

THE IMPACT OF MULTICULTURALISM ON PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES: A CASE OF SUDAN

Marzok Juma Dahia NGIRKUDU¹

Mustafa AKDAĞ²

Abstract

This article aimed to evaluate the impact of multiculturalism on public relations practices in Sudan. It also seeks to analyze the different public relations models used to describe public relations activities. The study employed the descriptive-analytical approach, which is known as a research method that focuses on collecting accurate and comprehensive details regarding a specific phenomenon or topic within a known time. The questionnaire was used as the primary tool for collecting primary data, which was then analyzed to present the results. **Findings:** The study revealed that multiculturalism has a direct impact on public relations activities in Sudan, and there was a strong positive relationship between multiculturalism and public relations practices. This is attributed to the challenges faced by public relations practitioners in Sudan in selecting appropriate communication channels to reach the target audience due to multiculturalism. **Originality/value of paper:** This research helps to provide a comprehensive assessment of the impact of multiculturalism on public relations practices in Sudan.

Keywords: Sudan, Public Relations, Culture, multiculturalism,

ÇOKKÜLTÜRLÜLÜĞÜN HALKLA İLİŞKİLER UYGULAMASINA

ETKİSİ: SUDAN ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZ

Bu makale, Sudan'da çok kültürlülüğün halkla ilişkiler uygulamaları üzerindeki etkisini değerlendirmeyi ve halkla ilişkiler faaliyetlerini tanımlamak için kullanılan farklı halkla ilişkiler modellerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada, belirli bir konu veya konu hakkında doğru ve kapsamlı ayrıntılar toplamaya odaklanan bir araştırma yöntemi olan tanımlayıcı-analitik yaklaşım kullanılmıştır. Birincil verilerin toplanması için ana araç olarak anket kullanılmış ve elde edilen veriler analiz edilerek sonuçlar sunulmuştur. **Bulgular:** Çalışma, çok kültürlülüğün Sudan'daki halkla ilişkiler faaliyetleri üzerinde doğrudan bir etkisi olduğunu ve çok kültürlülük ile halkla ilişkiler uygulamaları arasında güçlü bir pozitif ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bu durum, Sudan'daki halkla ilişkiler uzmanlarının hedef kitleye ulaşmak için uygun iletişim kanalları seçerken çok kültürlülük nedeniyle yaşadığı zorluklara bağlanmaktadır. **Makalenin özgünlüğü/değeri:** Bu araştırma, Sudan'da çok kültürlülüğün halkla ilişkiler uygulamaları üzerindeki etkisine kapsamlı bir değerlendirme sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca çalışmada, çok kültürlü ortamlarda faaliyet gösteren halkla ilişkiler profesyonellerinin çeşitliliği dikkate alınmasının ve yerel kültürel normlara göre uyum sağlamalarının ne kadar önemli olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sudan, Halkla İlişkiler, Kültür, çokkültürlülük.

Research Article

Araştırma Makalesi

¹ Doktora öğrencisi
Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal
Bilimler Enstitüsü Halkla İlişkiler
Anabilim Dalı, Kayseri, Türkiye

E-Posta
marzokjuma571@gmail.com
ORCID
0000-0003-1971-8816

² Prof.Dr. Öğretim Üyesi
Erciyes Üniversitesi İletişim
Fakültesi, Kayseri, Türkiye

E-Posta
makdag@erciyes.edu.tr
ORCID
0000-0002-1818-2960

Başvuru Tarihi / 11.11. 2024

Kabul Tarihi / Accepted

Introduction

Public relations, with its modern roots traced back to the United States in the early 20th century, is often perceived as a Western phenomenon. However, evidence suggests that public relations practices have existed in various regions of the globe since prehistoric times (Sriramesh & Takasaki, 1999, p.337). Particularly, since the era Pharaoh, public relations practices have been present in African cultures, which can be seen in marriage rituals, public events, and tribes' management affairs, as well as between citizens and civil administrations. Public relations have emerged as a core concern in organizational and institutional management, establishing themselves as one of the newest pillars of media studies. Public relations witnessed significant advancements throughout the 20th century, drawing upon a multitude of scientific theories, professional practices, ethical considerations, and cultural contexts (Ngirkudu & Akdağ, 2023, p. 87).

Theoretically, within the framework of cultural influence, systems theory provides a deep insight of the state of public relations activities. This theory characterizes organizations as systems that are affected by other systems, such as political, economic, social and particularly cultural systems, when operating in a multicultural environment. Public relations management in such organizations strives to foster positive interactions between the organization and its external and internal environments, implying that the organization is susceptible to any cultural changes occurring in the external environment, consequently impacting public relations practices. Over decades, an extensive line of literature has documented the cultural influences on public relations practice, eg. (Yoo & Donthu, 2002; Sriramesh & Takasaki, 1999; Sriramesh & White, 2013; Eckstein, 1996 ;Sriramesh, 1992c). It can be said that there is a correlation between the institution and culture, and therefore the link between public relations and culture is logical. Accordingly, since public relations is essentially a communication activity, it seems sense that multiculturalism would have an impact on public relations techniques. Culture and communication are two things that are mutually influential. In this context, this study aims to explore the impact of multiculturalism on public relations practices in Sudan. Sudan is a country characterized by a multicultural environment. To conceptually link culture to public

relations, it is necessary to distinguish between societal culture and corporate or institutional culture. This distinction is crucial because public relations professionals interact with external and internal audiences that are continuously imbued with the cultural characteristics of a particular region. These two types of cultures not only influence how people communicate but also shape how they respond to communication within the organization (Sriramesh, 1992c, p. 53).

