

Example of propaganda in united arab emirates advertising essay

[Experience](#), [Happiness](#)



The United Arab Emirates, often called the UAE, is a country on the Arabian Peninsula that was established in 1971 and has a population of about 9.2 million people. The majority of media communications in the country are controlled by the government who exercises tight control over the information and opinions broadcast to citizens (“The World Factbook: The United Arab Emirates”). The UAE is considered by many to be the focal point of media activity for the Persian Gulf and includes about twelve daily newspapers and more than twenty television and radio programs; all these media outlets must operate under close government surveillance and abide by a 1980 law that closely regulates the information disseminated from the media (“United Arab Emirates,” 2009). Media advertisements in the UAE are not allowed to depict any images that may be construed as controversial or harmful to the government. Freedom House states that the “UAE Federal Law No. 15 of 1980 for Printed Matter and Publications regulates all aspects of the media and is considered one of the most restrictive press laws in the Arab world” (“United Arab Emirates,” 2012). Because the media communications in the UAE are so tightly regulated, the government uses the media to perpetuate propaganda messages that support their goals. As a result, the advertisements often present an idealized picture of life in the UAE and never depict any images that hint at the dissent and political strife in the country.

The most popular city in the UAE is Dubai and advertising for Dubai presents an interesting example of the control of UAE media. Dubai is depicted as a modern and chic country that features all the wonderful amenities of Western culture while still holding true to their Muslim faith. A nine minute

advertisement for Dubai takes viewers through beautiful scenes of the land surrounding Dubai including the deserts and the sea while traditional Arabian music plays in the background. There are images of young girls dancing, adolescent men chanting, an older man knitting, and stunningly beautiful women smiling in a welcoming manner (Skorubski). All are attractive and seem very happy. This type of appeal is known as the “beautiful people” propaganda which uses images to relate a message of contentment and happiness with the product, in this case Dubai. The “beautiful people” appeal is common in advertisements, especially for traveling or destination advertisements but the commercials for visiting Dubai do not reflect the political and social strife of the area. The UAE has had several instances recently of imprisoning journalists for producing pieces that allegedly criticize the government (“United Arab Emirates,” 2012). While the UAE has not had the type of open protests like other Arab nations, many are beginning to speak out publicly against the restrictions on freedom of speech and freedom of the press (Davidson 2012).

Advertisements for more popular products also conform to the regulations set by the UAE while still managing to promote the product. A commercial for Pepsi shows several ordinary young men playing soccer amongst tall, modern buildings and then taking a break from playing to enjoy a Pepsi (Vanguard). The use of ordinary people to promote a product as opposed to someone famous is called the “common man approach” and relates the product to common people and therefore common sense. The commercial then features the young men driving brand new vehicles with looks of pure joy on their faces (Vanguard). This propaganda technique of pure joy

exaggerates the feelings of happiness from drinking a Pepsi and instead makes the viewer draw the conclusion that drinking the soda will produce feelings of euphoria. Even though the commercial is depicting an American company, it still conforms to the media standards set by the UAE by showing the surrounding setting of the country in positive terms. The buildings in the background are modern and clean and the end of the commercial shows the young men driving through a picturesque landscape with gazelles chasing their cars. This type of idealized setting is not representative of the living conditions in the UAE.

The UAE keeps a tight hold on the types of advertisements in the country and the information that is released through the media. As a result, the commercials touting the service in the UAE such as airlines and industry, as well as the advertisements for world-wide companies, often do not accurately depict the government and political unrest that is growing within the country. These media advertisements instead depict an idealized version of the UAE in order to suppress the dissent from those who disagree with the tight regulations and lack of freedom of speech and the press in the country.

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