Employing Digital-Media Platforms in Developing the Public-Relations Performance for Official Institutions in Palestine - Tulkarm Governorate

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Abstract

Recently, digital-media has entered all fields to facilitate and speed up communication and transmit the information. One of these areas is public relations, Several studies dealt with the impact of the use of digital means in public institutions such as universities, Public-bodies, and others. In general, digital-media contributed to strengthening public-relations in various public and private sectors. In this study, the effect of employing the digital-media into the public-relations in the official organizations would be investigated. The official institutions is studied in Tulkarm. The sample of study includes (220) Practitioners in the official institutions, the analytical-descriptive approach would be employed in this study, the collected data would processed with SPSS.

Keyword: Digital-media, Public-relations, organization

Introduction

The presence of digital-media is a trademark of a transparent and lively strategy of communications, to achieve this, social-media platforms provide specific utility to the local public-relations of government. Different tools of social-media could enhance interactivity among the government and its public, and reach to populations who do not interest by conventional media as a lot(Graham,2013) This novel technology permits officials in organizations to build good relations with the citizens who it represents. The relations-building possibility of the digital-media is particularly valuable for the professionals of public-relations where building relations is the essence of public-relations. Practitioners of public-relations have more methods to engage and with the public and communicate with them. According to (Smith, 2011) more than half of adults use platforms of digital-media, (Claeys,2012) described the Public -relations that is a process of communication concentrated on constructing relationships, maintain the image, reducing threats associated to reputation, the situations of crisis managing, in addition to support organization permanence. The modern relation-public is had concentrated on the dialogue and digital-media conceptions. organizations have engaged in digital-media might support practitioners to enhance dialogue and the two-direction

conversations rather than previous approaches of one-direction monologues. digital-media have made the communication is interactive and timely thereby usually perceived as perfect tools for managing organizations' relationships; and the essence function of public –relations (Ahmad,2019). (Bashir,2017) had mentioned that practitioners of Public-relations strongly think that digital media has the ability to change the way public-relations are practiced, past research had found that practitioners of relations-public still trialing with digital media for targets associated to communication of organization, according to (Duhe's,2015), the novel technologies had attracted the interest of the public-relations scientists in the last few decades, the concentration had transformed from the studies about usability to perception ones. (Valentini,2015) mentioned that, for the public-relations, the employing of digital -media is good, this is because digital-media could help the organizations to develop the dialogs as well as the relations with their publics. Additionally, (Orji-Egwu,2019) had pointed that Digital-media have provided multi opportunities and advantages in various areas, especially , in terms of the diversity and amount of information provided , as well as relating to communication. (Gordon,2010) mentioned that while multiple practitioners of the public-relations value the digital-media, then some of them indeed maximize the features which they provide to their profession. also author confirmed that a considerable number of practitioners of public-relations are still not to comprehend how digital-media could help in improvement their occupational practices. The evolvement of digital-media had increased a burden on the practitioners of public-relations. this burden associated with meeting the requirements of information for their interior and exterior publics by using their favored channels, practitioners of public-relations could not be uninterested to the employing of digital-media in their functions with the increased widespread of digital-media

Previous works

(Almudallal,2017) examined the role of departments of public-relations in the Universities in Palestine and how these universities are coping with their graduates which are responsible to enhance the university objectives to make its image is better to masses. authors also investigated the range of the public-relations function as a tool to facilitate the implementation of the universities targets. the study includes (120) samples from university graduates. Results had showed that the public-relations based on digital-platforms enhance the graduates affiliation to their universities. (Bashir,2017) conducted study with (19) practitioners. They are from governmental, non-profit and corporate organizations, the study had done in Kuwait, and aimed to understand the impact of using digital-media to achieve the targets of public-relations, and define the challenges related to use this media in addition to the examine if this media has hanged the public-relation or not. The effects of outcomes suggest the require for a strategy, in terms of roles, purpose, responsibilities, guidelines and policies toward digital-media management among the management and practitioners of public-relations. Also, there is a need to blend technologies of communication into the public-relations practicing. (DePaula,2016) had analyzed the local departments communication of government based on a digital-media platforms. they analyzed messages of Facebook according to specific models of interactivity of electronic-government, which are, one-direction push, two-direction pull, as well as networking, which they had integrated with the theory of Excellence of public-relations. they found considerable differences in the applied strategies and suggested