1. Public Relations and Culture

Culture has a direct impact on public relations because the culture of society is effective in the communication patterns used in that society as well as public relations are considered a part of communication activity (Sriramesh & White, 2013, p. 636).

Gudykunst & Nishida (2001), cultural differences should be methodically incorporated into theories of interpersonal relationship formation, according to research on how Japanese and North American people communicate differently. Despite having a substantial impact on human communication activities, societal culture which is distinctive to a given society and organizational culture which is special to an organization had, until recently, received little attention in public relations theories. Sriramesh & White (2013), argued that cultural characteristics significantly influence the global perspectives of dominant alliances. Since these senior executives are the ones who determine the extent of authority granted to the organization's public relations department, culture also impacts public relations practices. Therefore, culture serves as a crucial variable in comprehending because organizations engage practicea public relations in the manner they dose (Sriramesh & Takasaki, 1999, p.339). According to (Vasquez & Taylor, 1999, p.435) social culture consists of communication assumptions that enter the organization through employee experiences and attitudes and are an important part of an organization's public relations communications. For the public relations activities to be effective and successful, it is necessary to know the culture of the society where the activities are presented and to pay attention to cultural elements in the studies carried out (Koçak & Akdağ, 2021, p.730).

Therefore, each of the private or public companies or institutions that carry out public relations activities must analyze the culture to which they belong to. The most important reason for this is to understand the culture of those people and to do the activities that people can adopt to get people's approval as well as the desired effect.

Given the intricate nature of a culture such as in Sudan, no individual or organization can fully master the communication practices or patterns of such cultures. Rather than attempting to grasp all aspects of diverse cultures, it is more beneficial to examine intercultural communication and public relations from a relational and general perspective (Kent & Taylor, 2010, p.51). In contrast, Hofstede (2011) claims in his cultural dimensions theory that explains the impact of cultural differences on public relations practice, and he believes that understanding the level of individualism versus collectivism in a multicultural environment can help public relations practitioners determine whether to emphasize individual achievements or collective harmony in public relations practice, thereby enhancing the importance and effectiveness of the message (Mandela, 2024, p.57) . Before linking public relations with Sudanese culture, it is crucial to review the literature related to the concept of culture. Culture is a phenomenon that is specific to all societies and in which their generalities agree, but it differs from each other in particular, and due to the link between culture and society. Moreover, the concept of culture has become part of the social sciences, especially social anthropology, on which the hypothetical social, political, and economic theories about the history and development of societies and the laws that govern them are based (Guerarra, 2015, p.24-33).

It is difficult to define a specific definition of culture, but from the reference definitions of culture, Taylor's defined culture as "that complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs or any other abilities or customs acquired by man as a member of society" (Soukup, 2010, p.24). It is noted that with this descriptive definition, Taylor states that culture is an expression of the inclusivity of human social life, characterized by its collective dimension, is acquired, and therefore does not arise from biological heredity.

Hofstede (2001), tried to investigate how culture affects management techniques. Culture is the "collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the

members of one human group from another," according to the author, who also said that culture is to a human group what personality is to an individual. In addition, the author's analysis of manager data from 39 different countries yielded four characteristics of society culture. The relationship between culture and organizational management was not the focus of increasing numbers of organizational theorists until the 1980s, when Japan became a major industrial power. After making a distinction between corporate and society culture, Sriramesh and White contended that culture significantly affects an organization's public relations efforts (Sriramesh, 1992a, p.203, 1992b, p.206). Further research on public relations in India by Sriramesh revealed a connection between public relations and society culture, saying that "*Managers and staff inside an organization are products of the culture in which they live. Culture shapes and influences their characters. Thus, their actions reflect their culture. Public relations are impacted by culture through an organization's management philosophy*".

The relationship between corporate culture and public relations was the subject of a theory put forth by Sriramesh, Grunig, and Buffington. They stated that: (*A National, regional, or local culture can directly impact an organization as employees are enculturated within and outside the organization*) (Korolko & Nekrasova, 2009, p.22). There is a paucity of studies that connect societal culture with public relations practices. However, the management literature is replete with studies that link corporate culture to organizational behavior (Wilkins, 1983, p.28). Martin and Sell claim that corporate culture is the result of combining many subcultures. They distinguish between the mainstream culture and the subcultures that exist within the organization. The dominant culture of an organization refers to the core values that the great majority of its members uphold. Subcultures, according to some scholars, are modified forms of the dominant culture.

