Semantic Network Analysis of the Saudi Women Driving Decree

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Abstract : September 26th, 2017, is a historic date for all women in Saudi Arabia. On that day, Saudi Arabia announced the decree on allowing Saudi women to drive. With the advent of vision 2030 and its goal to empower women and increase their participation in Saudi society, we see how Saudis' Twitter users deliberate the 2017 decree from different social, cultural, religious, economic and political factors. This topic bridges social media 'Twitter,' gender and social-cultural studies to offer insights into how Saudis' tweets reflect a broader discourse on Saudi women in the age of social media. The present study aims to explore the meanings and themes that emerge by Saudis' Twitter users in response to the 2017 royal decree on women driving. The sample used in the current study involves (n= 1000) tweets that were collected from Sep 2017 to March 2019 to account for the Saudis' tweets before and after implementing the decree. The paper uses semantic and thematic network analysis methods to examine the Saudis' Twitter discourse on the women driving issue. The paper argues that Twitter as a platform has mediated the discourse of women driving among the Saudi community and facilitated social changes. Finally, framing theory (Goffman, 1974) and Networked framing (Meraz & Papacharissi 2013) are both used to explain the tweets on the decree of allowing Saudi women to drive based on # Saudi women-driving-cars.

Keywords : Saudi Arabia, women, Twitter, semantic network analysis, framing
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