A STUDY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES AT KING SAUD UNIVERSITY, RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of problem

Chiaravalle and Findlay said, "practitioners short themselves when they choose to not stay current with academic theory and approaches to development." (Chiaravalle & Findlay, 2007, p. 61).

In developed countries, higher management at universities realize and understand the need for a link between them and their stakeholders (Alhammad, 2007). In order to measure up with the science, culture, and knowledge that has been achieved by universities in advanced countries, the importance of universities in developing countries, in building a modern and developed society, cannot be neglected.

Universities are considered one of the most important institutions in modern society, because they effectively contribute to the development and improvement of society, both on the educational and cultural levels. However, universities in developing countries, do not live up to their true potential, rather they hardly demonstrate the potential benefit they could reach. Ultimately, they wind up being a routinely frequented institute by a number of community members without utilizing what the university has to offer. (Alhammad, 2007).

Public relations is of great importance to many organizations that deal with individuals and groups, particularly organizations that engage in activities or services
that are directly linked to the public. Alsorayai stressed that public relations has become one of the strongest weapons in the modern Saudi society. (Alsorayai, 2005).

Public relations departments at any university is one of the most, if not the only, link between the university and its internal and external publics. Despite the different titles, public relations is always a fundamental part of any educational institution's organizational structure. It is directly linked to the university's higher management and is entrusted with communicating with the public and the media. In order to fulfill this obligation, the public relations department utilizes different roles and models, which differ depending on the nature of the circumstances.

The importance of public relations departments and the roles that are expected to be practiced by these departments and their staff, cannot be overlooked. Surprisingly, there have not been enough scholarly studies dealing with public relations in Saudi Arabia in general, nor with King Saud University. An example of some of these studies that were intended to understand the effects of public relations practices and evaluate their role at Saudi universities is a study titled “Public Relations Activities at Two Saudi Arabian Universities” by Al-Bader, 1972. In addition to an Arabic study titled “The Main Role of Public Relations”, by Alhammad.

Chiaravalle and Findlay noted that, "Theory comes from some sort of practice and practice comes from some sort of theory." (Chiaravalle & Findlay, 2007, p. 56). The academic theoretical aspect needs to have a strong presence within the practice of public relations. In addition, different cultures, and political systems make public relations practice vary from one country to the next. (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2003), thus, illustrating the importance of conducting studies in public relations practice in Saudi Arabia.
The purpose of this study was to present a comprehensive overview of practice of public relations at King Saud University by attempting to identify the public relations models and roles practiced by PR practitioners there. The researcher hoped that this study will make a contribution to the body of knowledge for both policy makers and public relations practitioners at the university and in the public relations profession.

Therefore, this study used survey methodology, aiming to explore the models, functions, and practitioners’ roles performed by public relations practitioners at King Saud University.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Relations

For many years, the practice of public relations has had many formulated definitions (Botan & Hazelton, 2006, p. 11). Considered by many as the father of modern public relations, (Wilcox & Cameron, 2009, p. 52) Edward Bernays referred to public relations as “the engineering of consent.” Bernays defined the phrase as “the use of an engineering approach—that is, action based only on thorough knowledge of the situation and on the application of scientific principles and tried practices to the task of getting people to support ideas and programs.” (Bernays, 1947).

One of the oldest definitions of public relations was the one advocated by Wilcox and Cameron, 2009, "Public relations is the management function which evaluates public attitude, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and patience." According to the Public Relations Society of America, public relations is "a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics." (PRSA, 2012).

Ethics and codes of conduct have been established to hold the professionalism of public relations to high standards. Lesley stated that, "The major concerns of the PR practitioner ranges from shaping the image to the management of a crisis with an objective of presenting the client in the highest level of uniqueness." (Lesly, 1959, p.
According to Grunig and White, "the practice of public relations and theories about its practice, are affected by the assumptions that practitioners and theorists have about such things as morality, ethics, human nature, religion, politics, free enterprise, or gender." (Grunig & White, 1992, p. 32).

Public relations is a developed and ethical profession only when practiced by responsible and educated practitioners. Professionalism best illustrates the development of the public relations industry in the modern world. Worldview is defined as, "a set of images and assumptions about the world" (Grunig & White, 1992, p. 33).

While scholars and practitioners set the foundational rules to guide the profession. Botan and Hazelton stated that, "Many scholars and colleagues across the academy remain skeptical of the possibility of public relations developing as a self-standing theoretical discipline." (Botan & Hazelton, 2006, p. 6). The most common theory employed in international public relations research, is Grunig's Excellence Theory and the "four evolutionary models" of public relations development and practice: press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetric and two-way symmetric. (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 34).

To distinguish excellent from less excellent public relations, a researcher must be able to compare and evaluate worldviews. (Grunig & White, 1992). Unique cultural differences similarly limit the application and development of the worldwide models for the public relations practice. Freitag stated that, "Cultural differences are dominant and influence human communication processes and patterns. Public relations depends on the communication from such cultural differences." (Freitag, 2002, p. 219).

Public relations has developed more extensively in some countries rather than others because of the difference in political, economic and social environment of
those countries. Three main factors play a fundamental role in the nature of the profession:

1. The nature of the political system
2. The nature of the individual rights and freedom
3. The nature of the economic system (Kirat M., 2005).

Although the profession is growing in the Arab world, it still suffers from some problems, instances of malpractice, and misconceptions. With regard to management and organization, public relations in Arab countries suffers from the following:

1. Top management’s attitudes toward the profession
2. The lack of understanding places public relations in a poor position in the organizational chart
3. Confusion in public relations practitioners' tasks and dues
4. Lack of qualified practitioners
5. Lack of resources (Kirat M., 2005).

In general, most of the public relations literature suggests that public relations practice in Middle East has numerous issues that need to be dealt with. These issues include the following:

1. The practice of public relations shows that the profession is still in the early stage of its maturity and formation.
2. The objectives of public relations do not target internal publics.
3. Public relations focus on the publicity and press agentry role at the expense of strategic planning, research and evaluation. In addition, most of public relations departments carry out primarily advertising and marketing tasks
4. Some of the public relations departments have no strategic vision, do not have a plan of action, and do not have straightforward goals and objectives.

5. Public relations functions and activities focus on guest relations, protocol, receptions, coordinating with the media and, brochures and publications.

6. Lack of research is one of the main drawbacks of the public relations practice.

7. Research is not one of the major concerns of public relations. Feedback and opinion of internal public, and external public are not among the priorities of the organization and its top management. (Kirat M., 2005).

**Grunig’s Four Models of Public Relations**

Excellence theory is a general theory of public relations that resulted from a 15-year study of public relations practice. (Grunig & Grunig, 2002). The International Association of Business Communicators Research Foundation funded the project. Excellence theory was defined as, a theory of the characteristics of excellence in communication management and it addresses the normative question of how does public relations make an organization more effective and what are the characteristics of the public relations function that are most likely to make an organization effective. (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2006) Excellence theory has "the largest share" of theory-building articles in public relations and suggest that it is "arguably the closest public relations comes at this time to having a paradigm." (Laskin A. V., 2009).

Public relations models and the excellence theory in general, are considered the most dominant theoretical viewpoint of public relations. (Laskin A. V., 2009). Botan and Hazelton stated that, "a leading body of work has developed around symmetry and excellence theory, which has probably done more to develop public relations
theory and scholarship than any other single school of thought." (Botan & Hazelton, 2006, p. 6). Grunig and Hunt acknowledged that there had been "public-relations-like" activities throughout history, however, they were the first to identify the four models in the history of public relations. (Grunig & Grunig, 1992).

Grunig analyzed the use of different tactics by public relations practitioners and calcified 16 tactics into two groups, formally known as synchronic and diachronic communications. (Laskin A. V., 2009). These groups were later known as asymmetrical/symmetrical dimension. The research program began by using the term dimension, however, the term" dimension" was replaced later with the term "models." As Grunig et al. explained the typology of this change, and stated that the models represent, "a useful way to begin the development of a theory" (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002, p. 348).

Grunig and Grunig used the term model, the same way that it is used in the sciences, "as a simplified representation of reality". They also stated, "although all models are 'false' in the sense that no representation can capture reality perfectly, we would have no understanding of reality at all if we had no model with which to work." (Grunig & Grunig, 1992, p. 286).

Therefore, Grunig and Grunig defined the term model as, "a set of values and a pattern of behavior that characterize the approach taken by a public relations department or individual practitioner to all programs or, in some cases, to specific programs or campaigns. Thus, 'model' describes a broader pattern of behavior than does the concept of roles." (Grunig & Grunig, 1992, p. 286).

The original four models of public relations were press agentry/publicity model, public information model, the two-way asymmetrical model, and the two-way
symmetrical model. Grunig took the idea of one-way and two-way models of communication and elaborated the idea to include the purpose of the communication as well as the direction. (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). The three models except the two-way symmetrical model, reflect a practice of public relations that attempts to achieve the organization’s goals through persuasion. However, the two-way symmetrical model focuses on the practice of public relations where the interests of the organizations are balanced with the interests of the public. (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2012).

Public relations scholars have conducted extensive research on the extent to which organizations practice the four models of public relations, to identify which of these models provides a normative framework for effective and ethical public relations. (Grunig & Grunig, 2011). The research team suggested that the models could also serve as a normative theory: "We did find that the four models still provide an accurate and useful tool to describe public relations practice and worldview." (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002, p. 377). Although Grunig and Hunt identified these four models as stages in the history of public relations, they believe that all of the models are practiced today. (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). The four models are described as:

- **The press agentry/publicity model:** This is the model where information moves in one direction, from the organization to the public. It is the oldest public relations form of communication, and it is synonymous with promotions and publicity. Public relations practitioners operating under this model are always looking for opportunities to get their organization’s name mentioned favorably in the media. They do not conduct much research about
their publics beyond "counting the house." Although this model is considered ethical, it operates in a grey area.

- The public information model: It differs from press agentry because the intent is to inform rather than strive for promotion and publicity, but the communication in this model is still one-way. This model represents public relations practices in government, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and some corporations operate under this model. Practitioners operating under this model conduct little research about their audiences beyond testing the "clarity of the messages". Practitioners utilizing this model value accuracy, however, they decide the best type of information to communicate to their publics.