Besley & Persson (2024) defined corporate culture as the shared values of an organization's members and made the case that human resource management systems have the power to mold and strengthen organizational culture. The researcher believe that an organization's public relations practice is determined by the world views of the organization's dominant coalition and the power of the public relations department, both of which are influenced by societal and corporate culture. All these factors are

impacted by culture because it provides employees who decide on organizational strategies with a shared set of values, meanings, and beliefs. Thus, it is important to comprehend the societal culture that influences communication practices in each nation when evaluating public relations practices in different nations, particularly those that are multicultural, like Sudan and other African nations. Since public relations is primarily a communication activity, public relations practitioners who operate in multicultural environments must thoroughly research and comprehend societal norms prior to engaging in any activities. Doing so helps foster constructive communication between the institution and the community.

2. Sudan and Multiculturalism

Sudan, by its very nature, is a multicultural homeland. Before 1821, present-day Sudan was made up of different states such as the kingdoms of Fur, Beja, Musab'aat, Nuba Mountains, Al-Muqurra, Alwa, Abdallab, Funj, Sennar, and others. Present-day Sudan is home to peoples of diverse cultures and multiple languages. The name Sudan has been commonly used in official correspondence since 1870, In the past it is encompassing all the regions north of the Mediterranean Sea to the Horn of Africa and the Somali coast. Sudan is a vast country with borders with several countries to the north and northwest, connecting with Egypt and Libya, and to the west and southwest, connecting with Chad and the Central African Republic. To the south, it connects with Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan, and to the east, it connects with Ethiopia and Eritrea. It also connects with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia across the Red Sea (Eltayeb, 2019, p.471).

Sudan is described as the crossroads to Africa (a microcosm of Africa, as well as the Arab African homeland, the bridge of the Arab world). It is a mixture of races, as it has been an area of attraction for many human elements since ancient times. It has absorbed large numbers of people who migrated to it from different parts of the world throughout its formative stages. Sudan is a sample of a state characterized by multiculturalism, which is the result of the ethnic, social, and cultural components from which the people of Sudan have descended since ancient times. there are multiple cultures that represent multiculturalism in Sudan, for example culture of the Nile Riverbank people in northern and central Sudan, the culture of the savannah people in

the central-central region, the Beja culture in eastern Sudan, and the Fur culture in western Sudan. Despite the dominance of Islamic culture in northern Sudan, the African element is clear to the extent that Sudan cannot be described as a state with an Arab or African culture, but rather as a state with an Arab-African entity (Muhagir, 2013, p. 8-14).

Sudanese culture was built in the land of Africa, but the diversity of Sudan's climate allowed for the acceptance of other cultural patterns, which paved the way for the emergence of new cultural components in each historical period. Cultural diversity is a fundamental feature of the Sudanese state, and the manifestations of cultural diversity in Sudan are manifested in one way in language, religion, and ethnicity (Saeded, 2023, p.9). Sudan witnesses a multiplicity of languages, such as the Nubian language, the languages of the Fur and Beja, and other languages, then the Arabic language that spread during the period of Islamic kingdoms, in addition to the existence of local dialects for some Sudanese tribes. The number of languages prevailing now in Sudan is 114 languages, which is an indication of linguistic and cultural diversity. As for ethnic diversity, the original inhabitants of Sudan are the Cushites of Africa, but during the period of Islam's entry into Sudan, large numbers of Arab groups migrated to Sudan. Also, with the advent of the Turkish invasion and British colonialism, Asian groups and other groups came to Sudan and then settled and mixed and intermarried. These incoming human elements in Sudan with the indigenous people, which later produced ethnic diversity of about 570 tribes with different cultures of Arab and African origins. This diversity carries different and diverse cultures that Sudan witnesses today (Essien & Falola, 2008, p.41).

3. Method

The goal of the literature that is currently available is to assess how cultural influences affect public relations practice. More research of this kind is seen to be necessary to comprehend the nature of public relations practice in multicultural settings and to lessen the prevalence of dominant theories in the literature on public relations. This article aims to assess the extent to which multiculturalism, languages and local dialects influence public relations practices in Sudan. It also seeks to analyze

the different public relations models most commonly used in public relations practice in Sudan. Using the most appropriate technique for this study, the descriptive analytical approach was used to collect the required data and evaluate the influence of culture on public relations practice. This approach can be defined as an analytical strategy that focuses on obtaining sufficient and accurate data regarding a well-known event, topic, or time to achieve scientific objectives, generate conclusions, and then interpret them objectively and in line with the actual data and observable occurrences (Güçlü, 2021, p.27). Researchers who wish to research social sciences are thought to be suitable candidates for the descriptive analytical method. The study uses a questionnaire to gather data. The fields of quantitative analysis in this study align with the research questions as follows.: To what degree does multiculturalism influence Sudanese public relations practices? Which theories are most frequently applied in Sudanese public relations practices, and is there a theory specifically designed for Sudanese public relations from the standpoint of the country's multiculturalism? Do local dialects, linguistic and religious diversity have an impact on the practice of public relations?

