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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## Language as a Key Element in Digital Marketing Strategies for Foreign Products in Saudi Arabia

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**| ABSTRACT**

The study focused on exploring how language impacts the marketing of international products in Saudi Arabia. The key objectives were to investigate the impact of using the Arabic language in marketing foreign products in Saudi Arabia, assess its effect on consumer engagement and loyalty, and provide recommendations for foreign firms seeking entry into Saudi markets. Based on the systematic review method, data were carefully collected from five studies found on Scopus and online academic journals. After collecting the evidence, it was thoroughly studied using thematic analysis and later triangulated when we pulled it together. It is clear from the study that using Arabic language for digital marketing helped foreign products attract more Arab customers. As a result, people felt more connected to the brand, trusted it, and were more loyal since the practice fit with their cultural habits. Generally, this approach demonstrated a strong cultural understanding, which is greatly respected in the business world. As a result, for successful marketing in Saudi Arabia, businesses should make sure all advertising and promotional content is available in Arabic to ensure visibility, engagement, and loyalty from customers in the long run.

**| KEYWORDS**

Language, Arabic, digital marketing, foreign, engagement, loyalty, advertisement.

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### 1. Introduction

Language has become a fundamental marketing element for foreign companies based on localization, domestication, globalization, and foreignization strategies. Marketing of foreign products in different countries and regions is founded on resonating with the linguistic traditions of a target market. In their analysis of the phenomenon of Arabic advertising, Mokrushina (2024) demonstrated that the cultural, economic, and political organization of Arabic society is revealed. While language is considered central in marketing, the visual aspect of marketing often communicates more effectively. However, Bajaber (2020) and Mokrushina (2024) agree that religious values and traditions strongly influence marketing in Arabic-speaking countries. In contrast, Novianti et al. (2024) note that some Arab countries are comparatively more democratic and, therefore, allow the advertisement of certain prohibited products in their markets. Nonetheless, Mokrushina (2024) observes that advertising of alcoholic beverages, drugs, gambling machines, and cigarettes is strictly regulated. Likewise, Aseeri (2024) asserts that Arab countries limit the expression of features related to sexuality and nudity. Censorship is often imposed on advertisements that include undesired visual aspects or language. In agreement, Bajaber (2020) argues that traditional imagery in marketing is highly prioritized, as it measures public trust among Arabs. Therefore, to avoid distrust, marketers embrace these traditions to resonate with the tastes and preferences of the locals; consequently, marketing is tailored to the local consumer.

Language plays a pivotal role in marketing activities, which is why it has become a primary point of influencing the consumer toward having a taste and preference for foreign products. Kassawat (2020) sought to determine the role of language

in marketing international products in Arab countries. Focusing on 2,624 blurbs translated from English to Arabic, Kassawat (2020) established that language is used for localization and globalization of product marketing activities. With a focus on Saudi Arabian furniture, perfumes, cosmetics, and technology products, Kassawat (2020) found that most websites featured products described and labeled in Arabic. Kassawat (2020) also established that some products had dual English and Arabic names. Key linguistic marketing strategies employed include translation, transliteration, and a combination of transliteration and translation, explication, omission, adaptation, and non-English advertising. Like Kassawat (2020), Aseeri (2024) also established that marketing international products in Arab countries entails the translation of product labels into Arabic. Using the example of exported food products from English-speaking countries, Aseeri (2024) notes that labels are translated from English to Arabic through transliteration, literal translation, borrowing, and non-translation to achieve foreignization. The strategies adopted in descending order of priority include transposition, adaptation, and addition and omission, which are central to the domestication of product marketing. Therefore, language manipulation is leveraged as a crucial strategy to ensure foreign products gain visibility in local Arab markets.

