakeel (2001) thatthe Saudi market has a shortage of trained personnel.

Typically, the focus of such professional work-related training should be on the practical dimensions of skill and knowledge, and the updating of expertise for professionals to remain at the cutting-edge of understanding in the field. Such training can be provided by short courses at external training centres, supported by formal and informal on-the-job mentoring and training. The establishment of international-standard training centres in Saudi Arabia, specialised in advertising and design, would fulfil a current gap in professional educational resources, whether for those who want to embark on an advertising career or who, during their career, wish to undertake training to polish their skills and knowledge. Professional training would provide a significant opportunity to help local designers improve their proficiency in recent

technological advances in advertising design and graphics. Self-learning strategies also have a role, enabling individuals to improve their design skills via sources such as the Internet, software, books and magazines. This should not, however, be the primary only avenue for locals to improve their expertise, as is currently often the case. It is rarely successful without formal support in design education from schools, universities, colleges and training centres. The evidence gathered in this research has indicated that the self-learning approach dominant in Saudi Arabia has not resulted in quality outcomes or in a high quality local advertising industry.

Increasing computer technology use and improving skill levels

Achieving high quality outcomes in advertising is increasingly dependent on advertising agencies and their designers using the most powerful and recent software and computers and the most effective information and communication technologies. Currently, using such computer technologies offers advantages in time saving, team work and visual precision. Using appropriate computer technologies permits substantial automation of routine aspects of the visuals of an advertisement, enables designers to work with increased precision (with more pixels or dots per inch), and facilitates rapid electronic transfer of files between team members. For any given budget for an advertisement, the reduction in time gained through use of computer-based automation and electronic media increases the time available to the human aspects of designing, enabling more attention to be paid to identifying, selecting and polishing the ideas behind the designs. There is opportunity for better outcomes because there is, in effect, more 'work' done on each advertisement.

What are the implications for improving the quality of advertisements created by local agencies? Simply providing better quality software and computer hardware is unlikely to have much effect if local agency employees and management are unable to make full use of them. The most obvious and easiest way to get the greatest possible benefits is if local designers improve their skills

in their use of contemporary computer design software and the appropriate hardware. Elsewhere in the world, this up-skilling of designers is undertaken through workshops, seminars and courses run by high-quality design training centres. Up-skilling results in immediate gains, because the right computer technology in the hands of skilled and talented designers can revolutionize advertising design and significantly increase both the quality and quantity of output of any designer or team (see McLean, 2002). Improving local designers' skills with, and their access to, the Internet to support their advertising design offers many benefits for local agencies because the Internet is one of the easiest, fastest, and cheapest ways to research the latest and best in the advertising world. In addition, Internet-based electronic communication facilitates teamwork, particularly useful if team members (or their managers) are not co-located or are travelling.

Computers and their related information and communication technologies can also support the development of increased levels of institutional knowledge in the local industry. For example, advertising design websites can be used to share designers' experiences and expertise.

Improving professionalization and expertise in the local advertising industry

The discussions in Chapter 5 strongly indicate local advertising agencies may significantly benefit through the increased professionalization of their work, and when combined with benefits in the areas of self-promotion, contract management and other professional issues, this will help agencies achieve higher quality in their advertising designs. Increasing the professionalism of local agencies can happen from several starting points. For example, changes in the selection procedure for employing advertising designers might be implemented so preference is given to hiring those with specific skills, competencies and expertise in the field, rather than those who will accept the lowest salaries.

Other examples of increasing the professionalism of local advertising design agencies include:

- *Supporting designers' access to the knowledge of international and local experts through workshops and seminars.* The research suggests that collaboration between local and international agencies' designers would be a valuable way to increase the experience of local designers, helping them gain experience and good skills. Increasing the specialisation of staff would offer greater work efficiency, with the potential for improved output. This could be encouraged by ensuring each staff member develops and works in a particular field of specialisation. Many local agencies suffer from a well-established but unhelpful culture of overgeneralisation in which, for instance, graphic designers may undertake almost all the tasks involved of creating and producing an advertisement – in contrast to international agencies' standards of professionalism in which creative advertising design is undertaken by many specialists who work as a team.