The study group includes academics studying public relations in Sudan as well as practitioners and professionals in the field. The research community was determined by means of the basic random sample procedure used in the investigation. There are two primary sections of the questionnaire: The first shows the demographic data, which includes details about the respondents' years of experience, occupation, gender, and age. Regarding the second facet, it is associated with the primary subject of the study: This section is devoted to evaluating how Sudanese public relations practices are impacted by culture.

The Likert Pentameter scale will be used in the design of the questionnaire. The Likert scale is used to measure opinions, feelings, and judgments, meaning that it is generally used to measure topics that are not seen but affect people's behavior. The questionnaires will be distributed to 100 specialists working in the field of public relations. The analysis of the data was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 following data collection and accuracy verification. To assess the opinions, descriptive statistics will be used. These statistics will include

frequencies, percentages, averages, standard deviations, and the general trend of respondents' opinions.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Quantitative Findings

56% of the 100 respondents were males, while 44% represented females. Their educational levels varied, with 25% holding a bachelor's degree, 39% having a master's degree, 30% possessing a Doctorate, 5% post-doctorate qualifications, and 1% with a secondary school degree. This indicates a significant educational attainment in the field of public relations in Sudan. Out of the 100 participants, 51% were executives and managers of public relations departments in private institutions, while 49% held similar positions in governmental entities. The average work experience in public relations ranged from 5 to over 30 years, with average practical experience of 15 years.

Table 1: The Percentage of Public Relations Practitioners Who Responded to a Survey Regarding the Most Popular Public Relations Models in Sudan.

<i>Models</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Press Agency	3	3.0
Public Information	58	58.0
Two-way Asymmetrical.	11	11.0
Dialogue theory.	1	1.0
Personal influence	25	25.0
Cultural interpretive	1	1.0
African dialogue (Ubuntu theory)	1	1.0

Through the study, it has been revealed that in Sudan, most public relations practitioners utilize the models of Public Information and Personal Influence for their activities, whether in governmental or private institutions. 58% ($n = 58$) Among the respondents consider Public Information model as the most used, while 25% ($n = 25$) consider the Personal Influence model as the predominant approach. The personal influence model is based on the philosophy that the success of public relations significantly relies on personal networks of practitioners, enabling them to build

relationships with influential individuals in media, government, or active political and social groups.

Researchers believe that these models can effectively serve the goals and interests of organizations in culturally diverse and politically authoritarian regimes, where public expression is restricted. In such contexts, government officials, influential figures, and public opinion leaders become crucial audiences for public relations messages. Given Sudan's cultural diversity and authoritarian political systems, practitioners' preference for the Public Information and Personal Influence models aligns with the country's cultural and political realities.

Table 2: Evaluation of the Practice of Public Relations Through the Effectiveness of Models of Public Relations in Describing Public Relations Activities in Sudan.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Press Agencyry.		
Public relations and publicity are practically synonymous in our organization.	3.2600	.90587
The only thing the public relations department of our company does is act as the company's spokesperson to the media.	3.9600	1.07233
Getting publicity for this organization is the main goal of public relations in my establishment.	3.6900	1.08892
In my organization, we only publish what we want to publish, and we do not care about the public's opinion about our organization.	3.6800	1.21339
Public relations in my organization works only to create relationships with journalists.	3.4200	1.15627
Public information		
Rather than acting as the organization's defender or a go-between for management and the public, public relations at our company is a neutral way to spread information.	3.1400	.93225
Our time for doing research on the efficacy of our PR campaigns is restricted.	3.5600	1.11301
Maintaining newspaper clips is the only way we can determine whether our PR campaigns are effective.	3.7500	.93609

Almost everyone in our public relations department is too busy creating publications or composing news articles to have time for research.	3.6800	1.08134
Two-way Asymmetrical		
My organization's public relations department uses attitude polls to ensure that it is portraying the company and its policies in a way that the public is most likely to accept.	3.2900	.97747
We conduct research to ascertain public perceptions of the organization and potential shifts in those perceptions prior to launching a program.	3.3200	1.09986
We do research to find out how successful a public relations program has been in influencing people's perceptions after it has ended.	3.5100	.92654
Our overarching objective in public relations is to influence the public to act in a way that the company desires.	3.8800	.96693
Two-way Symmetrical		
Building mutual understanding between an organization's management and the publics it impacts is the goal of public relations.	4.2800	.60436
We perform informal research, such as surveys, to gauge the level of understanding between management and target audiences prior to launching a PR campaign.	3.4500	1.04809
At our organization, the goal of public relations is to influence management's views and actions in the same way as it influences the public's attitudes and behaviors.	3.4500	.89188
In our company, public relations help management and the public resolve disputes by acting as a mediator.	3.3800	.81377
Dialogue Theory		
To promote new ideas and methods for addressing issues, our PR department/agency highlights conflicts that exist between organizations and their audiences.	3.7800	.83581
When management behaves inappropriately against internal and external audiences, our PR department takes it to task.	3.1400	.86480
Our PR department fully supports the liberation and autonomy of marginalized internal and external publics.	3.2400	.84232
For our company and its clients, our public relations department is a key change agent.	3.9700	.78438

