

International public relations strategies on the website of the German Foreign Ministry in Arabic

By

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Abstract

The problem of this research lies in identifying the international public relations strategies that the German Foreign Ministry uses through its website in Arabic, and a main question stems from this problem: What are the international public relations strategies that the German Foreign Ministry targets on its Arabic website. This research is one of the analytical descriptive research in which the researcher used the content analysis method, and accordingly designed a form for content analysis, and the comprehensive inventory method was chosen for the research community, which was published on the German Foreign Ministry website for the period from 1/1/2020 to 31/12/2020. 2021. The study reached several results, the most important of which are: The German Foreign Ministry's website focused on using international public relations strategies intensively in order to achieve the arrival of its communication messages to the target audience, and the most important strategies used were repetition and persuasion.

Keywords: Strategies, International public relations, website of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

First: the research problem

The websites of the ministries of the world are no longer just a means of introducing the activities of these institutions that represent governments but have become more comprehensive to represent a country by providing services and providing information electronically to its visitors from all countries of the world using international public relations strategies to market the policy of those countries to another.

Hence, the research problem is summarized in the main question: What are the international public relations strategies that the German Foreign Ministry uses through its website in Arabic.

Second, the importance of research

The importance of this research lies in revealing the strategies used by the German Foreign Ministry in its international public relations by broadcasting communication messages directed to the Arab public using the German Foreign Ministry's website in Arabic.

Third: Research objectives

The research aims to:

Identify to the international public relations strategies that the German Foreign Ministry

focused on in its communication messages addressed to the receiving countries.

Third: Research type, method and tools

This research is one of the descriptive research in which the survey method is used and that seeks to describe and document the current situations or trends, that is, it explains what is already in place at the present moment. (Thulfiqar, 2015: 109 - 110), the researcher has adopted the content analysis method, which is one of the means of data collection, using the content analysis form as a tool to reach results that answer the questions of the research problem and achieve its goals by analyzing the mentioned data on the website of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the period of time specified for the study, to finally get acquainted with the strategies followed by the German Ministry Foreign Affairs in international public relations.

Fourth: The research community and its sample

The study population was determined using the comprehensive inventory of the Arabic-speaking website of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the period (from 1/1/2020 to 31/12/2021), and the researcher deals with the analysis of all data, reports, articles and dialogues published on the website during that period.

Fifth: search terms

International Public Relations: The art of managing international communication and relations between different countries of the world, and that it is the link between the people of the international community, with the aim of building and strengthening international relations full of trust away from international conflicts. (Khalaf Allah, 2021: 27)

Strategy: It is a process of formulating communication ideas for a campaign in order to achieve a specific procedural objective. (Al-Tamimi, 2018: 30)

Sixth: Validity and Test.

1- Validity

This test presents the form for content analysis to a group of experts and arbitrators, to find out the validity of this form by measuring the phenomenon under study, and to see if the categories are compatible with the subject of the research by displaying the percentage of agreement of arbitrators and experts, and here the researcher presented the form to a number of arbitrators and experts in the field of media, for the purpose of expressing their opinion and scientific observations regarding the validity of this form in measuring what it was designed for. The percentage of agreement between the arbitrators reached (%95), which is considered a good percentage that reflects the **validity** of the instrument.

2- Reliability

The researcher used the (consistency over time) method to measure the reliability of the analysis, as she conducted the analysis on the same sample twice, separated by the end of the first analysis period and the beginning of the second analysis, for a period of fifteen days, and after applying Holist equation (Al-Qayyim, 2007;89) The results of the two analyzes to calculate the reliability of the analysis show that the changes that occurred were minor and that the reliability coefficient amounted to (0.93) according to Holist equation, which is a scientifically acceptable percentage.

