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The Role of Institutional Communication in Enhancing Reputation among the External Public: A Field Study at the Hajjar al-Sud Institution in Skikda (Algeria)

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***Abstract*—**The study aimed to reveal the role of institutional communication in shaping external audiences' perceptions of the Hajjar al-Sud Foundation's reputation, by analysing the communication patterns and methods adopted by the foundation, the objectives the public perceives it to be pursuing, and the extent to which its communication practices and strategies are linked to levels of trust, image and institutional reputation, based on a field study involving 377 members of the external public.

The results revealed a diversity in the means by which the organisation's activities are recognised and variations in usage patterns depending on personal characteristics; they also revealed that the most prominent communication objectives perceived by the public are enhancing reputation, building trust and improving image. The findings demonstrated positive correlations between the evaluation of communication practices and strategies and the levels of trust, image and the general reputation of the organisation. These results highlight the importance of developing corporate communication and enhancing its effectiveness, thereby contributing to building trust, improving image and consolidating the positive reputation of economic organisations.

***Keywords*—**corporate communication, external audience, corporate reputation, mental image.

1. The research problem:

Corporate communications has become one of the key pillars on which economic organisations rely to manage their relationships with the outside world, against a backdrop of rapid changes in the business environment and the growing importance of engaging with various stakeholder groups. The role of an organisation is no longer limited to providing products and services, but has extended to building relationships based on the exchange of information, fostering trust, and raising awareness of its objectives and activities. The importance of corporate communications is highlighted as an organisational and communicative practice aimed at engaging with the external public through various means and channels—whether traditional or digital—by providing clear information, responding to public concerns, and strengthening the public's relationship with the organisation. Conversely, institutional reputation represents one of the most important intangible assets, as it is shaped by the public's impressions and perceptions of the organisation's activities and practices, as well as its credibility and responsiveness to the concerns of its stakeholders. From this perspective, the relationship between corporate communication and corporate reputation is evident, given that communication practices contribute to shaping the public's assessments and strengthening their trust in the organisation. In this context, the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation, as an economic organisation that interacts with various external stakeholders—including customers, suppliers, business partners and residents of neighbouring areas—makes the study of the nature of its

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communication with these groups and its implications for its reputation a topic worthy of research. Accordingly, this study seeks to reveal the role of institutional communication in shaping the external public's perceptions of the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation's reputation, by identifying the communication patterns adopted, the channels and objectives of such communication, and the extent to which it contributes to building trust and improving public perceptions.

Consequently, there is a need to examine this relationship in a field-based study by surveying the external public's views and impressions regarding the organisation's communication practices. The research problem for this study is therefore defined by the following question: **What role does organisational communication play in shaping the external public's perceptions of the reputation of the Hajjar al-Sud Organisation?**

2. Sub-questions

1_ Are there differences in the patterns and means of institutional communication relied upon by the external public to learn about the activities of the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation, and how do they assess the clarity of the information it provides**?**

2. What objectives do external audience groups perceive the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation as seeking to achieve through its communication with them, and to what extent does this communication contribute to their understanding of its activities and objectives**?**

3_ How does the external public evaluate the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation's communication practices and strategies, and to what extent do these contribute to building their trust and shaping their impressions of the Foundation's institutional reputation**?**

3. Hypotheses:

General hypothesis: Institutional communication contributes to shaping positive perceptions amongst external audiences regarding the reputation of the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation through the communication practices and methods adopted by the Foundation in communicating with its external environment**.**

Sub-hypotheses

1. There are differences in the patterns of use of corporate communication channels amongst the study sample in terms of their awareness of the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation's activities, depending on personal variables such as gender, age group and the nature of their relationship with the organisation

2. The Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation's communication with its external audience is linked to the achievement of communication objectives, namely raising awareness of its activities and products, gaining the public's trust, improving its image and strengthening its relationships with its external environment

3. There is a relationship between the external audience's assessment of the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation's communication practices and strategies, their level of trust in it, and their perceptions of its institutional reputation

4. Significance of the research:

This study derives its significance from three interrelated dimensions**:** scientific, practical and methodological**. At the scientific level**, it seeks to enrich knowledge in the field of corporate communication and public relations by highlighting the role of communication practices in shaping the external audience's perceptions and strengthening their trust in the economic organisation. **At the practical level**, its significance lies in evaluating the communication practices of the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation in terms of the methods used, the clarity of information, and responsiveness to public concerns, as well as the extent to which this is reflected in its reputation, thereby enabling proposals to be made for improving its communication performance. **At the methodological level**, the importance lies in the use of a questionnaire to survey the opinions of a diverse sample of the external public, comprising customers, suppliers, business partners and residents of the neighbouring area, thereby enabling the monitoring, assessment and analysis of their differing perceptions and evaluations in light of the study's objectives, research questions and hypotheses.

5. Objectives of the study

Main objective:

_ To reveal the role of organisational communication in shaping the external public's perceptions of the reputation of the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation.

Sub-objectives:

1_ To identify the main forms and channels of institutional communication relied upon by the external audience to learn about the activities of the Hajjar al-Sud Foundation, and to assess the clarity of the information it provides.

2_ To identify the objectives that the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation seeks to achieve through its communication with its external audience, and the extent to which this communication contributes to an understanding of its activities and objectives.

3_ To analyse the external audience's assessment of the communication practices and strategies adopted by the Foundation and to reveal the extent to which these are linked to strengthening their trust in it and shaping their perceptions of its institutional reputation.

6. Definition of concepts and terminology: The study requires the definition of the basic concepts underpinning the research topic and the clarification of their procedural meanings in a manner appropriate to the nature of the field study, its objectives and the data collection tool, as follows:

1.6 – The concept of institutional communication

A. Definition of communication:

Linguistically: from the verb 'to connect' (يلتصل), meaning 'to link'.

Technically: Communication is an interactive process that takes place through specific communicative content, whereby news and information are conveyed between individuals regarding a particular event or issue, or an abstract concept, and within which the recipient and sender of the message interact in order to share and exchange ideas, opinions and information with others (Rady and Al-Tamimi, 2017, p. 25).

b. Definition of an institution:

Etymologically: from the verb 'asas', 'yusas', 'tas'is'.

Terminologically: 'A group of people united within a legal, economic or social entity to achieve a common goal, by pooling and rationally utilising the material and human resources required for that purpose' (Qasimi, 2017, p. 236).

C. Definition of organisational communication in technical terms:

Van Riel's definition: 'A management tool through which all forms of internal and external communication are consciously coordinated in the most effective and efficient manner' (as cited in Libert & Johanne, 2016, p. 10).

Cornelissen, on the other hand, regards it as: 'a managerial function that provides a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communications with the aim of establishing and maintaining a good reputation amongst the stakeholder groups on which the organisation depends' **(Libert & Therry, op. cit., p. 10).**

The concepts of Van Riel and Cornelissen focus on the managerial and organisational dimension of corporate communication, viewing it as a tool and function for coordinating communications and achieving effectiveness, whilst overlooking its communicative and strategic dimensions and its role in linking the organisation to its internal and external environment.