Al-Jarf (2022) noted that foreign companies and their names predominate Arab markets due to domestication and foreignization strategies. According to Al-Jarf (2022) and Aseeri (2024), using a mix of Arabic and foreign languages in marketing by foreign companies has particularly made them appealing to locals in their respective markets. This perspective positions language as a key strategy foreign companies leverage in marketing products in Arab markets. However, there is a limited demonstration of the digital marketing perspective. The Arab e-consumer has not been adequately considered, as most studies focus on physical foreign shops and enterprises. Consequently, this systematic review seeks to establish the role of language in digital marketing strategies for foreign products in Saudi Arabia, addressing a gap in understanding how online platforms can capitalize on linguistic adaptation to enhance market penetration and foster consumer loyalty.

### **1.1 Study Aim**

The study aims to determine the impact of using the Arabic language and Arabic-rooted expressions in digital marketing strategies for foreign products in Saudi Arabia. This paper highlights the role of adapting the marketing content of global brands to suit Arabic-speaking consumers, increasing the number of consumers and strengthening their loyalty. This study demonstrates the strategic importance of language adaptation in marketing foreign products in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### **1.2 Objectives**

1. To investigate the impact of using Arabic in marketing foreign products in Saudi Arabia.
2. To assess the impact of Arabic on consumer engagement and loyalty.
3. To provide recommendations to international brands for enhancing their marketing strategies.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does using the Arabic language influence consumer engagement with foreign products in Saudi Arabia?
2. What cultural and linguistic factors should be considered when designing digital marketing campaigns for foreign products in Saudi Arabia?

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature reveals that language is essential for understanding and embracing marketing information and how it affects consumers. Widyahening (2015) explains that the words and phrases used in marketing can strengthen or weaken a company. Widyahening (2015) and Hadjichristidis et al. (2019) agree that the language used in a marketing message can decide whether it appeals to or repels customers. Backing up these claims, Linqata (2023) points out that a marketing message needs to help consumers discover a product or brand and encourage them to act, which leads to higher profits and more sales. Today's marketers often use Linqata's (2023) advice, realizing that using suitable language can lead consumers to feel certain emotions. Therefore, marketing language must draw clients in and keep them loyal over time.

More evidence confirms that language is a crucial factor in achieving successful marketing. According to Mokrushina (2024), most advertisers and promoters in the Arab world use the local tongue to appeal to Arab consumers. Aligned with these findings, Kassawat (2020) underscored that global companies redesign their logos to feature Arabic writing, helping local people better interpret and understand them. Hadjichristidis et al. (2019) also pointed out that many global brands now provide product information in Arabic to meet the preferences and respect the culture of Middle Eastern consumers. Mokrushina (2024) observes that advertisements for Ramadan and the fasting season are more visible due to their unique fit with Arab culture. When local people gather, businesses must use the local language to be noticed. Conversely, Kassawat (2020) observed that a mix of international languages and Arabic is often used in campaigns to promote products on the market. According to Alomoush (2023), companies in Arab countries use Arabic and English in their advertising to reach the highest number of consumers. Al-Badawi (2025) further explains that international brands need to speak the language of local consumers to be recognized in the

market. Global brands aim to communicate with local and international customers using Arabic and English. It also helps make a brand feel more real and proves that the company values local languages. Using Arabic expressions and popular sayings in ads helps make them more emotional and memorable for Arabic viewers.

Making the brand's communication relate to consumer culture and habits helps create lasting loyalty. This change allows a brand to be easily noticed in crowded regional markets. According to Novianti et al. (2024), using Arabic in beverage ads was critical in winning Arab customers and maintaining their loyalty. In the same way, El-Dali (2019) points out that using cultural references in advertising makes it easier for people to identify and recall a brand. Vasiloaia (2009) also proposes that language informs customers about products and creates trust by matching messages to their cultural customs. Alternatively, Al-Badawi (2025) explains that some marketers, on purpose, challenge the standard way people use language to draw more attention, either by using words that are not commonly used in that way or by forming new terms. Nonetheless, it may cause some consumer groups to misunderstand the message. Ferro and Ribeiro (2016) and Stuk (2023) explain that language problems make it challenging for some companies to expand their businesses internationally. For example, Ferro and Ribeiro (2016) explain that Portuguese firms succeed in other markets by trying to speak and understand the local language. Stuk (2023) asserts that while English is used in many places for communication, using local languages, especially the mother tongue, helps foreign firms succeed more consistently across the globe. Similarly, Hashem et al. (2024) state that speaking consumers' native language encourages them to trust a brand and remain loyal in the long run. It improves how a brand is recognized and helps with conversations across cultures. Using the local dialect reminds people of their origins and helps them feel a sense of togetherness. Consequently, businesses must use the host country's language to deal with language differences and promote international growth.

