

Factors and Attributes Affecting the Adoption of Digital Media Technologies by Public Relations Practitioners in Kuwait

By
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Technologies by Public Relations Practitioners in Kuwait**

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Abstract

This exploratory study examined the attitudes and factors influencing the decision to adopt new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. Kuwait's public relations practitioners were found in the past to be slow in adopting digital media technologies. Yet, Kuwait now ranks among the highest in the region in terms of new digital media consumers.

In a recent Kuwait public relations conference, scholars addressed that the field needs to benefit more from adopting digital technologies. Hence, there is a lag in adopting communication technologies when compared with Western societies.

The diffusion of innovation was the theoretical framework of this study. Therefore, the study examined the association of Rogers's attributes of innovation with the decision to adopt new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. In addition, the researcher examined how public relations practitioners differently perceive these five attributes of innovation based on gender and organization sector.

This dissertation implemented a mixed-method approach, using qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher in-depth interviewed (N = 14) public relations practitioners working in Kuwait and surveyed (N = 147) others.

In-depth interviews provided an explanation of each of Rogers's attributes of innovation. Interviewees mentioned the features of each of these attributes that influence their decision to adopt new digital media technologies. The descriptive results of the survey showed that only 1% of survey respondents had not adopted a new digital media technology for public relations practices. In addition, respondents identified Instagram as the most beneficial new digital media technology for public relations in Kuwait. Inferential statistics of the survey presented one

significant finding in that public relations practitioners in private sector organizations were more influenced by the trialability attribute of innovation than public relations practitioners in public sector organizations.

The main implications were that technology producers would benefit from the attributes of innovation features to encourage public relations practitioners to adopt their technologies. Adopting these technologies would improve women's public relations practices. Last, adopting digital media technologies would reduce public relations costs.

Keywords: Kuwait, Public Relations, Diffusion of Innovation, New Digital Media Technologies, Gender Differences, Organizational Sectors

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This research examined the gender differences in perceiving factors and attributes that drive use of the new digital media technology by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. The information will be used to understand factors influencing use of new digital media technologies in Kuwaiti public relations. Previous research suggests that public relations practitioners in Kuwait apply the new digital media technologies to improve their communications in daily operations (Abdulla, 2006; Al-Najran, 1998; Al-Yasin, 2013; Hussain, 2011; Sharif, 2003).

Development of new digital media technologies is rapidly intensifying for the purpose of simplifying public relations practitioners' duties in Kuwait (Al-Kandari & Gaither, 2011; Sharif, 2003). Paradoxically, the increase in the availability of new digital media technologies makes public relations practitioners' duties more complicated (Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Hussain, 2011). This effect is perceived to be prevalent among the public relations practitioners in Kuwait.

Kuwait is a small country in the Middle East, yet a wealthy country that contains about 6% of the total world oil reserves with no population under the poverty line ("The World Factbook," 2017). Although all of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries economic statuses rank among the highest in gross domestic product (GDP) in the world, all GCC countries are facing a drop of 2.7% as a result of the oil price collapse in 2016, excluding Kuwait (Corby, 2016). Corby (2016) reported that Kuwait is exempt due to its investment in the energy fields, namely oil and gas; in fact, Kuwait was named the most financially secure country compared to other GCC countries.

The Arab nation is fast adopting new digital media technologies, for example, social network sites, for use in public relations practices and functions (Gaither & Al-Kandari, 2014).

Globally, social media use among public relations practitioners is increasing (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008; Moya, 2014) in the Middle East (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012; Himelboim, Golan, Moon, & Suto, 2014; Khajeheian & Mirahmadi, 2015), and particularly among Kuwaiti media and public relations industry (Al-Kandari & Gaither, 2011; Alsalem, 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015). In fact, a recent study, which sampled 10,000 people in Kuwait, reported that 94% of the total population in Kuwait uses new digital media technologies (Central Agency for Information Technology, 2016). For instance, 57% of those using new digital media technologies are active Facebook users (“Internet World Statistics,” 2017).

Kuwait maintained the highest rate worldwide of women in fulltime employment at 88% (Marler & McGeeney, 2012); while the women in fulltime employment both worldwide and in GCC countries was 19% (Ryan, 2016). Nonetheless, Kuwaiti society neglects women’s empowerment, for example, women are not supported to held leadership positions (Al-Suwaihel, 2010; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015; Tlaiss, 2013). Similarly, in media and public relations, women are rarely represented in managerial or leading positions (Al-Yasin, 2013; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015).

