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Strategic branding models in Arab media: Exploring the impact of digital transformation

Abstract

This study explores the transformative landscape of Arab media branding strategies, focusing on the interplay between technology, diverse ownership models, and strategic innovation. Using Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism framework, this research examines the branding strategies of 11 prominent Arab media organizations. Findings show that successful Arab media brands combine cultural relevance, visual identity, and advanced digital technologies to build audience trust and loyalty. By leveraging wealth and innovation, Gulf nations promote the creation of technologically advanced media hubs, while other regions prioritize strong connections with local cultural identities. The study identifies four distinct Arab media branding models: the *Portals Model*, which emphasizes centralized platforms with authoritative voices; the *Streamer Model*, focusing on high-quality visuals and interactive experiences; the *Catalog Model*, offering structured content libraries and personalized curation; and the *Social Media Model*, leveraging real-time communication and emotional engagement to build loyal communities. This study highlights the crucial role of technology in shaping contemporary Arab media branding. It stresses the importance of balancing innovation with cultural and regulatory constraints to maintain long-term competitiveness and relevance in a rapidly changing media environment.

Keywords

Arab media, Media branding, Media technology, Media brand personality, Ownership models.

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1. Introduction

Digitalization has brought complex challenges for media organizations in brand building and maintenance (Tropp & Weinacht, 2022). With the rise of digital platforms, social media, and data-driven marketing, branding has shifted significantly from conventional approaches. Brands can now reach broader audiences, engage in real-time, and create personalized strategies, resulting in more interactive and dynamic brand-consumer relationships (Saulite & Ščeuļovs, 2023).

Historically, Arab media relied on state funding and functioned primarily as propaganda outlets (Richter and Kozman, 2021). However, the emergence of satellite television in the 1990s initiated a transition that resulted in private media, greater competition, increased advertising revenue, and intricate variations in patronal and market relationships. This transition improved content quality and fostered specialization.

Wealthy Gulf nations, such as Qatar and the UAE (United Arab Emirates), host influential pan-Arab media, while North Africa and the Levant have developed strong national outlets. This expansion in satellite channels reflects key social and political shifts, transforming content production, distribution, and consumption across the region (Guaaybess, 2019).

Despite the growth of digital platforms, broadcast television remains popular in the Arab world, with about 30% of consumers reporting an increase in live TV viewership (PwC Middle East, 2020). Audiences in the Arabian Gulf prefer popular broadcast media, likely due to higher levels of trust in these channels (Dennis et al., 2018). Trust is one of the branding attributes in media (Strömbäck et al., 2020). Audiences opt for channels that deliver credible news or trust, quality, and local content, among various factors. As the media landscape evolves, reflecting technological changes, branding remains essential for media organizations to stand out, engage audiences, and build loyalty (Chan-Olmsted, 2011).

According to a 2020 report, the Arab satellite broadcasting landscape comprises about 1,093 television channels from both public and private media entities (ASBU, 2020). Given the increasing diversity and intense competition among these channels, examining the branding strategies of leading media brands is both relevant and timely. Despite the changes in the Arab media market, research on the branding strategies used by Arab media organizations remains sparse. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how Arab media shape their brand identities. It offers a critical evaluation of how digital transformations influence branding in the Arab media environment. The study focuses on the branding strategies of prominent TV channels in the MENA region, examining their digital identities and presence using the Kapferer identity prism. This analysis explores the branding techniques of these channels and how technological advancements shape their strategies, identifying four applicable models of Arab media branding.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Media brands' branding strategies

Aaker (1996) defines a *brand* as “a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers.” This definition, widely embraced in the marketing discipline, underscores the potent influence that brands and branding strategies wield when adeptly implemented. In essence, a brand transcends mere nomenclature or visual identity; it embodies a distinct identity, values, and promises that connect consumers emotionally. The concepts of brands and branding are intricate, embodying nuanced distinctions in their definitions. For instance, Kamboj et al. (2018)

differentiate between the two by positing that brands embody the perceptions retained by consumers. In contrast, organizations conceive branding as a practice and process.

By the mid-2000s, the rise of digital technologies had fundamentally changed how media organizations strategize and operate, pushing them to implement branding and brand management practices (McDowell, 2011). Subsequently, social media revolutionized media branding even further. Recent studies highlight how brands, leveraging platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, use direct engagement and user-generated content to cultivate authentic relationships with audiences, achieving differentiation and loyalty in a dynamic media landscape (Cheung et al., 2019; Colicev et al., 2022). Today, with an ever-increasing range of media options, media brands are challenged with intense competition, and consumers face difficulty making viewing decisions (Heim et al., 2023).

A media brand is defined as “a differentiated product/service that provides the means for the creation and distribution of self- and externally produced audio and visual content as well as for the communication through various channels to connect, inform or entertain the receiver.” (Heim et al., 2023, 73) According to Chan-Olmsted and Kim (2022), “media brands are any media entities with recognizable characteristics (e.g., logo and brand name) that evoke certain associations, and therefore, differentiate an entity from another.” (Chan-Olmsted & Kim, 2022, 110) Malthouse and Calder (2018) further emphasize notable distinctions between traditional brands and media brands. Media brands, unlike other brands, are distinct in their operation. They function as ‘social shells,’ characterized by a unique model that combines owned media content, user-generated content, and advertising, all distributed seamlessly through the same platforms (Heim et al., 2023).

Arab media brands navigate complex ownership structures shaped by regulatory constraints and socio-cultural dynamics, influencing their digital branding strategies. While these brands increasingly adopt digital-first approaches, they face unique challenges that can limit the flexibility of their branding efforts (Azoury & Daou, 2020). Navigating cultural context requires a deep understanding of local values, which can complicate the implementation of innovative branding strategies. Consequently, Arab media organizations need to strategically balance innovation in digital branding with strict regulatory compliance and cultural adaptability (Zaid, 2018). This demands a nuanced approach, where direct engagement and user-generated content must be carefully aligned with both legal frameworks and societal expectations to establish authentic audience relationships and promote brand differentiation and loyalty.

2.2. Kapferer Branding Model: The Brand Identity Prism

The Brand Identity Prism, developed by Jean-Noël Kapferer in 1986, is a widely recognized framework in marketing for analyzing and constructing a strong brand identity. According to Kapferer, strong brands can weave all aspects of the prism into a compelling whole to create a concise, clear, and appealing brand identity (Kapferer, 1994).