The strategy also applies to online marketing, where individuals associate a brand with their background when their local language is used in advertisements. Abuljadail and Badghish (2021) analyzed companies' use of Facebook pages in Saudi Arabia and other countries. The study results indicate that using Arabic in digital ads encouraged more attention to price, performance and Saudi Arabian culture. The results from the study are consistent with what Almutairi and Alotaibi (2023) found, that using the consumer's native language in marketing campaigns boosts online engagement, especially when aiming at social media users. In addition, Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen (2017) pointed out that advertisements in a foreign language do not always do better than those in the mother tongue of consumers. Similarly, Menkveld (2015) revealed that English commercials were helpful in the Netherlands, but individuals responded more strongly to Dutch advertisements. In contrast, Al-Badawi (2025) pointed out that an advertisement's effectiveness is affected by the language chosen and its strategic use of tone, context and timing. Novianti et al. (2024) pointed out that aspects of culture and symbolism tied to a foreign language can be more important than just being able to speak it. How an ad affects people may depend on its cultural meaning, not just how well it is understood. Adjusting the language to Arabic for audiences resulted in higher click-through rates and more conversions in several marketing campaigns. Thus, marketers need to pay close attention to how language influences the campaign so that it truly appeals to consumers' preferences and emotions.

References also show that marketing products internationally often depends on understanding cultural differences. Bajaber (2020) discovered that using Arabic and Arab culture in marketing improves outcomes. Similarly, Gully (1997) suggests that foreign firms must embrace Arab culture and language to help producers and consumers connect. Hadjichristidis et al. (2019) mention that using cultural messages and a local language in marketing foreign products helps create customer loyalty. Therefore, foreign companies must use the local culture and language to develop strong customer loyalty.

However, while the study demonstrates the role of a language in marketing by foreign firms, there is limited focus on Saudi Arabia. There is also scant evidence on how the Arabic language influences marketing in the digital space. As a result, a systematic review was conducted to demonstrate the role of language in digital marketing strategies for foreign products in Saudi Arabia.

### **3. Methodology**

The main research approach in this study is a comprehensive systematic literature review. By using a systematic literature review, researchers can review existing research, reports, and case studies carefully. It allows experts to find the strengths and weaknesses in current understanding without conducting surveys or interviews (Rowley & Slack, 2004).