Organizations in Kuwait are basically defined by their ownership. There are three main organization sectors in Kuwait: public, private and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Public relations practices differ among sectors (Go & You, 2016). Accordingly, these sector differences have been found to be associated with factors, attributes, and levels of intentions of public relations practitioners to adopt new digital media technologies (Al-Shohaib, Frederick, Al-Kandari, & Dorsher, 2010; Briones et al., 2011; Go & You, 2016; Sharif, 2003).

Need for the Study

Scholars emphasized the need for future research on examining the process of diffusion of new digital media technologies and gender issues in public relations. For instance, Fitch et al. (2015) suggested that future studies should investigate how public relations is practiced through gender differences. Further, Atkin et al. (2015) promoted the examination of the generalization process of new digital media technologies.

There are a wide number of research studies that discussed the implementation of public relations. Regardless, there is a paucity of research discussing Kuwaiti public relations issues and challenges. Many have called on public relations researchers to consider Kuwait as a field of study (Alramadan, 2007; Al-Yasin, 2013; Hussain, 2011).

In addition, several well-known public relations scholars encouraged public relations researchers to examine and measure the public relations practices, theories and models in different cultures (A. Alanazi, 1996; Culbertson & Chen, 1996; L. Grunig, Toth, & Hon, 2013). In fact, the Kuwaiti Public Relations Association is urging researchers to contribute to improving public relations practices in Kuwait (“Kuwait Public Relations Association,” 2014).

Statement of the Problem

As a developing country in the Middle East, Kuwait’s public relations practitioners have been found in the past to be slow in adopting new communication technologies (Sharif, 2003), and this continues to be the case, although Kuwait ranks among the highest in the Middle East in terms of new digital media consumers (Al-Sumait, 2014; Salem, 2017), and has a high rate of internet access at 80% (“Internet World Statistics,” 2017).

In fact, another study reported that 92% of the Kuwait population accesses the internet (Central Agency for Information Technology, 2016). In reality, the recent public relations conference held in Kuwait concluded that the public relations field in Kuwait is still developing

and needs to benefit more from implementing the new digital media technologies (“Digital Public Relations Conference,” 2016). For example, the researcher interviewed a Kuwaiti public relations practitioner, working in the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, in 2013 who indicated that the public relations associated with his educational organization did not adopt social network accounts.

Further, in the same previous interview, the public relations practitioner told this researcher that the public relations practitioners in his organization did not update their organizational website for about two years. In essence, the lateness of the public relations practitioner in Kuwait in adopting new digital media technologies creates a lag in communication technology updates when compared with the Western new digital media usage level and subsequent effects (Eyrich et al., 2008; Kirat, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

This dissertation aims to understand the different intentions of adopting new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners in Kuwait by gender and organization sector. The study will gauge whether the public relations practitioners’ decision to adopt new digital media technologies are associated with the attributes of innovation, besides how public relations practitioners’ gender influences their perception of these attributes of innovation, along with understanding the organization’s sector’s influence on the adoption decision.

The perception held that adoption of new digital media technologies in the Middle East, which Kuwait is a part of, is progressing at a slower pace than rates perceived in Western public relations (Curtin & Gaither, 2004; Hussain, 2011; Kirat, 2005, 2007). Yet, 92% of population in Kuwait has access to the internet (Central Agency for Information Technology, 2016). Finally, the purpose is to identify the factors and attributes that relate to how public relations practitioners

in Kuwait adopt or refuse to adopt new digital media technologies, and highlight the differences in adoption decision by gender and organization sector.

Importance of the Study

Atkin et al. (2015) encouraged other scholars to keep examining the generalization of new communication innovations. This dissertation aims to examine the attributes of innovation that are associated with public relations practitioners in Kuwait. Moreover, it will explore the process of adoption of new digital media technologies. Further, the researcher is responding to recommendations of previous researchers who have turned up a methodological issue that this study would overcome. For example, many studies encouraged the implementation of a mixed-method research approach namely, surveys and in-depth interviews (S. Alanazi, 2013; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003). Scholars encouraged exploratory studies in order to adopt a mixed-methods approach (Zhou, 2011).

In addition, the topic is meaningful for all public relations practitioners in Kuwait. In fact, the findings would be relevant to public relations practitioners in other countries that share similar cultural sets with Kuwait, namely, the GCC countries. Moreover, the dissertation explores different levels of intent of the public relations practitioners in Kuwait in adopting a new digital media technology in terms of differences in gender and organization sector based on Rogers's (2003) diffusion of innovation theory. Diffusion of innovation is a theory that has been widely accepted by scholars but was not examined on the current new digital media technologies in Kuwait.