- *Local agencies could improve the way that they manage clients, including limiting their intervention in the design process and educating them to have a better understanding of advertising design.* This might be achieved by local agencies providing their clients with free consultations and advice, for example by holding workshops to educate them in advertising approaches. This would help agencies and their clients to work together more effectively and produce better outcomes.

- *The Saudi government and larger institutions and businesses can also assist in improving the professionalism of local agencies by giving them priority of contracts, providing guidance and setting standards of performance for them to engage with government and institutional projects.* In part this will benefit local agencies by permitting them access to the large and lucrative contracts usually assigned to international agencies, but that could provide the financial support required to improve local agencies' software and computer technology resources.

Winning government projects may also help improve professionalism by increasing local agencies' experience and self-confidence.

Improving advertising concepts and promoting creativity

The effectiveness and quality of almost any advertisement depends on the engagement created by the novelty and attractiveness of the concept or underlying idea. The creative development of novel and attractive concepts that result in effective advertisements has been a low priority for local agencies and their designers, part of the sacrifice made to minimise cost in a downward quality spiral. Local agencies do not generally pay attention to advertising ideas, and many of the ideas used in their advertisements are old, duplicated, and so less engaging to their audience. Local agencies may benefit strongly by focusing more on creating new, innovative, and useful concepts, the source and origin of a successful and effective advertising campaign. This can be institutionalised in many ways: for example, local agencies might establish special departments to identify, create, search for, and develop appropriately novel and attractive concepts. As finding appropriate ideas to use is one of the most difficult stages a designer faces when creating an advertisement, this would help address criticisms that local advertising has no clear, single message. It may also help with the opposite criticism that local advertisements sometimes are overly complicated, containing multiple ideas, which leads to confusion.

Part of the move towards identifying better quality concepts is paying more attention to brainstorming and similar 'creative' idea generation processes that are often neglected in local agencies. This would be supported by increased use of more diversified sources of inspiration, including the latest innovations in global advertisements.

Establishing professional associations for advertising designers and the industry

For any professional field, self-support to improve the quality of outcomes of the member participants and the profession overall typically depends on the establishment of appropriate professional institutions. There are not yet any such associations or institutions for designers in Saudi Arabia. Such a professional association would provide physical or virtual locations where members could gather and exchange experiences and knowledge. There are several ways in which professional associations or institutions could assist:

- Establishing professional standards for different classes of registered members.
- Providing training courses for those working in the Saudi advertising sector.
- Encouraging and providing information to young people who are interested in becoming employed in advertising.
- Providing professional marketing for the Saudi advertising sector
- Establishing and organising events and activities for the Saudi advertising field.
- Providing coordination and liaison between advertising agencies and research companies
- Providing an external professional channel of communication between the advertising industry and design professionals.
- Creating and making available an information resource to serve as a reference to members about developments in advertising.
- Providing public education and information about advertising.
- Organising rotating local and international advertising exhibitions.

The last of these is a significant issue for advertising designers. Organising exhibitions and fairs to showcase the latest in the field of advertising is a good way to improve local advertising standards. Exhibitions and competitions between local and international advertising agencies have a helpful role in providing information between different sectors of the Saudi advertising market. At their most basic, exhibitions provide a means of exchanging information on experiences and techniques. Local designers can benefit by

participating in competitions and contests, testing their creative abilities and gaining experience in an environment that critically values good work.

Establishing associations and institutions for the local Saudi advertising industry potentially offers many benefits, improving quality of designs and strengthening the financial and competitive health of local agencies and the designers they employ. To gain these benefits will require establishing appropriate initiatives and developing long-term plans.