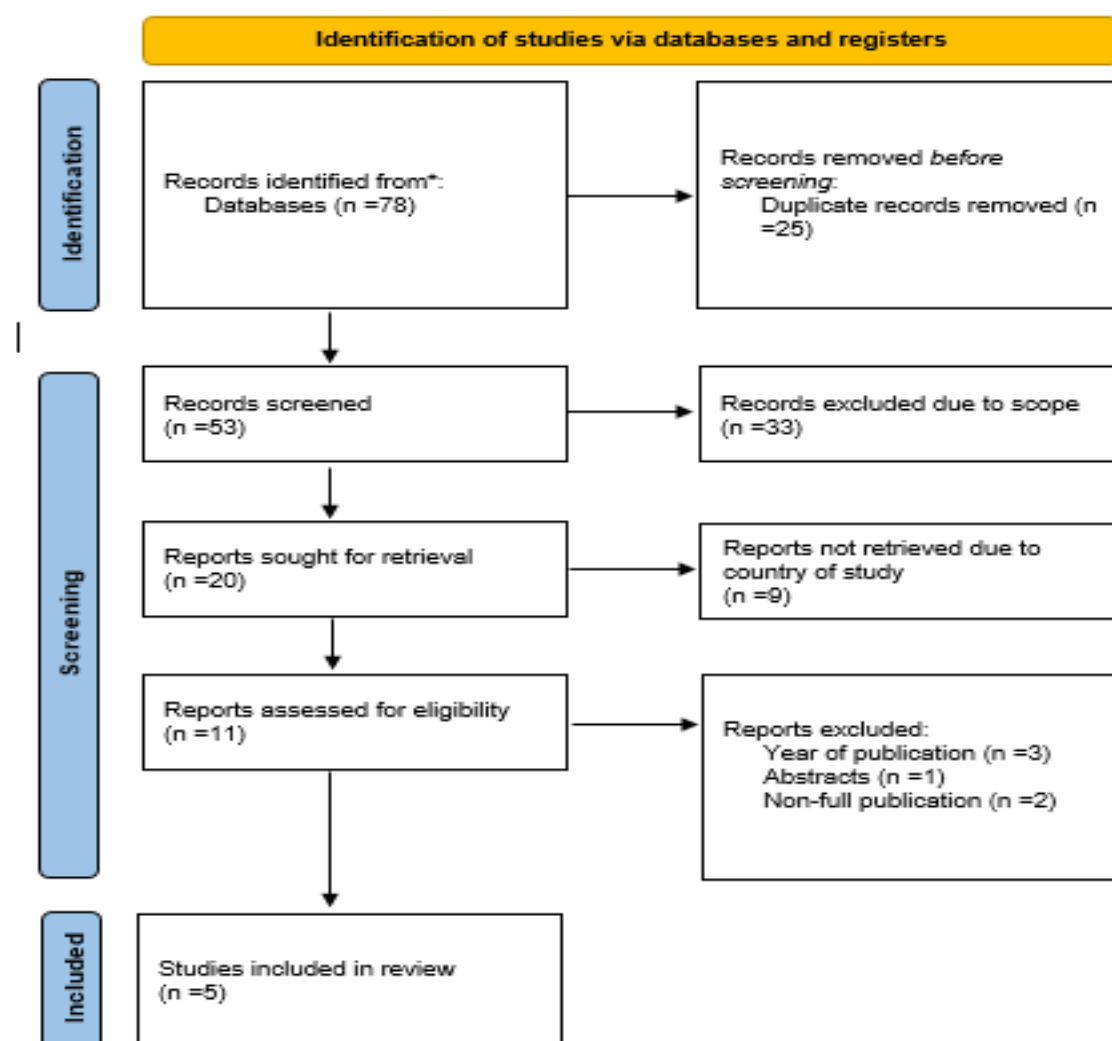
The studies included in this review were found by searching Scopus and online academic Journals (Cheong et al., 2023). The search included terms such as "language," "Arabic," "international," "digital," "marketing," and "products," along with related words such as "foreign," "goods," "services," "advertisement," "promotion," "online," and "global." The terms were combined with Boolean operators (AND OR) to guarantee that all relevant literature was included in the search (Muhammad, 2017).

The title and abstract were checked on all the collected papers, after which the complete texts were analysed according to strict criteria. Factors examined were the study's limits, the main subject of digital marketing of products, the Saudi Arabian location, English as the publication language, and the year range from 2019 to 2025. Research that did not qualify, including studies in other areas, studies in languages other than English, and research on traditional marketing, was not included (Dekkers et al., 2022). The inclusion and exclusion criteria are summarized in Table 1 below.