Table (1)

Arbitrators' names	The sum of the main and sub-categories	Approved Categories	Categories that are not approved	Categories that have been requested to be modified or added	The degree obtained by the tool
Prof. Dr. Baqir Mousa Jasim, Department of Public Relations, College of Media, University of Baghdad	8	7	1	0	%87.5
Assist. Prof. Dr. Raya Qahtan Ahmed, Department of Public Relations, College of Media, University of Baghdad	8	7	0	1	%87.5
Assist. Dr. Rana Ali, Department of Public Relations, College of Media, University of Baghdad	8	8	0	0	%100
Assist. Prof. Dr. Haider Alo Al-Qutbi, Department of Public Relations, College of Media, University of Baghdad	8	8	0	0	%100
Assist. Dr. Sondos Fouad Mustafa, Department of Public Relations, College of Media, University of Baghdad	8	8	0	0	%100
Experts' agreement rate					%95

Holist's equation.

$$\text{Reliability coefficient} = 2 T / N1 + N2$$

where it represents

T: The number of cases agreed upon by the first and second analysis

N1: The number of cases symbolized by the researcher in the first analysis

N2: The number of cases symbolized by the researcher in the second analysis

$$538 \ 269 \times 2$$

$$\text{Reliability coefficient} \frac{538 \ 269 \times 2}{578 \ 289 + 289} = \frac{2153072}{867578} = 0.93$$

$$578 \ 289 + 289$$

Seventh: Previous studies

)Al-Zadjaliya Study: (Al-Zadjaliya, 2014)-

This study relied on the method of analyzing the communication strategies of the websites of government institutions in the Sultanate of Oman to know the communication strategies through those websites that are used by the public relations departments in government units subject to the civil service law and its executive regulations in the Sultanate of Oman, It also focused on describing the contents used on the websites of government agencies and knowing the nature of the topics on which the messages of those websites focus, this study also used the content analysis method to describe and analyze the contents of all the websites of government units, the communication patterns and the technical tools used and to determine the communication strategies that these contents focused on, the results of the study showed an increase in the number of government units that own websites on the network, and the study concluded that all websites used the communication strategies represented by the media strategy and the strategy of persuasion and interpretation.

The similarities between the two studies are that our study also used the method of analysis of international public relations strategies on the website of German ministry of foreign affairs , and also touched on the contents of the messages broadcast by the ministry's website and the patterns used, which is similar to the goal of our research, which seeks to know

the contents of communication messages, patterns and strategies used and how to direct them to the public.

2- Yasin study (Yasin :2019)

This study focused on the importance of using marketing international public relations strategies as they represent the bridge between the organization and its audiences, as they interpret, present and market the organization's ideas and services.

This study also aims to monitor the strategies followed by marketing public relations in the international field, as well as focus on the extent to which the public is interested in the website (the study sample) and the extent of the success of those strategies in attracting the public, the researcher also identified the research community in the websites of the two companies (Apple) and (Samsung) as a sample for her research and relied on the comprehensive inventory method.

The similarities between this study and our research are that it focuses on the same goal in our research, which is to know the strategies of public relations in the international space and the extent of their impact on the public used for those sites, which our study touched upon to monitor the methods in addition to the international public relations strategies used by the German government through the website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (research sample)

3-Abdul-Saheb Study: (Abdul-Saheb, 2018)

This study focused on the extent to which social media sites contribute to the delivery of promotional means because of its ease of communication and creating a public space for discussion, and how to employ these sites in political marketing operations, and politicians use web pages to promote their ideologies and disseminate their programs with the aim of influencing public opinion, this research dealt with how to market political products on the two pages of the Prime Minister and the Iraqi Parliament on Facebook, and relied on the content analysis methodology for those **two** pages, as a result of this study, the purposes of marketing focus on showing the activities and actions carried out by politicians, and it showed a discrepancy between the various topics and contents published by politicians, and that the public only interacted with specific issues that affect their demands and needs, and the research focused on the contribution of new media technology in the political field, which clarifies the methods of Iraqi politicians in marketing their policies and their personalities, and the research aims to reveal the topics and content that are marketed in the publications of the Iraqi prime ministers and Iraqi parliament on Facebook. The study also relied on the method of content analysis to know the contents and forms of political marketing.