A brand's identity, as Aaker (1991) observes, establishes its distinctiveness over time, differentiating it from competitors and allowing consumers to link specific attributes and values to it. When these characteristics stand out from other brands in consumers' minds, adopting the brand becomes straightforward because its promises, benefits, and features are clearly different from those of competitors (Kapferer, 2004). These associations, when brought to the minds of consumers, create images of the brand, elicit positive attitudes and feelings toward the brand, and provide a compelling reason to purchase or adopt the brand (Aaker, 1991). These identity features and specific attributes stem from management thinking and strategic planning. They are determined by the management team, in light of contextual

elements, competition, and consumers' input and perceptions (Silveria et al., 2013). The combination of these identity elements and attributes contributes to the creation of the identity prism.

The Brand Identity Prism proposes that a brand's success is driven by a brand aligning six-sided prism with different facets: physique, personality, culture, relationship, self-image, and reflection (Kapferer, 1994).

- Physique refers to the brand's physical attributes, including its visual identity, logo, design, packaging, and other visual elements.
- Personality embodies the human traits and characteristics associated with a brand. Aaker (1997) developed a five-trait brand personality model. Jennifer Aaker (1997) indicates that previous studies suggest a stronger preference for a brand arises when there is a closer alignment between human traits and the brand's characteristics. The five traits are: Sincerity (domestic, honest, genuine, cheerful), Excitement (daring, spirited, imaginative, up-to-date), Competence (reliable, responsible, dependable, efficient), Sophistication (glamorous, pretentious, charming, romantic), and Ruggedness (tough, strong, outdoorsy, rugged).
- Culture relates to the brand's values, beliefs, and underlying principles. Culture is deeply rooted in local traditions. According to Ross (2020), consumers prefer buying products that relate to their regions.
- Relationship focuses on how the brand interacts with its customers. It is evident in the collaboration between the brand and its customers, the feedback provided to the brand, and the engagement and support received by the customers, among others.
- Reflection concerns the way a brand represents its consumers. By understanding its audience, a brand can identify segment-specific patterns, enabling it to reflect its customers along with the values, behaviors, and attitudes they embody.
- Self-image refers to how consumers perceive themselves or their identity when they use or associate with the brand (Kapferer, 1994).

Research has substantiated the applicability and efficacy of Brand Identity Prism. Scholars such as Roy and Banerjee (2014) and Anderson (2010) have engaged in empirical investigations to test and affirm the validity of the model's six components: Physique, Personality, Culture, Relationship, Reflection, and Self-image. These studies have predominantly supported the Brand Identity Prism's utility as an all-encompassing instrument for analyzing brand identity.

This study uses the Brand Identity Prism to investigate how Arab media organizations differentiate their brands and position themselves in a digital-first world. It explores Arab media branding strategies through the Brand Identity Prism framework to gain insights into their positioning. In this research, the brand identity prism will be utilized to critically analyze the relationship between brands and their consumers, as well as the potential influence on brand adoption and the emotional connections that arise in consumers. More specifically, through their branding strategies, this study addresses the following questions:

Q#1 What branding strategies do media organizations embrace to make their media brands salient amongst viewers and what are the implications for their market positioning?

Q#2 How do Arab media organizations leverage digital transformation and emerging technologies to innovate and enhance their competitiveness in the media market?

3. Methodological approach

This study examines the branding strategies of popular media brands within the Arab television broadcasting landscape. The media brands are selected based on three criteria:

first, they must have their domain names. Second, the channels should attract substantial viewership in their local or pan-Arab markets. Third, the selected channels must be accessible to audiences via satellite: 2M.ma, Abu Dhabi TV, Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, ART, DMC, Dubai 1, LBCI, MBC 1, MBC (Shahid, streaming service but available on satellite TV through DISH Network and Sling TV), and Saudi TV1 (Al-Oula) (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample of Arab media channels studied

Channel Name Reach (%)	Description
2M 36%	2M, Morocco's leading broadcaster, launched in 1989 as pay-TV before becoming a public-private channel. Broadcasting in Arabic, French, and Berber, it reaches over 16 million viewers daily, offering diverse, inclusive content with wide national and international coverage.
Abu Dhabi TV 11.1%	Established on August 4, 1969, government-owned Abu Dhabi TV is a flagship channel of the Abu Dhabi Media Network. Renowned for diverse programming and global reach, it offers news, dramas, and digital services, enriching audiences with innovation and quality content.
Al Arabiya 21.5%	Launched in 2003, Al Arabiya is a private Arab news channel known for balanced reporting. It belongs to Saudi-owned MBC Group (Media Broadcasting Channel) Operating in 40+ cities, it reaches millions across MENA, leveraging 180 million social media followers and a strong digital platform for modern engagement.
Al Jazeera 5.9%	Established in 1996 in Doha, Qatar, Al Jazeera is an independent news channel funded in part by the Qatari government. It evolved from an Arabic news channel into a global network with over 70 bureaus, reaching 150+ countries. Renowned for impartial reporting and amplifying marginalized voices, it garners international acclaim and trust.
ART N/A	Established in 1993 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the Arab Radio and Television Network (ART) pioneered Arabic satellite broadcasting. Privately owned by Saudi media mogul Saleh Abuabdallak Kamel, the channel offers diverse family-oriented content, it connects Arab culture globally through extensive programming spanning drama, sports, music, and documentaries.
DMC 1.71%	Launched in 2017, DMC Network quickly rose in Egypt and the Arab world with flagship channels DMC and DMC Drama, part of state-owned media conglomerate Egyptian Media Group. Offering diverse programming across genres, it leverages social media to engage audiences, maintaining its relevance and accessibility.
Dubai One 10.6	Dubai One, a flagship English-language channel part of government-owned Dubai Media Incorporated, was launched in 2004. Catering to an international audience, it offers a mix of movies, series, news, and lifestyle programs, highlighting Dubai's global identity and cultural diversity.
LBCI 41.7	Founded in 1985, the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI) is a private Arab network headquartered in Lebanon. Known for innovative, high-quality programming, it reaches audiences worldwide and maintains strong digital engagement across demographics.
MBC (Shahid) 12.8%	Shahid was launched in 2008 as the first Arabic video-on-demand platform. It was later revamped in 2020 as Shahid VIP, offering premium content, original productions, and exclusive series, further solidifying its position as the leading Arabic streaming service. The channel belongs to the private conglomerate MBC group.
MBC1 51.9%	Media Broadcasting Channel (MBC), a flagship Arabic-language channel of the Saudi privately-owned MBC Group. It delivers diverse content to a broad audience. Initially based in the UAE, it now operates from Saudi Arabia, showcasing its strong regional presence.
Saudi TV1 12.8%	Saudi TV1, known as Aloula, is Saudi Arabia's first national television channel, launched on July 7, 1965. Operated by the Saudi Broadcasting Authority (SBA), it delivers diverse, high-quality programming that reflects Saudi culture, values, and traditions while engaging modern audiences.