**Table (1)***Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria (Alotaibi, 2025)*

| Measures of Inclusion   | Measures of Exclusion   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Studies conducted in Saudi Arabia.</li> <li>-Studies concerning digital marketing.</li> <li>-Studies published between 2019 and 2025.</li> <li>-Studies published in English language</li> <li>-Primary research</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Abstracts</li> <li>-Studies focusing on forms of marketing other than digital marketing.</li> <li>-Systematic reviews.</li> </ul> |

Following the criteria in Table (1), five studies were retrieved from Scopus and other online academic journals, as shown in the PRISMA chart (Figure 1). The information retrieved from the five studies was thematically analysed and triangulated to synthesise results demonstrating the role of language in the marketing of international products in Saudi Arabia

**Figure 1***PRISMA Flowchart (Alotaibi, 2025)*

The summary of the five studies and the respective quality appraisal outcomes are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2**

*Quality Appraisal Based on Critical Skills Appraisal Program (Alotaibi,2025)*

| Criterion/Study   | Benmamoun et al. (2019) | Alotaibi (2023) | Koka et al. (2023) | Aldawish et al. (2024) | Alotaibi (2024) |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| -Was there a clear statement of the research objectives                 | ✓                       | ✓               | ✓                  | ✓                      | ✓               |
| -Is methodology sufficient?   | ✓                       | ✓               | ✓                  | ✓                      | ✓               |
| -Was the research design sufficient to address the research objectives? | ✓                       | ✓               | ✓                  | x                      | ✓               |
| -Was the recruitment strategy sufficient for the research objectives?   | ✓                       | ✓               | ✓                  | ✓                      | ✓               |
| -Was the data gathered in a way that addressed the research issue?      | ✓                       | ✓               | ✓                  | ✓                      | ✓               |
| -Has attention paid to the researcher participant relationship?         | ✓                       | ✓               | ✓                  | ✓                      | x               |
| -Have ethical issues been addressed?                                    | ✓                       | ✓               | ✓                  | ✓                      | ✓               |
| -Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?                           | ✓                       | ✓               | ✓                  | ✓                      | ✓               |
| -Is there a clear statement of findings?                                | ✓                       | ✓               | ✓                  | ✓                      | ✓               |
| -How valuable is the research?  | ✓                       | ✓               | ✓                  | ✓                      | ✓               |

**Table 3**

*Literature Matrix (Alotaibi, 2025)*

| Author(s) Name          | Aim   | Participants   | Methodology   | Main Findings  |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Benmamoun et al. (2019) | Determining the importance of localising and culturally customising digital marketing media.                                | The sample comprises 410 Arabs from Saudi Arabia.  | Data was gathered using focus group discussions and an online quantitative survey.                    | Findings show that using Arabic in marketing is linked to cultural and religious alignment. The preference for the Arabic language also drives the majority of consumers to e-commerce platforms, regardless of the origin of the products being offered. For instance, marketing content presented in Arabic was regarded as authentic and engaging for Arab consumers, leading to trust and loyalty toward foreign brands. |
| Alotaibi (2023)         | The study assessed the impact of including Arabic and cultural expressions in digital marketing media for foreign products. | The study entailed an analysis of digital advertising media incorporating the Arabic language. | The study was based on a case study design focusing on digital advertising media published in Arabic. | Using Arabic in digital adverts for foreign products was linked to arousing an emotional connection and loyalty to the brand. Bilingual adverts combining foreign languages and Arabic were influential in gaining the attention of local and foreign consumers. The strategy also instilled a higher brand engagement and a sense of belonging.   |
| Koka et al. (2023)      | The study assessed the influence of the Arabic language and cultural expressions on social media engagement.                | The study was based on a sample of 183 Saudis using social media.                              | Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews and structured survey questionnaires.              | Findings demonstrated that most social media users from Saudi Arabia prefer communicating in Arabic. The use of Arabic is linked to cultural sensitivity and higher engagement of Arabs on social media. Arabic also increases engagement with global discourses.  |
| Aldawish et al. (2024)  | The study uses digital advertising media to determine cultural factors that impact  | The study was based on a sample of 10 Saudi consumers.   | Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews.   | Arabic resonated with the Islamic foundations of faith. Relatability and higher consumer engagement in online platforms were also  |