In our public relations department, we rely on the theory of dialogue, believing that dialogue is one of the most ethical forms of communication and includes recognizing the value of the other and their ideas.	3.7800	.90543
African Dialogic (Ubuntu)		
Using the notion of African dialogue (Ubuntu), we in the Public Relations Department strive to foster harmony, a collaborative atmosphere, and ongoing consultation.	4.0700	.65528
Since oral communication is a common means of communication in African countries, the public relations department uses oral communication tactics like storytelling, music, dances, and proverbs to build partnerships with grassroots organizations.	4.0200	.85257
In the field of public relations, we interact with our audiences through theater and folk drama.	3.8200	.80879
Our PR department oversees fostering peace in the workplace by planning including, training on value sharing, team-building activities, and forums.	4.0800	.77434
Verbal communication is a tactic used by our public relations department.	3.4700	.88140
Cultural Interpretive Model		
A useful framework for comprehending and using public relations in a multicultural and linked society is offered by the cultural interpretative model.	4.1600	.80050
Public relations practitioners should take cultural values, conventions, and beliefs into account when developing their campaigns and strategies, as these factors have a big impact on how the public perceives and behaves.	4.2800	.71181
Professionals in public relations should be able to adjust their communication strategies to various cultural situations and should be culturally competent.	4.3000	.75879
Public relations professionals can strengthen their connections with stakeholders who have different origins and viewpoints by using the cultural interpretative model.	4.2700	.67950
A fundamental element of training and education programs for public relations professionals should include the cultural interpretative model.	3.9200	.88398
Personal influence Model		

The Personal Influence Model is a useful framework for comprehending how people are influenced by messages from public relations campaigns.	4.2200	.67540
Public relations campaigns must focus on opinion leaders and influencers since they are vital in influencing public opinion and consumer behavior.	4.2700	.80221
The interpersonal influence model is a useful tool for public relations practitioners when creating more successful tactics to involve opinion leaders and influencers in their programs, particularly in settings where there are strong ethnic and cultural ties.	4.1500	.83333
The personal influence model holds significant importance in the realm of public relations initiatives, as people are progressively exposed to suggestions and endorsements from their peers.	4.0800	.72027
Public relations practitioners should prioritize building trust and credibility with key stakeholders to maximize their personal influence.	4.0000	.80403
The Personal Influence Model remains relevant in the context of African societies, where oral communication and community networks hold significant influence.	4.2300	.69420
Understanding and respecting cultural norms and values is crucial for effectively utilizing the Personal Influence Model in African public relations campaigns.	3.9700	.85818

The results of the poll indicated that the sample does not use the press agency model. The institution's use of public relations did not extend beyond acting as a point of contact for journalists or the media. Getting funding and attention for these institutions was the aim of this. The respondents attribute this to the political system in Sudan, which controls the media and does not grant sufficient freedom of publication and expression. Therefore, public relations practitioners had to work to obtain support from journalists through their personal relationships. These findings highlight the challenges faced by public relations practitioners in Sudan.

The survey's findings also show that Sudan's public relations strategies most frequently employ the public information approach. The researchers' findings in Table

I demonstrate this, with 63% of the sample believing that the only way to assess the effectiveness of public relations using the public information model is to archive data and documents. This suggests that the primary method of public relations practice through the public relations model was the dissemination of information, news stories, brochures, and bulletins.

The findings also demonstrated that public relations staff members lack the time to undertake research since they are too busy creating news articles, pamphlets, and bulletins. Furthermore, according to the survey results, public relations professionals in Sudan do not use the two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical models in their work. Even though the African dialogue theory (Ubuntu) is not prevalent in Sudan. The results indicate that public relations practitioners tend to practice their activities based on the philosophy of Ubuntu theory.

This theory is derived from the African culture of the South Africa region and is based on the philosophy and principles of African communication, which are represented by teamwork, hospitality, and continuous consultation. Creating harmony and a spirit of teamwork among employees and between other units is the responsibility of the public relations department, according to this view. This theory states that because African societies are culturally diverse, public relations practitioners should use popular culture-compatible communication techniques, like storytelling, the use of folk songs, proverbs, and theater, to strengthen the institution-public relationship.

These techniques are common in African societies. The African conversation philosophy, or Ubuntu, has not been adopted in Sudan because the country's rulers, since independence, have been attempting to strengthen the notion of an Arab-Islamic monoculture. Due to this, African culture is not well-known in Sudanese society, which has prevented the Ubuntu theory which is based on African culture from spreading widely.

The respondents' responses regarding the application of the cultural interpretation model to public relations practices in Sudan show that they concur that the model helps to understand PR practices in a multicultural setting like Sudan. Public

relations practitioners should take into consideration how public perceptions and behaviors are shaped by an awareness of cultural norms and values.

Building solid relationships with stakeholders who have different backgrounds and viewpoints is facilitated by this in turn. Furthermore, the study's findings demonstrated that one of the theories that is most frequently applied in Sudanese public relations initiatives is the personal influence theory. The sample agreed, on average, that the personal influence model offers a useful foundation for comprehending and influencing the public through public opinion leaders with public relations communications.