Improving the role of local media in relation to design

Chomsky (1997) has argued the media play a key role in the composition of culture and the formation of concepts in any society. This aligns with individuals' personal experience in Saudi Arabia. Saudi media influence the composition of culture and the formation of concepts, and hence quality, of Saudi advertising design. The media can play a constructive role that results in significant changes. For example, media coverage has significantly increased the interest in soccer in Saudi Arabia over the last thirty years, from a little-regarded sport to one of the most common topics of conversation in the country. In similar fashion, national and local media have the potential to strongly influence the attitudes towards visual culture in Saudi society, and to encourage people to become more open to and expectant of high quality, particularly in the visual aspects of advertisements, The media can also increase the level of artistic and aesthetic sophistication in understanding visual art. The Saudi media in partnership with education could provide public education that would positively encourage high quality Saudi advertising design because society (that is, its consumers) would be less accepting of poor quality advertisements and of the goods or services they are intended to promote.

Summary

This chapter has proffered several suggestions for changes that will improve the quality of local advertising agency industry in Saudi Arabia. These include establishing design schools for males, and setting up advertising training centres and associations for designers. Increasing professionalism and encouraging more proficient use of modern computer technology to create novel and creative advertisements are also significant ways to improve the quality of local advertising. The research also suggests that Saudi media can play a role in increasing the appreciation of visual culture in Saudi society.

The following, concluding chapter, Chapter 7, considers the future of advertising in Saudi Arabia, makes suggestions for further research, addresses the limitations of this research, and outlines the contribution to knowledge resulting from this research.

Chapter 7/ Conclusions

This research has focused on identifying and explaining causes for differences in the quality of work produced by local and international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia, and strategies, both small- and large-scale, that may be implemented to improve this imbalance in the future.

This chapter contains an overview of the thesis; a speculative view of potential futures for the advertising industry in Saudi Arabia, based on the research; a brief overview of the contributions to knowledge from this research; a review of the limitations of the findings; suggestions for future research, a review of the lessons learned in relation to the practical aspects of data collection in this research context, and a summary conclusion

Overview of the Thesis

To recap, the thesis consists of 7 chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction and executive overview of the research

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Collected Data after Analysis

Chapter 5: Discussion and Development of Explanatory Models

Chapter 6: Identification of Appropriate Strategies and Interventions

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The research problem was described in the first chapter, which also provided an overview of all aspects of the research, including the objectives and the questions that were addressed. This was followed in Chapter 2 with a review of the literature relating to the research topic and its context, including material relating to graphic design, advertising history, advertising and advertising

design processes, advertising agencies, computer technology and visual design. The third chapter presented the analyses that led to the choice and detail of the approaches governing data collection and analysis used in the research, as well as a detailed description of the qualitative and quantitative approaches (self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews) used to collect data from 223 participants from local and international advertising agencies in the four major cities in Saudi Arabia in terms of advertising. The data analysis methods also were described in this chapter. Chapter 4 provided a detailed description of the collected data, after it has been subjected to preliminary analysis for mean and standard deviation, using SPSS to identify dominant and unusual groupings of responses from the research participants. The data gathered was primarily participants' judgments and perceptions from their experiences as professionals in advertising. Participants addressed various issues including, the processes of creating advertising, designing with modern computer technology, impacts of computer technology on Saudi advertising design activities and organisations, the sources used to inspire creative advertising, the quality of local advertising design, reasons for differences in quality between local and international agencies' products, design education and training in Saudi Arabia, difficulties encountered by advertising designers in both local and international agencies, and possible ways to improve the quality of work in the local advertising industry.

In chapter 5, the data described in Chapter 4 was collated into groups of factors that provided identify larger-scale explanations of how and why groups of factors acted together to influence the quality of local advertising agencies design outputs. Chapter 5 linked different findings from Chapter 4 to provide more comprehensive explanations for the comparatively lower quality of advertising generally created by local agencies in comparison with that of the international agencies.

In Chapter 6, the explanations for quality differences presented in Chapter 5 were reviewed to identify potential interventions and strategies that might improve the quality of design outcomes in the local industry.