illustrations depending on a socio-technical opinion for adopting the technology and the organizations' tasks and purposes. (Vercič,2015) had reviewed the growth of the set of knowledge on the relation between ICTs and public-relations , such as digital and social-media. they also assessed whether these "novel " media have induced them to think with relation to the rules of coping with those publics differently. (Wolf,2018) provided deep view

into opinions of the public-relations specialists and situations towards the digital-media in Perth and Singapore in addition to

Western-Australia and exploring the basic question of public-relations' target. The results had shown that the public-relation professionals agree with assumptions provided by the existence literature associated to the possibility of digital media to support the public-relations. (ÜNLÜ,2022) had analyzed the Twitter employing for public-relations of the municipality of Lahti. This study basically aimed to uncover the public-relations concentration of the ecological strategy municipality. Tweets which had shared on the municipality's account on Twitter Platform between 1 and 30, November in 2021, had analyzed. (Jukić,2017)presented the outcomes of research purposed to analyzing the employing of Facebook which is the most common social site for public-relation field in Slovenia.(Ryan,2007) proposed a model in the study presented reputation management from the points of view of well-known researchers in the field of public relations (Fombrun & Dowling), and considerations of their points of view were taken at the municipal level, and among these considerations: organizational culture, financial management, products and services, vision, leadership, responsibility Social, environmental, emotional grooming.

Literature Review

Digital-media, changes the method human utilize media gradually , entertainment as well as information. Currently, media contents, public-relations as well as advertising are disseminated online and distributed through social platforms and digital networks(Orji-Egwu,2019).

Public-relation composed of the entire forms of striped communication among an organizations and their masses for the aim of targets achievement in relation to mutual understanding (Jefkins, 2006).

(Grunig,2001) had defined public-relations as a tool of management which employs the management features such as (stripping, making-decisions, and research) to enhance the capability of organizations to create valuable relations and relay on these relations. Public-Relations in in the municipality particularly is defined by (Nadig,1949)as the official and conscious use of practical methods that are applied by experts in order to produce citizens' interest in the local government body with full awareness of them in an understandable and effective manner. (Cabot, 2012) defined it as: the administrative function that determines, establishes, and preserves mutually advantageous relationships among the organization and the various masses and all on whom its success or un-success relies. Electronic Municipality had defined by (Masouleh,2011) as a developed and new style of management through which the level of performance and administrative efficiency is raised and the work environment is improved to facilitate all services and businesses provided by government institutions to citizens through electronic means such as the Internet, cellular and landline phones with high speed and effectiveness.

In Palestine, especially Tulkarem, the government deals with citizens directly through the institutions, which work in coordination with it directly. The supervisory authority in the government for the conduct of business in the cities and villages for which it is responsible, (Saqr &Al-Akhsham, 2010) confirm that public-relations in recent years has become one of the most important departments that help senior management in various institutions so that this administration is constantly aware and in constant contact with the masses, which works to correct its decisions and paths, especially those whose effects are reflected on people. official institutions have direct dealings with citizens , as they

are the governmental interface that deals with the different groups of society. Thus, it is necessary to have official pages on the electronic platforms of the official institutions, which facilitates communication between them and the community. In the public sector, attention must be paid because These methods are used in achieving effective communication, and in shaping reputation and effective collaborative behavior. In addition to identifying the necessary measures for the development and development of the region. (Wyszomirski, 2014) Digital-media enables the public sector to create strong channels of communication with the public. Accordingly, official institutions and public-relations departments must take care of the official pages of the official institutions and create pages on platforms that they do not exist on, and keep pace with the technological development in the field of social media, and the official institutions' pages must be documented by Social-media companies, which gives them more attention by this audience, so protection and security systems are put on the pages so that they are not exposed to penetration or security gaps.