- The two-way asymmetrical model: This model considers that public relations communicates using scientific persuasion. Grunig concluded that practitioners using an asymmetrical model, in spite of their good intentions, it is difficult, to practice public relations in a way that is ethical and socially responsible. (Grunig & White, 1992, p. 40). This model utilizes "social science research" methodology in order to increase the persuasiveness of the message. Public relations practitioners under this model use surveys, interviews, and focus groups to measure public attitudes towards the organization, so it can design public relations programs that will gain support of key publics. While, feedback is an important part of the characteristics of this model, the organization is only interested in having the public's change its attitude toward the organization.

- The two-way symmetrical model: This model illustrates a public relations emphasis where, the organizations and its public acclimate to each other. With
this model both the organization and publics can be persuaded, both also may change each other's behavior. (Grunig & White, 1992, p. 39). As previously mentioned, Grunig stated, "symmetrical programs generally are conducted more ethically than are other models and produce effects that balance the interests of organizations and the publics in society. Symmetrical practitioners, therefore, have mixed motives, they are loyal to both their employers and to the publics of their organizations." (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2006, p. 47). The model focuses on the use of social science research methodology to achieve mutual understanding through two-way communication rather than one-way communication. (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2012).

In practice, professional public relations involves both asymmetrical "compliance-gaining" tactics and symmetrical "problem-solving" tactics. However, Grunig and Grunig stated that, "the most effective public relations, excellent public relations, will fall more toward the symmetrical end of the continuum than the asymmetrical end." (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). Dozier stated, "many people expect concepts of excellence to be different, depending on the industry, types of organization, or nationality. Instead, we found that communication excellence is universal." (Dozier D. M., 1995, p. 4).

The two-way symmetrical model of communication is a real and a normative model. It is a model that organizations can use but often do not use because an "authoritarian dominant coalition" sees the approach as a threat to its power. Even though, two-way symmetrical public relations is an ethical approach that contributes to organizational effectiveness more than other models of public relations. (Grunig & Grunig, 1992).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Press agency/publicity</th>
<th>Public information</th>
<th>Two-way asymmetric</th>
<th>Two-way symmetric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td>Dissemination of information</td>
<td>Scientific persuasion</td>
<td>Mutual understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of communication</td>
<td>One-way; complete truth not essential</td>
<td>One-way; truth important</td>
<td>Two-way; imbalanced effects</td>
<td>Two-way; balanced effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of research under the model</td>
<td>Little; “counting house”</td>
<td>Little; readability readership</td>
<td>Formative; evaluative of attitudes</td>
<td>Formative; evaluative of understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading historical figures</td>
<td>P.T. Barnum</td>
<td>Ivy Lee</td>
<td>Edward L. Bernays</td>
<td>Bernays; educators; professional leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where practiced today</td>
<td>Sports; theater, product promotion</td>
<td>Government, nonprofit associations, business</td>
<td>Competitive business, agencies</td>
<td>Regulated business, agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate percentage of Organizations practicing today</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.1: An overview on the four models of public relations. (Laskin A. V., 2009)**

**Public Relations Practitioners’ Roles**

Some of the most important public relations theories that have been developed are about practitioner roles. Research on these roles has been very important to the body of public relations knowledge. Understanding what practitioners perform has helped to explain the power of the public relations function in an organization, and how their activities produce the right programs, influence strategic planning, and affect the short-term and long-term goals of organizations. Roles are defined as "the recurring actions of an individual, appropriately interrelated with the repetitive activities of others so as to yield a predictable outcome." (Dozier D. M., 1992).
Broom and Smith first investigated the different roles played by public relations practitioners that affected client perceptions of them. The literature in Broom and Smith's initial study provided five conceptual role models that were operationalized in the public relations context, they are: expert prescriber, technical services provider, communication process facilitator, problem-solving process facilitator, and acceptant legitimizer. They attempted to match their experimental versions of these role models to institutionalized practitioner behavior. (Broom & Smith, 1979).

Finally, they proposed four public relations roles, which are the expert prescriber, the communication facilitator, the problem-solving process facilitator, and the communication technician. (Broom & Smith, 1979). The four roles represented the following activities:

- **The expert prescriber:** The practitioner operates as the authority on both public relations problems and their solutions. The practitioner researches and defines the problem, develops the program and takes major responsibility for its implementation. Management is often content to leave public relations in the hands of the 'expert' and they become passive and dependent on the "expert's advice" avoiding the integration of public relations mentality in daily management decisions.

- **The communication facilitator:** This role casts the practitioner as a sensitive 'go-between' or information broker. The practitioner serves as a liaison, interpreter, and mediator between the organization and its publics. This role puts the practitioner in a collaborative relationship with both management and the organization's publics.
- **The problem-solving process facilitator:** The practitioner works in partnership with management throughout the process of defining and solving problems. The practitioner helps the organization employ a rational problem-solving process that involves key organizational members in public relations planning and programming.

- **The communication technician:** The practitioner is primarily concerned with producing communication materials for the public relations effort. They see themselves, as do others, in limited non-management roles. Management relies on practitioners in this role to only implement public relations programs and not to contribute in the program decisions process. (Broom & Dozier, 1986).

Later Broom recognized that practitioners often perform multiple roles. He argued that a practitioner can be categorized according to the most frequently played role. (Leichty & Springston, 1996). As Toth et al. stated, "Roles in public relations are in process, enacted in economic circumstances that require practitioners to retool, and reinvent themselves to respond and even keep ahead of the demands of and changes within their organizations." (Toth E. L., Serini, Wright, & Emig, 1998).

Further research indicated that the first three roles, the expert prescriber, the communication facilitator, the problem-solving process facilitator, were all part of an essential manager’s role. After conforming that the first three roles were interrelated, Dozier found that the four roles described by public relations practitioners could be reduced to a managerial role and a technician role. Dozier also found two minor roles, "the media relations specialist", and "the communication liaison". Dozier argued that communication liaisons were simply managers "thwarted by organizational
constraints", he also argued that media relations specialists were a type of technician specializing in external media relations rather than internal activities.

Dozier concluded that the major and minor roles inter-correlated and the minor roles also failed to emerge reliably in studies. “The manager and technician roles emerge empirically time and again in studies of different practitioners.” (Dozier D. M., 1992). Dozier urged for the reduction of the roles. He states, "The two roles are uncorrelated, indicating that they are empirically as well as conceptually distinct." (Dozier D. M., 1992). Reagan et al also concluded the same results (Reagan, Anderson, Sumner, & Hill, 1990).

The technician role consists of writing, editing, taking photos, handling communication production, running special events, and making telephone calls to the media. Essentially, these activities focus on implementing management’s overall communication strategies. On the other hand, the managerial roles consists of collaborating with senior management to identify and solve problems, keeping communication flowing between the organization and its publics, and advising senior managers about communication needs. (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2012, p. 61).

Nonetheless, Dozier's classification of practitioner roles has received some criticism, as Leichty and Springston stated, "further descriptive research on PR roles is needed. A lot of meaningful information is lost by categorizing practitioners as either managers or technicians. With Important elaborations. Broom and Smith's categories fit our data better than Dozier's manager/technician dichotomy." (Leichty & Springston, 1996).
If managers can deliver both manager and technical functions, they achieve higher status in the organizations decision-making process. Public relations practitioners cannot expect to have the opportunity to influence and achieve beneficial relationships with stakeholders unless they perform both roles. They especially must execute the manager role in such a way that top management will understand its value and demand it of the public relations function. (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2012, p. 61).

However, in order for the public relations department to be empowered, the senior practitioner has to have a managerial role in the organization. Grunig and Grunig state, "In less excellent departments, however, all of the communication practitioners—including the senior practitioner—are technicians. If the senior communicator is not a manager, it is not possible for public relations to be empowered as a management function." (Grunig & Grunig, 2003).

Public Relations in the Arab World and Saudi Arabia

The body of knowledge of public relations in the Arab world is still young and growing. Most of the studies that have analyzed public relations in Saudi Arabia, in particular, are mostly contributions by graduate students from American universities. These and other studies have contributed to an understanding of public relations in countries such as Saudi Arabia. (Sriramesh K., 2003).

According to some scholars, the Middle East was the cradle of public relations going back thousands of years. Freitag and Stokes stated that, Hammurabi of Babylonia used the sheep-shearing season to gather his people for "town hall
meetings". They also stated that Pharaohs used the irrigation season to celebrate the Nile River to disseminate information and news to farmers. (Freitag & Stokes, 2009).

In Arab culture, Alanazi said, "'Okaz Souk,' an open market in the Arab Peninsula before Islam, served as an example. At this market, Arabian tribes' poets and speakers competed for glory in demonstrations and competitions with other tribes." (Alanazi, 1996). With Islam, communication concepts were encouraged, especially to convert new followers and spread Islamic teaching. (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 168).

Al-Enad noted that public relations is known as "general relations" in the Arab world. The term "public" and "public relations" is not used at all in Arabic, not even in public relations or "general relations" text books. The word "public" as referring to "a group of people" can be translated literally by different Arabic words. He stated, "In the Arab world, labeling public relations as 'general affairs' and 'general relations' may have contributed to the persistent vagueness of the nature, goals, roles, and functions of public relations." (Al-Enad A. H., 1990).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located in southwest Asia. It is the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula. It occupies an area about the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River. Saudi Arabia’s population is 27 million, including 8.4 million foreign residents, and its capital city is Riyadh located in the middle of the country. (About Saudi Arabia, 2011). The country is bordered by the Red Sea on the west; the Persian Gulf and the United Arab Emirates on the east; Yemen and Oman to the south; and Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait on the north. The country is also, where Islam was born and the site of the faith’s two most important shrines, Mecca and Medina. (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 167).
Considering that the government is a monarchy, its oil-based economy and other major economic activities are government controlled. It boasts the largest petroleum reserves in the world. Vast gas reserves also help define the Saudi economy. To reduce its dependence on oil, the Saudi government has launched a program to privatize some public institutions such as power generation and telecommunications. Further, the government has encouraged the development of a wide range of manufacturing industries, providing incentives to private-sector entrepreneurs. (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 167).

According to Feghali, "Saudi Arabians maintain a comparatively closed society by requiring conformity to rigid gender roles and Islamic Sharia law and by strictly regulating interaction with the multitude of foreigner workers living separately on compounds." (Feghali, 1997).

It is impossible to discuss the emergence of public relations without considering the Arab–American Oil Company (ARAMCO). In the early 1930s, ARAMCO began to search for oil in Saudi Arabia. (ARAMCO, 2012). American managers and workers failed to accommodate some Saudi cultural issues. A number of communication problems quickly emerged. Therefore, ARAMCO established a public relations function and charged it with two principal tasks:

1. To train Arabs to work with Americans
2. To teach Americans to understand, respect and adapt to Saudi culture. (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 168).