This model's underlying tenet is that interpersonal networks have a significant impact on public relations success. By using this technique, public relations professionals aim to build trusting connections and close friendships with powerful people who hold positions of authority in the government, media, or political organizations.

It is important to note that in multicultural communities, authoritarian political systems, and nations where the media is not allowed to openly reflect public opinion, this model can successfully advance the objectives and interests of the institution. Sudanese society is made up of several political, religious, and ethnic groupings that are shaped by their leaders. Thus, the most crucial audience for public relations practitioners to reach the objectives and promote the interests of the organization is public opinion leaders, government representatives, political and religious leaders, and other community leaders.

Evaluating the impact of religious and Multiculturalism on public relations practices.

Multiculturalism has an impact on the practice of public relations. Based on a review of the respondents' viewpoints, it is discovered that 86% of them think that multiculturalism affects public relations practice, while only 14% think that it has no effect at all. This finding suggests a robust positive correlation between multiculturalism and its influence on public relations strategies. It demonstrates that public relations professionals who operate in multicultural settings like those found in

Sudan and other parts of Africa, for example must take this multiculturalism into account and strive to adjust their strategies to fit the demands of the local context. Furthermore, the results highlight how important multiculturalism is becoming to public relations. Having communication strategies that are both culturally competent and effective is becoming ever more important as firms operate in global markets and interact with a varied range of audiences.

When launching PR initiatives aimed at a multicultural setting, public relations practitioners ought to enlist the services of cultural consultants or experts. More than ninety percent of public relations professionals who responded to the poll said that when launching public relations initiatives aimed at multicultural settings, they should consult cultural consultants or advisers for their experience. Out of the 100 research participants, 93 percent (n = 93) answered "yes" when questioned, and 7 percent (n = 7) disagreed, stating that they saw no need to engage advisors or cultural consultants. The number of years of experience is correlated in a statistically meaningful way with the responses to this paragraph. The experience of researchers who responded in the affirmative averages 15 years and 87%.

This study's conclusion suggests that culture matters when it comes to public relations, particularly in multicultural settings like Sudan. Therefore, it is essential to enlist the aid of local cultural experts. They assist in selecting terms and symbols that are appropriate for that environment's customs, which significantly enhances the effectiveness of public relations efforts.

The statement suggests that there is a favourable association between the number of years of public relations experience and the belief in the importance of cultural understanding in multicultural campaigns. As practitioners gain more experience, they are more likely to recognise the value of cultural sensitivity in achieving successful communication across various settings. With increasing experience, public relations professionals become more aware of the function and impact of cultural consultants.

They understand that seeking out cultural understanding and expertise is crucial in developing effective multicultural campaigns. By utilising the knowledge

and insights of cultural consultants, practitioners can ensure that their campaigns resonate with diverse audiences and avoid cultural insensitivity. The relationship between experience and the identification of cultural competence highlights the significance of ongoing education and career advancement in the field of public relations. As practitioners gain more experience, they realise the importance of continuous learning and staying updated with evolving cultural dynamics. This realisation motivates them to pursue further education, attend workshops, and engage in professional development opportunities to enhance their cultural competence.

The main causes of the public relations program's weakness in terms of comprehension, persuasion, and decoding messages sent by public relations departments to the public are the region's dialects, cultural and religious heterogeneity, and multilingualism. According to the results of this section, more than 70% of respondents think that Sudan's multiculturalism, religious diversity, and linguistic diversity significantly undermine PR campaigns by making it harder for target audiences to comprehend the messages that PR departments try to convey to them. There was a 27% (n = 27) said no, meaning that 73% (n = 73) of respondents thought that linguistic and dialectal variety had big effect on public relations efforts.

Language and dialectal diversity, along with religious diversity, are characteristics of Sudan's regions. The cultures of the West are linguistically and dialectically distinct from those of the South and North, as are the languages and dialects spoken in Eastern Sudan and the Western regions. Thus, scholars contend that public relations professionals in Sudan need to consider these variations when crafting their messaging to ensure that the symbols conveyed to these areas are interpreted in accordance with the regional dialects and languages. Furthermore, the study emphasizes how important it is to be sensitive to cultural differences and contextual differences in public relations in Sudan. Through embracing the languages and cultures of the country, businesses can develop communication strategies that improve relationships with a range of stakeholders.