As outlined above, this concluding Chapter 7 provides an overview of the research and its findings. In addition, it offers a speculative view of potential futures for the advertising industry in Saudi Arabia, based on the researcher's insights and analyses. This is followed by a brief summary of the contributions to knowledge from this research, along with a review of its limitations, suggestions for future research, a review of the lessons learned in relation to the practical aspects of data collection, and a summary conclusion.

Speculation on Aspects of Potential Futures of the Saudi Advertising Design Industry

International advertising agencies currently dominate the Saudi advertising market, as has been made clear by: official statements; responses from the participants in this research; and the personal observations of the researcher during his field work. This dominance is partly a result of the widely acknowledged differences in quality of output of international and local advertising agencies. This difference in quality of design output is likely to increase if local agencies do not improve and professionalise the ways in which they create and produce advertising. International advertising agencies operate in a competitive environment and continually work to increase the quality and effectiveness of their advertising designs. Unless the local advertising industry changes and becomes competitive, it will be left behind and the quality 'gap' will increase – at the potential cost of retarding the development of local businesses that employ advertising agencies.

For those local advertising agencies that do improve the quality of their designs, it appears there is room for them to compete and prosper in the 'upper end' of the advertising market. Based on his field visits and communications with professionals, it became clear to the researcher the Saudi market has the capacity to accommodate new, highly-competent advertising agencies, especially given the recent economic reforms and the many projects funded by

the government that require ongoing advertising campaigns. Unless this demand is met by local advertising agencies providing high quality outputs, it will be filled by the increased participation of global advertising agencies,

Competition and problems with quality may prune out the weaker local advertising agencies. This may be in the best interest of the Saudi advertising industry, because the survivors are likely to be more competent, with the ability to compete against international conglomerates in the advertising field. However, even highly-resourced and highly-skilled local agencies will only be able to survive and compete in the Saudi market if they continue developing their work and training their staff in the latest techniques and practices. Another possibility is consolidation of the sector, in which local agencies merge to provide economies of production and increased specialisation and professionalism. These offer a way forward. For example, agencies might specialise in, say, real estate advertising, or in creating advertisements for national and governmental campaigns.

For current advertising design staff, increased levels of professionalism will adversely affect their employment options. Opportunities to enter or remain in the field will decrease for unqualified, inefficient, unprofessional and less-skilled staff. Initially, this will be most evident in relation to software skills. Advertising designers who cannot effectively utilise up-to-date design software programs will find their employment opportunities limited because, increasingly, effective advertising design and production depend on such computer skills.

The current education arrangements suggest a possible change in gender balance in the Saudi Arabian advertising industry towards an increase in female employees. There are now three female Design colleges and a Graphic Design department available to women in Saudi universities. Given the current female dominance in Design education and the trend towards increased dependence on staff that are well-educated and qualified in design knowledge and skills, the researcher expects female designers will play an increasing and important role in the advertising industry in the future. The number of female designers is

likely to increase in the next few years, and some of them might be expected to play important roles in the development of the future Saudi advertising design industry.

The overview afforded in this research by field visits, personal communications with designers in the advertising industry, and the researcher's own experience in the advertising industry in Saudi Arabia all indicate the industry is profitable and offers financially-comfortable career pathways. This indicates young Saudi people with visual design talent will be interested in participating in advertising. The development of the advertising field is a potentially good source of income for the Saudi people and will help decrease the high level of unemployment in Saudi Arabia.

The complex of factors and outcomes relating to Saudi advertising design suggest there is opportunity for the establishment of Design colleges and training centres specialising in Advertising Design. The research findings indicate there are sound investment opportunities for the profit-oriented private education sector to establish training and education centres, programs and courses to teach topics related to advertising, such as design principles, production, photography, and so on. The government sector may also invest in this field because of the benefits it offers in terms of fulfilling national and local government agendas relating to economic and cultural development.

Contributions to Knowledge

This research contributes to knowledge about factors causing differences in quality between local and international advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia, and strategies required to improve the development of the advertising design industry in Saudi Arabia.