The Middle East Public Relations Association (MEPRA) was launched in 2000. (Kirat M., 2005). MEPRA's goals were, increasing awareness, raising the level of professionalism, providing a voice for the public relations industry, and most importantly, assuring that its members adhere to a professional code of conduct.
In addition, one of MEPRA's key objectives was to create educational forums in the region for young practitioners who might consider public relations as an exciting career opportunity. MEPRA defined public relations as "the discipline that looks after reputation with the aim of earning understanding and support, and influencing opinion and behavior." (Badran, Turk, & Walters, 2003). Recently the Saudi Association for Public Relations and Advertising (SAPRA) was also established with the same goals and objectives. (The Saudi Association for Public Relations and Advertising, 2012).

According to MEPRA, most local and regional consultancies enjoy a high level of professionalism. Generally speaking, private and public sectors in the Middle East vary in the level of professionalism. Moreover, the majority of public relations agencies maintain high professional standards. (Badran, Turk, & Walters, 2003).

Although the public relations professionalism in Saudi Arabia is developing rapidly, limited support from top management and limited budgets continue to delay the progress. Most public relations research in Saudi Arabia focuses on one crisis or another and fails to move the discipline forward by developing and exploring theories and models suitable to the Saudi context. (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 169). Public relations in Saudi Arabia was predominantly viewed as a "propaganda function" rather than as a contributor to decision-making process. (Alanazi, 1996). Moreover, practitioners, were not always brought into the decision making process. However, when they were, their advice tended to be taken seriously. (Alanazi, 1996).

Public relations in Saudi Arabia is characterized by:

- Misunderstanding of the concept, role and function of public relations
• Lack of expertise and training *Limited financial resources
• Rapid growth in higher education programs in public relations
• The seeds of professional standards of practice (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 169)

The last two decades in the Arab world have seen a huge expansion of public relations in various areas such as, economics, politics, and the social and cultural sectors. However, this profession still suffers from poor performance, lack of strategies and absence of vision. (Kirat M., 2005). Internet adoption, however, enables public relations professionals to handle multiple tasks more quickly and easily and enhances efficiency. A study by Al-Shohaib, Al-Kandari, and Abdulrahim found that only 46 percent of Saudi public relations professionals had adopted the Internet for public relations. (Al-Shohaib, Al-Kandari, & Abdulrahim, 2009) Alanazi argued that, innovation and progress were often in conflict with the perceptions of some Saudi religious leaders. For example, introducing radio to the country caused some religious leaders to believe that the medium was satanic, yielding only when the King persuaded them that the radio, as well as the telephone and the automobile, were innovations that could be used to serve religious purposes as well. (Alanazi, 1996).

Research shown that public relations practice plays different roles, however, there may be other reasons. One of these reasons is what we call environmental factors, which not only affects the practice of public relations but also dictates certain ways and methods and perhaps different goals, philosophies and values of public relations. The philosophy and practice of public relations can be affected by societal conditions. (Al-Enad A. H., 1990).
Public relations in Saudi Arabia, is highly tied to government institutions and is looked at as a tool of publicity, manipulation, and protocol. Another important factor in public relations is the place of individuals in society, the different strategies used to communicate with them, their freedom, and to what extent their opinion is important in society. (Alanazi, 1996)

Another condition that is expected to influence public relations philosophies, goals, tools, and practices is the dominant theory of the press in society. When discussing public relations in governmental institutions in Saudi Arabia, we realize that transparency in government activities is nearly nonexistent. (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 167). According to Al-Enad, in most parts of the Arab world, the authoritarian theory of the press is still in effect. However, in other parts a developmental theory is applied. In most cases, communication in governmental institutions is one-way, its purpose is unbalanced, and the tools are the mass media. The mass media not only publish and transmit information from government public relations, but have no power to edit, or change any part in most cases. (Al-Enad A. H., 1990).

The government of Saudi Arabia is a strict one, Clarke stated that the government, "...seeks to improve the economic welfare of the citizens while also enforcing (sometimes ruthlessly) the country's customs and traditions." (Clarke, 2007). Even though, "...government enforcement of social mores has set Saudi Arabia apart as one of the world's strictest and most traditional societies." (Clarke, 2007). As previously stated, the mass media only disseminates information from the government, and in most cases does not have the ability to edit or change this information. Al-Enad stated, "If the practice of a certain theory of the press is
justified, then the practice of public relations in any form suitable to the cultural and societal conditions is not only justified but essential." (Al-Enad A. H., 1990).

It is not surprising the role and functions of public relations are affected by environmental factors. (Al-Enad A. H., 1990). Religion, politics, and traditional customs are factors that influence the Saudi community. In democratic societies, one can easily explain and defend the need for public relations because the values of public relations are democratic. However, in authoritative countries, the task is difficult, but not impossible. (Al-Enad A. H., 1990).

Today, job descriptions for public relations practitioners in public and private organizations in the middle east, still reflect the early press agentry model of public relations practice. (Badran, Turk, & Walters, 2003). According to Al-Enad, sometimes, public relations was used just to be used and to be present in the management hierarchies, and sometimes public relations was used to do what other departments do not do. However, most of the time it is used to function as a receptionist and/or a communication agent. (Al-Enad A. H., 1990). Public relations performs as an information office in ministries and other governmental agencies. It seeks to communicate with the public to achieve one or two goals:

1. To educate the public on subjects related to client field of work and increase its knowledge and/or to persuade it to behave or act differently (e.g., go to school, immunize, obey traffic rules, etc.)

2. To publicize achievements of client and/or society as a whole, and make the public feel satisfied. (Al-Enad A. H., 1990).

Regarding these goals, Al-Enad argued that when people or managers take into account the cultural lag concept, whereas, cultural lag is defined as "the various parts
of modern culture are not changing at the same rate; some parts are changing much more rapidly than others; and that since there is a correlation and interdependence of parts, a rapid change in one part of our culture requires readjustments through other changes in the various correlated parts of culture."

(Al-Enad A. H., 1990). Along with cultural lag, when also taking into account the role of public relations in light of the general systems theory, both of the previously mentioned goals are justified. There should be no reason to question the first goal. Nevertheless, the second goal appears to be "propaganda" which contrast with the ethics of public relations and is, questionable. (Al-Enad A. H., 1990). Cultural differences among societies affect how public relations is practiced by people within different societies. (Badran, Turk, & Walters, 2003).

Al-Enad concluded, that public relations is located between an institution and its publics or environment. In contrast, in developing nations, public relations is located between "the material" and "the nonmaterial aspects of the culture". The literature suggests that public relations attempts to adapt each side, to the needs and expectations of the other. In both cases, public relations’ role may not meet the standards that are stated by public relations theoreticians. Nevertheless, engage in public relations activities, does help in maintaining the equilibrium of the system. (Al-Enad A. H., 1990).

Alanazi illustrated that, public relations departments hire domestic Saudi employees when their primary target audiences are Saudi Arabian. Moreover, Alanazi stated that the public relations department is the second most important information source when Saudi audiences are targeted. When organizations target non-Saudi audiences they often hire public relations firms in the targeted country, indicating the importance given to public relations outside the country. According to Alanazi, public
relations in Saudi Arabia is in varied roles and with some sophistication. In addition, no single public relations role was clearly dominant in Saudi public relations, but all four roles were practiced to some degree. Public relations in Saudi Arabia remains a male-dominated field. (Alanazi, 1996).

In conclusion, considering the knowledge already gathered, public relations practitioners' roles at enterprises in public and private sectors in Saudi Arabia are still somewhat ambiguous. Public relations roles fall under the blurred concept that has been casted upon public relations practices in Saudi Arabia. There is a lack of understanding of the true role of public relations, which, mostly, does not cross the theoretical and scientific concepts of public relations and strategic planning that are taught as a science in journalism and communication colleges. (Alsadhan, 2007).

Public Relations at King Saud University

Considering that universities and colleges are educational institutions that have a diverse and broad range of beneficiaries, they are defiantly in need of public relations activities. The public relations' operations at universities revolve around a number of tasks in order to achieve the university objectives. These functions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The transfer of information from the university to the public
- Conduct research from the public to determine what their attitude is towards the university and report the findings to the university's higher management to confirm what is correct and correct what is wrong.
• Coordinate or arrange media coverage, conferences, and events. (Alhammad, 2007).

Along with the establishment of King Saud University in 1957, (King Saud University, 2012), a public relations structure was also being established. The university officially categorized this public relations effort as "the General Department of Public Relations and Media", and structurally linked it to the University's president. The department aims to publicize the role of the university's scientific and academic status towards the overall development of the university. In addition, the department strives to identify public opinion toward the university and forward this information to the university's higher management.

The public relations department is also tasked with managing good relations between the university's stakeholders, as well as raising awareness in regard to the stakeholders' importance to the university and the community. With this effort, the university strives to attain mutual interaction with the publics in order to achieve the university's goals and mission.

The public relations department is responsible for identifying its own recruitment needs, and work on improving their daily operations, as well as, the drafting of facts and information that require publishing, in the appropriate media template. The department is also responsible for supervising the distribution of any publication released by the university, deanships, colleges, and departments, with the exception of the university's newspaper.

The public relations department, among other things, reviews, processes, and authorizes, dues payable to publishing institutions regarding the university's different
newspaper, magazine and publications’ subscriptions, and negotiates their renewals. The department also organizes the distribution of these publications to different units of the university.

The General Department of Public Relations and Media at King Saudi University is divided into five sections, and they are:

• The Relations Department, which consists of three units: the Protocol Unit, the Training Unit, and the Travel-Documents Unit.

• The Media Department, which consists of four units: the Media-Documentation Unit, the Internal Media Unit, the University Media Unit, the University Advertising Unit.

• The Information Department, which consists of five units: the Publishing Unit, the Computer Unit, the Programing and Planning Unit, the Invitations Unit, and the Database Unit.

• The Halls Department. This department is responsible for reserving halls for conferences and events. The Halls Department consists of two units: the Halls Coordination Unit, and the Halls Supervision Unit.

• The Finance and Administration Department. This department is concerned with the financial and administrative matters. (Alhammad, 2007).
**Research questions**

RQ1. Which of Grunig’s models of public relations are practiced by public relations practitioners at King Saud University?

RQ2. What are the functions of public relations departments at King Saud University?

RQ3. What roles do public relations practitioners perform at King Saud University?

