

An insight into the brand-conscious Saudi generation of 'Drifters'

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Research Structure



- Conceptual problem formulation - explored through elicited and iterative qualitative data collection
- Synthesis of Branding, Consumer Behaviour and Sociological Literature
- Inductive Reasoning and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: as a basis for formulating Participant observation methods – then culminating in Critical Discourse Analysis
- Working paper

Drifting an informal American-English term for oversteering a car through an apex, or straight often opposite lock. Judged according to technique, style and car control, It represents the tip of an iceberg of a deep-rooted sub-culture - blending creative sports expression with: fashion, music, slang, sexuality, participant/observer-



Methodology

- 3 methods of **Participant Observation** method were used: **external**, **passive** and **balanced** – in Arabic and English: Which were deployed in the following settings:
 - Covert observation at drifting events in Saudi Arabia
 - Critical discourse analysis of websites, user generated content and web-forums: e.g. Facebook, YouTube, online drifting chat rooms
 - In-depth interviews with Saudi drifters and Saudi non-drift participants

Initial Findings

- Saudi Drifters demonstrate traits of: **Innovation, creative expression, collective-individualism, risk-taking, control,** and **self-defined socio-religious ambassadorship.** Furthermore, they are **internet savvy, multi-lingual** cultural magpies.
- Also, culturally conservative societies, such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), are planted in a virtual world of hyper-pluralism and self-expression. This yields higher degrees of:
 - Revolutionary hybridization and complex tacit boundary setting
 - Opposite generational behavioral traits. It is however still unclear whether this is temporal and generation specific, or progressively continuous
 - Ratification of social status and identity through brands

Analysis and observations of drifting in Saudi Arabia, derived from online and on-site, yielded the following major findings:

- **More attention paid to the drifters' identity rather than car brands.** The title of video clips carried drifters' names, with the intention of attracting more viewers
- **Modifications made to original manufacturer's designs receive more attention than the brand itself.** e.g. cheaper creatively customised cars appeared more attractive than expensive unmodified cars

Scope and Scalability

The authors observed the following factors as being key when creating the right environment for a *cult of sub-culture*:

- **Cultural surrogate hybridization**
- **Virtual participation and rolling news**
- **Brand Friendships**
- **Authenticity**
- **Socio-Religious ambassadorship**

ありがとうございました
Thank You Very Much