Note. Reach percentages are based on each channel's audience share within its domestic media market. Source: Panel Ipsos Zplan (2025).

Source: Allagui and Ibahrine.

Due to the scarce public information regarding ratings, audience reach, advertising rates, inflated rate cards, and potential measurement inaccuracies (Allagui, 2019), the authors consulted media buyers and strategists from advertising agencies for further insight. They confirmed the channels' popularity in their respective local or pan-Arab markets. Furthermore, each selected channel must feature websites with unique domain names to enable branding analysis. Channels lacking domain names, even those with a YouTube channel or Facebook presence, were excluded from the sample.

This research employs qualitative methods guided by Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism, which serves as a structured framework to analyze how these media organizations convey brand identity and engage audiences. The six facets of the Brand Identity Prism - Physique, Personality, Culture, Relationship, Reflection, and Self-Image were operationalized into specific codes to analyze the branding of the selected channels. A deductive coding approach was used, mapping the facets of the Brand Identity Prism to relevant codes in the Arab broadcast media context (see codes adopted in table 2). For example, Physique was coded based on visual branding elements (e.g., logos and visual consistency), while Personality captured narrative tone and style, ensuring a consistent analytical framework across all brands.

Data collection was conducted primarily through the official websites of these media organizations, as digital presence plays an increasingly crucial role in branding strategies (Gielens & Steenkamp, 2019). The content was systematically organized within a structured folder system to maintain the integrity of each segment and facilitate thorough analysis. To ensure rigor and reduce potential biases, two researchers conducted the coding of all channels, then compared their coding results. Both underwent an initial familiarization phase followed by an in-depth, systematic coding process. The coding system used ("Yes" for presence, "No" for absence) enhances systematic data reduction, pattern identification, and flexibility. In thematic analysis, this approach facilitated the quantification of specific features, aiding in pattern recognition while ensuring a structured, consistent coding process that minimized subjective bias. The iterative refinement of categories and reflective discussions within the research team further enhanced the analytical depth, addressing the unique cultural and regional nuances of Arab media brands.

By systematically analyzing these brands, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of the branding strategies employed by major media organizations within the Arab region. This analysis highlights the strategies and transformations of media brands.

4. Finding:

4.1. Brand Physique

All studied media brands prominently display their logos, enhancing strong visual brand recognition across various channels. Except for Al Jazeera, which features a slogan, "The Opinion and the Other Opinion," the remaining channels do not exhibit clear slogans. MBC 1, Saudi TV1, Al Jazeera, LBCI, ART, Abu Dhabi TV, Al Arabiya, and MBC (Shahid) consistently communicate clear brand messages, reinforcing their identities. In contrast, Dubai One, 2M.ma, and DMC exhibit inconsistencies in their visual presentations, which can weaken brand clarity, as will be discussed below. For instance, 2M.ma's slogan, "2M, nous rassemble"¹ (tr. 2M reunites us), while impactful, is notably absent from its website and social media platforms.

Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism highlights the importance of a strong visual identity, or "Physique," as a foundation for building a lasting brand. Saudi TV1 and Al Jazeera exemplify this model by maintaining consistent use of their logos and slogans across platforms, enhancing their identity as reliable media sources. 2M.ma, DMC, Al Arabiya, and MBC (Shahid), demonstrate visual inconsistencies, which could diminish brand cohesion and audience trust. For example, the lack of clear slogans for MBC 1, Dubai One, and DMC may

¹ 2M nous rassemble available on 2M Wikipedia page (<https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/2M>).

weaken their brand identity and their attempts to position themselves across platforms. (Table 2)

Table 2. Arab media brands: Identity traits

Channels	Logo prominence	Clear brand message	Clear Slogan	Platforms Visual Consistency	Competence	Excitement	Sophistication	Sincerity	Ruggedness	Patriotism	Clear brand values	Mission/vision included in platform	Language as identity	Culture of innovation	Segmentation	Cultural Relevance	Technological Engagement	Brand love	Brand hate	Communal brand relationships	Brand friendships	Brand addiction
2M.ma	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	nd
Abu Dhabi TV	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No*	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	nd
AlArabiya	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	nd
Al Jazeera	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	nd
ART	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	nd
DMC	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	nd
Dubai 1	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No*	No*	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	nd
LBCI	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	nd
MBC (Shahid)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	nd
MBC1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	nd
Saudi TV1 (AlOula)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	nd

Source: Allagui and Ibahrine.

4.2. Brand Personality

We used the five dimensions of Brand personality developed by Jennifer Aaker (1997), which are “the Big Five”: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness.

All media brands score highly on sincerity, characterized by “caring, authentic, honest” and competence, which encompasses “expertise, trust, and high-quality product.” However, there is notable variation in traits like sophistication associated with “luxury and style” and excitement, which involves “creating an experience that is fun and engaging.” For example, brands such as Abu Dhabi TV, ART, and MBC Shahid strike a balance between sophistication and excitement, reflecting a modern and engaging tone. In contrast, brands like 2M.ma and LBCI emphasize ruggedness, potentially aligning with themes of toughness, resilience and cultural strength. Meanwhile, Al Jazeera and Saudi TV1 strongly focus on sincerity, with less emphasis on excitement or ruggedness.

Six channels display excitement, while five do not. However, ruggedness characterized by toughness appears in four channels, 2M.ma, Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and LBCI. Violent images of war, blood, dust, and destruction on the websites’ homepages speak to these channels’ ruggedness trait. (Table 2)

4.3. Culture

Cultural factors significantly shape media brands' identities and their engagement with audiences. We analyzed themes and symbols representative of a nation’s spirit, such as patriotism and language. We also examined how clearly the media brands' values, mission, and

vision are articulated on their platforms. Finally, we evaluated the degree to which these brands have embraced a culture of innovation, particularly through the incorporation of new technologies or advancements in technology features.

Patriotism appears prominently in eight channels: Dubai 1, 2M.ma, Saudi TV1, Al Jazeera, LBCI, ART, Abu Dhabi TV, and MBC (Shahid), each reinforcing national pride and cultural connections. For example, Saudi TV1 showcases Saudi heritage and accomplishments, promoting a spirit of national pride. In contrast, channels like MBC 1, DMC, and Al Arabiya place less focus on patriotic themes.