RQ4. What are the most important job skills for public relations practitioners at King Saud University?
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to present a comprehensive overview of public relations at King Saud University by attempting to identify the public relations models and roles practiced by PR practitioners. For the purpose of obtaining quantitative data about public relations practice at the university, a survey was conducted. Employing a quantitative method, this study aimed to generate measureable data that could summarize observations provided by public relations practitioners and make quantifiable conclusions. According to Stacks, measurement is a characteristic of quantitative method, when research inquiries into the reasons of why people behave in a certain way. (Stacks, 2011).

Subjects and procedures

The researcher prepared the research material which consisted of a cover letter, a study description sheet, and the questionnaire. The content of the material was first written in English, and then it was translated into Arabic by the researcher. To ensure accuracy, both English and Arabic materials were reviewed by Turki Aljallal, a friend and colleague who has professional training and experience both in public relations
and translation. Additionally, both the researcher and Mr. Aljallal hold Bachelor’s degrees in English translation from the Language and Translation College at King Saud University.

Unfortunately, King Saud University’s websites lacked information about the public relations staff and their contact information. PR professionals at the university were identified and recruited for this study with the help of the former faculty adviser of the public relations department at the university, Dr. Ali Alanazi. After contacting Dr. Alanazi, the researcher organized a package containing the Arabic versions of the cover letter, the study description sheet, and the questionnaire. The package was sent via e-mail to Dr. Alanazi, at that time, he printed out the material and sent it internally to the participants who met the criteria of the study.

**Survey instrument**

Surveys are considered the most common used research methodology in public relations. Stacks presented four basic ways to collect data: via telephone, mail, person-to-person, and the Internet. (Stacks, 2011). Of the four types of surveys, the researcher was advised by Dr. Alanazi to utilize mail survey based on his knowledge of the practitioners at the university, and how likely they would participate in the study.

One way to make sure the survey is reliable and valid, is to use one that someone else has prepared and demonstrated to be reliable and valid through careful testing. This is particularly important when survey tests attitude, emotions, quality of life and moral values. (Fink, 2009). To make sure that requirements of reliability were met, an
already pre-tested reliable instrument was used for the purposes of this study. The survey was adopted from the instrument used in the Excellence study by Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002) which was developed to understand public relations in organizational excellence by inquiring the senior public relations managers, top management, and employees in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

For the purpose of this study, the instruments’ statements and coding system were fully adopted and utilized to answer research question one, models of public relations, research question two, function of public relations, research question three, public relations practitioners roles, and finally, research question four, important skills for practitioners. However, the original unusual format of measurement was changed to a Likert scale measurement, in order to keep the self-administered survey simple and clear.

The 5-point Likert scale used in the survey ranged from (1) strongly disagrees to (5) strongly agree. In order to generate a high response rate, the survey was kept concise with a total of 38 questions distributed along three pages. The design and logic of the self-administered survey was made user-friendly to help reduce skipping and missing data.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement on a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree to 16 statements regarding Grunig’s four models of public relations. The second section also asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement on a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree to 16 statements regarding the two practitioners’ roles. The third section asked for demographic information. This included gender, age, experience in public relations,
educational levels, and training in public relations if applicable. This approach helps to gain understanding of the qualifications of the respondents.

Data collection and data analysis

The participants in the study that filled out the survey, were instructed by Dr. Alanazi, to seal the survey in an envelope and send them back. The responses were collected over a period of two weeks. This was expected because the researcher knew the amount of time required, considering having the right connections, this process needed. As a result, 55 completed surveys were returned of the 62 surveys that were sent out.

After the surveys were collected, and sent to the researcher, they were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The data was double checked for accuracy. The data were then analyzed. The analysis included, numbers and frequencies, and measures of central tendency including mean, median, and mode, in addition to measures of range and standard deviation. (Fink, 2009).

Institutional Review Board approval and King Saud University Support

The researcher received written permission from King Saud University to conduct this research. In addition the researcher also received an exempt approval for this research project from the Institutional Review Board.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

A total of sixty-two (62) surveys were printed and distributed to public relations practitioners at King Saud University. Of those, fifty-five (55) surveys were returned, yielding a (88.7%) return rate.

Study Demographics

Gender

Figure 4.1 showed that the gender distribution of the survey was (43) respondents (78.2%) were male and (12) respondents (21.8%) did not specify their gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1: Distribution of study sample according to Gender
Age

Out of the completed surveys (n=55), (4) respondents (7.3%) stated they were between the ages 18-24 years old, (25) respondents (45.5%) specified they are between the ages 25-34 years old, (20) respondents (36.4%) stated they were between 35-44 years of age, (6) respondents (10.9%) stated they were between the ages 45-54. In Figure 4.2 the respondents were condensed into two fairly equal groups, the first group ranged from 18-34 where a little over half of the respondents fell (52.7%). The second group was from 35 years and older (26) respondents fell in to this group (47.3%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34 Years</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Years and older</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.2: Distribution of study sample according to Age**

Experience

All respondents indicated their years of experience based on the ranges that were in the survey. (4) Respondents (7.3%) indicated they have been practicing public relations for less than one year. (25) Respondents (45.5%) stated they had been practicing public relations for 1-5 years. (10) Respondents (18.2%) had been practicing public relations for 6-10 years. (16) respondents (29.1%) had been practicing public relations for more than 10 years. In Figure 4.3 the respondents were condensed into two groups, the first group was practitioners that have been practicing public relations for 6 years and less, a little over half of the respondents fell in to this
group (52.7%). The second group was practitioners that have been practicing public relations for more than 6 years, (26) respondents fell in to this group (47.3%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 Year</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6 Years and more</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3 Distribution of study sample according to Number of years in the practice of public relations

Level of education

According to Figure 4.4, (9) respondents (16.4%) to the survey indicated that their highest level of education was high school, (38) respondents (69.1%) stated that their highest level of education was a bachelor’s degree, (5) respondents (9.1%) indicated that their highest level of education was a master’s degree, one respondent (1.8%) stated that the highest level of education was a Ph.D. degree, and finally (2) respondents indicated that their highest level of education was other than the ones listed in the survey, however they did not list their degree.
### Educational Level Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA Degree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA degree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.4: Distribution of study sample according to educational level*

### Training in Public Relations

In Figure 4.5, (15) respondents (27.3%) indicated that they had not received any training in public relations, (10) respondents (18.2%) stated that they had one training course in public relations, (14) respondents (25.5%) stated that they had received 2-3 training courses in public relations, (16) respondents (29%) indicated that they had received more than 3 training courses in public relations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of training courses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Course</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 Courses</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 Courses</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.5: Distribution of study sample according to the number of training courses in public relations*
Grunig’s four models of public relations

The first part of the survey asked the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the 16 statements, the same statements used in Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier’s (2002) study. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a scale from 1-5, where 1 indicates (strongly disagree) and 5 indicates (strongly agree). To present the responses clearly, the statements will be presented in four categories according to Grunig’s models of public relation (Press Agentry, Public Information, Two-Way Asymmetrical, and Two-Way Symmetrical). Each model has four statements supporting that particular model.

Press Agentry (Figure 4.6):

1. The main purpose of public relations is, simply, to get publicity for the University

   The mean score for this item was (3.05). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (7) respondents selected strongly agree (12.7%), (18) respondents selected agree (32.7%), (8) selected neutral (14.5%), (15) selected disagree (27.3%), and (7) respondents selected strongly disagree (12.7%).

2. In public relations, we mostly attempt to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.

   The mean score for this item was (3.51). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (8) respondents selected strongly agree (14.5%), (26) respondents selected agree (47.3%), (8) selected neutral (14.5%), (12) selected disagree (21.8%), and (1) respondents selected strongly disagree (1.8%).
3. *We determine how successful a program is from the number of people who attend an event or use our products and services.*

The mean score for this item was (3.90). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (13) respondents selected strongly agree (25%), (27) respondents selected agree (51.9%), (6) selected neutral (11.5%), (6) selected disagree (11.5%), and none of the respondents selected strongly disagree.

4. *In the university, public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.*

The mean score for this item was (2.56). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (3) respondents selected strongly agree (5.6%), (11) respondents selected agree (20.4%), (8) selected neutral (14.8%), (23) selected disagree (42.6%), and (9) respondents selected strongly disagree (16.7%).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ser No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The main purpose of public relations is, simply, to get publicity for the University</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In public relations, we mostly attempt to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>We determine how successful a program is from the number of people who attend an event or use our products and services.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>In the University, public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.6: Press Agentry Model

Public Information (Figure 4.7):

5. *In public relations, nearly everyone is busy writing news stories or producing publications and there is no time to conduct research.*

The mean score for this item was (2.61). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (4) respondents selected strongly agree (7.4 %), (10) respondents selected agree (18.5%), (8) selected neutral (14.8%), (25) selected disagree (46.3%), and (7) respondents selected strongly disagree (13%).
6.  *In public relations, we disseminate accurate information, but do not volunteer unfavorable information.*

The mean score for this item was (3.64). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (10) respondents selected strongly agree (18.2%), (22) respondents selected agree (40%), (16) selected neutral (29.1%), (7) selected disagree (12.7%), and none of the respondents selected strongly disagree.

7. *Keeping a list of media stories and placements is about the only way we have to determine the success of a program.*

The mean score for this item was (3.19). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (6) respondents selected strongly agree (11.1%), (19) respondents selected agree (35.2%), (12) selected neutral (22.2%), (13) selected disagree (24.1%), and (4) respondents selected strongly disagree (7.4%).

8. *At the university, public relations are more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the University.*

The mean score for this item was (2.96). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (3) respondents selected strongly agree (5.7%), (15) respondents selected agree (28.3%), (15) selected neutral (28.3%), (17) selected disagree (32.1%), and (3) respondents selected strongly disagree (5.7%).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ser No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In public relations, nearly everyone is busy writing news stories or producing publications and there is no time to conduct research.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In public relations, we disseminate accurate information, but do not volunteer unfavorable information.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Keeping a list of media stories and placements is about the only way we have to determine the success of a program.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>At the university, public relations are more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the University.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.7: Public Information Model

Two-Way Asymmetrical (Figure 4.8):

9. After completing a public relations program, we conduct research to determine how effective the program has been in changing people’s attitudes.

The mean score for this item was (3.04). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (5) respondents selected strongly agree (9.1%), (14) respondents selected agree (25.5%), (17) selected neutral (30.9%), (16) selected disagree (29.1%), and (3) respondents selected strongly disagree (5.5%).
10. **In public relations, our broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the university wants them to behave.**

The mean score for this item was (3.36). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (6) respondents selected strongly agree (10.9%), (21) respondents selected agree (38.2%), (16) selected neutral (29.1%), (11) selected disagree (20%), and (1) respondents selected strongly disagree (1.8%).

