

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background information about Jordan, with special focus on governance, government structure, and economy. The chapter also provides a statement of the problem, which describes the need for the study, especially public dissatisfaction with the government. In line with the statement of problem, the chapter provides the research questions, objectives, and significance of the study.

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the organizational image of Jordanian government ministries. In particular, the study was designed to measure organizational image of government ministries and to identify organizational image attributes that should be a focus of public relations departments in ministries in their efforts to enhance the image of the government among Jordanians. Organizational image plays a critical role in enhancing publics' loyalty and has been perceived as an asset to the organization. Building a positive organizational image is the primary role of public relations (PR) departments. Government ministries need to understand the attributes that constitute organizational images in order to promote positive organizational image.

1.1 Jordan

1.1.1 The Government

The government type in Jordan is constitutional monarchy with representative government and is headquartered at Amman. The monarchy is hereditary in that "the

throne of the Kingdom is passed down through inheritance within the dynasty of King Abdullah bin al-Hussein in the direct line of his male heirs” (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2012, n. p.). The Prime Minister, as the head of government, appoints the cabinet. The Cabinet consists of Council Of Ministers who are answerable to the elected House of Deputies. Together with the House of Notables (Senate), make up the legislature. The country’s judiciary is independent (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2012). In terms of administrative divisions, Jordan has 12 States.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has the following ministries: Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Prime Ministry Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of State for Economic Affairs, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Ministry of Health, and Ministry for Administrative Development. Other Ministries are Ministry of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Municipal, Rural and Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Culture, and Ministry of Agriculture. Other ministries include Ministry of State, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of State for Judicial Affairs, Ministry of Social Development, and Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2012).

1.1.2 The Economy

The economy of Jordan, which is among the smallest in the region with an estimated GDP of US \$36.82 billions as of 2011, is characterized by insufficient supplies of natural resources such as water, and oil (CIA, 2012). This is because Jordan, a small country, has limited natural resources and is listed among water-poor countries worldwide (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2011). As such, the government makes heavy reliance on external assistance. The country is plagued by chronically high rates of poverty, huge budget deficit, inflation, and unemployment. The people of Jordan have in 2011 continuously held demonstrations across the country demanding political reforms that would bring to an end corruption in government, high unemployment, rising commodity prices, and rampant poverty.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The importance of public relations in building a favorable organizational image is recognized among PR researchers and practitioners (Bergmann, 2002; Brunner & Brow, 2007; Hung, 2008; Kiridan, 2007; Wright & Fill, 2001). Recent political developments in Jordan show that the public relations departments have failed in building and maintaining positive organizational image. CIA (2012); El- Shamayleh (2012); Amos & Bulog (2013) have reported that the people of Jordan held, in 2011, 2012 and 2013 demonstrations in the capital city Amman and in other parts of the country to protest against rampant corruption in the government, rising poverty, unemployment, and inflation. The Jordanians were demanding for political reforms that would see an end to the injustices identified. This is an indication that the public

image of ministries in Jordan is damaged and needs to be rebuilt, maintained and enhanced. Positive image and reputation would boost the performance of the ministries and enhance their effectiveness in addressing issues that affect the country. However, no study has examined the role of government public relations in building and maintaining the image of government departments. Most of the previous public relations studies conducted in Jordan were concerned with the evaluation of the public relations activities and administrative and technical issues involved (Al Adwan, 1996; Al Qudhah, 2004). None of the studies focused on investigating the image of the ministries with a view of providing suggestions on how the image could be improved. It is against this background that the present study has been designed to find out how government ministries can enhance their image through their public relations departments.

1.3 Research Questions

The following are the research questions:

- What are the attributes that form the image of Jordanian ministries as perceived by their respective employees?
- What are the most important image attributes among Jordanian ministries as perceived by their respective employees?
- What are the satisfaction rates of ministry employees with regard to the current state of each of the image attributes of their respective ministries?

1.4 Research Objectives

The **General Objective** of the current study is to determine how government ministries, through public relations, can enhance their image among the internal publics. **Specifically**, the study will seek:

- To identify the attributes that form the image of Jordanian ministries as perceived by their respective employees.
- To determine the most important image attributes of Jordanian ministries as perceived by their employees.
- To determine the satisfaction rates of ministry employees with regard to the current state of each of the image attributes of their respective ministries.

1.5 Significance of the Research

Literature strongly links good organizational reputation and image to success (E. Alniacik, U. Alniacik & Erdogmus (2012); Pruzan (2001); Zain (2008); Decker (2012); Wei (2002). These two –reputation and image – have been perceived as organizational resources/assets. These terms [resources/assets] are used to show the value attached to these aspects by the organization. Applied to government ministries, it will also be found that the image that the publics have concerning a particular ministry produce either positive or negative effect on the ministry. For instance, a ministry that is not sensitive to working conditions would have bad image. People would not want to work in such a ministry. The converse is also true in that people would be interested in working for ministries with good working conditions, or simply positive image. Since government ministries serve the public, it implies that lack of

good reputation and image affects provisions of services by ministries negatively. This implies that the living conditions of the entire nation will be compromised since the services provided by the government are not reliable. These observations make it necessary that a study is carried out to achieve, maintain, and enhance image and reputation for ministries in Jordan. This would in turn lead to enhanced quality of the services that the ministries provide to the public. Additionally, studies (e.g. Decker, 2012), have shown that it is important for organizations to cultivate good reputation and image. Decker reported that organizations with a good image are at an advantage in the event that wrongdoing allegations and leveled against the company. If the organization accepts such allegations, their image enhances as opposed to those organizations without good reputation and image (Decker, 2012).

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

- **Public relations:** Public relations refers to “the development and management of ethical strategies using communications to build relationships with stakeholders or publics” (Johnston et al., 2009, p. 7).
- **Publics:** Publics are groups of people who share interests or concerns in that they have interests and concerns over the actions of an organization (Grunig, 1992).
- **Internal publics:** Internal publics consist of a group of people who are found within an organization such as employees (Johnston et al., 2009).
- **External publics:** External publics are groups of people found outside the organization including customers, the mass media, competitors, voters, community groups, lobby groups, legislators, among others (Johnston, Zanawi & Brand, 2009).

- **Image:** Image has been defined as a “set of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person holds of an object” (Kotler (1991, p. 570; as quoted in Bergmann, 2002, p. 50).

The image of an organization is the mental model the publics form whenever they think of that organization (Schuler, 2004).

- **Reputation:** Reputation is the way “key external stakeholder groups or other interested parties actually conceptualize” an organization (Bromley, 2000, p. 241). In this study, reputation, image, and identity are used interchangeably.

- **Identity:** Corporate identity has to do with the way an organization’s key members conceptualize it (Bromley, 2000).

- **Power:** Power refers to the ability, influence and authority that the public relations department enjoys as a result of the position the department occupies within the structure of the organizational (Grunig, 1990).

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