The research has:

- Identified advertising design industry representatives' understanding of the factors that result in a lower quality of advertising created by local agencies compared to their international counterparts.
- Developed overarching explanations of how individual factors act together to mutually influence the key elements that lead to differences in quality
- Identified strategies that will help reduce or eliminate the differences in quality between local and international agencies.
- Provided improved understanding of the roles played by computer technology in producing quality in advertising design in Saudi Arabia.
- Increased understanding of Saudi advertising design by making explicit some previously tacit characteristics of the Saudi advertising market.
- Contributed to understanding the role of Saudi education in improving advertising design.

Limitations of this Research

This research has focused on identifying multiple factors that cause differences in quality between local and international advertising agencies operating in Saudi Arabia, developing large-scale explanations of how and why these factors act, either singly or in combination, to affect the quality of advertising. It also identifies strategies and interventions that will reduce quality differences in the future.

The nature of this research is both specific and exploratory. The limitations of the research outcomes are defined by its nature. The findings of the research are accurate and well supported. Before their application at a detailed level or for a specific local situation (e.g. in any particular city), however, they should be aligned with details of the social and business reality of that particular place. For example, the finding that design colleges are of benefit is likely to be more true of some cities and suburbs than of others.

Beside the limitations above the data collection methods have two practical limitations as discussed in Chapter 3.

The number of variations of types of advertising agencies in Saudi Arabia is larger than might be expected. In part, this appears due to advertising having developed in a relative ad-hoc manner in Saudi Arabia, which is a country whose tribal-based cultural norms do not align well with the commercial culture on which modern advertising agency development is typically developed. The research participants were chosen to represent the main types of advertising agency in Saudi Arabia, and there provide good representation for the focus of the research: explanations of differences in quality of output between international and local advertising agencies. At a more granular level, however, the research does not guarantee to have representatives from every configuration or type of advertising agency organization found in Saudi Arabia. The implication is the findings may not exactly apply to the small number of advertising agencies that differ significantly from the mainstream of local and international agencies represented in the data.

The second practical limitation concerns the gap between the professional knowledge of participants required to practice advertising design, and the reflective, critical conceptual skills needed to accurately understand and comment on those professional practices. This is a common problem in research involving practitioners in any field. It is the reason, for example, why professional sports people employ sports scientists to help them improve their game. Sports persons typically lack the theoretical basis for understanding what they are skilled at practicing. The implication for this research is the theoretical detail of what it has been possible to ask participants has been bounded by the need to ensure that the questions have a good match with the professional knowledge and skills of participants. This has meant the more detailed conceptual issues that emerged have been left to be investigated at a later time using research methods suited to more tightly focus on those issues.

Suggestions for Further Research

During this research, it became obvious further examination of particular areas would be helpful. Some interesting targets for research were identified, where increased detail would offer useful understanding to developing the contribution of the local advertising industry to Saudi economic and cultural development.

The first is to undertake research that will provide a more in-depth, detailed understanding of the role and needs of advertising agencies' clients. Clients' desires, knowledge (or lack of knowledge) and power relations can drive the advertising design sector in both helpful and unhelpful ways. For example, this research revealed a potentially unhelpful obsession of some clients with delivery speed over effectiveness and quality, that compromised the advertising design process; and unhelpful intervention in design that had the same effect. As the data for this research project were gathered only from participants on the supply side, that is, employees, managers and owners of local and international advertising design agencies, a more complete understanding would result from including participants from the demand side (client).

Second, it became clear that there would be advantages in understanding differences between local and international advertising agencies' design outputs in closer detail. This research tackled this issue by focusing on a small set of inputs: forms and concepts. Participants' responses indicated that there will be benefits in exploring differences in more depth in relation to other inputs, such as client market places and the differences in their preferences.