11. **Before starting a public relations program, we look at attitude surveys to make sure we describe the university in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.**

The mean score for this item was (3.35). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (8) respondents selected strongly agree (14.8%), (19) respondents selected agree (35.2%), (14) selected neutral (25.9%), (10) selected disagree (18.5%), and (3) respondents selected strongly disagree (5.6%).

12. **Before beginning a program, we conduct research to determine public attitudes toward the university and how they might change.**

The mean score for this item was (3.06). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (5) respondents selected strongly agree (9.4%), (16) respondents selected agree (30.2%), (12) selected neutral (22.6%), (17) selected disagree (32.1%), and (3) respondents selected strongly disagree (5.7%).
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
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Figure 4.8: Two-Way Asymmetrical

Two-Way Symmetrical (Figure 4.9):

13. The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the University and publics the university affects.

The mean score for this item was (3.82). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (11) respondents selected strongly agree (20%), (31)
respondents selected agree (56.4%), (7) selected neutral (12.7%), (4) selected disagree (7.3%), and (2) respondents selected strongly disagree (3.6%).

14. Before starting a program, we conduct surveys or informal research to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.

The mean score for this item was (3.00). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (3) respondents selected strongly agree (5.5%), (19) respondents selected agree (34.5%), (13) selected neutral (23.6%), (15) selected disagree (27.3%), and (5) respondents selected strongly disagree (9.1%).

15. The purpose of public relations is to change the attitudes and behavior of publics.

The mean score for this item was (3.31). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (5) respondents selected strongly agree (9.3%), (25) respondents selected agree (46.3%), (9) selected neutral (16.7%), (12) selected disagree (22.2%), and (3) respondents selected strongly disagree (5.6%).

16. Our university believes public relations should provide mediation for the University, to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.

The mean score for this item was (3.65). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (11) respondents selected strongly agree (20%), (25) respondents selected agree (45.5%), (10) selected neutral (18.2%), (17) selected disagree (12.7%), and (2) respondents selected strongly disagree (3.6%).
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<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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Figure 4.9: Two-Way Symmetrical

According to the participants’ responses (Figure 4.10), The Press Agentry model scored a mean of (3.25) with a standard deviation of (0.73). The Public Information model scored a mean of (3.11) with a standard deviation of (0.55). The two-way asymmetrical model scored a mean of (3.20) with a standard deviation of (0.79). The two-way Symmetrical model scored a mean of (3.45) with a standard deviation of (0.65).
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Figure 4.10: Mean’s and Std. Deviation for total of factors

Public relations practitioners’ roles

The second part of the survey asked the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the 16 statements, the same statements summarized in Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier’s (2002) study. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a scale from 1-5, where 1 indicates (strongly disagree) and 5 indicates (strongly agree). To simplify the responses, the results will be presented in the same order they were in the survey. However, they will be illustrated in two categories, The Managerial Role (Figure 4.11), and the Technician Role (Figure 4.12) Each role has eight statements supporting that particular role.

1. Coordinate a press conference or arrange media coverage of an event

The mean score for this item was (3.91). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (19) respondents selected strongly agree (34.5%), (22) respondents selected agree (40%), (7) selected neutral (12.7%), (4) selected disagree (7.3%), and (3) respondents selected strongly disagree (5.5%).
2. *Manage people*

The mean score for this item was (3.45). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (15) respondents selected strongly agree (27.3%), (17) respondents selected agree (30.9%), (8) selected neutral (14.5%), (8) selected disagree (14.5%), and (7) respondents selected strongly disagree (12.7%).

3. *Conduct evaluation research*

The mean score for this item was (3.04). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (5) respondents selected strongly agree (9.4%), (13) respondents selected agree (24.5%), (17) selected neutral (32.1%), (15) selected disagree (28.3%), and (3) respondents selected strongly disagree (5.7%).

4. *Produce publications*

The mean score for this item was (3.13). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (3) respondents selected strongly agree (5.6%), (23) respondents selected agree (42.6%), (10) selected neutral (18.5%), (14) selected disagree (25.9%), and (4) respondents selected strongly disagree (7.4%).

5. *Write an advertisement*

The mean score for this item was (3.25). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (7) respondents selected strongly agree (13.2%), (21) respondents selected agree (39.6%), (6) selected neutral (11.3%), (16) selected disagree (30.2%), and (3) respondents selected strongly disagree (5.7%).

6. *Take photographs*

The mean score for this item was (3.44). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (13) respondents selected strongly agree (23.6%), (20)
respondents selected agree (36.4%), (5) selected neutral (9.1%), (12) selected disagree (21.8%), and (5) respondents selected strongly disagree (9.1%).

7. Write speeches

The mean score for this item was (4.15). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (17) respondents selected strongly agree (31.5%), (32) respondents selected agree (59.3%), (1) selected neutral (1.9%), (4) selected disagree (7.4%), and none of the respondents selected strongly disagree.

8. Develop goals and objectives for your departments

The mean score for this item was (4.02). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (18) respondents selected strongly agree (32.7%), (25) respondents selected agree (45.5%), (8) selected neutral (14.5%), (3) selected disagree (5.5%), and (1) respondents selected strongly disagree (1.8%).

9. Produce audio and visual

The mean score for this item was (2.85). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (6) respondents selected strongly agree (10.9%), (13) respondents selected agree (23.6%), (10) selected neutral (18.2%), (19) selected disagree (34.5%), and (7) respondents selected strongly disagree (12.7%).

10. Prepare a departmental budget

The mean score for this item was (2.80). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (4) respondents selected strongly agree (7.4%), (14) respondents selected agree (25.9%), (12) selected neutral (22.2%), (15) selected disagree (27.8%), and (9) respondents selected strongly disagree (16.7%).

11. Perform environmental scanning
The mean score for this item was (4.00). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (20) respondents selected strongly agree (36.4%), (22) respondents selected agree (40%), (8) selected neutral (14.5%), (3) selected disagree (5.5%), and (2) respondents selected strongly disagree (3.6%).

12. Write news releases and feature articles

The mean score for this item was (3.47). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (11) respondents selected strongly agree (20%), (19) respondents selected agree (34.5%), (13) selected neutral (23.6%), (9) selected disagree (16.4%), and (3) respondents selected strongly disagree (5.5%).

13. Develop strategies for solving public relations and communication problems

The mean score for this item was (3.85). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (14) respondents selected strongly agree (25.5%), (27) respondents selected agree (49.1%), (8) selected neutral (14.5%), (4) selected disagree (7.3%), and (2) respondents selected strongly disagree (3.6%).

14. Create and manage a speakers' bureau

The mean score for this item was (3.28). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (7) respondents selected strongly agree (13%), (17) respondents selected agree (31.5%), (18) selected neutral (33.3%), (8) selected disagree (14.8%), and (4) respondents selected strongly disagree (7.4%).

15. Use research for segment public's

The mean score for this item was (2.93). The distribution of responses for this statement was, (1) respondents selected strongly agree (1.8%), (22) respondents selected agree (40%), (11) selected neutral (20%), (14) selected disagree (25.5%), and (7) respondents selected strongly disagree (12.7%).

16. Manage the University’s response to issues
The mean score for this item was 3.05. The distribution of responses for this statement was, (5) respondents selected strongly agree (9.1%), (20) respondents selected agree (36.4%), (10) selected neutral (18.2%), (13) selected disagree (23.6%), and (7) respondents selected strongly disagree (12.7%).
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Figure 4.11: Managerial Role
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Produce publications.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>5.6</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Produce audio and visual.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.12: Technician Role
According to the participants’ responses (Figure 4.13), The Managerial Role scored a total mean of (3.40) with a standard deviation of (0.82). On the other hand, The Technician Role scored a slightly higher total mean of (3.44) with a standard deviation of (0.82).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managerial Role</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technician Role</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.13: Mean's and Std. Deviation for Practitioner Roles
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The results of this study provided insight in several ways. Most importantly, it is clear that public relations at King Saud University is now practiced in varied roles and with some sophistication. This study confirmed the important role public relations plays, and the study’s survey generated information to answer the researcher’s research questions. Although, differences were found in previous Arabic studies regarding the practice of public relations among government organization types in Saudi Arabia, these differences were not necessarily large or important. (Alanazi, 1996, p. 252).

The gender distribution of this study showed that, (78.2%) respondents were male and (21.8%) respondents did not specify their gender (Figure 4.1). This was expected based on the researcher’s knowledge of the Saudi community. However regarding females’ presence in the public relations field, Alanazi (1996), observed that public relations in Saudi Arabia is still a male-dominated field. He stated “Only three of the 228 respondents were females, with only 26 female employees being reported in all of the respondents' organizations.” (Alanazi, 1996, p. 254). This situation contradicts with the results found in the Excellence study where the majority of public relations professionals in the three countries studied were women. (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2006)
More than half of the respondents (52.7%) indicated that their age ranged from 18-34, and (47.3%) of the respondents from 35 years and older (Figure 4.2). However, this does not mean that the public relations profession at King Saud University is still young in terms of the age groups that practice public relations according to the previous studies (Alhammad, 2007; Alsorayai, 2005), because, (81.9%) of the practitioners were between 25-44.

In regard to the years of experience, Alanazi stated that only (20%) of respondents of his study on public relations in Saudi Arabia reported long experience in the field. (Alanazi, 1996, p. 253). However, for this study, practitioners at the university showed an improvement. They reported that (47.3%) have been practicing public relations for more than 6 years, and (52.7%) have been practicing public relations for 6 years and less, and (Figure 4.3). This also challenges the characteristic claimed by Freitag and Stokes that Saudi public relations practitioners lack expertise. (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 169).

Considering that public relations is still a relatively new profession in the region, results from this study showed that (16.4%) of the public relations practitioners at the university indicated that their highest level of education was a high school degree (Figure 4.4), which was not surprising. Previous studies also showed that practitioners in Saudi Arabia have reported holding less than a college degree; this was due to the fact that higher education is a relatively recent phenomenon in Saudi Arabia, and that practitioners with low educational levels had and still have solid experience in the field. (Alanazi, 1996, p. 252).

However, the important of education was clear in the data collected from this study, (69.1%) of practitioners at the university stated having a bachelor’s degree, and
(10.9%) reported having post-graduate degrees (Figure 4.4). These results were consistent with studies such as Alhammad (2007), showing an improvement over the results found by Alanazi (1996) study where he stated that (10.5%) of public relations employees in Saudi Arabia reported having graduate-level education, (Alanazi, 1996, p. 252).