Table 3: Evaluating the Impact of Cultural Pluralism on Public Relations Practices.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
------------------	----------	-----------

Lack of knowledge among practitioners of public relations working in a multicultural environment of local languages, customs and traditions and the history of these communities leads to the lack of success of public relations programmes.	4.2100	.82014
Developing and adapting special communication methods that fit the cultural norms of a multicultural environment that helps in the success of the public relations program.	4.3400	.72780
One of the most important cultural factors that public relations practitioners must consider is the multilingualism, values and traditions prevailing in society.	4.4300	.65528
Cultural diversity within the Public Relations Group can contribute to the creation of positive relationships with the public in a multicultural environment.	4.4000	.69631
Understanding and knowing the cultural differences of the target audience can facilitate the work of public relations.	4.3200	.69457
Lack of understanding of social values and norms affects the choice of appropriate channels and means of communication for public relations operating in a multicultural environment.	4.2400	.81798
The lack of interest of the colony in public institutions during the colonial period had a significant impact on the weakness of the public institutions after independence and, consequently, on the weak exercise of public relations.	4.0800	.86082

The results indicate that 84% ($n = 84$) of the sample agree that the lack of knowledge among public relations practitioners working in multicultural environments about local languages, customs, traditions, and the history of these communities leads to the failure of public relations programs. 13% ($n = 13$) of the sample responded neutrally, which confirms that familiarity with local customs, traditions, and dialects, as well as studying the history of the communities living in multicultural environments such as Africa in general and Sudan in particular, contributes to the success of public relations programs. This is indicated by the results with a mean of ($M = 4.2100$) and a standard deviation of ($SD = .82014$). The results confirm the important role of cultural competence for public relations practitioners by gaining knowledge about the cultures in which they work. The results also indicate

that 89% of the sample believe that in the face of these communities, it is necessary for public relations practitioners to develop communication methods that are compatible with cultural standards, which helps to create a positive communication channel between the institution and its audiences and thus the success of the public relations program.

This is confirmed by the sample with a mean of ($M = 4.3400$) and a standard deviation of ($SD = .72780$). In addition, the results indicate that 91% ($N = 91$) of the respondents believe that when developing communication methods, public relations practitioners should consider the most important cultural factors, which are the values and traditions prevailing in that environment.

This was indicated by the sample with a mean of ($M = 4.4300$) and a standard deviation of ($SD = .65528$). The study results also indicated that 90% of the sample agree that cultural diversity within the public relations team helps to create a more effective communication environment with the public in a multicultural environment such as Sudan, which helps to choose appropriate public relations communication channels and means. It is indicated by the mean result of ($M = 4.4000$) and a standard deviation of ($SD = .69631$).

The findings underscore the benefits of cultural diversity in public relations practice. By embracing cultural diversity, organizations can create more effective public relations teams that can better communicate with their diverse audiences. The findings emphasize the crucial need to link culture with public relations. By understanding the native's point of view and incorporating cultural insights into communication strategies, practitioners can foster effective communication, build trust, and establish credibility. This link between culture and public relations ensures that messages are tailored to resonate with diverse audiences and that relationships are nurtured based on mutual understanding and respect.

Ultimately, embracing cultural sensitivity in public relations leads to more successful outcomes and strengthens connections in an increasingly diverse global landscape. In addition to the previous results, the study indicates that 82% of the respondents believe that despite the existence of the potential to develop public

relations practices in Sudan, the lack of interest by the colonizer in public institutions during the colonial period had a significant impact on the institutions and thus weakened the practice of public relations. This was confirmed by the results through the mean result of ($M = 4.0800$) and a standard deviation of ($SD = .86082$), which indicates the agreement and convergence of the opinions of the respondents.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study concluded that culture has a direct impact on the practice of public relations in Sudan and that there is a strong positive relationship between multiculturalism and public relations practice. This is because cultural diversity, multiple languages, and dialects have a significant impact on public relations activities through understanding and decoding the messages sent by public relations departments to their audiences. Therefore, researchers believe that in a multicultural environment like Sudan, public relations professionals need to understand the values, beliefs, and communication styles of different cultural groups.

The idea of following a one-size-fits-all approach will not work in an environment like Sudan. Respecting cultural sensitivities is also of paramount importance, as images, symbols, and even humor can be misinterpreted across cultures. Therefore, public relations practitioners must be cautious when selecting images and symbols.

According to the findings, public relations professionals typically base their work on the Ubuntu conception of philosophy. This idea is founded on the concept and values of African communication, which are exemplified by cooperation, hospitality, and ongoing consultation. It is drawn from the African culture of the South African region. Sudan has not adopted the African conversation philosophy, or Ubuntu, because the country's rulers have been attempting to establish the concept of an Arab-Islamic monoculture ever since the country gained its independence. Due to this, African culture is not well-known in Sudanese society, which has prevented the Ubuntu theory which is based on African culture from spreading widely.

In addition, the study highlights how important it is for public relations professionals operating in multicultural settings to take diversity into account and

adjust in accordance with local cultural norms. Because of this, the public relations program will be more successful. It also necessitates expertise with regional dialects, customs, and history of the societies in which they dwell, such as Sudan and broad parts of Africa.

The study also stresses the value of cultural variety in the public relations team since it fosters communication and facilitates the development of unique communication techniques that align with the norms of a varied environment. As a team with diverse backgrounds offers a wider range of cultural understanding. This allows for the design of messages and communication strategies that resonate with different segments of society. Overall, cultural diversity within a public relations team is not just a feel-good notion, it's a strategic advantage. By embracing diversity, Public Relations teams can create more effective communication campaigns, build stronger relationships with audiences.