Institutional communication is also defined as: 'the spoken and written human communication that takes place within an organisation at both the individual and collective levels, and which contributes to the development of working methods and the strengthening of social relations among staff' (Ramash, 2019, p. 20).

D. Institutional communication in procedural terms:

In this study, this refers to the totality of communication activities and practices adopted by the Hajjar Al-Sud Organisation in its communication with its external audience, with the aim of publicising its activities, objectives, products and services, enhancing trust in the organisation, and strengthening its relationships with its external environment. It is measured procedurally through the forms and means of communication by which the public learns about the organisation, the clarity of the information provided, the objectives the public recognises the organisation is seeking to achieve through its communication with them, as well as the public's assessment of its communication practices and strategies.

2.6. Institutional reputation:

The concept of reputation:

Reputation, linguistically: refers to one's fame and reputation, whether good or bad. It is said: 'He did that out of hypocrisy and for the sake of reputation', meaning so that people might see and hear him (Bin

Habib et al., 1991, p. 485).

Reputation in technical terms: it is a collective assessment by stakeholders of a company's appeal (Sarhan and Fakhr al-Din, 2022, p. 136).

Reputation is also defined as: one of the intangible assets of significance to an organisation, built upon previous strategies, which must therefore be managed with care to ensure its growth and continuity (Qabour and Salem, 2023, p. 129).

It is also defined as the public's assessment of the information published by an organisation regarding its various activities and products. (Ratemli and Bououn, 2022, p. 129).

_ The procedural concept of organisational reputation:

In this study, this refers to the sum of the perceptions, impressions and assessments formed by the external public towards the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation, based on their knowledge of its activities, the nature of its dealings with them, its communication practices and the extent to which it responds to their concerns. It is measured procedurally through the general public's assessment of the organisation's reputation, the level of trust they express towards it, the extent to which they believe its communication practices contribute to improving its image, and their willingness to recommend dealing with it.

3.6_The procedural concept of the external audience:

In this study, this refers to all individuals who have direct or indirect links with the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation, or who interact with its activities and are affected by them within its social and economic environment. This concept includes customers, suppliers, business partners, residents of the area surrounding the organisation, and other individuals who have knowledge of or a connection to it; it is defined procedurally by the nature of the respondent's relationship with the organisation and the personal data provided in the questionnaire.

4.6. The procedural concept of mental image:

In this study, this refers to the set of impressions and perceptions formed by members of the external public regarding the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation as a result of the information they receive about it and their understanding of its practices and communication activities. It is measured procedurally through the respondents' assessment of the clarity of the information provided by the organisation, the seriousness with which it addresses public concerns, its efforts to build good relations with its stakeholders, and how this is reflected in their impressions of it.

7. Study population and sample:

The study population is defined as the total population of the area under the jurisdiction of the municipality of Bekouche Lakhdar, which lies within the geographical sphere of influence of the Hajjar al-Sud organisation, as they represent the external public who may form perceptions and impressions of the organisation, its activities and its communication practices, which is consistent with the nature of the study entitled 'The Contribution of Institutional Communication to the Formation of a Positive Reputation for the Economic Organisation: The Hajjar al-Sud Foundation as a Case Study'. The total population of this community stood at 18,334, which necessitated the use of a sampling method rather than a comprehensive survey, given the time, effort and material and human resources required by the latter.

In order to determine the appropriate sample size, Steven K. Thompson's formula was adopted, as it is one of the statistical formulas used to estimate sample sizes based on a population of known size; it allows the sample size to be determined according to the confidence level, margin of error and prevalence of the characteristic under study, This formula was chosen to ensure that the sample size was estimated in accordance with clear statistical criteria, using a 95 per cent confidence level, corresponding to a standardised coefficient (Z = 1.96), a margin of error of 5 per cent (d = 0.05), and a prevalence rate of the characteristic under study (p = 0.50), and the probability of its absence (1–p = 0.50), as no prior data is available to determine the actual proportion of this characteristic within the target population. The equation is calculated using the following formula:

$$n = \frac{N \cdot p(1-p)}{\frac{(N-1)\,d^2}{Z^2} + p(1-p)}$$

where the symbols represent the following:

- (n): the required sample size.
- (N): the population size, estimated at 18,334.
- (Z): the standard score corresponding to a 95 per cent confidence level, equal to 1.96.
- (d): the permissible margin of error, estimated at 0.05.
- (p): The proportion of individuals exhibiting the characteristic under study, estimated at 0.50.
- (1-p): The probability that the characteristic is not present, estimated at 0.50.

Substituting the specified values into the equation, we obtain:

$$n = \frac{18334 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{\left[\frac{(18334-1)\times(0.05)^2}{(1.96)^2}\right] + 0.5(1-0.5)}$$

$$n = \frac{4583.5}{\left[\frac{18333 \times 0.0025}{3.8416}\right] + 0.25}$$

n=4583.5/12.176?376.45

After rounding the result up to the nearest whole number, the sample size was determined to be 377 items, which was the number primarily adopted to guide the research instrument and the collection of field data.

Type of sample and method of selection

In line with the nature and objectives of the study, which aim to explore the contribution of institutional communication to the formation of a positive reputation for the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation from the perspective of its external audience, a non-probability convenience sampling method was adopted for selecting the research participants, This selection is based on a number of methodological and field-based considerations, the first of which relates to the specific nature of the study population, which is not limited to a specific social or professional group, but rather comprises individuals whose relationships with the organisation and levels of interaction with it vary, ranging from residents of the surrounding area, its customers, those who deal with it, and others who have knowledge of or contact with its activities. This selection is also linked to the difficulty of encompassing all members of this audience within a specific and comprehensive sampling frame that can be relied upon to conduct a random draw ensuring known and equal chances of selection, Furthermore, the nature of the field study requires direct communication with members of the external public and the gathering of their opinions and perceptions regarding the organisation’s communication practices and their impact on its reputation; this made a cross-sectional survey a practical option suited to the circumstances of accessing the respondents and the feasibility of conducting the field survey, Consequently, the sample was selected from among those individuals who were readily accessible during the data collection period, who possessed sufficient knowledge of or connection to the organisation to enable them to answer the questionnaire’s questions, and who expressed a willingness to participate, without resorting to random sampling procedures.

8. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is defined by three fundamental dimensions: the spatial, temporal and human dimensions, which clarify the framework within which the field study was conducted, as follows:

1_ Spatial dimension: The field study was conducted at the Hajjar al-Sud organisation and the surrounding geographical area within the municipality of Bekouche Lakhdar in the province of Skikda, as this is the spatial context in which the organisation operates and through which it engages with its various external audiences, making it a suitable area for studying the public’s perceptions and impressions of its communication practices and institutional reputation.

2_ Temporal scope: The study spanned the period from 1 May to 27 July 2026, which was the period allocated for the fieldwork, including the preparation of the research instrument, the distribution of the questionnaire to the sample group, and the collection of the data obtained in preparation for its processing and statistical analysis.

3_ Human scope: The human scope of the study comprises the external audience of the Hajjar al-Sud organisation, as the group that interacts with or is directly or indirectly linked to the organisation. This includes residents of the area surrounding the organisation, customers, suppliers, business partners and other individuals

who have knowledge of or a connection to its activities. The study sample was selected from these groups using a random sampling method, comprising 377 individuals, with the aim of surveying their opinions and perceptions regarding the organisation's communication practices and the extent to which these contribute to shaping its corporate reputation.