Results from this study reported that (29%) of practitioners at the university indicated that they had more than three training courses in public relations. Then again, (27.3%) indicated that they had no training in public relations at all, which is the second largest percentage of the population. Whereas, (43.7%) of the practitioners indicated they had from 1-3 training courses in public relations (Figure 4.5). Although, the largest percentage of the population has received adequate training, the percentage of practitioners without training supports previous studies claiming its absence.

Alanazi stressed that over (90%) of the respondents to his study on Saudi public relations stated that more training is needed, and only (25%) reported that training is offered constantly, as well as, (75%) of the respondents stated that it is sometimes available. (Alanazi, 1996, p. 252), supporting Freitag and Stokes’ statement that, one of the Saudi public relations characteristics is the lack of training (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 169).

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Which of Grunig’s models of public relations are practiced by public relations practitioners at King Saud University?
The four models of public relations hold an essential position in the Excellence Theory. (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). According to Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier, many scholars, “essentially have equated the entire Excellence theory with the two-way symmetrical model.” (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002, p. 307).

According to Grunig and Grunig, in government public relations, the public information model consistently was the most common, and the press agentry model was not far behind. (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). According to Alanazi, Saudi government organizations use publicity to strengthen their image and showcase their achievements. In addition, practitioners at government agencies believe that public relations is a propaganda function rather than as one that focuses on decision making (Alanazi, 1996, pp. 249-250).

Moreover, Al-Shohaib, Al-Kandari, and Abdulrahim stated, “Public relations in Saudi Arabia is applied in publicity, press agentry and propagation of organizational accomplishments.” (Al-Shohaib, Al-Kandari, & Abdulrahim, 2009). However, research suggested that, in the United Arab Emirates, public relations departments in most of the government units mostly practice a “two-way symmetrical” model or-at the least-a “mixed-motive” model. (Krckeberg, 1996).

According to the data collected in this study, public relations practitioners at King Saud University generally agreed that Grunig’s two-way symmetrical model (M= 3.45) was the most practiced model at the university. Moreover, Grunig’s other three models, the Press Agentry model (M= 3.25), the two-way asymmetrical model (M= 3.20), and the Public Information model (M= 3.11) also, came close, however, respondents to the study did not believed as strongly in these models classifying them in the neutral range, Figure 4.10.
In addition, Scholars have linked the entire Excellence theory with the two-way symmetrical model. Grunig considers this model the most ethical, he also stresses that, “excellent public relations can help the rest of the organization be excellent.” (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). The participants supports of the two-way symmetrical model is a significant sign that practitioners practice ethical public relations at the university.

Moreover, Grunig’s four models can be used situationally to classify behaviors of public relations in different organizations, and in the same organization at different times. (Al-Enad A. H., 1992). Thus, the participants’ responses to the individual 16 statements indicate that all the models are utilized on some level.

The survey results from this study regarding the models that are practiced by public relations practitioners at King Saud University contradicts with previous study conducted in Saudi Arabia, and is apparently consistent with Kruckeberg (1996), indicating signs of development within the practice at the university.

**Research Question 2: What are the functions of public relations departments at King Saud University?**

According to Alanazi, propaganda along with publicity are historically some of the functions of public relations in Saudi Arabia. Attending opening ceremonies and social activities, and visiting new projects are ways used to strengthen images and showcase achievements. (Alanazi, 1996). In addition, Freitag and Stokes, state that Saudi managers also mainly view public relations as a propaganda function. (Freitag & Stokes, 2009, p. 169). However, this study shows that public relations practice at King Saud University challenges these previous beliefs.
According to the results, participants in this study generally agreed with the practice of the two-way symmetrical model. This model strives for mutual understanding between the organization and its publics by using social science research methodology to achieve mutual understanding through two-way communication rather than one-way communication.

To further illustrate the participants’ agreement with this model, item number 13 in the first part of the survey that stated, *the purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the university and publics the university affects*. The mean score for this particular item was (3.82). Where (76.4%) respondents indicated that they agree and strongly agree, and only (10.9%) indicated that they disagree and strongly disagree, Figure 4.9.

According to the results of this study, the other three models are also practiced to a certain extent, therefore, their functionality is also relevant to the university. The press agentry model (M= 3.25), describes when practitioners disseminate information that might not be truthful. The public information model (M= 3.11), shows that practitioners rely on truthful one-way communication to inform publics about organizational positions. The two-way asymmetrical model (M= 3.20) describes organizational practices that encourage two-way communication with publics. However, the messages that are communicated in this model can be tailored thus, the end result can be an imbalanced relationship between the organization and the public.

According to the literature, to achieve the university objectives, public relations departments should, among other functions, transfer information from the university to the public, determine the public’s attitude towards the university by conducting research, reporting research findings to the university's management, in addition to
coordinate or arrange media coverage, conferences, and special events. Therefore, as previously stated, the models classify behaviors of public relations in different organizations and in the same organization at different times.

Research Question 3: What roles do public relations practitioners perform at King Saud University?

Practitioners’ roles theory is one of the most important public relations theories that has been developed. Research on practitioners’ roles has been very important to the body of public relations knowledge. Part of this study attempted to uncover public relations practitioners’ roles that are performed at King Saud University. Previous studies conducted in Saudi Arabia revealed that there is no single clear dominant role in Saudi public relations, but all roles were practiced to some degree. Additionally, Alanazi stated that exploratory factor analysis revealed five factors, but limiting the solution to two factors showed two roles (the managerial role and the technical role) that were similar to the roles found in American research. (Alanazi, 1996, p. 254).

According to the data that was collected in this study, public relations practitioners at King Saud University indicated that they did not feel strongly about the managerial role (M= 3.40) their agreement level with this role classified it in the neutral range. On the other hand, respondents generally agreed to performing the technician role (M= 3.44) slightly more than the other role classifying it in the agree range, Figure 4.13.

According to previous studies, there seems to be no single dominant public relations role. Consequently, the results for this study are consistent with earlier studies in Saudi Arabia. Alanazi stated, “Communication technicians are somewhat more common than are practitioners.” (Alanazi, 1996, p. 252). These results are also
supported by Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier, they stress that communication technicians carry out most of the day-to-day communication activities of public relations departments. (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2006, p. 41).

Despite the slight overall difference in the mean total for the roles, respondents at King Saud University reported high agreement levels for both the Managerial and Technician roles on the individual statements, Figure 4.11, Figure 4.12, which indicated a slight consistency with previous studies. Notably Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier, stated that many practitioners play both manager and technician roles. (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2006, p. 41).

**Research Question 4: What are the most important job skills for public relations practitioners at King Saud University?**

Understanding what practitioners perform and how their activities produce the right programs, influence strategic planning, and help achieve organizational goals, has helped explain the power of the public relations in an organization. Dozier stressed that practitioners must be aware of what it takes to be excellent, and they must have the knowledge and skills to carry out this mission. (Dozier, 1995).

Public relations practitioners at King Saud University reported that their agreement level with the managerial role classified it in the neutral range. On the other hand, respondents reported that their agreement level with the technician role was slightly more than their agreement level with the managerial role, classifying it in the agree range. In general, these classifications point out which role is utilized the most, and in turn indicate the important job skills that practitioners should possess.

According to the literature, practitioners performing managerial roles should be skilled at identifying and solving problems by collaborating with university officials,
keeping communication flowing between the university and its stakeholder publics, and advising university officials about communication needs. On the other hand, practitioners performing technician roles should be skilled at writing, taking photos, editing, handling communication production, coordinating special events, and making telephone calls to the media.

**Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research**

This study has profiled public relations practice at King Saud University on various research issues, including public relations models, practitioners’ roles, functions, and most importance skills for practitioners, by conducting a survey of public relations practitioners working at the university.

One of the limitations of this study is that there have not been enough scientific studies dealing with public relations in Saudi Arabia in general, nonetheless, at King Saud University. In other words, the only populations to which the results can be generalized are the participants of this study. Therefore, future studies should be conducted in order to have a more comprehensive picture of public relations in Saudi organizations in general and Saudi University in particular.

Another limitation of this study lies in its methodology. The survey method is an important tool, however, studies that employed participant-observation and in-depth interviews might yield more detailed results. To minimize this limitation in future research, the researcher strongly suggests communicating with practitioners on a one-to-one basis.

It is not surprising that the role and functions of public relations is affected by environmental factors. (Al-Enad, 1990). Religion, politics, and traditional customs are some of the factors that influence the Saudi community. Exploring societal and cultural
influences on Saudi public relations is another important area of research. Internationally, culture has a great effect on public relations practice. Considering the researchers knowledge of the country and its culture, future research should examine the relationship between culture and public relations in Saudi Arabia. This approach will help increase our understanding of international public relations in general and on Saudi public relations in particular.

Grunig and Grunig stressed that students must learn to think of the international implications of public relations problems, and the importance of learning how to work with colleagues and clients from other countries. In addition, students should learn how different cultural, political, economic, and media systems work. (Grunig & Grunig, 2002). According to Alanazi, Saudi and non-Saudi target audiences were approached differently in Saudi public relations. Saudi organizations relied on Saudi staff with communicate with Saudi audiences. On the other hand, Saudi organizations, hired non-Saudi practitioners and relied on non-Saudi staff with international experience when targeting non-Saudi audiences. (Alanazi, 1996, p. 252). Therefore future studies should research Saudi practitioners’ international knowledge and expertise.

Most Saudi practitioners receive their education in communications and public relations at local universities. However, this study did not ask the participants that had an educational degree after high school about their specific majors. Future studies about public relations education in Saudi Arabia is of great importance. Understanding the curriculum would help in order to provide suggestions on how to build a better program for better knowledge of public relations, and install the most important and up-to-date practices and ethics, considering that modern public relations in Saudi Arabia is still young.
In addition, this study has not fully examined practitioners’ ethical standards when practicing public relations. The study has uncovered that the most favorable model of public relations was the two-way Symmetrical, however, there might be unethical activities in public relations, that the current study has not touched on, which need to be examined for a more professional practice in the future.

Finally, in Saudi Arabia government agencies and the media are all government-controlled, they share the same underlying mission, there is little or no conflict between the two. (Alanazi, 1996, p. 253). Unfortunately, this study did not reveal the relationship between practitioners at the university and the media, therefore, future research should be conducted in this area.