Background of the Study

The review of new digital media technologies' effects on the Arab nations poses a concern when compared to Western standards. Kuwait, in particular, suffers a paucity of research

(Alramadan, 2007; “Kuwait Public Relations Association,” 2014). The United States, for example, displays a high rate of digital media technologies development and use.

The United States encourages, motivates, and supports the development of digital media technologies in unlimited areas of livelihood (Moya, 2014). For example, social network sites are encouraged, used, and justified in the United States through public relations in (a) social, (b) economic, (c) political, (d) religious, and (e) security innovations and developments (Briones et al., 2011; Bystrom, Banwart, & Mckinney, 2014; Curtis et al., 2010; Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Moya, 2014). Limitations applied to the use of social network sites are laid out in maintaining the integrity of individual privacy and safety. Adding to that, Taylor and Kent (2010) stated that the importance of social network sites was overrated. Also, there is no cap on social network sites’ development and use (Go & You, 2016; Gordon & Berhow, 2009).

The effectiveness of social network sites as a communication tool has increased their value for the public relations field (S. Alanazi, 2013; Hussain, 2011; Moya, 2014), which made public relations practitioners claim that social network sites are becoming an important part of public relations practices (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012; Go & You, 2016). Although there are some later adopters among public relations practitioners who do not integrate digital media technologies as soon as they occur (Avidar, 2009; Khajeheian & Mirahmadi, 2015), many have highlighted the necessity of keeping up with new digital media technologies (Agozzino, 2015).

Yet, according to Go and You (2016), not all organizations are eager to adopt social media. Almost 300 organizations’ adoptions of social media were analyzed and they were categorized into two main groups. First was organizations adopting a single social media channel; second, organizations adopting multiple social media channels (Go & You, 2016).

Social network sites introduce new features of digital media technologies to public relations communication. For example, social network sites have removed all geographical boundaries of communication (Bystrom et al., 2014). Further, social network sites make dialogue or two-way communication easier than ever, which many public relations studies assured is important to a successful public relations practice (S. Alanazi, 2013; L. A. Grunig, 2001; Kent & Taylor, 2002; Taylor, Kent, & White, 2001).

Yet most studies found that public relations use of social network sites was and is still limited to one-way communication (Agozzino, 2015; Linvill, McGee, & Hicks, 2012). According to Go and You (2016), organizations have started adopting a serious two-way communication with clients. A study interviewed 40 American public relations practitioners who emphasized the significance of social network sites as effective digital media technologies (Briones et al., 2011). However, others found that social network sites would be more influential if posts were tailored to target the audience (Bystrom et al., 2014; Linvill et al., 2012).

The social network sites integration system still has a long way to go toward perfection, at least in Eastern cultures. However, the openness of the United States government toward encouragement, research, development, enhancement and marketing of social network sites' ideas and products means the effects of public relations functions in the United States are envisaged at high levels (Linvill et al., 2012) compared to the Middle East (F. Almutairi, 2009; Al-Yasin, 2013; "Digital Public Relations Conference," 2016, "Kuwait Public Relations Association," 2014).

The global and local Kuwaiti workforce is shifting in gender composition (Dozier, Sha, & Shen, 2013; L. Grunig et al., 2013; Marler & McGeeney, 2012; Ryan, 2016). Equally important is the implementation of the new digital media technologies that are changing many

cultural values (Alsalem, 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014). In addition, there is a paucity of literature regarding public relations practices in Kuwait (Alramadan, 2007). In sum, this importance increases the need to examine such a topic to fill a part of the enormous gap in the body of knowledge regarding Kuwait's public relations, women practitioners, organization sector, and the implementation of new digital media technologies in these public relations practices.

Research Inquiries

The dissertation first examined which of Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation encourage public relations practitioners in Kuwait to adopt new digital media technologies. Second, it investigated the gender differences in perceiving Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation. Third, the study addressed which organization sectors - public, private or a non-governmental organization (NGO) - were more supportive of adopting new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners in Kuwait.

Overview of Methodology

This study was designed to acquire data through the implementation of a mixed-method research perspective. Scholars identified four types of research perspectives by categorizing them into primary and secondary methods (Joyner, Rouse, & Glatthorn, 2013). This dissertation treated both qualitative and quantitative methods equally and respectively.