Eight media brands have a clear mission and vision displayed on their websites. However, Dubai One and 2M.ma fail to articulate their mission and vision to audiences, even though this information can be found on the websites of their parent organizations or on Wikipedia. A language grounded in national identity enhances cultural ties with viewers—a tactic used by MBC 1, Saudi TV1, Al Jazeera, DMC, LBCI, ART, Abu Dhabi TV, and MBC (Shahid), all of which present their content in Arabic. In contrast, Dubai One, aimed at an expatriate audience, delivers its programs in English, highlighting a distinct difference from the Arabic-centric networks. On the other hand, 2M.ma showcases language as an expression of identity by incorporating Arabic, French, and Amazigh, thereby honoring Morocco's rich cultural heritage and establishing itself as a platform that reflects the nation's linguistic diversity pride.

Cultural innovation stands out as a vital differentiator. Networks like MBC 1, Saudi TV1, Al Jazeera, DMC, LBCI, ART, Abu Dhabi TV, and MBC (Shahid) foster a culture of innovation, enabling them to thrive in a changing media environment. For example, Shahid and DMC adopt contemporary content delivery methods and user engagement techniques. Shahid focuses on a streaming-first model that emphasizes on-demand access and a user-friendly interface, demonstrating its dedication to convenience and personalization. Likewise, DMC incorporates interactive elements, including video chats and real-time user interaction, in addition to its on-demand offerings. In contrast, 2M.ma and Al Arabiya do not prioritize innovative features as prominently. (Table 2)

4.4. Relationship

The relationship between media organizations and their audiences exhibits considerable variability. While this study focuses on the strategies brands use to engage with their audiences, it does not delve into the evaluation of audience perceptions and emotions towards the brand, which is typically assessed through surveys. Nonetheless, we apply Alvarez's framework to explore five types of brand-consumer relationships: brand love, brand hate, communal brand relationships, brand friendship, and brand addiction. Social media platforms serve as a lens through which we analyze users' sentiments regarding media brands, as further explained below.

Alvarez et al. (2023, 5) describe brand love as a "multidimensional construct encompassing self-brand integration, passion, positive attitudes, long duration, and additional elements." Channels such as 2M.ma, Abu Dhabi TV, Al Jazeera, ART, DMC, Dubai One, LBCI, MBC (Shahid), MBC 1, and Saudi TV1 have successfully nurtured strong brand love among their audiences. For instance, MBC 1 showcases brand love through a deep emotional connection with viewers via its family-focused programming. DMC benefits from a favorable audience perception; a review of comments on social media reveals warm interactions, with many followers expressing affection through hearts, flowers, and positive remarks. In contrast, Al Arabiya has struggled to establish a comparable positive image. An analysis of their Instagram posts indicates a lack of positive engagement, with comments often missing or indifferent.

Brand hate encompasses more than just negative feelings toward a brand; it is a persistent sentiment characterized by aversion and resentment, as highlighted by Akrouf and Mrad (2023). While examining websites and social media, it is difficult to detect any significant hate directed at these brands. We found no notable negative comments on the social media accounts of any broadcasters. For instance, although the Al Arabiya Instagram account contains some comments with a negative tone, we did not encounter any strong anti-brand statements or expressions of resentment. Though it is possible that channels are moderating comments and only permitting filtered ones, our observations suggest an absence of brand hate towards the brands studied.

Most channels, such as 2M.ma, Abu Dhabi TV, DMC, Dubai One, LBCI, MBC (Shahid), and MBC 1, consistently cultivate strong connections with their audiences. In contrast, Saudi TV1 exhibits limited community engagement, making it an outlier among those analyzed.

Most channels, such as 2M.ma, Abu Dhabi TV, Al Jazeera, ART, DMC, Dubai One, LBCI, MBC (Shahid), and MBC 1, have effectively built strong connections with their audiences, showcasing trust, engagement, and emotional ties. For example, Al Jazeera promotes trust through its slogan; by giving a voice to all, it guarantees reliability and engagement with its viewers. In comparison, Al Arabiya and Saudi TV1 show the least success in developing brand relationships friendships.

In our assessment of addiction, we observed that websites and social media platforms do not address viewing addictions. While some sites feature drama series for binge-watching, which could indicate addiction, no metrics exist to verify this in the current context. Self-declaration from audiences could also serve as a measure of addiction, but such data is unavailable for this study. Therefore, we classified addiction as “n.d” (not determined) due to the absence of a valid proxy.

MBC (Shahid) showcases a distinctive blend of brand loyalty and strong audience engagement. With a robust digital footprint and exceptional interaction levels, the platform cultivates loyalty through its exclusive, high-quality content while also promoting regular engagement. Its binge-worthy offerings, which include exclusive shows and intuitive digital platforms, motivate audiences to consistently connect with and rely on the brand for entertainment. (Table 2)

4.5. Reflections

In the Kapferer Brand Identity Prism, Reflection signifies how brands mirror their target audience. Brands pinpoint their target market and perform thorough research to grasp consumer needs, which enables them to develop strategies that enhance communication and strengthen their connections with audiences. This methodical planning helps brands outline profiles of their target demographics and psychographics. It reflects brands' perceptions of consumers, taking into account their personal traits and behaviors. This element is typically visible in the visuals or promotional materials they use to present their message to audiences.

We evaluated how audiences are portrayed through the images and content on their websites and social media. For example, segmentation strategies highlight the audience profiles that brands target. Networks like MBC 1, Al Jazeera, and MBC (Shahid) focus on a connected, family-oriented Arabic audience, while Dubai 1 attracts a connected crowd but emphasizes a foreign viewership. Saudi TV1 and DMC seek to engage a broader audience. Specifically, DMC and MBC 1 provide family-friendly programming, whereas Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya prioritize news and global issues.

4.6. Associations or self-image

In the Kapferer Brand Identity Prism, Self-Image illustrates how consumers perceive and express themselves while interacting with brands. Audience studies measure these perceptions by engaging directly with consumers. Surveys are used to explore how individuals view themselves in connection to brand usage. In the absence of surveys, assessing promotional materials can alternatively uncover the aspirations that brands embody, reflecting how

consumers identify with them. For example, Al Jazeera conveys that subscribers seek diverse and exclusive content; moreover, they are dedicated viewers, as evidenced by the prominent placement of the well-known program ‘The Other Direction’ in the advertisement (see image 1). The promotional banners further emphasize convenience with the tagline “Watch when you want,” highlighting the features of the Al Jazeera 360 application. Lastly, it can be inferred that those who identify with Al Jazeera tend to be male and see themselves as serious technology users with varied interests and inquisitive minds.