Gender issues have not been addressed in depth in this research. Saudi advertising design has been researched 'as is', and gender considerations have emerged as a potentially significant topic for future research. In spite of the reality that design education is currently exclusively female, the Saudi industry, both local and international, is predominantly male. There are three design colleges and one graphic design department for females in the Saudi universities, yet from observation only around 5% of designers in the Saudi

advertising market are female. This may be a matter of gender bias, or it may be that we are witnessing a transitional situation in which newly educated female designers will take an ever larger role in the Saudi advertising market. Understanding this would require an exploration of the participation of females in Saudi advertising: the benefits they bring, their needs and the difficulties they face in the advertising field.

A further study is recommended to make a proposal to establish a degree -level Design school in Saudi Arabia. As a result of undertaking this research, one of the researcher's goals is to convince Saudi university officials to establish design colleges to meet the country's needs. The researcher intends to submit a proposal to establish a design college. The proposal will consider the country's real needs, the religious issues, and will respect the country's regulations and societal values. It is clear that it will not be an easy task to persuade Saudi officials to establish design colleges, but it will be an important aim for the researcher in the future.

Training centres can, in the meantime, play a key role in improving the advertising industry in Saudi Arabia. Their current role is limited. Training centres in the Saudi market generally specialise in teaching the English language and Microsoft Office programs, as mentioned before. Some of these training centres (although unspecialised in design training) offer training for Adobe programs, particularly Photoshop, the most popular graphic design software in the Saudi market. This research suggests there are likely to be benefits in exploring the potential though further investigation of design training centres in Saudi Arabia including their difficulties and needs. This may help in establishing high-quality centres, with the intention of improving local Saudi advertisement output.

Practical 'Lessons Learned' in Research Methods

The research was undertaken as a PhD at an Australian university, and the data collection was undertaken in Saudi Arabian cities. Distance presented difficulties. Within Saudi Arabia itself, the geographical distance between the four cities from which the research information was collected presented its problems, exacerbated by the severe nature of the terrain and climate.

Initially it was proposed to use modern technology such as the Internet and e-mail to reduce the problems of distance, terrain and climate. Remote communication methods, including post, proved unsuccessful. Questionnaires sent by any remote means (post, email or Internet) were ignored by participants. The researcher discovered the only successful way to elicit the research information was face-to-face. This was expensive in costs and resources, due to the time inefficiency of the approach and the need to travel between four cities. Delays in the completion of questionnaires by participants in the advertising design agencies and in some case, complications in being able arrange interviews', proved to be a significant problem. Some interviews had to be held late in the evening after completion of work of the participants, presenting practical difficulties of both travel and location. It was common for such interviews to be eventually completed very late into the night.

Undertaking research with participants who were primarily Arabic speakers added an additional layer of complication, particularly relating to verification and ethics approval for the research. The researcher had to translate the questionnaire and interview questions into Arabic and have an Arabic language specialist compare the two versions and certify that they were similar. The researcher later had to translate participants' answers from Arabic into English before analysing them. Each of these translational stages absorbed time and resources.

These experiences indicated the benefits of planning research in much greater detail and budgeting for additional costs.

Summary and Conclusion

The aims of this research were to identify the reasons behind the low quality of advertisements created by local agencies and to identify improvements that can be made, as well as their potential benefits for Saudi advertising design. The core research questions were: "what are the reasons for the low quality of local Saudi advertising design?" and "how can Saudi advertising design be improved?"

Based on official Saudi statements, researcher review, and observations of many advertisements created by local advertising agencies and professional participants' observations, there are clear differences in quality between the advertisements created by local and international agencies in Saudi Arabia. The research found the main reasons for these differences are due to a constellation of factors, including a lack of computer technology skills among local designers; lack of professionalism and experience in local agencies; limited adherence to professional best-practices in advertising design in local agencies; lack of design education and training in Saudi Arabia; local agencies' limited financial resources; consequently limited commitment to investment in infrastructure, staff, and training, and in the development of novel ideas and concepts; and interference by clients in the creative process.

