

Journal



of P R e s e a r c h

Middle East

Journal of Public Relations Research Middle East

Scientific refereed Journal - Published by Egyptian Public Relations Association - Fifth year - Sixteenth issue - July / September 2017

Arab Impact Factor 2017 = 1.34

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(ISSN 2314-8721)

Egyptian National Scientific & Technical
Information Network
(ENSTINET)

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Journal of Public Relations Research Middle East
(JPRR.ME)

Scientific Refereed Journal

- Sixteenth issue - Fifth Year - July / September 2017 -

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ISSN for the printed copy

(ISSN 2314-8721)

ISSN of the electronic version

(ISSN 2314-8723X)

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The Journal is indexed within the following international digital databases:



The efficiency of communication strategies to respond to the crisis in the formation of public awareness on the reputation of the organization "A Case Study"

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Abstract

This One of the most difficult challenges for public relations in the global marketplace is in the field of crisis communication. In particular that the organization manages a crisis is critical in maintaining good relationships between the organization and the public. Thus, how an organization responds to a crisis is one of the crucial standards in evaluating public relations effectiveness and excellence. Crisis response strategies vary in their effects according to the degree of crisis danger and level of controllability.

Previous studies have focused on identifying the most appropriate response communication strategies and their role in shaping different communication messages about the organization.

This study investigated the publics' perceptions toward organizational crisis response strategies through analyzing the communication appeals targeted to the general publics. Also the study aims at discovering the role of communication response strategies' in shaping organization reputation and their assessment of the quality of products, services, internal management efforts and social responsibility programs. Furthermore, the study aims at identifying the attribution factors of a crisis.

Research model is represented by *Kylie Ann Douthwaite* in 2011 by linking basic variables to each other. The crisis factors: crisis history – crisis effects - crisis response strategies. The organizational factors: degree of responsibility – reputation and the factors of publics: behaviors intention.

Study model assumes that the crisis as an independent variable will have direct and indirect negative effects on the organization reputation as a dependent variable which will have also negative effects on the publics' behaviors intention towards the organization. Thus, publics are shaping their perceptions about the crisis attributions depending on the following elements: severity – responsibility – intention – repeat – stability – crisis history.

This study explored the concepts of crisis and reputation, Quantitative method was adopted to measure these concepts. This study conducted a case study of an educational organization (American university in Cairo) and the crisis is students' trike and study cancellation. Survey with "400" students was adopted as an instrument for assessing the relationship between study variables.

Results explored the link between all the study model variables. Research results indicated that the university is using effective communication through crisis regarding “credibility – accuracy – continuity – speed” and this leads to low crisis attribution. Also research results explored that the efficiency and consistency of communication messages and tolls being used in crisis time affects the students’ emotions, attitudes and behaviors intention toward the university.