Image 1a. Al Jazeera promotional banners

Image 1b. Al Jazeera 360 promo



(Translation 1a: Subscribe now. Exclusive and varied content, informative and entertaining.)

(Translation 1b: AlJazeera 360. Available now. Watch what you want when you want.)

Brands like MBC 1 offer both emotional and functional advantages, cultivating loyalty and trust among their audience (see Table 3 for the list of media brand associations).

Table 3. Arab Media Brands Associations according to Kapferer’s Brand Identity Prism

Channels	Brand Associations
2M	2M's target audience values cultural heritage, social awareness, and civic engagement, primarily Moroccan nationals focused on news, sports, drama, and national pride.
Abu Dhabi TV	Abu Dhabi TV viewers are patriotic, proud of their culture, valuing Khaliji entertainment, festivals, sports, and family-focused programming while embracing modern global trends
AlArabiya	Al Arabiya viewers see themselves primarily as Saudis, but also as Arabs—conservative, informed, politically aware, and interested in hard news, global affairs, and using tech-savvy platforms like WhatsApp and Snapchat.
Aljazeera	Al Jazeera viewers see themselves as informed, socially conscious Arabs, focused on regional news, conflicts, African issues, and engaging through tech-savvy platforms, with no or little interest in entertainment
ART	ART viewers are young, fun entertainment enthusiasts, valuing humor, drama, and the legacy of Egyptian cinema, prominently showcased across its platforms
DMC	DMC viewers are young, stylish, and culturally attuned Arabs, valuing sophistication, celebrity news, and polished, lifestyle-oriented content
Dubai 1	Dubai One viewers are cosmopolitan, young, and outgoing, valuing a blend of international and local culture, staying in tune with global trends while embracing regional traditions
LBCI	LBCI viewers are serious, politically engaged, and value timely, in-depth regional news coverage, appealing to a tech-savvy audience with a focus on current affairs
Shahid	Shahid viewers are young, tech-savvy entertainment enthusiasts, primarily from the GCC, enjoying binge-watching and reflecting an upper-class lifestyle through exclusive, customizable options
MBC	MBC viewers are modern, family-oriented, and culturally conscious, prioritizing Saudi entertainment while valuing accessible, streamed content that fits their lifestyle
Saudi TV1 (AL Oula)	Saudi TV1 (Al Oula) viewers are middle-aged, conservative Saudis who value tradition, cultural pride, and elegance, primarily engaging with local drama and entertainment through traditional TV rather than social media

Source: Allagui and Ibahrine.

5. Discussion

This research examines the branding strategies used by media channels and how effectively brands adopt new technologies to enhance their competitiveness. We analyzed 11 Arab media channels and found comparable and different trends in their branding approaches.

The existing literature suggests that the concept of media branding is still evolving and is not yet fully understood (Weinacht, 2015). The integration of digital technologies and social media has profoundly reshaped branding and content strategies, particularly in the Gulf region, where traditional television continues to attract substantial audiences alongside the rising dominance of digital platforms. This shift toward digital media, especially among younger demographics, has compelled media organizations to develop innovative content formats and explore new distribution channels to engage and retain viewers effectively.

5.1. Branding strategies for Arab Media channels

Brands are key marketing strategies for differentiation. Broadcast channels endeavor to create points of differentiation (PODs) and cultivate a distinctive image. Previous research has suggested that each media organization develops its visual identity, establishing implicit boundaries and determining which content is included or excluded from its audience (Kenix, 2013).

Our findings indicate that Arab media brands prioritize distinctive branding features; however, they fail to deliver a comprehensive visual identity. While all brands have prominent logos, only six maintain visual consistency. For example, logos may appear in different colors across various platforms or pages. Additionally, background colors can vary among website pages. We also observed inconsistencies between the logo presentations on websites and social media. Most brands lack clear slogans, with only two exceptions. Nonetheless, most display their values and brand missions on their websites. Thus, overall, the studied brands provide a visual identity, albeit not comprehensively. Scholars such as Chan-Olmsted and Kim (2001) and Chan-Olmsted and Shay (2015) pointed out that visual branding significantly fosters audience trust and loyalty. Förster (2011) further emphasizes the importance of visual identity in TV brand management, highlighting how a clear and consistent visual presence is vital for media organizations to establish their brand authority.

All brands examined demonstrate strong competence, indicating their ability to produce content effectively. Sincerity traits, characterized by being down-to-earth and wholesome, were clearly evident in all brands. The credibility of news outlets is bolstered by competence and sophistication, which was seen in every brand except for 2M.ma and LBCI. This fosters trust and establishes credibility, making these brands reliable sources for thorough reporting and balanced viewpoints. Brands that highlight patriotism (eight out of 11) and have clear mission statements (all but three) engage audiences more effectively by aligning themselves with cultural values. According to Doyle (2006), cultural relevance plays a significant role in media branding, indicating that brands that resonate with national values encourage deeper audience engagement. Every brand linked to cities, such as 2M (Morocco), Dubai 1 (Dubai), LBCI (Lebanon), and Saudi TV1-Aloula (KSA), displays this characteristic. This cultural connection is essential for cultivating a loyal viewer base, as it enhances the emotional bond.

Analyzing Shahid's website through the lens of Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism framework reveals a meticulously crafted brand identity. The website showcases a sleek and professional design that captures the brand's essence, featuring an elegant aesthetic and color palette that resonates with a spirit of innovation, perfectly in tune with Shahid's well-established branding. In contrast, the Moroccan brand 2M.ma emphasizes cultural identity

over visual identity, which appears disjointed. While the brand demonstrates competence and fosters some interaction and positive emotional connections with its audience, it lacks a culture of innovation and primarily caters to the broader Moroccan market.

Abu Dhabi TV emphasizes cultural identity in its branding strategy. Its visual attribution efforts are integral to this approach, utilizing its content catalog to engage primarily with *Khaliji* audiences (those from the Arabian Gulf). In contrast, DMC employs a similar branding strategy centered on appealing programming but does not emphasize cultural identity to the same extent. Instead, DMC highlights celebrity images and curated lifestyle content to stand out among other media brands. Meanwhile, ART adopts a content-driven branding strategy targeting its audience of young, light-hearted individuals who enjoy Egyptian entertainment.

Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya are two news channels with comparable visual identities and aesthetics. Nonetheless, Al Arabiya employs a segmentation strategy aimed mainly at Saudi nationals who take pride in their culture and heritage. While both channels produce news and global affairs content, Al Jazeera presents a more geographically varied range than Al Arabiya. LBCI also positions itself as a news channel but targets a wider audience, appealing to those interested in drama and entertainment programming as well. The frequent advertisements on LBCI underscore its revenue model, distinguishing it from other channels.

Shahid operates mainly on a subscription model and effectively conveys its revenue strategy, while its visual branding strengthens its position in the market. Despite being integrated with MBC, Shahid's branding remains noticeably different; this might lead to some confusion about how MBC is represented on the Shahid platform. However, viewers can still access MBC's live stream on Shahid, enhancing visibility for Shahid and its diverse range of engaging shows, which could help draw in new subscribers.

Saudi TV (Al Oula) and Dubai One adopt different targeting strategies; Al Oula aims primarily at Saudis, while Dubai One caters to foreign expats. Dubai One capitalizes on celebrity appearances and captivating programming, whereas Saudi TV presents a wide selection of series and shows. Unlike Saudi TV, which has a limited presence on social media and tends to neglect these platforms, Dubai One promotes a culture of innovation and engages actively with its viewers.

In conclusion, while Arab media brands utilize the Arabic language and have comparable cultural characteristics, their branding strategies vary. The former prevalence of government-owned media, which suffered from limited resources, has declined due to the rise of private media. Nowadays, many government-owned brands, especially in the Gulf region, are on par with private competitors. Several brands have adopted a culture of innovation, which we will delve into further below.

5.2. Role of digital technologies in transforming Arab media brands

Research indicates that dynamic environments stimulate innovation within media organizations (Maijanen & Virta, 2017). Chan-Olmsted (2011) highlights that media brands must innovate consistently to remain relevant in the digital era. To adapt to these digital transformations, brands should integrate real-time, personalized communication strategies. Chan-Olmsted (2011) argues that effective brand-consumer relationships necessitate a blend of time-honored loyalty strategies and contemporary interactive platforms. This shift highlights the need for adaptability and creativity in fostering robust brand connections.

Engaging and immersive viewer relationships are crucial for promoting loyalty and interaction in on-demand content. This is significant for the "Relationship" aspect of Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism, which concentrates on the connections that brands build

with customers. Innovative and culturally relevant content profiles help achieve strong audience engagement and emotional ties. Allagui (2021) points out that media brands should prioritize crafting content that entertains while also fostering an emotional connection with viewers. This approach cultivates long-term loyalty and recognition. This element is in line with the “Associations” component of the Brand Identity Prism, which reflects how consumers view themselves in relation to the brand (Kapferer, 1994). In the analysis of various channels, Al Jazeera and Shahid exemplify these traits, emerging as innovative and appealing brands in both technological and cultural aspects.

The next section provides a closer examination of how digital technologies contribute to the transformation of Arab media.

5.3. *The Four models of Arab media branding*

5.3.1. The Portals Model

Drawing from this evidence, the Portals Model emerges as a framework for understanding traditional media branding in the digital age. According to Yi and Kim (2008), portals are websites or platforms that act as gateways to a variety of services, including user-created content (UCC), multimedia, and other digital resources. The Portals Model emphasizes the importance of strong visual identity, authoritative tones, cultural relevance, and high audience interaction levels. By leveraging these elements, media organizations can establish and maintain a robust brand presence, ensuring comprehensive content delivery and reinforcing their authority in a competitive digital landscape.

The Portals Model in media strategy involves developing a comprehensive website that functions as a central gateway, providing users with access to a wide array of entertainment content, services, and information. Predominantly used by traditional broadcasting organizations in the Arab region, this model adapts to the digital landscape by consolidating news, entertainment, and various content from multiple sources into a single, easily accessible platform. It includes live TV and text-based content distribution, aiming to cater to contemporary audiences’ diverse preferences and needs. This delivery strategy enhances user engagement, increases website traffic, and opens multiple revenue streams, including advertising, subscriptions, and premium content. Notable adopters of this model include media outlets such as 2M, LBCI, Al Jazeera, Dubai 1, and Al Arabiya, which offer extensive content libraries, social media feeds, interactive features, and supplementary resources, establishing themselves as authoritative entities within their sectors.

5.3.2. The Streamer Model

The Streamer Model is an interactive content creation approach where digital multimedia entertainment is produced live, often from creators’ environments, and consumed by viewers in real-time (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018; Mao, 2022). This model, adopted by organizations like MBC (Shahid), MBC 1, and Abu Dhabi TV, promotes streaming content that often evolves into distinct brand entities, complementing traditional Free-to-Air (FTA) broadcasting. The model offers diverse in-house content through a hybrid of free-to-air and video-on-demand services, enhancing viewer experience with interactivity and immersion (Qaddumi, 2024).

This model’s increasing popularity as a marketing strategy mirrors the rapid rise in streaming adoption. Media organizations like MBC1 and Abu Dhabi TV present products and services compellingly, illustrating the model’s effectiveness in the competitive video-on-demand landscape (The National News, 2020).

It is worth mentioning that Abu Dhabi TV and Shahid both employ aspects of the Streamer Model, such as high-quality imagery, innovative content formats, and personalized engagement. However, Shahid distinguishes itself through several unique features. Shahid has become the leading streaming service in the Arab world, largely due to its extensive Arabic-language content and strategic partnerships with major content producers, which allow it to cater to a broad audience across the Arab region (Qaddumi, 2024). Additionally, Shahid offers innovative features like personalized content recommendations and exclusive original programming, enhancing user engagement and loyalty, which positions it as more than just a streaming platform but also a key player in content creation. Shahid's branding strategy, which emphasizes cultural relevance and family-friendly content, strengthens its connection with viewers, setting it apart from Abu Dhabi TV, whose reach and brand positioning may not be as strategically aligned with regional cultural trends (Qaddumi, 2024).