If designers at local advertising agencies are to improve the quality of their advertising design, the most urgent need is to improve their staff's skills in modern technology as it relates to advertising design. This is a key to success. A stronger focus on design education and training, and particularly on the establishment of design colleges for males in Saudi universities will bolster the supply of qualified designers. Increasing professionalism in local agencies and establishing associations for designers will also assist in improving creativity and advertising outputs because they will promote the exchange of experiences and skills between designers. Finally, local media can assist to improve visual culture in Saudi Arabia, as this may reflect positively on local advertising agencies and their clients.

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Appendix A: Location of the four cities in the study

Appendix B: Ethical approval granted by Curtin University for the study

Curtin 🌸
University of Technology

memorandum

To	Dr Terence Love, Humanities
From	A/Professor Stephan Millett, Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee
Subject	Protocol Approval **HR 127/2008**
Date	14 November 2008
Copy	Mojib Alzahrani Humanities Graduate Studies Officer, Faculty of Humanities

Office of Research and Development

Human Research Ethics Committee

TELEPHONE   9266 2784
FACSIMILE   9266 3793
EMAIL   hrec@curtin.edu.au

Thank you for providing the additional information for the project titled *"The impact of computers on Saudi advertising design"*. The information you have provided has satisfactorily addressed the queries raised by the Committee. Your application is now **approved**.

- You are authorised to commence your research as stated in your proposal.
- The approval number for your project is **HR 127/2008.** *Please quote this number in any future correspondence*
- Approval of this project is for a period of twelve months **23-10-2008** to **23-10-2009**. To renew this approval a completed Form B (attached) must be submitted before the expiry date **23-10-2009**.
- If you are a Higher Degree by Research student, data collection must not begin before your Application for Candidacy is approved by your Divisional Graduate Studies Committee.
- The following standard statement **must be** included in the information sheet to participants:

  This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number HR 127/2008). The Committee is comprised of members of the public, academics, lawyers, doctors and pastoral carers. Its main role is to protect participants. If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845 or by telephoning 9266 2784 or by emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Applicants should note the following:

It is the policy of the HREC to conduct random audits on a percentage of approved projects. These audits may be conducted at any time after the project starts. In cases where the HREC considers that there may be a risk of adverse events, or where participants may be especially vulnerable, the HREC may request the chief investigator to provide an outcomes report, including information on follow-up of participants.

The attached **FORM B** should be completed and returned to the Secretary, HREC, C/- Office of Research & Development:
When the project has finished, or
- If at any time during the twelve months changes/amendments occur, or
- If a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs, or
- 14 days prior to the expiry date if renewal is required
- An application for renewal may be made with a Form B three years running, after which a new application form (Form A), providing comprehensive details, must be submitted.

Regards,

[signature]

Pp A/Professor Stephan Millett
Chair
Human Research Ethics Committee

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Appendix C: Letter from King Saud University to advertising agencies requesting permission to interview or distribute questionnaires to participants

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة الملك سعود
كلية المعلمين

الرقـــم :
التاريخ : / / ١٤ هـ
المرفقات :

الموضوع :

السادة/ المسئولين في شركات الدعاية والإعلان   وفقهم الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته   وبعد،

نأمل منكم التعاون مع مبتعث الدكتوراه/ معجب بن عثمان الزهراني وذلك بتسهيل مهمة توزيع الاستبيان وإجراءات مقابلات مع مصممي الإعلانات وذلك لاستخدامها للأغراض العلمية المتعلقة ببحثه لمرحلة الدكتوراه وهي (تأثير استخدام الكمبيوتر على تصميم الإعلان السعودي).

وتقبلوا فائق تحياتنا،،،

العميد

د. علي بن عبدالله العفنان

ص.ب ٤٣٤١ الرياض ١١٤٩١ هاتف الكلية:٠١٤٩١١٠٦٣ - فاكس ٤٩١٥٦٨٤ موقع الكلية:WWW.TCR.EDU. SA   P.O. Box 4341, Riyadh 11491 Tel.: 014911063 Fax:4915684 WWW.TCR.EDU. SA

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