Benefiting from previous studies

Previous studies help the researcher to formulate the problem and objectives of the research, from where others have finished and delve deeper into the aspects that they did not address; As the review of the scientific heritage and the proposals of others benefited the researcher from several aspects, as it enabled the researcher to form a clear vision of the research problem, formulate questions, and define the goals that the researcher seeks to reach, in a way that differs from previous studies, in addition to identifying the categories and the most prominent issues included in research form , the researcher also reported looking at the topics covered by others and studying other topics in a new manner and way.

Theoretical Framework for Research International Public Relations Strategies

International public relations is defined as “the way in which governments, individuals

and groups directly or indirectly influence the attitudes and opinions of the public that directly influence the foreign policy decisions of the governments of other countries.” (Al-Azzawi, 2013: 109)

The strategy is a process of formulating communication ideas for a campaign in order to achieve a specific procedural goal, there are a set of strategies used in international public relations, namely.

1-Strategies for building relationships: It is one of the processes based on devoting all capabilities that work to bring about a mutual international understanding between organizations, governments and bodies that practice international public relations activities in the international system and the international community, this strategy represents a logical and objective transition to the process of achieving goals, and all governments and organizations that practice international public relations work to build strong and continuous relationships with various means of communication, leaders of government agencies and prominent personalities in the countries in which they work in order to open formal and informal channels to facilitate their work. (Al-Tamimi, 2018: 27)

2-Communication strategy: This strategy represents implementation in international public relations as it allows it to be consistent with the elements of the external environment with which interests and needs are exchanged, and that communication represents a continuous reciprocal process, as it works to create a climate for interaction, cooperation, international conflict and the exchange of social roles among the masses of societies . (Saleh, 2017: 202)

3-Persuasion strategy: This type seeks to change the views on a political, commercial or behavioral issue in the international field among individuals and groups, by addressing feelings and emotions as it depends on persuasion with evidence, arguments and evidence that support and prove the validity of the views, as well as the use of effective direct speech, the response of the public according to this strategy will be in two ways: (Al-Zubaidi, Raouf Hussein, 2018: 116)

A. Perceptual thought stems from the search for culture, science, learning and conclusion.

B. Emotional stems from the search for spiritual and emotional conviction.

4-Dialogue strategy: This strategy is used in closed and in-depth intellectual discussions about problems and crises that are expected to occur and how to respond to and address them, and in implementing social responsibility programs, this strategy is a process of exchanging views and presenting the views of the concerned parties with the aim of solving a pending problem, by waiving some issues or accepting compromise solutions while preserving the core issues to ensure the minimum acceptable gains for all, and it requires effective, purposeful and organized management, mechanisms and expertise. (Al Saifi, 2021 : 210)

5-Consensus-building strategy: This strategy seeks to build relationships with the external environment and is usually applied when there is a conflict of interests between parties, each of which depends on its existence on the other, and is based on theories of negotiation and conflict, active groups represent pressure on governments and organizations and a threat to their stability, so It is necessary to study the external environment, monitor its developments, and identify issues that may represent problems for governments, and how they can deal with these issues (Al-Jawari, 2016: 260)

6-Repetition strategy: This type seeks to what is called memory confirmation with a

focus on repetition and diversity in meaning and content, being more effective and impactful than identical or similar repetition, to reach its goal by influencing the audience's trends and behaviors by repeating meanings, vocabulary and words and focusing on specific issues that fall on the global level, this strategy is based on a cognitive process (attention, focus, interest, response, and memory confirmation). (Al-Jawari, 2016: 260)

7-The strategy of scientific cultural structures: This strategy deals with the masses as one homogeneous audience, taking advantage of the similarities between cultures, and is based on the fact that culture is a comprehensive vision of the world embodied in concepts, values, phenomena and behavior that the language factor brings together in societies and that it is diversified by the diversity of the categories of these societies socially and intellectually (Al-Dulaimi). , 2019: 214)

8-External media strategy: This strategy is based on the process of explaining and clarifying facts and information to audiences abroad with the aim of making an impact on the mentality of those audiences in a way that serves the issues and interests of the state, that is, the state's ability to influence the policy of other countries through external media, which is called open diplomacy by depending on the three-dimensional pillars represented by the government's influence on the citizens of another country, then these people influence their governments, and the latter changes its external behavior in a way that is consistent with public demands and thus with the interests of the state of influence (Jasim, 2015: 14)