The strategic content approach has significantly fueled the platform's growth, with subscriber numbers soaring from 0.1 million at the end of 2019 to 3.76 million during Ramadan 2023 (Qaddumi, 2024). A key result of technological integration in the media sector is the rise of Shahid as the leading streaming service in the Arab region. This trend reflects a broader movement of traditional broadcasters expanding their digital presence on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube to reach younger demographics that dominate content consumption. MBC has strategically leveraged TikTok, known for its short-form video format and young audience, to maintain its relevance and appeal to a new generation of viewers (Zawya, 2023b). TikTok's formats are characterized by their brevity, interactivity, and inherent shareability. This distinctive approach to content consumption employs a variety of innovative features, including duets, stitches, effects, and trending challenges, to enhance the interactive nature of the viewing experience. By offering snippets or exclusive content from its Ramadan 2023 lineup, MBC not only promotes its programming but also demonstrates a keen understanding of the platform's unique style of content consumption (Zawya, 2023a). However, despite the growing popularity of the Streamer Model, its impact on audience attitudes toward endorsed brands remains understudied.

The Streamer Model's adoption has yielded benefits beyond mere competitive positioning. It has also empowered these media organizations to adapt and continuously thrive within the dynamic media landscape. Shahid is a prime example of the model's successful implementation, establishing itself as a leading platform for Arabic audiences seeking a comprehensive library of live and on-demand content explicitly curated for regional tastes. Shahid's platform further exemplifies the transformative potential of the Streamer Model, as it caters to diverse viewer preferences while fostering innovation in content delivery and audience engagement.

5.3.3 The Catalog Model

Structured content libraries that provide engaging user experiences foster long-term relationships and loyalty. Förster (2011) emphasizes the importance of organized content delivery in maintaining audience engagement. This structured approach to content curation aligns with the "Relationship" aspect of Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism, focusing on the interaction between the brand and its customers.

Personalized content curation enhances audience engagement and loyalty by reflecting the brand's commitment to user preferences. Allagui (2021) highlights that personalized content strategies in media branding are crucial for meeting diverse audience needs. This personalized approach is crucial for the "Associations" element of Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism.

The Catalog Model emerges thus as a framework for understanding modern media branding. This model emphasizes organized content delivery and personalized user experiences, aligning with the strategic diversification discussed by Malmelin and Moisander (2014). By integrating clear visual branding, approachable tones, cultural relevance, structured content libraries, and personalized curation, media brands can effectively build and maintain audience engagement and loyalty in a competitive digital landscape.

The Catalog Model is a strategic approach to content distribution that centers on audience needs, offering diversification and personalized choices. This model involves curating and maintaining a systematic and coherent catalog or library of offerings, ensuring ease of access for the audience. Media organizations using this model focus on delivering niche or specialized entertainment content through well-organized content previews and strategic categorization, making it easy for users to find the desired information. This model is exemplified by organizations like DMC, ART, and Saudi TV (AlOula), which prioritize meticulous content organization and regular updates to stay relevant and cater to evolving audience preferences. This structured approach enhances the user journey and engagement by ensuring the extensive library remains accessible and discoverable.

The absence of key brand identity components on the websites of certain media organizations should not be construed as a disregard for the strategic significance of branding and positioning. This strategic pivot is partly due to the complexities presented by various stakeholders (journalists, advertisers, and consumers, etc.), manifesting in a scenario of information asymmetry between media organizations and their respective audiences (Siegert, et al., 2011). The Catalog Model plays a significant role in content generation and emphasizes comprehensive material organization; it does not typically position itself at the forefront of innovation. Instead, it serves as a complementary element within a broader digital strategy, rather than leading the evolution of media branding. Recent studies indicate the continued popularity of broadcast television in the Gulf countries. This sustained familiarity has ingrained them as a natural component of viewers' routines (Khalil, 2016; Zaid et al., 2023). The Catalog Model, by utilizing structured content delivery, needs to adjust to regional viewing habits and preferences to stay relevant and responsive to the changing digital landscape.

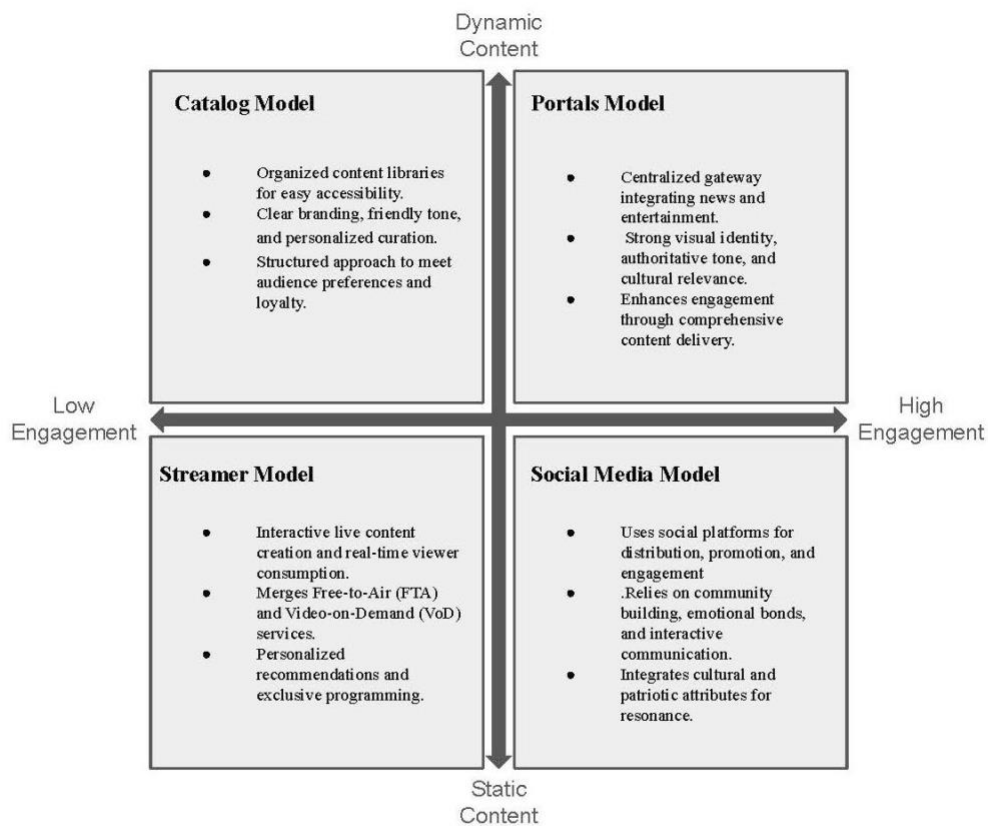
5.3.4 The Social Media Model

The Social Media Model represents a strategic approach that utilizes social media platforms as the main channels for distributing, promoting, and engaging with media content. Media organizations employing this model effectively leverage social media to engage their audience, foster communities, and boost brand awareness.