Practitioners at the university should gain broad skills and experience in their fields to prove that they can add more values to the university. This will give them a chance to perform strategic planning with the dominant coalition, and it will allow them to focus more on managerial activities and less on technical activities. Managerial roles should be more performed than technician roles. As Dozier stated, “it is not sufficient to be a great technician capable of writing great news releases; it is important to be able to manage two-way communication, conduct research, and understand social science behind communications.” (Dozier, 1995).

Regarding international public relations, it is important to bear in mind that interpersonal communication is very important in a relationship-based culture like Saudi Arabia. When looking for public relations practitioners, interpersonal communication is one of many important skills that should be taken into consideration.

Finally, based on the study’s findings, it seems that public relations at King Saud University is developing. However, practitioners should utilize information from the
Saudi Arabian Public Relations Association (SAPRA), because such associations can help manage public relations activities, and help provide professional and ethical guidelines for the practice.

**Conclusion**

Public relations, developed in the West, based on westerner assumptions about behavior and cultural understanding, however, concepts such as Grunig’s four models of public relations and public relations practitioners’ roles, helps explain the profession in international settings such as King Saud University, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Public relations departments are the second most important information source when targeting Saudi audiences, which, is a good sign for public relations as it indicates the recognition of the field. (Alanazi, 1996, p. 254). This study revealed the public relations models, practices, and practitioner roles at King Saud University, by conducting a survey of public relations practitioners working at the university.

This study showed that practitioners perform both public relations roles, and are generally familiar with public relations activities, such as writing press releases, writing newsletters, communicating with the media, holding events, etc. Therefore, if practitioners were challenged and encouraged to participate in strategic activities, they will add more value to the work they perform. Moreover, Practitioners can influence and achieve beneficial relationships with stakeholders if they perform both public relations roles. (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2012, p. 61).

Education and training contribute to the importance of public relations, appropriate education and training allow practitioners to perform their jobs
effectively. It was clear that practitioners and the university realized that according the results of the study.

Excellent public relations programs are staffed by practitioners who gained the knowledge needed to perform the managerial role, through education, or self-study. (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2006). Moreover, in less excellent departments, all of the communication practitioners and senior practitioner are technicians. (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2006, p. 41). With this in mind, public relations at King Saud University seems to show potential in being Excellent.

This study yielded several interesting findings by profiling public relations practice at King Saud University, an organization that has not been adequately studied. The significance of this study is that it discusses various aspects of public relations practice, such as public relations functions, practitioner roles, and their most important skills. Although the study endured many challenges and limitations, the researcher achieved its main goal, which was shedding light on a relatively unknown topic.
REFERENCES


Appendix A: English Survey Instrument

Part one:

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about the public relations department, whereas 1 indicates (strongly disagree) and 5 indicates (strongly agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The main purpose of public relations is, simply, to get publicity for the University.

2. In public relations, we mostly attempt to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.

3. We determine how successful a program is from the number of people who attend an event or use our products and services.

4. In the University, public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.

5. In public relations, nearly everyone is busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to conduct research.

6. In public relations, we disseminate accurate information, but do not volunteer unfavorable information.

7. Keeping a list of media stories and placements is about the only way we have to determine the success of a program.

8. At the university, public relations are more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the University.

9. After completing a public relations program, we conduct research to determine how effective the program has been in changing people’s attitudes.

10. In public relations, our broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the University wants them to behave.

11. Before starting a public relations program, we look at attitude surveys to make sure we describe the University in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.

12. Before beginning a program, we conduct research to determine public attitudes toward the University and how they might change.
The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the University and publics the University affects.

Before starting a program, we conduct surveys or informal research to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.

The purpose of public relations is to change the attitudes and behavior of publics.

Our University believes public relations should provide mediation for the University, to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.

Part two:

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your day-to-day activities, whereas 1 indicates (strongly disagree) and 5 indicates (strongly agree)

| 1. Coordinate a press conference or arrange media coverage of an event. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Manage people |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Conduct evaluation research |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Produce publications |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Write an advertisement |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6. Take photographs |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7. Write speeches |   |   |   |   |   |
| 8. Develop goals and objectives for your departments |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9. Produce audio and visual |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10. Prepare a departmental budget |   |   |   |   |   |
| 11. Perform environmental scanning |   |   |   |   |   |
| 12. Write news releases and feature articles |   |   |   |   |   |
| 13. Develop strategies for solving public relations and communication problems |   |   |   |   |   |
| 14. Create and manage a speakers' bureau |   |   |   |   |   |
Part three:

Demographics and professional information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender:</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>25-34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many years have you been practicing public relations/communication?

| Less than 1 | 1-5 | 6-10 | More than 10 |

What is your highest level of education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High school</th>
<th>BA Degree</th>
<th>MA degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have you had training in public relations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>1 Course</th>
<th>2-3 courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 3</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please state the title of your position:

Thank you for your time, and participation.
Appendix B: Arabic Survey Instrument

القسم الأول:
من فضلك وضح إلى أي مدى توافق أو لا توافق على العبارات التالية، حيث أن:
لا أوافق بشدة  
لا  
أوافق  
محايد  
أوافق بشدة

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>الهدف الرئيسي للعلاقات العامة في الجامعة، ببساطة، هو الدعاية والإعلان للجامعة</th>
<th>أوافق بشدة</th>
<th>أوافق</th>
<th>محلي</th>
<th>لا أوافق</th>
<th>لا أوافق بشدة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يحاول موظفو العلاقات العامة في الجامعة نشر الأخبار الإيجابية في وسائل الإعلام بينما يتم إبعاد الأخبار السلبية من النشر.</td>
<td>أوافق بشدة</td>
<td>أوافق</td>
<td>محلي</td>
<td>لا أوافق</td>
<td>لا أوافق بشدة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>يقرر موظفو العلاقات العامة مدى نجاح برامجهم كما يظهر من خلال عدد الحضور لحدث ما أو من خلال عدد المستفيدين من نشاطات وبرامج الجامعة.</td>
<td>في الجامعة، العلاقات العامة والنشر يعنيان تقريبًا نفس الشيء.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>في إدارة العلاقات العامة في الجامعة، كل موظف، تقريبًا، مشغول بكتابة الصحفية أو العمل على إنتاج المطبوعات الإعلامية لدرجة أنه لا يوجد وقت لعمل البحث.</td>
<td>أن الاحتفاظ بملف للقصاصات الصحفية هو السبيل الوحيد لدى موظفي العلاقات العامة للتحقق من نجاح نشاطاتها.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تقوم العلاقات العامة من خلال إنشائها وبرامجها بتوزيع معلومات وأخبار صحية ودقيقة ولكنها لن تبادر بنشر معلومات أو أخبار سلبية عن الجامعة.</td>
<td>أن الهدف الواضح لموظفي العلاقات العامة في الجامعة هو إقناع الجماهير للتصرف بالطريقة التي تريدها منهم الجامعة.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>إدارة العلاقات العامة في الجامعة تعتبر ناشئًا محليًا للعلومات وغير متحزئ للجامعة.</td>
<td>في الجامعة، العلاقات العامة والنشر يعنيان تقريبًا نفس الشيء.</td>
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<td>بعد الانتهاء من النشاط وبرامج العلاقات العامة يقوم موظفو العلاقات العامة بعمل البحوث اللازمة لمعرفة مدى نجاح هذه البرامج في تغيير اتجاهات الجمهور.</td>
<td>قبل بدء برامج العلاقات العامة في الجامعة، يقوم موظفو العلاقات العامة بالإطلاع على نتائج الأبحاث للتعرف على نظرية الجمهور للجامعة وسياساتها. وذلك لجعل الجامعة وسياستها أكثر قبولًا لدى الجمهور.</td>
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<td>قبل بدء برامج العلاقات العامة في الجامعة، نجري آليات تتضمن تحديد الموقف العام نحو الجامعة، و إلى أي مدى قد يتغير هذا الموقف.</td>
<td>قبل بدء برامج علاقات عامة، تجري آليات لتقييم نتائج الموقف العام نحو الجامعة، و إلى أي مدى قد يتغير هذا الموقف.</td>
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<td>هدف برامج العلاقات العامة في الجامعة هو العمل على تطوير تفاعلات مشترك بين الجامعة والجمهور المتاثرين به.</td>
<td>هدف برامج العلاقات العامة في الجامعة هو العمل على تطوير تفاعلات مشترك بين الجامعة والجمهور المتاثرين به.</td>
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<td>قبل بدء برامج العلاقات العامة في الجامعة، يقوم موظفو العلاقات العامة بالإطلاع على نتائج الأبحاث للتعرف على مدى تأثر الجمهور بالجهود.</td>
<td>تستخدم استراتيجيات الاستقصاء للتعرف على مدى تأثر الجمهور بالجهود.</td>
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<td>هدف برامج العلاقات العامة في الجامعة هو تغيير اتجاهات وسلوك جماهير الجامعة.</td>
<td>هدف برامج العلاقات العامة في الجامعة هو تغيير اتجاهات وسلوك جماهير الجامعة.</td>
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تعتقد الجامعة بأن العلاقات العامة ينبغي أن تعمل كوساطة في الجامعة للتكريب بين وجهات النظر الإدارية والجماهير في الموضوعات الجدلية.

القسم الثاني:
من فضلك وضح إلى أي مدى توافق أو لا توافق على العبادات التالية التي تتعلق بمهامك اليومية، حيث أن:

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<th>توافق بشدة</th>
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<th>محيد</th>
<th>لا توافق</th>
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أقوم بتنظيم مؤتمر صحي أو تنسيق تغطية إعلامية لمناسبة أو حدث.
أقوم بالإدارة أو الإشراف على الموظفين في الإدارة التي أعمل بها.
أقوم بالقلم بدراسات تقويمية.
أقوم بإنتاج المنشورات.
أقوم بكتابة الأعلانات.
أقوم بالتفاصيل صور فوتوغرافية.
أقوم بكتابة الخطابات الرسمية.
أقوم بإعداد أهداف واستراتيجيات للإدارة التي أعمل بها.
أقوم بإنتاج مواد صوتية ومرئية.
أقوم بإعداد الميزانية.
أقوم بكتابة ما ينشر أو يقال عن الجامعة.
أقوم بكتابة البيانات الصحفية وكتابة المقالات الصحفية.
أقوم بإعداد استراتيجيات وخطط لحل مشاكل العلاقات العامة والإتصال.
أقوم بإعداد واستخراج قائمة المتحدثين الرسميين.
أقوم باستخدام البحوث لقياس الرأي العام.
أقوم بإدارة ردود فعل و إستجابة الجامعة للقضايا الداخلية و الخارجية.