This is because understanding cultural norms and beliefs contributes to shaping public perceptions and behaviors that must be considered. Researchers believe that the complex and diverse environment helps to reinforce the importance of continuous research and development for public relations practitioners, as public relations is an administrative function that works to create harmony and compatibility among the components of society. Researchers also believe that an environment like Sudan needs to use the two-way communication model by public relations practitioners, as this model helps more in creating mutual communication and understanding between the institution and its diverse audience.

REFERENCES:

- Besley, T., & Persson, T. (2024). Organizational dynamics: culture, design, and performance. *The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, 40(2), 394-415.
- Eltayeb, H. O. A. (2019). The Role of the Media in the Management of Cultural and Social Diversity Sudan Case Study. In *Route Educational & Social Science Journal* (Vol. 6, Issue 4, pp. 462–479). http://www.ressjournal.com/Makaleler/421362558_23.pdf
- Gudykunst, W. B., & Nishida, T. (2001). Anxiety, uncertainty, and perceived effectiveness of communication across relationships and cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 25(1), 55–71. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(00\)00042-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(00)00042-0)

NGIRKUDU, Marzok Juma Dahia ve AKDAĞ, Mustafa . (2025). The Impact Of Multiculturalism On Public Relations Practices: A Case Of Sudan. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi (egifder)*, 13 (1), 533- 554

- Guerarra Amel. (2015). *Cultural Globalization and its Impact on the Algerian Society*, Larbi Ben M'Hidi University-Oum El Bouaghi Faculty of Letters and Languages Department of English, Unpublished Master's Thesis, *Algeria*
- Eckstein, H. (1996). Culture as a foundation concept for the social sciences. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 8(4), 471-497.
- Güçlü, İ. (2021). Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri *Teknik-Yaklaşım-Uygulama*, Ankara: Nika yayınevi.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*, 2nd ed. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online readings in psychology and culture*, 2(1), 8.
<https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=orpc>
- Kent, M., & Taylor, M. (2010). How intercultural communication theory informs public relations practice in global settings. In *Public relations in global cultural contexts* (pp. 50-76). Routledge.
- Koçak, P. G., & Akdağ, M. (2021). Kültür ve Halkla İlişkiler İlişkisi: Halkla İlişkiler Akademisyenlerinin Alana İlişkin Değerlendirmeleri. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi*, 9(2), 725-755.
- Korolko, V., & Nekrasova, O. (2009). Corporate Culture and Public Relations. *Ukrainian Sociological Review*, 105–122.
- Essien, K., & Falola, T. (2008). *Culture and customs of Sudan*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- Mandela, K (2024). Influence of Cultural Differences on Global PR Campaigns ,*Journal of Public Relations*,3(1),53.
- Muhagir, M. A. (2013). *Multiculturalism in Sudan*,
https://www.academia.edu/5246794/Multiculturalism_in_Sudan_Introduction
- Ngirkudu, M. J. D., & Akdağ, M. (2023). The Impact of Political Change on the Practice of Public Relations in Sudan. *OPUS Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 20(51), 86–94.
<https://doi.org/10.26466/opusjr.1214954>
- Saeed, S. (2023). Diversity Management in Sudan's Democratic Transitional Arrangements. *Internafional Insfitute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance*, 1-16.
- Soukup, M. (2010). The Concept of Culture: Bioculturology and Evolutionary Social Sciences. In *Anthropologia Integra* (Vol. 1, Issue 1).
https://journals.muni.cz/anthropologia_integra/article/view/1730
- Sriramesh, K. (1992a). *Societal culture and public relations*.
<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Krishnamurthy-Sriramesh/publication/248527703>
- Sriramesh, K. (1992b). Societal culture and public relations: Ethnographic evidence from India. *Public Relations Review*, 18(2), 201–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0363-8111\(92\)90010-V](https://doi.org/10.1016/0363-8111(92)90010-V)

NGIRKUDU, Marzok Juma Dahia ve AKDAĞ, Mustafa . (2025). The Impact Of Multiculturalism On Public Relations Practices: A Case Of Sudan. Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi (egifder), 13 (1), 533- 554

Sriramesh, K. (1992c). *The Relationship between Culture and Public Relations1*.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247564609>

Sriramesh, K., & Takasaki, M. (1999). The impact of culture on Japanese public relations. *Journal of Communication Management*, 3(4), 337–352. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb023497>

Sriramesh, K., & White, J. (2013). Societal culture and public relations. *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, September, 597–614.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203812303-32>

Vasquez, G. M., & Taylor, M. (1999). What cultural values influence american public relations practitioners? *Public Relations Review*, 25(4), 433–449. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111\(99\)00030-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(99)00030-2)

Yoo, B., & Donthu, N. (2002). Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations. *JMR, Journal of Marketing Research*, 39(3), 388.

Wilkins, A. L. (1983). The culture audit: A tool for understanding organizations. *Organizational Dynamics*, 12(2), 24–38. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616\(83\)90031-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(83)90031-1).

Yazarların çalışmaya katkı oranları eşittir.

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.