9. Type and Methodology of the Research

First: Type of Research

This study falls within the category of descriptive research, as it seeks to describe the reality of institutional communication at the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation, to identify its patterns, methods and communication objectives, as well as to monitor the external public's perceptions and assessments of the Foundation's communication practices and their impressions of its institutional reputation. This type of research is not limited to merely describing the phenomenon; rather, it extends to analysing its dimensions and interpreting the associated data in the light of the study's objectives and research questions.

Secondly: Research methodology

The study adopted a descriptive approach, as this was deemed the most appropriate given the nature of the subject and its objectives. This approach allows for a description of the phenomenon of institutional communication and an analysis of the various communication practices and activities employed by the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation in its engagement with its external audience, as well as an examination of the nature of this audience's perceptions and assessments regarding the Foundation's reputation. This approach was implemented by collecting field data using a questionnaire, which was then organised, categorised, statistically processed and analysed to arrive at answers to the questions posed.

Thirdly: Reasons for choosing the methodology

The descriptive approach was chosen for scientific and methodological reasons relating to the nature of the study, the most important of which are:

1. Its suitability for studying the phenomenon of institutional communication in its real-world context within an economic organisation.

2_ Its ability to identify patterns and means of institutional communication, as well as the objectives the organisation seeks to achieve through its communication with its external audience.

3_ It enables an understanding of the external audience's perceptions and assessments of communication practices, as well as their impressions of the organisation's reputation.

4. Its compatibility with the nature of the research tool—the questionnaire—and the data it provides that can be categorised and subjected to statistical analysis.

10. Previous studies

The first study: Karima Othmani's (2020) study, entitled 'The Role of Corporate Communication Channels in Brand Building – A Field Study at Kondor', examined the role of communication channels in establishing a brand and strengthening its presence among the public, with a focus on visual identity, event-based communication and digital communication. It adopted a descriptive-analytical methodology and a systems approach, utilising observation, interviews and questionnaires. It concluded that the use of these channels is important in strengthening the brand identity of the Kondor Organisation and consolidating its presence.

The second study: The study by Karima Boutaba (2016), entitled 'Institutional Communication between Workers' Rights in the Media and Organisational Policy – A Case Study of Sonelgaz and its Branches for the Period 2015–2016', aimed to evaluate the internal communication policy and the extent to which it safeguards workers' right to access information. The case study employed observation, interviews, questionnaires and a stratified random sample. The results revealed low levels of employee satisfaction with the information provided to them, despite the availability of communication channels, thereby highlighting the need to develop a more effective internal communication policy.

Study 3: The study by Fadila Saba' (2022), entitled 'The Academic Fields of Communication Studies: A Theoretical Study on Organisational Communication', sought to identify the place of organisational communication within the field of communication studies, and to highlight its conceptual dimensions, functions and objectives. The study relied on a theoretical and analytical review of the literature without the use of field

research methods, and concluded that institutional communication plays a vital role in organising and coordinating communication practices in a way that serves the organisation's objectives.

_ **Benefits derived from previous studies:** The most significant benefits derived from previous studies are as follows:

_ Drawing on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that have addressed institutional communication, its functions, objectives and dimensions.

_ Drawing guidance from the methodological approaches and tools used in previous field studies.

_ Drawing on indicators relating to institutional communication channels, clarity of information and public relations when defining the questionnaire's themes.

_ Utilising previous findings to interpret and discuss the field results of the current study.

_ To draw on the academic references cited in previous studies to enrich the theoretical framework of the research.

11. Presentation and analysis of the field study results:

Having discussed the various methodological procedures required by the nature of the study—including the definition of its research problem, questions and objectives, as well as the clarification of its concepts, methodology, sample and scope—we now turn in this section to the presentation and analysis of the field data obtained through the administration of a questionnaire to a sample of the external public of the Hajjar al-Sud Institution. The aim is to identify the naturenature of the organisation's communication practices, to understand how the public perceives them, and to assess the clarity of the information and communication objectives, as well as the extent to which these are linked to the public's level of trust in the organisation and their perceptions of its institutional reputation. This will enable us to answer the study's research questions and test its hypotheses in light of the field findings obtained:

Table 1: Results of the overall reliability test for the study questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items (N of Items)	Reliability Level
0.779	13	Good

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the output of SPSS 27.

The results of the overall reliability test for the study instrument, which consists of 13 items, reveal that Cronbach's alpha coefficient reached a value of 0.779. This value exceeds the commonly accepted benchmark in social and humanities studies, estimated at 0.70, indicating that the questionnaire possesses a good degree of internal consistency. This result indicates an acceptable level of homogeneity and inter-item correlation in measuring aspects related to the subject of the study, namely the contribution of institutional communication to the formation of a positive reputation for an economic organisation, using the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation as a case study. This value also reflects an appropriate level of stability and reliability in the measurement, thereby reinforcing the validity of the data obtained for use in statistical processing, analysing the responses of the sample participants, and addressing the research questions. Based on the results of the Cronbach's alpha test, it is clear that the questionnaire as a whole possesses a good and acceptable degree of stability, as the internal consistency coefficient was 0.779 across 13 items; this result permits the adoption of the instrument for field data collection and statistical analysis.

It can therefore be said that the questionnaire fulfils a fundamental requirement for the reliability of measurement instruments, thereby supporting its use in identifying the external public's perceptions regarding the role of corporate communications in building a positive reputation for the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation.

Table 2: Distribution of sample members by gender and nature of their relationship with the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation.

Gender: * Nature of your relationship with the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation: Crosstabulation		Nature of your relationship with the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation:					
Customer		Resident of the area surrounding the organisation	Business partner	Other: resident, follower	Total		
Gender	Male	Frequency	38	0	37	76	151
		Percentage %	10.1%	0.0%	9.8%	20.2%	40.1%

Table 2: Distribution of sample members by gender and nature of their relationship with the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation. *(continued)*

Gender: * Nature of your relationship with the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation: Crosstabulation		Nature of your relationship with the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation:				
Female	Frequency	38	188	0	0	226
	Percentage %	10.1%	49.9%	0.0%	0.0%	59.9%
Total	Frequency	76	188	37	76	377
	Percentage %	20.2%	49.9%	9.8%	20.2%	100.0%

Source: Compiled by the researcher based on the output of SPSS 27.

The data in the table indicate a disparity in the distribution of the sample by gender and the nature of their relationship with the Hajjar al-Sud institution: there were 226 female respondents, accounting for 59.9 per cent of the total sample, compared with 151 male respondents, accounting for 40.1 per cent. In terms of the nature of their relationship with the institution, the category of females residing in the area surrounding the institution recorded the highest proportion, with 188 individuals, representing 49.9 per cent of the total sample, whilst the 'customers' category was evenly split between males and females, with 38 individuals of each gender – representing 10.1 per cent of the total sample for each category. The 'business clients' category comprised only males in the sample, totalling 37 individuals (9.8 per cent), whilst another category (residents, followers) was limited to males, totalling 76 individuals, representing 20.2 per cent. These results highlight that the largest representation in the sample was of females residing in the area surrounding the institution, followed by males belonging to the 'other' category, then customers of both genders, and finally male business partners. This distribution reflects a disparity in the nature of the relationships between the respondents and the institution, and reveals differences in the composition of the groups participating in the study according to gender; this should be taken into account when interpreting the external public's perceptions of the institution's communication practices and its positive reputation.

