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The Factors Affecting on the Perceptive Image of Public Relations Function: A Field Study on a Sample of Students from the Department of Media at Umm Al-Qura University

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Abstract

Research Question: What are the factors affecting the image of public relations' function among female students studying Public Relations at the Department of Media in Umm Al-Qura University?

Research Objectives:

- To identify the nature of the image of the public relations' function that the female students from the Department of Media have, particularly those majoring in Public Relations at University of Umm al-Qura.
- To identify the most important factors affecting the mental image of the function of public relations (personal, environmentally educational, social factors)
- To identify the difficulties and obstacles that challenge the female students to have a better understanding of the function of public relations.

Research Method:

A qualitative research method was used based on a questioner (survey).

Sample:

Female students majoring in Public Relations from the Media Department of Umm Al Qura University.

Research chapters:

- Chapter I: Theoretical and methodological framework of the research.
- Chapter Two: Presenting and discussing the results of the field study.

Results:

- 65.6% of the responses were showing a positive perception of the public relations' function, whereas 33.6% of the responses showed a mix of both positive and negative perception of the public relations' function.
- The environmentally educational factor was ranked first as the most influential factors on the perception of public relations' function, followed by personal factors, and social factors.

- 72.0% of the responses stated the following phrase "The inability to interact with the external work environment which could have contributed to acquire a better understanding of public relations' function," which was a major difficulty facing them in understanding the correct perception of public relations' function.
- 67.2 % of the responses stated this phrase "The focus on the theoretical part while ignoring the practical part of teaching."

The Recommendations:

- Providing realistic opportunities of practical training should allow students to keep pace with the labor market.
- Preparing intensive training programs aimed at refining the skills of public relations' students and qualifying them to work efficiently in the work place.