In the studied examples, no media brand relies solely on social media for content streaming or audience interaction. However, while exploring various Arab media channels, we encountered such platforms. These are satellite channels that broadcast via traditional TV and lack websites or domain names yet stream their content on platforms like YouTube or Facebook. A prime example is AlMasria TV; this channel has no independent website and only broadcasts through social media platforms. As a legacy media entity, it adopts branding strategies that resonate with its identity, values, and culture. AlMasria TV is competent, localized, and utilizes social media to enhance its reach and connect with viewers. It is part of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) network, without a dedicated domain name, but is included in the bundle of ERTU channels. The channel maintains a unique presence on YouTube, showcasing a variety of its programs. This model highlights the crucial role of social media platforms as vibrant hubs for content distribution, immediate

engagement, and archiving, while also recognizing the significant contribution a website makes to branding initiatives. While websites provide a wealth of in-depth content and comprehensive archives and serve as a hub for the organization, social media platforms function as dynamic focal points for the distribution of content and the facilitation of instant engagement. Because consumers increasingly rely on social media as a primary information source, social media dependency affects their use of social media for branding information, entertainment, and interpersonal connections, making brand pages on social media key platforms for consumer-brand interactions (Tsai & Men, 2013).

Figure 1. The four models of media branding



4 Models of Media Branding

Source: Allagui and Ibahrine.

6. Theoretical Considerations and Strategic Managerial Implications

Media organizations are increasingly prioritizing strong connections with their audiences by creating compelling and unique content that spans multiple channels and platforms. We integrated the media organizations' brand identities with the way they present their presence on digital platforms. This integration allows us to analyze their branding strategies. (Table 4)

Table 4. Media brand identity traits per media models

Brand Identity Prism Facet	Portals Model	Streamer Model	Catalog Model	Social Media-Based Model
Physique	Sophisticated website design, consistent logo use	High-quality imagery, innovative content formats	Clear visual branding, structured content libraries	Dynamic content, real-time interaction, user-generated content
Personality	Serious/sophisticated tone of voice	Engaging, interactive, immersive	Friendly/casual tone	Interactive, community-focused
Culture	Values of reliability and authority	Culture of innovation and creativity	Emphasis on user experience and personalized curation	Inclusivity, community building, engagement
Relationship	Enhances audience trust and brand authority	Fosters emotional connection and loyalty	Promotes long-term engagement and loyalty	Increases brand awareness and audience interaction
Reflection	Attracts a serious, sophisticated audience	Appeals to tech-savvy, engaged viewers	Attracts a relaxed, casual audience	Appeals to a broad, interactive community
Self-Image	Audience sees themselves as discerning and sophisticated	Viewers perceive themselves as innovative and engaged	Users see themselves as relaxed and well-served by the content	Audience views themselves as active, involved community members

Source: Allagui and Ibahrine.

This study outlines four unique media branding models, each utilizing strategies to improve audience targeting and engagement effectiveness. The Portals Model features a carefully designed website that conveys trust; while moderately attractive, it effectively projects competence and authority, emphasizing communal relationships. The Streamer Model utilizes high-quality imagery, creative content formats, and personalized, interactive experiences to strengthen the connection between the brand and its audience. The Catalog Model evokes a library-like atmosphere, emphasizing strong visual branding and structure combined with personalized curation, which collectively enhances user experience and encourages long-term loyalty. Finally, the Social Media-Based Model centers around real-time interaction and community building, prioritizing proximity, convenience, and a dynamic atmosphere across social media platforms.

The findings reveal that each branding model—Portals, Streamer, Catalog, and Social Media—displays unique strengths in their branding strategies. The Portals Model is centered on building trust and authority with a cohesive, professional design. The Streamer Model prioritizes interactive and engaging user experiences, highlighting the significance of strategic digital integration. The Catalog Model focuses on clarity and consistency in content organization, while the Social Media-Based Model emphasizes the need for real-time engagement and dynamic interaction communication.

For media managers, the strategic implications are clear: investing in a strong visual identity and a distinctive brand personality can greatly improve brand recognition and build loyalty. The Portals Model effectively establishes authority through competent and up-to-date content, while the Streamer Model caters to audiences who seek high-quality, innovative content along with interactive features. The Catalog Model suits organizations that emphasize user-friendly, cohesive branding and personalized content curation, making it easily accessible to audiences. Meanwhile, the Social Media-Based Model is best for brands looking to harness real-time interactions and community engagement to enhance visibility and expand audience reach. Each model provides a customized approach to media branding, underlining the necessity of aligning branding strategies with organizational objectives and audience preferences.

Future research should expand on these models to validate and refine the typology across broader contexts. Conducting in-depth interviews with media experts to discuss and evaluate the models could offer further insights. Comparative studies across different regions could yield deeper insights into the effectiveness of each model. A key avenue for future research is a quantitative analysis that examines the correlation between consistent branding practices and audience engagement and loyalty. This approach would strengthen the evidentiary base, offering enhanced empirical validation and theoretical advancement in media branding studies.

7. Conclusion

Effective branding strategies grant media organizations a crucial competitive edge, especially in today's crowded media landscape. Studies indicate that media companies utilize diverse tactics to maintain their relevance and uniqueness amid growing competition (Saulite & Ščeuļovs, 2023; Chan-Olmsted & Wang, 2020). By adopting a brand-focused approach, these organizations create cohesive branding strategies that leverage platform synergies and extend across various channels, thereby improving their market standing and optimizing audience engagement (Malmelin & Moisander, 2014; McDowell, 2006).

Despite significant advancements, the evolution of branding in the media industry has introduced increased complexity to strategic management processes. Branding is still frequently regarded as a supplementary promotional activity rather than a fundamental component of strategic planning. To unlock the full potential of branding, media organizations must integrate it deeply into their core decision-making processes, positioning branding as a central element of their overall business strategy rather than relegating it to ancillary marketing functions.

This study presents a typology of branding models—Portals Model, Streamer Model, Catalog Model, and Social Media-Based Model—each with a distinct strategy for enhancing audience engagement in media branding. Drawing inspiration from website typology, these models are examined through Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism, a framework highlighting the complex and adaptable nature of branding choices in today's media landscape. This research focused on a sample of eleven Arab media brands, which may limit the broader applicability of the results (Stapley et al., 2022). Although exploratory, this study offers significant insights into media branding strategies, proposing an analytical framework based on Arab regional media that can be modified for various regions and media contexts. Expanding this research to other countries and areas could enhance our understanding of branding strategies, audience engagement, and brand identity development in the rapidly changing global media environment.

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