The results show that the study sample was characterised by relative diversity in terms of the nature of the relationship with the Hajjar al-Aswad Institution, with a higher proportion of females, particularly amongst residents of the area surrounding the institution, whilst the categories of business partners and 'other' were predominantly male.

Table 3: Distribution of sample members by age group and nature of their relationship with the Hajjar al-Sud Foundation.

Age group: * Nature of your relationship with the Hajjar al-Sud Foundation: Crosstabulation		Nature of your relationship with the Hajjar al-Sud Institution:				Total
Customer	Resident of the area surrounding the organisation	Business partner	Other: Citizen, follower			
Age group	Under 25	Frequency	38	0	0	0	38
		Percentage	10.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.1%
	25 to 35 years	Frequency	0	74	0	0	74
		Percentage	0.0%	19.6%	0.0%	0.0%	19.6%
	36 to 45 years	Frequency	38	114	37	38	227
		Percentage	10.1%	30.2%	9.8%	10.1%	60.2%
	Over 45 years	Frequency	0	0	0	38	38
		Percentage	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.1%	10.1%
Total	Frequency	76	188	37	76	377	
	Percentage	20.2%	49.9%	9.8%	20.2%	100.0%	

Source: Compiled by the researcher based on the output of SPSS 27.

The statistical data indicate a clear disparity in the distribution of the sample by age group and the nature of their relationship with the Hajjar al-Sud Foundation. The 36–45 age group ranks first with 227 respondents, accounting for 60.2 per cent of the total sample, followed by the group aged between 25 and 35, with 74 respondents, representing 19.6 per cent, whilst the under-25 and over-45 age groups recorded the same number, with 38 respondents each, representing 10.1 per cent. In terms of the nature of the relationship with the organisation, it is clear that the 36–45 age group exhibits the widest variety of relationship types, comprising 114 respondents from the area surrounding the organisation, accounting for 30.2 per cent of the total sample, and 38 customers, accounting for 10.1 per cent, 37 business partners, accounting for 9.8 per cent, and 38 respondents in the 'other' category (residents, followers), accounting for 10.1 per cent. As for the 25–35 age group, participation

was limited to residents of the area surrounding the institution, totalling 74 individuals, representing 19.6 per cent of the sample, whilst the under-25 age group was exclusively comprised of customers, totalling 38 individuals, representing 10.1 per cent. As for respondents aged over 45, their participation was confined to another category (‘citizen, follower’), with the same number and percentage. These results highlight that the 36–45 age group represents the most prominent segment in the sample; it is also the most diverse in terms of the nature of its relationship with the organisation. This makes it possible to draw on the perceptions of its members regarding various aspects of institutional communication, whether through direct interaction with the organisation, living in its vicinity, or following its activities. This distribution also indicates that the composition of the external audience participating in the study varies across age groups, which necessitates taking this variation into account when analysing their opinions and perceptions regarding the organisation’s communication practices and their implications for the formation of its positive reputation.

It is evident that the study sample is predominantly comprised of individuals aged between 36 and 45, a group which also exhibited the greatest diversity in the nature of their relationship with the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation, whereas other age groups were concentrated within specific patterns of relationship with the organisation. This reflects a varied presence of age groups within the external audience, underscoring the importance of taking age characteristics and the nature of the relationship with the organisation into account when interpreting the study’s findings regarding the extent to which institutional communication contributes to the formation of a positive reputation for the economic organisation.

Table 4: The extent to which sample members are exposed to information relating to the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation and are aware of its activities, according to personal variables and the nature of their relationship with the foundation

Variable	Category	Yes	No	Total
Gender	**Male**	**76**	**75**	**151**
	Female	**113**	**113**	**226**
	Total	**189**	**188**	**377**
Age group	**Under 25**	**0**	**38**	**38**
	25 to 35 years old	**37**	**37**	**74**
	36 to 45 years old	**152**	**75**	**227**
	Over 45 years	**0**	**38**	**38**
	Total	**189**	**188**	**377**
Nature of relationship with the organisation	**Client**	**38**	**38**	**76**
	Residents of the area surrounding the organisation	**113**	**75**	**188**
	Economic operators	**0**	**37**	**37**
	Other: Citizen, follower	**38**	**38**	**76**
	Total	**189**	**188**	**377**
Chi-squared test results for the three variables				
Variable	**Chi-square value**	**Degrees of freedom**	**Statistical significance**	**Statistical decision**
Gender	**0.004**	**1**	**0.95**	**Not significant**
Age group	**102,117**	**3**	**0**	**Functional**
Nature of relationship with the organisation	**44,679**	**3**	**0**	**Functional**

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the output of SPSS 27.

The results in the table show that 50.1 per cent of the sample had previously received information about the Hajjar al-Sud Foundation or been aware of its activities compared with 49.9 per cent who had not, which reflects a clear convergence between the two groups and indicates that the external public’s access to the organisation and its information is not equally available to all members of the sample; this calls for an examination of the nature of this access in relation to the variables under study

With regard to the gender variable, we observe an almost complete convergence between males and females: the proportion of those who had previously received information about the Foundation stood at 50.3 per cent

among males compared with 50 per cent among females, whilst the proportion of those who had not previously done so stood at 49.7 per cent among males and 50 per cent among females. The results of the chi-squared test confirm that there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and the extent of exposure to information relating to the organisation, as the calculated chi-squared value was 0.004 at a significance level of 0.950, which is greater than the adopted significance level of 0.05. Consequently, there are no statistically significant differences in the extent to which members of the sample are aware of information about the organisation based on the gender variable

As regards age group, the results show a clear disparity between the groups: the 36–45 age group recorded the highest proportion in terms of exposure to information relating to the organisation, with 152 out of 227 individuals, or approximately 67 per cent, followed by the 25–35 age group at 50 per cent Meanwhile, no individuals in the under-25 or over-45 age groups answered ‘yes’. The chi-squared test revealed a statistically significant relationship between age group and the extent of exposure to information, with a chi-squared value of 102.117 at 3 degrees of freedom and a significance level of less than 0.001, indicating that the sample’s awareness of the organisation’s information varied according to their age groups

With regard to the nature of the relationship with the organisation, the results reveal that residents of the area surrounding the organisation recorded the highest proportion in terms of exposure to information relating to it, at 60.1 per cent, compared with 39.9 per cent who had not previously been exposed to such information, whilst customers’ responses were evenly split between ‘yes’ and ‘no’ at 50 per cent respectively. The category of citizens and followers also recorded the same percentage, whilst none of the economic operators answered ‘yes’; all members of this group stated that they had never received information about the organisation or been aware of its activities. The results of the chi-squared test showed a statistically significant relationship between the nature of the relationship with the organisation and the extent of exposure to information, with a calculated chi-square value of 44.679 at 3 degrees of freedom and a significance level of less than 0.001. This indicates that the level of exposure varies according to the nature of the relationship between the sample members and the organisation

Overall, these results suggest that the extent to which the external public is exposed to information relating to the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation is associated with age group and the nature of the relationship with the organisation, whilst it is not statistically significantly associated with gender. This can be explained by the fact that opportunities for interaction with the organisation and familiarity with its activities may vary according to age group and the nature of the relationship with it, which highlights the importance of diversifying communication practices and channels to ensure that information reaches different segments of the external public.