Problem Statement

The accessibility of digital-media had offered several channels for practitioners of media particularly the practitioners of public-relations for sharing their masses effectively and directly without depending on the conventional media. practitioners of the Public-relations now had

opportunities for sharing precise updates and in time on activities associated their organizations which this ensure the rapid feedback from their masses(Necmiye,2017). Some practitioners of media take the benefit of the opportunities which provided via digital-media to develop their occupational practices and construct universal reputation for their organizations in a originative way. This study would examines the impact of digital-media on the public-relations in official institutions in Tulkarem.

Aims of this study

1-   This study particularly aims to:
2-   1-Investigate digital-media employing in public-relations practicing in Tulkarem
3-   2-Define if the digital-media developed the performance of practitioners of public-relations in official institutions in Tulkarem.

Questions of study

1.   1-Do practitioners of the public-relations in Tulkarem employ the digital -media effectively in practices of professional.
2.   2- What is the influence of using the digital-media sites in the official institutions in Tulkarm?

Assumptions

There is no statistically significant relationship at the level of significance $(0.05 \leq a)$ between the use of digital-media and public-relations in the official institutions in Tulkarm

Methodology

The researcher has employed an approach which is analytical, which is the suitable approach for this kind of studies.

Population of the Study

The study population consisted of practitioners of Public-Relation in the official institutions in Tulkarm which include (22) official Directorates that are (Local Government,

Education, the culture, Works, Interior-Affairs, Tourism, Labor, Endowments, Finance, Security, Economics, Health, Communications, Universities, Media, civic engagement, Transportation, Land authority, Agriculture, Social development, Environmental Quality Authority, General Petroleum Corporation). The required data for this study has been gathered based on a Questionnaire which include items to investigate the effect of the digital-media on the public-relation of the official institutions in Tulkarm as an official Public institution. The items of the tool and the method of correction has been formulated based on Likert-scale, which was designed based on the five-dimensional Likert scale.

The sample of study

The actual studied sample consisted of (220) practitioners of Public-Relation in the official institutions especially in the public-relations departments.

Condition of studies

1-   1-the time:
2-   from 10/12/2022 to 10/1/2023
3-   2-the location:
4-   Palestine, Tulkarm Governorate

Validity of the tool

The suitability of the employed tool has been verified, in addition to the safety of the paragraphs wording, as well as the belonging of every of these paragraphs to the domain in which ,it has been put.

Stability of the tool

For measuring stability of the employing tool, then researcher depending on (Cronbach's alpha) Equation, Gitman's Equation, and half-partition Equation. Table (1) shows stability of the tool scale:

Table (1). *the tool-scale Stability*

Stability-scale	number of items	Stability
Cronbach's alpha equation	10	0.85
split half equation	10	0.66
Gutman's equation	10	0.87

The stability coefficients of the tool were proper, as the stability coefficient reached (0.85) according to Cronbach's Alpha equation, and it

reached (0.66) according to the split-half equation, and it reached (0.87) according to the (Guttman's) equation, this points to, that tool has an accepted grade of stability which could be depended upon in the ultimate implementation of the search, because all these percentages are higher than the minimum acceptable level, which is (60%), and therefore it is a sufficient percentage from a statistical point of view to continue the research procedures.

Procedures of Study

The search was implemented by the following steps

1.   Stage of gathering the: minor-data has been collected from several minor resources such as articles, previous studies, university…., in order to evolve the theoretical framework in this search.
2.   2-The stage of gathering the premier-data: After designing the questionnaire and

confirming its validity as well as stability, it had been distributed to the studied sample members, to obtain a volume of sufficient information to get answers of the questions and implement the set aims.

3. The questionnaires were collected, then reviewed to guarantee their appropriateness for analysis, as well as those that were not valid were excluded.

4. The stage of Data-Entry: the gathered data have been inserted to (SPSS), and then categorized the data to be prepared for the process of analyzing.

5. Stage of Data-processing: the data had analyzed to get information about variables which are dependent or non-dependent, and for carrying out the analyzes which provide answers to the study's questions and examine hypotheses for achieving the objectives of this study.