القسم الثالث:

الموارد المعرفية:

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<th>الجنس</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. الجنس:

2. العمر:

3. عدد سنوات الخبرة في ممارسة العلاقات العامة:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>أقل من 1 سنة</th>
<th>1-5 سنوات</th>
<th>6-10 سنوات</th>
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4. المستوى التعليمي:

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<tr>
<th>دكتوراه</th>
<th>ماجستير</th>
<th>جامعي</th>
<th>أقل من أول</th>
<th>أخرى</th>
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5. هل حصلت على دورات في مجال العلاقات العامة؟

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>أكثر من 3 دورات</th>
<th>2-3 دورات</th>
<th>دورة واحدة</th>
<th>لا أبداً</th>
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6. ما هو مسماك الوظيفي؟

و شكرًا لك على المشاركة...
Appendix C: English recruitment Letter

Dear public relations practitioner,

Greetings, my name is Saud Alanazi, and I am a graduate student majoring in public relations at the Department of Journalism at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, United States. I am currently working on my final research paper, titled “A Study of Public Relations Practices at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.” I am using a paper survey instrument as my methodology for my research, and I am hoping you would be willing to participate for the survey.

This study aims to ask you about your opinion about public relations practice at the King Saud University. This survey has three sections and should not take more than 15-20 minutes. Therefore, as a public relations practitioner your insight would be important to my study. Remember that your participation is completely voluntary, and you can stop your participation at any time without any penalty.

There are no expected risks or discomfort to you as a participant if you decide to participate in this study. All of your responses will be kept confidential. Dr. Becky McDonald and I are the only people who are going to review the data for this study. I assure you that any information I include in my research does not identify you as the respondent.

Thank you for your time, please feel free to contact me with any questions, and if you would like a copy of the study.

Sincerely

Saud Alanazi
Principal Investigator
Phone number: +1-765-631-1027
Email: salanazi@bsu.edu
Appendix D: Arabic recruitment Letter

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

عزيزي الكريم موظف العلاقات العامة
حفظك الله ورحمة الله وبركاته,,، وبعد

أود أن أحيطك علمًا بأنه أجلت درجة الماجستير في قسم الإعلام بجامعة بول ستيت - انديانا – الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. ودراستي تتعلق بموضوع "ممارسات العلاقات العامة في جامعة الملك سعود, الرياض، المملكة العربية السعودية".

وتنمو هذه الأسئلة من ثلاثة أقسام مرتبطة بالموضوع, أرجو التكرم بتعبئتها حسب الاختيار المطلوب في السؤال ولا تضع أكثر من علامة واحدة لكل عبارة, كما أرجو ألا تترك أي عبارة بدون وضع العلامة على أحد خياراتها. و لن تستغرق الإجابة على الاستبيان أكثر من 15-20 دقيقة

علمًا بأن إجابتك على هذه العبارات تعني الكثير للباحث وذلك من أجل التوصل إلى نتائج وتوصيات تفيد المسئولين في الأخذ بها, كما تترتب البعثة وذلك عن طريق إضافة أبعاد جديدة للموضوع، ولذا فالمؤمل أن تكون الإجابة على هذه الاستبانة متحرية الدقة ما أمكن, علمًا بأن مشاركتك تطوعية تماما, ويمكنك التوقف عند تعبئة النموذج في أي وقت. وسوف تعامل هذه المعلومات بسرية تامة و لن تستخدم إلا لغرض البحث.

شكرا لكم، وأرجو الاتصال بالباحث في حال وجود أي أسئلة.

مع تحياتي

سعود بن عبدالعزيز العنزي
جامعة بول ستيت
الهاتف: +1765-631-1027
البريد الإلكتروني: salanazi@bsu.edu
Appendix E: English study description sheet

**Study Title**  A Study of Public Relations Practices at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**Study Purpose and Rationale**

The purpose of this research project is to determine the models and roles of public relations that are practiced at King Saud University. Findings from this research may help public relations practitioners understand the current state of PR and how to improve it in the future.

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria**

To be eligible to participate in this study, you must be between the ages of 20 and 65, and you must perform public relations functions at King Saud University.

**Participation Procedures and Duration**

For this project, you will be asked to complete a series of questions about your opinion about Public relations practice at the King Saud University. This survey has three sections and should not take more than 15-20 minutes to complete.

**Data Confidentiality or Anonymity**

Your responses will be completely anonymous. The researcher will not be able to associate answers with any respondent. In addition, no identifying information such as names will appear in any publication of the data. Therefore, please complete the survey openly and honestly.

**Storage of Data**

The paper survey responses (in Arabic) will be stored in a binder until the data is entered in a software program (SPSS) and checked again for accuracy. After that the paper survey will be shredded. The SPSS file will be saved on a password protected flash drive for at least 2-3 months until the research is completed, and then deleted. Only the researcher and the faculty advisor will have access to the data.

**Risks or Discomforts**

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.
Benefits

There are no perceived benefits for participating in this study. However, findings from this research may help PR practitioners understand the current state of public relations and how to improve it in the future.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from participating at any time for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. Please feel free to ask any questions of the investigator before or after completing the survey.

IRB Contact Information

For one’s rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: For questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070 or at irb@bsu.edu.

Study Title   A Study of Public Relations Practices at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Researcher Contact Information

Principal Investigator: Saud Alanazi, Graduate Student
Department of Journalism
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306
Telephone: +1-765-631-1027
Email: salanazi@bsu.edu

Faculty Supervisor: Becky McDonald, Ph.D.
Department of Journalism
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306
Telephone: +1-765-285-8209
Email: bamcdonald@bsu.edu
عنوان الدراسة:دراسة لمارسات العلاقات العامة في جامعة الملك سعود، الرياض، المملكة العربية السعودية.

الغرض من الدراسة و أساسها المنطقي: الغرض من هذا المشروع البحثي، هو تحديد نماذج وأدوار العلاقات العامة التي تمارس في جامعة الملك سعود، وقد تم تعداد نتائج هذا البحث، والممارسين للعلاقات العامة على فهم الحالة الراهنة للعلاقات العامة وكيفية تحسينه في المستقبل.

معايير الإدراج/ الاستبعاد: لكي تكون مؤهلة للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة، يجب أن تكون بين سن 20 و 65، ويجب أن تكون من مهتمي أعمال العلاقات العامة في جامعة الملك سعود.

إجراءات المشاركة والمدة المتوقعة للبحث: لهذا المشروع، سوف يطلب منك اكتمال سلسلة من الأسئلة حول رأيك في ممارسات العلاقات العامة في جامعة الملك سعود. هذه الدراسة على ثلاثة أقسام، ولن تستغرق أكثر من 15-21 دقيقة لإكمالها.

إخفاء الهوية أو سرية البيانات: سوف تكون ردودكم مجهولة تماماً. فلنتمكن من ربط الأجوبة مع أي من المشاركين. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، لن توجد معلومات تحدد الهوية كأسماء وغيرها في أي نشر للبيانات الناتجة عن الدراسة. لذلك، يرجى اكتمال الأسئلة بصراحة وصدق.

تخزين البيانات: سيتم تخزين الردود على الاستمارة (باللغة العربية) في ملف مغلق حتى يتم إدخال البيانات في برنامج حاسوبي (SPSS) و بعد مراجعة النتائج مرة أخرى للتأكد من دقتها، سوف يتم إتلافها. وسوف يتم حفظ ملف الملف في (SPSS) في فلاش محمي بكلمة سر لمدة لا تزيد عن 2-3 أشهر حتى يتم الانتهاء من البحث، ومن ثم يتم حذفها. لن يطلع على النتائج سوى الباحث والمشرف الأكاديمي.

المخاطر أو المضايقات: لا توجد مخاطر أو مضايقات متوقعة بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

المفاف: لا توجد مفاف مباشر لمشاركة في هذه الدراسة. ولكن، قد تساعد نتائج هذا البحث، الممارسين للعلاقات العامة على فهم الحالة الراهنة للعلاقات العامة وكيفية تحسينه في المستقبل.

طبيعة المشاركين: المشاركة في هذه الدراسة هو طوعية تماماً وأنت حر في الانسحاب من المشاركة في أي وقت ولأي سبب دون أي عقوبة من الباحث. ولا تتردد في طرح أي سؤال على باحث قبل أو بعد الانتهاء من المشاركة.

معلومات الاتصال بمجلس المراجعة المؤسس: لمعرفة حقوق الفرد اعتباراً من موضوع البحث، بالنسبة للأستاذة عن حقوق كموضوع بحث يمكنني الاتصال براوي (المؤسس) بمكتب نزاهة البحث، في جامعة بول ستبيت، منسي، ولاية إنديانا 47306، هاتف رقم:
أو على البريد الإلكتروني: irb@bsu.edu

عنوان الدراسة: دراسة لممارسات العلاقات العامة في جامعة الملك سعود، الرياض، المملكة العربية السعودية.

معلومات الاتصال بالباحث:

باحث الرئيسي:
سعود العنزي, طالب دراسات عليا
قسم الصحافة والإعلام
جامعة بول ستنت
منسي، ولاية انديانا
الهاتف: +1-765-285-5070
البريد الإلكتروني: salanazi@bsu.edu

المشرف الأكاديمي:
د. بيكي ماكدونالد
قسم الصحافة والإعلام
جامعة بول ستنت
منسي، ولاية انديانا
الهاتف: +1-765-631-0275
البريد الإلكتروني: bamcdonald@bsu.edu
Appendix G: King Saud University Letter of Support

Suadade doktor [Name],

Prof. [Name],

I, the US Consular General of Saudi Arabia in the United States, hereby certify that:

The person named above is a true and lawful holder of the credentials presented.

Salutations and greetings in peace and safety for you.

King Saud University Letter of Support

[Logo and signature]

[Name]

Dean of the College of Arts

[Signature]

King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Appendix H: King Saud University Letter of Support (English translation)

His Excellency/ Dr. Mohammed Abdullah AlEissa

The Saudi Cultural Attaché to the United States of America

Peace and mercy of God be upon you,,,

King Saud University has the honor to provide gratitude and appreciation to Your Excellency for the kind efforts towards scholars generally and our university scholars in particular.

Referring to the letter sent by the scholar / Saud Abdulaziz Alanazi with his desire to conduct a questionnaire on Public Relations practitioners at King Saud University and applying it to his research project entitled, “A Study of Public Relations Practices at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia”

It gives me great pleasure to inform your Excellency that the university has no objection.

Please accept my sincere and immense appreciation,,,

Vice-rector for Graduate Studies
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