Table No. (05): The means relied upon by members of the sample to learn about the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation’s news and activities, according to personal variables and the nature of their relationship with the Foundation

Variable	Category	Website	Direct contact	Others	Website + Others	Contact + Media	Contact + Others	Total
Gender	Male	0	38	37	0	38	38	151
		0%	25.2%	24.5%	0%	25.2%	25.2%	100%
	Female	38	0	74	76	0	38	226
		16.8%	0%	32.7%	33.6%	0%	16.8%	100%
Age group	Under 25	38	0	0	0	0	0	38
		100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	25–35 years	0	0	74	0	0	0	74
		0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	36–45 years	0	38	37	76	38	38	227
		0%	16.7%	16.3%	33.5%	16.7%	16.7%	100%
	Over 45 years	0	0	0	0	0	38	38
		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
Nature of relationship	Customer	38	38	0	0	0	0	76
		50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	Residents of the surrounding area	0	0	74	76	0	38	188
		0%	0%	39.4%	40.4%	0%	20.2%	100%
	Economic operator	0	0	37	0	0	0	37
		0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	Other	0	0	0	0	38	38	76

Variable	Category	Website	Direct contact	Others	Website + Others	Contact + Media	Contact + Others	Total
0%		0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	100%	
Grand total		38	38	111	76	38	76	377
		10.1%	10.1%	29.4%	20.2%	10.1%	20.2%	100%

Chi-squared test results

Variable	Chi-square	Degrees of freedom	Statistical significance	Statistical decision
Gender	195.136	5	0.000	Statistical function
Age group	744.312	15	0.000	Statistical function
Nature of relationship	744.312	15	0.000	Statistical function

Source: Compiled by the researcher based on the output of SPSS 27.

The results in the table show that the sample participants rely on a variety of means to learn about the news and activities of the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation, with the category ‘learning through others’ ranking first, with 111 individuals (29.4 per cent) of the total sample, followed by the category ‘a combination of the website or social media pages and through others’, with 76 respondents (20.2 per cent) Then came the category of combining the media with information from others, with the same frequency, whilst the categories of the website or social media pages, direct contact with the organisation’s representatives, the media, and events and activities organised by the organisation each recorded 38 respondents, representing 10.1 per cent for each respectively. These results indicate the prominent role played by the social environment in the circulation of information relating to the organisation and in raising awareness of its activities, alongside other means of communication

With regard to the gender variable, we observe a difference in the patterns of how males and females learn about the organisation’s news. Male responses were distributed across direct contact with the organisation’s representatives, via others, the media, and events and activities organised by the organisation, as well as a combination of the media and via others, with similar frequencies of 38, 37 and38 and 38 respectively, whilst females’ responses were distributed across the organisation’s website or social media pages; via others; a combination of the website or social media pages and via others; and a combination of the media and via others, with frequencies of 38, 74, 76 and 38 respectively. The chi-squared test revealed a statistically significant relationship between thegender and the channels used to find out about the organisation’s news and activities, with a chi-square value of 195.136 at 5 degrees of freedom and a significance level of less than 0.001, indicating that patterns of accessing the organisation’s news differ according to the gender variable

As for the age group, the results show a clear difference in the methods used across the groups: all individuals in the under-25 age group relied on the website or social media pages (38 individuals), whilst all individuals in the 25–35 age group relied on others (74 individuals). As for the 36–45 age group, their sources of information about the organisation’s news varied, ranging from direct contact with the organisation’s representatives, via others, a combination of the website or social media pages and via others, the media, and events and activities organised by the organisation, to a combination of the media and via others. The final group, aged over 45, relied exclusively on a combination of the media and word of mouth, with 38 individuals falling into this category. The results of the chi-squared test confirm a statistically significant relationship between age group and the channels used to learn about the organisation’s news, with a chi-squared value of 744.312 at 15 degrees of freedom and a significance level of less than 0.001, indicating differences in patterns of communication channel usage across age groups. With regard to the nature of the relationship with the organisation, the results reveal that customers rely equally on the website or social media pages and direct contact with the organisation’s representatives, with 38 individuals in each category, whilst residents of the area surrounding the organisation rely to a greater extent on a combinationbetween the website or social media pages and word of mouth, with 76 respondents; followed by learning about the organisation through word of mouth, with 74 respondents; and then a combination of the media and word of mouth, with 38 respondents. As for business clients, all relied on word of mouth to learn about the organisation’s news, with 37 respondents, whilst the responses the ‘citizens’ and ‘followers’ categories were distributed equally between the media, events and activities organised by the organisation, and a combination of the media and word of mouth, with 38 respondents each. The chi-squared test revealed a statistically significant relationship between the nature of the relationship with the organisation and the means used to learn about its news and activities, with a value of 744.312 at 15 degrees of freedom and a significance level of less than 0.001. Overall, the results indicate that the external audience does not rely on a single medium to learn about the news and activities of the Hajjar al-Sud Foundation; rather, their sources of information vary according to their personal

characteristics and the nature of their relationship with the Foundation. The results also highlight reliance on others as an important source for the circulation of information, which calls for strengthening the Foundation's presence through various and integrated communication channels, thereby enabling it to reach the different segments of its external audience and meet their diverse communication needs

Table No. (06): Distribution of sample members according to the primary objective they perceive the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation to be striving to achieve through its communication with the external public

Primary objective of institutional communication	Frequency	Percentage
Raising awareness of its activities, products or services	**76**	**20.2**
Enhancing its reputation and gaining public trust	**149**	**39.5**
Improving its public image	**114**	**30.2**
Strengthening its relationship with the outside world	**38**	**10.1**
Total	**377**	**100.0**

Source: Compiled by the researcher based on the output of SPSS 27.

The table shows that the primary objective which members of the sample recognise that the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation seeks to achieve through its engagement with the external public is to enhance its reputation and gain public trust, at a rate of 39.5 per cent, equivalent to 149 respondents, which is the highest percentage amongst the various objectives presented. In second place is the objective of improving its image among the public, at 30.2 per cent, which equates to 114 responses, followed by raising awareness of its activities, products or services at 20.2 per cent, representing 76 responses, whilst strengthening its relationship with the external environment came last at 10.1 per cent, or 38 responses.

These results indicate that members of the sample recognise that the corporate communications of the Black Stone Foundation are not limited to providing information and publicising its activities, products and services, but extend to strategic objectives linked to building its corporate reputation, gaining public trust and improving its image in the public eye. Furthermore, the fact that the objectives of enhancing reputation, gaining trust and improving image ranked highest reflects the importance of the perceptual and impression-based dimensions in the public's perception of the function of institutional communication; this highlights the link between this activity and the shaping of the external public's view of the organisation, as well as the strengthening of its standing within its social and economic environment.