6. Stage of Results-discussion: Researcher has discussed the outcomes gained via analyzing the data.

Table (2). *the results of analysis the data*

Items	Mean	standard deviation	grade
1- official institutions in Tulkarm have official pages on social media and its own website that helps provide information about the these institutions.	4.56	0.91	5
2- The existence of social networking pages helps facilitate communication between the various institutions and the public.	4.68	0.94	1
3- The creative ideas are applied by the institutions' public-relations Practitioners in the content that is published on the pages of social networking sites	4.50	0.89	9
4- The institutions are interested in citizens' opinions and comments on social networking sites on public issues.	4.52	0.90	7
5- The institutions' publishes its annual financial reports and reports of completed projects in newspapers and digital media.	4.59	0.92	4
6- Official Institutions in Tulkarm publish all its projects and achievements on digital-media	4.64	0.93	3
7- Institutions in Tulkarm are very active on the digital-media	4.67	0.90	2
8- Practitioners of public-relations in Tulkarm are adopting digital-media for their different masses and other functions of the public-relations	4.48	0.87	10
9- Digital-media provide the Institutions a method which is low-cost to evolve relations with individuals of different publics	4.51	0.90	8
10- digital-media have developed the public-relations practicing Institutions in Tulkarm	4.55	0.91	6

from the table(2) it could be seen that item (2- The existence of social networking pages helps facilitate communication between the various institutions and the public.) gets the biggest mean value(4.68) with standard deviation(0.94) this refers that the public-relations Practices based on digital sites in the official institutions in Tulkarm enhance the communication between the official institutions and the public. The following item was (7- official institutions in Tulkarm are very active on the digital-media) with mean equal to (4.67) and standard deviation (0.90), this indicates the keenness and interest of the official institutions in Tulkarm in its constant communication with its public, this results agree with (ÜNLÜ,2022) in the need to concentrate on the communication ways with the public. In the third grade, the item (6- official institutions in Tulkarm publish all its projects and achievements on digital-

media) has achieved mean (4.64) and standard deviation(0.93). However, item (4- The official institutions are interested in citizens' opinions and comments on social networking sites on public issues get the 7th grade with high value of mean (4.52) and standard deviation (0.90) this indicates that despite the official institutions' interest in electronic communication with the people, it is necessary to make more efforts in order to gain close contact with people and their trust in the institution.

The item (9- Digital-media provide the organizations a method which is low-cost to evolve relations with individuals of different publics) was at the 8th grade with mean (4.51) and (0.90), and this means that linking public-relations with digital-media requires equipment, software, modern devices, and a strong internet network, which adds extra financial burdens. although the item (3- The creative ideas are applied by the institutions' public-relations Practitioners in the content that is published on the pages of social networking sites)

get high value of mean(4.50) and standard deviation (0.89), it was at the 9th grade this means that creative ideas are not often applied by public-relations employees in the municipality in the content that is published on the pages of social networking sites. The item (8- Practitioners of public-relations of official institutions in Tulkarm are adopting digital-media for their different masses and other functions of the public-relations) gets the last grade with mean (4.48) and standard deviation (0.87). this refers that there are some challenges related to the ability of some practitioners of public-relations to cope with the novel media, thereby, it is necessary to conduct awareness and training programs to deal efficiently with various digital-media and keep abreast of developments in this field.

Conclusion

In this study, the basic concepts related to public-relations based on the digital-media in the official organizations had introduced, the official institutions in Tulkarm have studied, the main aim of this study was to investigate the role of digital-media in developing the public-relations in these institutions, A questionnaire was used to implement the study with (220) practitioners of public-relations in the official institutions in Tulkarm, the gathered data had been analyzed based on SPSS, results had shown that the public-relations integrated with digital-media in the official institutions in Tulkarm enhance the communication ways between the official institutions as well as its public. Also, the official institutions in Tulkarm interest in the connection with public, this in turn develop the public-relation in these institutions. Despite this, there major challenges associating with using digital-media in the fields of public-relations such as the various requirement to implement powerful communication environment and the cost associated it, also, some practitioners of public-relations suffer from a few difficulties to deal with the digital-media, therefore, it is necessary to provide supporting programs to deal efficiently with different digital-media, and advances technologies associated with public-relations.

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