|                 |  |                                   |  |  |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|
|                 | Saudi consumers' purchasing decisions.   |                                   |  | associated with Arabic in advertising media. The consistency of advertisements published in Arabic also yielded consumer trust and brand loyalty.  |
| Alotaibi (2024) | The study aimed to determine the impact of using Arabic in online advertising foreign products in Saudi Arabian markets. | Twelve consumers of Saudi origin. | Data was collected using semi-structured interviews. | The Arabic language incorporated in advertisements aroused a feeling of cultural resonance and sensitivity, emotional connection with the brand, an in-depth understanding and connection with the foreign brand, and promotion of the Arab culture, particularly through cultural preservation. |

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Product Promotion

Product promotion is achieved through visibility. In digital spaces, visibility occurs when consumers recognize, embrace, and acknowledge a product. As a result, promotion is successful when people relate to the brand. According to Alotaibi (2024), featuring Arabic in Saudi advertisements greatly helps to market foreign items to the local market. Similarly, Benmamoun et al. (2019) discovered that ads written in Arabic still catch consumers' eyes, whether the product comes from the Middle East or not. Alotaibi (2024) and Benjamin et al. (2019) explain that using Arabic guarantees that consumers receive clear instructions about the product. Alternatively, Alotaibi (2023) suggests that using Arabic alongside other languages is effective in the context of cosmopolitan and globalized websites. However, Alotaibi (2023) and Alotaibi (2024) argue that presenting messages only in Arabic to those who speak Arabic leads to a stronger association with consumers. Aldawish et al. (2024) argue that local businesses that use only Arabic in their ads tend to receive more referrals. As a result, the company becomes more familiar to its target audience and earns their trust and loyalty. Making Arabic a priority in digital advertising allows firms to show respect for culture and helps their brand become more authentic and relatable in Saudi Arabia. These findings indicate that Saudi Arabia promotes foreign products best when Arabic is fully included in marketing plans.

### 4.2 Customer Engagement and Loyalty

Applying Arabic to advertising on the web helps brands attract Arab consumers. According to Alotaibi (2024), including Arabic language in advertisements helps a brand interact with Arab culture and engage people from that culture. Moreover, Alotaibi (2023) and Alotaibi (2024) state that consumers are more likely to buy the product when advertising is in Arabic.

According to Koka et al. (2023), advertising in Arabic on digital platforms boosts consumer trust and helps keep customers loyal. According to Aldawish et al. (2024) and Alotaibi (2023), using Arabic in advertising by international firms helps consumers feel more included, encouraging them to trust and buy more. For this reason, businesses operating globally in Saudi Arabia should use Arabic to improve their visibility within the country. Importantly, the research finds that cultural language within ads impacts consumers strongly, making them feel like they belong and thus become more loyal to the brand. In particular, these results demonstrate why brands should focus on adapting language when creating digital campaigns for Arab consumers.

### 4.3 Association with the Arab Culture

All five studies mention the Arabic language as an important sign of connecting with the Arab community and respecting Arab traditions. All studies agree that using Arabic in marketing increases feelings of Arab identity. Aldawish et al. (2024) argue that when Arabic is used, it supports and highlights aspects of Arab culture, especially in fashion. Conversely, Alotaibi (2023) and Alotaibi (2024) claim that being culturally aware of Arabic advertising affects people's buying decisions. This result agrees with Koka et al. (2023), who show that using Arabic helps present cultural messages and affects consumers' decisions to purchase. Therefore, although the digital market is considered worldwide, being aware of cultural differences can lead to the best results and success in countries that share culture and language. Language plays a key role in demonstrating how content choices can align with the cultural tastes of online audiences.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 The Influence of the Arabic Language on Consumer Engagement with Foreign Products in Saudi Arabia