To emphasize, the study was an exploratory descriptive study type. Exploratory studies are those that investigate an area not widely presented in the literature (Zhou, 2011). Descriptive studies are those that describe a phenomenon (Joyner et al., 2013). In terms of methods, Joyner et al. (2013) suggested that for descriptive studies a survey should be counted as a primary method, and interviews are "additional methods that may be used" (2013, p. 79). This dissertation implemented both surveys and interviews to reach its conclusions.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in this dissertation for purposeful description of public relations practitioners in Kuwait utilizing new digital media as a public relations communication tool. The terms were derived from the literature that discussed related subjects.

Public relations: “The practice of relating an organization to the public and those who influence the public to ensure mutual understanding and adaptation” (Doyle, 2016, p. 387).

Public relations practitioners: As named by Doyle (2016), public relations officers are those employees who are responsible for public relations practices.

Digital media: Computer-mediated communication, which is any communication or interaction between users that is directly mediated by online communication tools, and it is different than traditional media in terms of coding and recoding procedure (Chandler & Munday, 2016).

Social network sites: Websites that enable individual users to establish their personal profiles that they can use to generate content and links for individual online contacts (Chandler & Munday, 2016).

Social media: A communication tool that enables the interaction feature between its users (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008), “whether they are known to each other or strangers, localized in the same place or geographically dispersed” (Chandler & Munday, 2016).

Public sector organization: Organization that is owned by and controlled by the government (Black, Hashimzade, & Myles, 2017).

Private sector organization: Organization that is not owned or run by the government (Black et al., 2017).

Non-governmental organization (NGO): Organization built by legally approved people who are working voluntarily for a specific purpose and their organization's income is not distributed to its members; it is also called a non-profit organization (Black et al., 2017).

Limitations of the Study

The geographical issue was a limitation of these dissertation mixed methods. The researcher could have reached a wider sample of public relations practitioners to be included in the quantitative survey. In the same manner, Daymon and Holloway (2011) showed that non-direct interviews are better nowadays, yet Seidman (2013) argued that a rapport relationship increased the quality of interviews is developed in personal interviews. In fact, the Kuwaiti culture respects and appreciates personal face-to-face communication more than mediated communication (Alsalem, 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014; Curtin & Gaither, 2004; Sharif, 2003). Therefore, the researcher might reach more participants for the qualitative in-depth interviews and surveys if he presented in Kuwait.

Summary

This dissertation is a report of an exploratory descriptive study of different influences of attributes of innovation on the public relations practitioners in Kuwait based on their gender and organizational sector, and the association of these attributes of innovation with the adoption decision. The study was based primarily upon interviewing and surveying public relations practitioners in Kuwait. This first chapter of the dissertation presented the background of the study, stated the problem, described the significance, showed the major research questions, presented an overview of the methodological approach, and specified the limitations. Lastly, this first chapter concluded by defining some terms that were used.

Next, the second chapter covers the literature that discussed related topics and derived the dissertation inquiry. The literature review is classified under five main categories. First, the literature review reports the theories that have been implemented in studying related topics and the argument of deciding to adopt the diffusion of innovation theory as a theoretical framework for this dissertation. Second, it introduces public relations practices in Kuwait. Indeed, the researcher highlights and names some public relations practices that never been addressed in previous literature that discussed the public relations history in Kuwait. Third, the literature review explains the influences of the new digital media technologies on Kuwait in general, and particularly on the public relations practices in Kuwait. Fourth, women's issues in the Kuwaiti public relations are discussed. Fifth, organizational sector and its impact on the adoption of new digital media technologies in their public relations practices is detailed. Finally, the chapter concludes by naming the research questions this dissertation is explores.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Literature regarding Kuwait in general, as well as gender differences, organizational sector, public relations, public relations practitioners, and the implementation of new digital media technologies in Kuwait suffers from a dearth of research. Henceforth, many have called on researchers to consider Kuwait as a part of their public relations studies (Alramadan, 2007; “Kuwait Public Relations Association,” 2014).

Consequently, the purpose of this dissertation is to examine how Rogers’s (2003) five attributes of innovation (relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, complexity, and observability) would differently influence public relations practitioners in Kuwait based on their gender and organization sector. Such topics become important because of their exploratory nature. Exploratory types of research are those that are studying an area that has rarely been discussed in the body of literature (Zhou, 2011).

Theories.

Theory is a systematic way to examine a process or phenomenon (Atkin et al., 2015). Theoretical frameworks “provide a basis for the empirical review” (Joyner et al., 2013, p. 143). Henceforth, a study built on a solid theoretical framework would demonstrate success in achieving its goals more than studies that lack a theoretical framework. However, some scholars contend that a theoretical framework is not necessary for public relations studies (Al-Yasin, 2013).