Table 7: Sample participants' assessment of the extent to which Hajjar Al-Sud's communications contribute to understanding its activities and recognising its objectives

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T-value	Sample trend
I don't think so	**38**	**10.1**	**2.8939**	**0.94497**	**8.094**	**Yes, to some extent**
To a small extent	**76**	**20.2**				
Yes, to some extent	**151**	**40.1**				
Yes, to a large extent	**112**	**29.7**				
Total	**377**	**100.0**				

Source: Compiled by the researcher based on the output of SPSS 27.

The table shows that the largest proportion of the sample (40.1 per cent) believe that communication from the Hajjar al-Sud Foundation helps them to understand its activities and learn about its objectives to some extent, followed by those who believe that such communication contributes significantly (29.7 per cent), whilst 20.2 per cent of respondents believe that communication makes only a minor contribution to achieving this understanding, and 10.1 per cent do not believe that such communication helps them to understand the organisation's activities and learn about its objectives.

In terms of statistical indicators, the arithmetic mean was 2.8939, which is slightly lower than the hypothetical mean of 3, reflecting an assessment tending towards the average level with a slight deviation from the neutral point, The standard deviation was 0.94497, indicating variation in the sample's assessments of the extent to which institutional communication contributes to clarifying the organisation's activities and objectives.

Consequently, it can be said that the Hajjar Al-Sud Organisation's communication contributes to a moderate degree to helping its external audience understand its activities and recognise its objectives; however, this role clearly remains below the desired level. This highlights the importance of developing communication practices and improving the clarity and consistency of the information provided, thereby enhancing the public's understanding of the organisation's activities and objectives.

Table 8: Results of the Pearson correlation coefficient test between the evaluation of communication practices and strategies and the level of trust and image among the external audience

Variables	Assessment of communication practices and strategies	Level of trust and image
Assessment of communication practices and strategies	**1**	**0.816****
Level of trust and image	**0.816****	**1**
Significance level (Sig. 2-tailed)	**—**	**0.000**
Sample size (N)	**377**	**377**

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the output of SPSS 27.

The results of the correlation test show a strong positive correlation between the sample's assessment of the communication practices and strategies of the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation and their level of trust and the image they have formed of it, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of (0.816), a value indicating a strong correlation between the two variables. Furthermore, the p-value was 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.01, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant at the 1 per cent level amongst the sample of 377 individuals. This result suggests that the more positively the public evaluates the communication practices and strategies adopted by the organisation, the higher the level of trust in it becomes and the more favourable the image formed of it by the external public. This reflects the importance of communication practices in building a relationship based on trust and creating positive impressions of the organisation. Consequently, this result supports the hypothesis that there is a relationship between the external public's assessment of communication practices and strategies and their level of trust in the organisation and their perceptions of it.

Table (09): The relationship between the assessment of communication practices and strategies and the assessment of the public reputation of the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation

Statistical indicators	Assessment of communication practices and strategies	Assessment of public reputation
Spearman's correlation coefficient	**1.000**	**0.519****
Significance level (two-tailed)	**—**	**0.000**
Number of cases	**377**	**377**

Source: Compiled by the researcher based on the output of SPSS 27.

The results of the Spearman's correlation test show a moderate to strong positive correlation between the sample's assessment of the communication practices and strategies of the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation and their assessment of its general reputation, with a correlation coefficient of (0.519), which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, with a p-value of $p<0.001$, based on a sample of 377 individuals.

This result indicates that the higher the external audience's evaluation of the organisation's communication practices and strategies, the more positively they evaluate its general reputation, reflecting a correlation between the quality of communication practices and the impressions formed by the audience regarding the organisation's reputation. Consequently, the results support Hypothesis 3, which posits a relationship between the external public's evaluation of communication practices and strategies and their perceptions of the organisation's

reputation, whilst emphasising that statistical correlation does not necessarily imply a causal relationship between the two variables.

Table (10): The relationship between the evaluation of communication practices and strategies and the willingness to recommend doing business with the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation

Statistical indicators	Value
Pearson Chi-Square value	**658.916**
Degrees of freedom (df)	**10**
Significance level (Sig.)	**0.000**
Number of cases (N)	**377**

Source: Compiled by the researcher based on the output of SPSS 27.

The results of the chi-squared test show a statistically significant relationship between the evaluation of the communication practices and strategies of the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation and the sample's willingness to recommend dealing with it, with a chi-squared value of (658.916) at 10 degrees of freedom, and a significance level of less than (0.001), which is lower than the accepted significance level (0.05). This result indicates that the willingness to recommend the organisation is linked to the public's evaluation of the communication practices it adopts, meaning that differences in the evaluation of these practices are associated with differences in the sample's attitudes towards recommending the organisation. Consequently, this result supports the hypothesis positing a relationship between the evaluation of communication practices and strategies and the external public's willingness to recommend the organisation.

12. Study findings in light of the hypotheses:

First sub-hypothesis: There are differences in the patterns of use of institutional communication channels amongst the study sample in learning about the activities of the Hajjar Al-Sud Organisation, depending on personal variables such as gender, age group and the nature of the relationship with the organisation.

_ The first sub-hypothesis was fully confirmed, based on the results of Table 5 concerning the patterns of use of institutional communication channels relied upon by the external public to learn about the news and activities of the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation, where the results of the chi-squared test revealed statistically significant differences in these patterns according to the three personal variables of gender, age group and the nature of the relationship with the organisation, with levels of statistical significance below 0.001 in all cases, which confirms that the communication channels used by members of the sample differ according to their personal and social characteristics. These results are reinforced by the findings in Table 4, which relates to the extent to which participants had previously received information about the organisation or been aware of its activities; the results revealed statistically significant differences according to age group and the nature of the relationship with the organisation, whilst no statistically significant differences were found according to the gender variable, with a p-value of 0.950. The results also showed a diversity of sources for learning about the organisation's activities, with reliance on others leading the way at 29.4 per cent, followed by a combination of the website or social media pages and others at 20.2 per cent; this reflects the multiplicity of channels through which information about the organisation is disseminated and the varying patterns of use amongst the external public. Consequently, the results confirm the hypothesis regarding the existence of differences in patterns of use of institutional communication channels depending on personal variables.

_ **Second sub-hypothesis:** Hajjar Al-Sud's communication with its external audience is linked to the achievement of communication objectives, namely raising awareness of its activities and products, gaining public trust, improving its image and strengthening its relationships with its external environment.