The study found that using Arabic in marketing leads to higher customer involvement and loyalty in Saudi Arabia. Alotaibi (2023), Alotaibi (2024), and Koka et al. (2023) studies found that Arabic users are more likely to relate to foreign goods. Even though the brand is not from the region, the approach brings customers closer to the Arab community. The results are

consistent with what Abuljadail and Badghish (2021) and Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen (2017) found Arabic language helps bring in customers and gives them a more profound knowledge of the product in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Aseeri (2024) points

out that knowing Arabic helps customers sense that their preferences and beliefs are acknowledged. On the contrary, Al-Badawi (2025) finds that marketing content drives people's engagement, not the language. Interesting and engaging the audience will increase the message's results, as Bajaber (2020) stated. That is why marketers should consider Arabic culture, what customers like, and their preferences before making strategies for online interactions. The study finds that popular Arabic expressions and local phrases helped more people interact with these campaigns and click their links. With this technique, people better understand the offers and feel closer to the brands. In addition, using Arabic marks to show respect for Saudi culture helps the brand seem less foreign to its audience, which increases its feeling of authenticity.

### **5.2 The Cultural and Linguistic Factors to Consider When Designing Digital Marketing Campaigns for Foreign Products in Saudi Arabia**

The analysis revealed that using Arabic in marketing supports cultural sensitivity, an approach that is valued in understanding other cultures and traditions. Results from Aldawish et al. (2024) and Koka et al. (2023) suggest that using Arabic in digital marketing helps the Arab culture relate to the product and link it to their cultural items. Bajaber (2020) and Novianti et al. (2024) point out that Arabic traditions and norms are key when marketing beauty products, beverages and cosmetics. Although the findings do not suggest direct censorship of marketing without cultural fit, Aseeri (2024) reports that ads for cigarettes and alcohol are strictly forbidden and using sexually suggestive content is also not allowed. Therefore, Saudi Arabia's digital marketing of foreign products requires companies to understand Arab culture and the limits around promoting and showing specific types of goods. This allows the campaign to fit into local customs and work better.

### **5.3 Research Limitations**

A key study limitation concerns the limited evidence on this research topic. Although many studies examine foreign product marketing in Saudi Arabia, very few look into the effects of language. Moreover, few investigations have explained how Arabic is used to advertise foreign products on digital platforms. The limited number of studies limits how comprehensive the review is and may influence whether the results can be used in various digital situations within the Kingdom. Also, the limited subject matter in previous studies makes it hard to compare the outcomes in different industries or with different groups, which shows the need for more research.

## **6. Recommendations**

Based on research on marketing abroad in Saudi Arabia, advertisements from foreign firms should reflect local culture and communicate with consumers using Arabic. Using Arabic in advertisements is a vital step in creating a deeper, more interactive relationship between the brand and the target audience. To be successful in Saudi Arabia, advertising campaigns should feature aspects of local culture based on scientific studies that indicate linking ads to culture helps build loyalty and makes campaigns more likely to succeed.

Additionally, trust can be earned by ensuring their products respect local cultural and social values. They can accomplish this by adding Arabic terms that fit Saudi consumers' needs and wants and adding aspects of Saudi culture that appeal to emotions. This communication method helps lead to sales and improves the brand's status among other competitors. By doing this, campaigns are seen as genuine by the audience, which supports lasting relationships and helps the brand expand over time. Every brand must be careful to use the exact Arabic words on all their digital platforms to keep their credibility and avoid confusing consumers.

## **7. Conclusion**

The study aimed to examine the impact of the Arabic language on marketing goods from other countries in Saudi Arabia. The objectives involved learning about the effects of Arabic on the marketing of foreign goods in Saudi Arabia, measuring how well consumers interact with and remember brands in Arabic and proposing strategies for global firms to enter the Saudi market successfully. About the first objective, it was proven that advertising goods in the local language helps to attract consumers and ensure the product can be noticed. Based on the second objective, the study found that Arabic-language marketing in digital areas improved consumer interaction, made individuals feel included and led to stronger customer loyalty and trust. Marketing in Saudi Arabia requires using Arabic so customers feel engaged and want to support the business.

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