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Factors Influencing Public Relations Practitioners' Acceptance and Use of Digital Applications: A Field Study Based on the Unified Theory of Technology Acceptance and Use (UTAUT)

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Abstract

This study investigated the factors influencing the acceptance and use of digital applications by public relations practitioners in the public sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To answer the study questions, the researcher used the survey method by applying it to a purposive sample of (45) public relations practitioners working in public sector ministries in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The main findings indicated that social media applications were the most frequently used digital applications among the sample members; WhatsApp ranked first, followed by email and Twitter. The responses of study participants on the "anticipated performance" axis ranged from "agree" to "strongly agree." While their responses on the "anticipated effort" axis were "neutral," "agree," and "strongly agree," their responses on "social impact" axis were "neutral," "agree," and "strongly agree." On the "available facilities" axis, responses ranged from "agree" to "strongly agree," however all responses on the "behavioral intention" axis were "strongly agree." The results show that there is a direct correlation with statistical significance between anticipated performance, anticipated effort, social impact, and available facilities and study participants' behavioral intention to accept and use digital applications.

Keywords: Public Relations, Digital Applications, Unified Theory of Technology Acceptance.