The second sub-hypothesis was partially confirmed, based on the results of Tables 6 and 7, where the results of Table No. (06) showed that the sample recognised that the primary objective the Black Stone Foundation seeks to achieve through its communication with the external public is to enhance its reputation and gain public trust (39.5 per cent), followed by improving its image in the eyes of the public (30.2 per cent), then raising awareness of its activities, products or services (20.2 per cent), and finally strengthening its relationship with the external environment (10.1 per cent). This reflects the diversity of communication objectives that the public attributes to

the organisation, with those related to reputation-building, image enhancement and gaining trust standing out. On the other hand, the results in Table 7 revealed that 40.1 per cent of the sample believe that the organisation's communication helps them to some extent to understand its activities and learn about its objectives, compared with 29.7 per cent who believe it contributes significantly to this, whilst 20.2 per cent consider its contribution to be weak, and 10.1 per cent do not believe it helps them achieve this understanding. The arithmetic mean was 2.8939, indicating a rating tending towards the medium level, whilst the nature of the response scale's coding must be taken into account when interpreting it. Based on these results, it can be said that the hypothesis was partially confirmed, as the data revealed the public's awareness of a range of communication objectives that the organisation seeks to achieve, particularly those relating to enhancing its reputation, gaining trust and improving its image, however, the extent to which communication enables the public to understand the organisation's activities and objectives remains variable and has not reached a high level amongst all members of the sample; this suggests there is scope for developing the effectiveness of communication practices and improving the clarity of information provided to the external public.

Sub-hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between the external public's evaluation of the communication practices and strategies of the Hajjar Al-Sud Organisation and their level of trust in it, as well as their perceptions of its institutional reputation.

The third sub-hypothesis was confirmed, based on the results of Tables 8, 9 and 10, which collectively revealed statistically significant correlations between the external audience's assessment of the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation's communication practices and strategies, their level of trust in the Foundation, their perceptions of its institutional reputation, and their willingness to recommend doing business with it. The results in Table 8 showed a strong positive correlation between the assessment of communication practices and strategies and the external public's level of trust and perception of the organisation's image, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of (0.816) with a p-value of less than (0.001), indicating that a positive evaluation of communication practices is associated with a higher level of trust and an improved public image of the organisation. The results in Table 9 also showed a moderate to strong positive correlation between the evaluation of communication practices and the evaluation of the organisation's overall reputation, with a Spearman's correlation coefficient of (0.519) at a significance level of less than (0.001), which reflects a link between the nature of the public's assessment of communication practices and the impressions they form regarding the organisation's reputation. In the same context, the results in Table 10 showed a statistically significant relationship between the assessment of communication practices and strategies and the willingness to recommend dealing with the organisation, with a chi-squared value of (658.916) at a significance level of less than (0.001), which indicates that differences in the evaluation of communication practices are associated with differences in the public's attitudes towards recommending the organisation. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the third sub-hypothesis is statistically supported, given the confirmed relationships between the evaluation of communication practices and each of trust, image, public reputation and willingness to recommend doing business with the organisation; whilst it should be emphasised that these correlational relationships do not prove the existence of a direct causal effect of communication practices in shaping these perceptions.

General hypothesis: Institutional communication contributes to the formation of positive perceptions amongst the external public regarding the reputation of the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation through the communication practices and channels adopted by the organisation in communicating with its external environment**.**

The general hypothesis of the study was confirmed, in light of the findings derived from the three sub-hypotheses. The results of the first sub-hypothesis revealed differences in the patterns of use of institutional communication channels relied upon by the external audience to learn about the activities of the Hajjar Al-Sud Organisation, depending on personal variables, which reflects the diversity of communication channels and the varying ways in which members of the public utilise them. Furthermore, the results of the second sub-hypothesis indicated that the external audience recognises the organisation's multiple communication objectives, foremost among which are enhancing its reputation and gaining public trust (39.5 per cent) and improving its image (30.2 per cent); however, the contribution of institutional communication to helping the audience understand the organisation's activities and recognise its objectives remained at a moderate level. As for the results of the third sub-hypothesis, they revealed the existence of statistically significant correlations between the evaluation of communication practices and strategies and the level of public trust and image, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of (0.816), A Spearman's correlation coefficient of 0.519 was also recorded between the evaluation of

communication practices and the evaluation of the organisation's public reputation, as well as a statistically significant correlation between the evaluation of those practices and the willingness to recommend dealing with the organisation, according to the results in Table 10, which necessitate a review of the statistical classification of the evaluation categories before their final adoption. Based on these findings as a whole, it can be said that corporate communication is linked to the formation of the external public's perceptions of the reputation of the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation through the diversity of its channels and objectives, and the correlation between the evaluation of its practices and levels of trust, image and general reputation; consequently, the study's findings support the general hypothesis.

13. Conclusion:

In the Algerian context, institutional communication has become one of the key approaches necessitated by the economic, social and digital transformations that organisations are undergoing, given the increasing importance of their relationship with their external environment and the growing need to build trust, enhance their public image and consolidate their institutional reputation. The role of an economic organisation is no longer limited to performing its productive and service-related functions and achieving its economic objectives; it is now also linked to its ability to communicate effectively with its various target audiences, keep them informed of its activities and strategic directions, and respond to their aspirations and expectations.

It is from this perspective that this study was conducted to examine the role of institutional communication in shaping the external public's perceptions of the reputation of the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation, by identifying the nature of its communication practices and objectives, and the manner in which the public perceives these practices and assesses their implications for their relationship with the organisation.

In light of the field findings, it was possible to answer the study's main research question: 'What is the role of institutional communication in shaping the external public's perceptions of the reputation of the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation?' This was achieved through the following findings:

- The results of the first sub-question revealed the diversity of channels relied upon by the external public to learn about the organisation's activities, with statistically significant differences in usage patterns according to gender, age group and the nature of the relationship with the organisation. They also showed variations in the level of exposure to information depending on age group and the nature of the relationship, with no significant differences according to gender.

- The results of the second sub-question indicated that the main objectives the public perceives the organisation to be seeking to achieve through its communication with them are enhancing its reputation and gaining their trust (39.5 per cent), followed by improving its image (30.2 per cent); however, the contribution of communication to understanding the organisation's activities and learning about its objectives was only moderate.

- The results of the third sub-question revealed a strong positive correlation between the evaluation of communication practices and strategies and the public's level of trust and perception of the organisation's image, with a correlation coefficient of 0.816, It also showed a moderate to strong positive correlation between the evaluation of communication practices and the evaluation of the organisation's overall reputation, with a Spearman's correlation coefficient of 0.519, reflecting the link between a positive evaluation of communication practices and an improvement in the public's perceptions of the organisation.

Based on these findings as a whole, the study supports the general hypothesis that institutional communication contributes to shaping the external public's perceptions of the reputation of the Hajjar Al-Sud organisation, through the association of its communication practices with levels of trust, image and the overall assessment of the organisation's reputation, whilst emphasising that the correlational findings alone do not prove the existence of a direct causal effect.

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Appendices:

Gender: * Have you ever received information about the Hajjar al-Soud organisation or been aware of its activities?