9-The local global strategy: This strategy depends on adapting the activities of the organizations in proportion to the local conditions in each country, and in some cases it uses a communication strategy in accordance with the social and economic characteristics of the community, and there is also a communication strategy adopted by the United Nations called the global vision strategy and local voice and It is based on detailing the global mission of the United Nations, its activities, and its information in line with the local contexts of different countries. (Jasim, 2015: 140)

The practical aspect of research

Table (2) shows the sub-categories of the main category of international public relations strategies, in the first place, the strategy of repetition with recurrence reached (109), and with percentage of (%45.99), as the publications of the German Foreign Ministry focused on specific issues and repeated them extensively and profusely, in order to achieve impact and to inculcate in mind the issue of refugees, displaced persons, conflicts, the global epidemic file and humanitarian aid, issues that are a priority in Germany's foreign policy.

In the second place came the strategies for building relationships, with a frequency of (31) recurrence, at a rate of (%13.08), this category appeared in the publications of the German Foreign Ministry, through Germany's cooperation with the countries of the union in the production of vaccines against the pandemic and also to end the turmoil in countries where armed conflict spreads and those that suffer from poverty and disasters, and economic relations represented by visits by German ministers and officials to countries, whether they are Arab countries or the countries of the union or with the great powers, here relationship building strategy employed, in order to strengthen and support the German position and win friends and supporters.

In third place came the external media strategy category, with a frequency of (27) recurrence, and a rate of (%11.39). Here, the official website of the ministry presented international news of interest all over the world, including political, economic, social, technical,

artistic and educational news.

While the category (Local Global Strategy) ranked fourth with (24) recurrences, and at a rate of (%10.13), and here the German Foreign Ministry website focused on employing this strategy in transferring local issues, and making it an issue of global public opinion, such as the climate files and the Corona pandemic.

In fifth place came the category (communication strategy) (18) recurrence, and at a rate of (7.59). The website of the German Foreign Ministry employed this strategy,

the fact that communication represents a reciprocal process in coordinating German policies with the elements of the external environment with which they exchange interests and needs.

The category of consensus-building strategy came in sixth place, with 17 **recurrence**, with a rate of (%7.17), and the German Foreign Ministry's website employed the consensus-building strategy in order to build strategic relations between Germany and the public, so Germany played a leading role in the European Union in particular and the world in general for its contribution on various issues, including the policy of supporting refugees, providing aid and assistance, forming alliances to confront the Corona virus, holding conferences, adopting negotiations, and hosting forums in various forums.

In the seventh place, the persuasion strategy category came with a number of recurrences of (8) at a rate of (%3.38). Here the German Foreign Ministry website used evidence, proofs, numbers and statistics; In order to convince the target audience of the messages that the communicator wants to deliver to the recipient.

While the category (Dialogue Strategy) ranked eighth with (3) recurrences at a rate of (%1.27), which was shown by the German website through Germany's adoption of open dialogues with governments, peoples, and institutions on issues of disagreement or those around which the conflict revolves, and even in cooperation with employ this strategy.

Table (2) shows the sub-categories of the main category *International Public Relations Strategies*.

S/N	Category	Frequency	The ratio %	Rank
1	Relationship building strategies	31	13.08	Second
2	Communication strategy	18	7.59	Fifth
3	Persuasion strategy	8	3.38	Seventh
4	Frequency strategy	109	45.99	First
5	External media strategy	27	11.39	Third
6	Local global strategy	24	10.13	Fourth
7	Dialogue strategy	3	1.27	Eighth
8	Consensus Building Strategy	17	7.17	Sixth
	The total	237	%100	

Results

The results of the study showed that the website of the German Foreign Ministry clearly relied on the use of international public relations strategies clearly , the most prominent of which was the strategy of recurrence through intensive publication on certain topics and their repetition significantly, the most important of which is Germany's role in resolving conflicts, achieving peace, providing aid and confronting the pandemic, as well as the strategy of persuasion by relying on Evidence, figures and statistics.

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