Crosstab

			Have you ever received information about the Black Stone Foundation or been aware of its activities?		Total
			Yes	No	
Gender:	Male	Count	76	75	151
		% within the sex:	50.3%	49.7%	100.0%
	Female	Count	113	113	226
		% within the sex:	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	189	188	377
		% within the sex:	50.1%	49.9%	100.0%

Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact significance (two-tailed)	Exact significance (one-tailed)
Pearson's Chi-Square	0.004[a]	1	0.950		
Continuity correction [b]	0.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	0.004	1	0.950		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	0.517
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.004	1	0.950		
Number of Valid Cases	377				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 75.30.

b. Calculated only for a 2x2 table

Gender: * By what means do you find out about the organisation's news and activities? (You may select more than one answer)

Crosstab

			Through which channels do you find out about the organisation's news and activities? (You may select more than one answer)						Total
			Website or social media pages	Direct contact with the organisation's representatives	Through other people	Options 1 and 6	Options 2 and 5	Options 2 and 6	
Gender:	Male	Count	0	38	37	0	38	38	151

Crosstab									
% within the sex:	0.0%	25.2%	24.5%		0.0%	25.2%	25.2%	100.0%	
Female	Count	38	0	74	76	0	38	226	
	% within the sex:	16.8%	0.0%	32.7%	33.6%	0.0%	16.8%	100.0%	
Total		Count	38	38	111	76	38	76	377
		% within the sex:	10.1%	10.1%	29.4%	20.2%	10.1%	20.2%	100.0%

Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (two-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	195.136[a]	5	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	260,948	5	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	9,800	1	0.002
Number of Valid Cases	377		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.22.

Age group: * Have you ever received information about the Hajjar al-Sud Foundation or learnt about its activities?

Crosstab					
			Have you ever received information about the Hajjar al-Aswad Foundation or learnt about its activities?		Total
			Yes	No	
Age group:	Under 25	Count	0	38	38
		% within the age group:	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	25 to 35 years	Count	37	37	74
		% within the age group:	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	36 to 45 years	Count	152	75	227
		% within the age group:	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%
	Over 45 years	Count	0	38	38
		% within the age group:	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	189	188	377
		% within the age group:	50.1%	49.9%	100.0%

Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (two-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	102.117[a]	3	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	132,000	3	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	6,340	1	0.012
Number of Valid Cases	377		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.95.

Age group: * Through which channels do you find out about the organisation's news and activities? (You may select more than one answer)

Nature of your relationship with the Black Stone Foundation: * Have you ever received information about the Black Stone Foundation or learnt about its activities?

Crosstab

			Through which channels do you find out about the organisation's news and activities? (You may select more than one answer)						Total
			Website or social media pages	Direct contact with the organisation's representatives	Through other people	Options 1 and 6	Options 2 and 5	Options two and six	
Age group:	Under 25	Count	38	0	0	0	0	0	38
		% within the age group:	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	25 to 35 years	Count	0	0	74	0	0	0	74
		% within the age group:	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	36 to 45 years	Count	0	38	37	76	38	38	227
		% within the age group:	0.0%	16.7%	16.3%	33.5%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
	Over 45 years	Count	0	0	0	0	0	38	38
		% within the age group:	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	38	38	111	76	38	76	377
		% within the age group:	10.1%	10.1%	29.4%	20.2%	10.1%	20.2%	100.0%

Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (two-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	744.312[a]	15	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	573,406	15	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	229,392	1	0.000
Number of Valid Cases	377		

a. 6 cells (25.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.83.

Crosstab

			Have you ever received information about the Black Stone Foundation or been aware of its activities?		Total
			Yes	No	
Nature of your relationship with the Black Stone Foundation:	Client	Count	38	38	76
		% regarding the nature of your relationship with the Hajjar al-Aswad Foundation:	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	Residents of the area surrounding the organisation	Count	113	75	188
		% regarding the nature of your relationship with the Hajjar al-Aswad Foundation:	60.1%	39.9%	100.0%
	Business client	Count	0	37	37
		% regarding the nature of your relationship with the Hajjar al-Aswad Foundation:	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Other: citizen, follower	Count	38	38	76
		% regarding the nature of your relationship with the Hajjar al-Aswad Foundation:	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	189	188	377
		% regarding the nature of your relationship with the Hajjar al-Aswad Foundation:	50.1%	49.9%	100.0%

Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (two-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	44.679[a]	3	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	59,024	3	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2,140	1	0.143
Number of Valid Cases	377		

Chi-square tests

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.45.

Nature of your relationship with the Hajjar al-Sud Foundation: * Through which channels do you find out about the Foundation's news and activities? (You may select more than one answer)

Crosstab

			Through which channels do you find out about the organisation's news and activities? (You may select more than one answer)						Total
			Website or social media pages	Direct contact with the organisation's representatives	Through other people	Options 1 and 6	Options 2 and 5	Options 2 and 6	
The nature of your relationship with the Black Stone Foundation:	Client	Count	38	38	0	0	0	0	76
		% within the nature of your relationship with the Black Stone Foundation:	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	of the population in the area surrounding the organisation	Count	0	0	74	76	0	38	188
		% within the nature of your relationship with the Black Stone Foundation:	0.0%	0.0%	39.4%	40.4%	0.0%	20.2%	100.0%
	Economic operator	Count	0	0	37	0	0	0	37
		% within the nature of your relationship with the Black Stone Foundation:	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Other: Citizen, follower	Count	0	0	0	0	38	38	76
		% within the nature of your relationship with the Black Stone Foundation:	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	38	38	111	76	38	76	377
		% within the nature of your relationship with the Black Stone Foundation:	10.1%	10.1%	29.4%	20.2%	10.1%	20.2%	100.0%

Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (two-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	697.851[a]	15	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	673,595	15	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	240,318	1	0.000
Number of Valid Cases	377		

a. 3 cells (12.5 per cent) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.73.

Appendix: Statistical Tests and Scientific Justifications:

Variables	Statistical method	Justification for selecting the test
Assessment of communication practices and confidence level	Spearman's correlation	To measure the direction and strength of the correlation between two variables measured on ordinal scales, and to determine the extent to which the assessment of communication practices is correlated with the level of trust among the external audience.
Assessment of communication practices and assessment of public reputation	Spearman's correlation	To measure the strength and direction of the correlation between the assessment of communication practices and the ordinal rating of the organisation's public reputation.
Assessment of communication practices and willingness to recommend the organisation	Chi-squared test	To detect the presence of a statistically significant relationship between the categories of assessment of communication practices and the categories of willingness to recommend dealing with the organisation, as categorical variables in the analysis.

_ Appendix: Results of the Pearson correlation coefficient test between the evaluation of communication practices and strategies and the level of trust and image among the external public:

_ Appendix: Results of the Pearson correlation coefficient test between the assessment of communication practices and strategies and the assessment of the general reputation of the Hajjar Al-Sud Foundation:

Correlations			
		Assessment_of_Practices_and_ Strategy	Level of Trust and Perception
Assessment_of_Practices_and_ Strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.816**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	377	377
Level of Trust and Perception	Pearson Correlation	0.816**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	377	377

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Correlations				
			Assessment_of_practices_ and_strategy	How do you rate the general reputation of the Hajjar Al-Aswad Foundation?
Spearman's rho	Assessment_of_practices_and_strategy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.519**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	377	377
	How do you rate the general reputation of the Hajjar Al-Aswad Foundation?	Correlation Coefficient	0.519**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	377	377

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

_ Pearson Chi-Square Appendix on the relationship between the evaluation of communication practices and strategies and willingness to recommend dealing with the Hajjar al-Aswad Foundation

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (two-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	658.916[a]	10	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	572,626	10	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,632	1	0.006
Number of Valid Cases	377		

a. 3 cells (16.7 per cent) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.73.