For example, Al-Yasin (2013) claims that there is still no clear definition of public relations; as a result, scholars cannot assign a theory for a non-defined field. In contrast, an

argument can be made that there is a difference between a definition and theory. First, there may be several definitions for a term, and scholars can accept one and refuse the other. Conversely, theories are phenomena that were examined and proved in a scientific approach. For example, there are many definitions of public relations and some scholars adopt the definitions that they believe more suited to their understanding of public relations practices.

However, public relations is widely studied as a part of mass communications, communication studies, or marketing, which are all parts of social science. Social science fields are the human study field or a description of human practices, and they can share and apply theories to multiple social science fields. For instance, the agenda setting theory can be applied to political science studies.

Another example related to this dissertation topic is the diffusion of innovation theory, which is applied in this dissertation. The diffusion of innovation theory was founded to boost the sales of new technological innovations. Nonetheless, scholars have utilized the diffusion of innovation theory to examine public relations practitioners' willingness to adopt novel communication technologies to increase the efficiency of public relations (Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003).

In general, many theories and models aim to examine related topics. In studying related topics, the literature demonstrated the Technology Adoption Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989); the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003), and the Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers, 2003). In fact, scholars recently integrated all the previous theories and created a new model to examine the interactive nature of communication technologies, named the Integrated Technology Adoption (Atkin et al., 2015).

The researcher examined the literature that discussed these theories (Atkin et al., 2015; Davis, 1989; Rogers, 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2003). On the one hand, the Technology Adoption Model was founded to examine the adoption of new technology in organizations. That examination will include the usefulness of new technology in an organization. In addition, it will examine the ease of implementing or using this new technology in the organization (Davis, 1989).

Diffusion of Innovations.

On the other hand, is the diffusion of innovation theory. The diffusion of innovation provided a wider range for examining adoption of innovative technologies. The law of diffusion of innovation used for understanding the status of adoption of new digital media technologies in Kuwait hinges on the diffusion of innovation models. Several models exist in United States publications (e.g. UTAUT and TAM).

However, the theoretical model for diffusion of innovation has yet to be identified for Kuwait and Arab nations at large. Specifically, the diffusion of innovation model identified for rating the status of adoption of new digital media technologies in Kuwait was advanced over 50 years ago and credited to Professor Everett Rogers of Iowa State University. The theory postulated that any innovation advancement could not be successfully adopted without social acceptance and behavioral change (Cunningham, 2014; Rogers, 2003). The model details how adoption trends for new technology are patterned. The model reflects how consumers react to new technology socially and psychologically. Rogers (2003) classified the adopters into five categories: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.

Rogers's (2003) position holds that the key to success in marketing a product using new digital media technologies, namely social media, is getting to the front of the curve as early as

possible. The strategy is to find customers who believe what the designers believe.

Conventionally, the early majority does not try adoption until a previous customer for the product gives a testimonial first. Listening to testimonials puts the potential customer as either an early innovator or late innovator. Laggards are those that encounter products at seminars or store presentations. The current digital age quickly puts consumers at late arrival.

According to Cunningham (2014), social media usage analysis shows that there are social network opinion leaders who take the step toward innovation. However, there are those who lead the leaders. Social-psychologically, leaders hold the position of power. They are those who lead and guide the leaders to inspire the public. Following leaders leads to change; however, understanding why the leaders should be followed brings followers up to the frontage of leadership. New digital media technologies facilitate the bringing of followers to the front of leadership. Hence, new digital media technologies convert followers to leaders in every aspect of social networking.

In general, Rogers (2003) mentioned that the diffusion process involves many parts, such as timing, social system, channels of communication about the diffusion, steps of adoption decision, and the most relevant part of this study, the five attributes of innovation. In a similar manner, Atkin et al. (2015) have proposed a new model, the integrated technology adoption model, which combines many theories that examine the interaction between individuals and technology. Atkin et al. (2015) developed his new model by joining the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology, UTAUT, the diffusion of innovation, the technology adoption model, and uses and gratifications. Implementing and examining such a model, however, would not be feasible for this research for several reasons.

The first reason is the geographical limitations of the study. The researcher is located in the United States, and is studying the adoption process in Kuwait. The second limitation is the time that the researcher will need to implement this new model that exceeds the limitation that the researcher has. The third limitation is the lack of a clear public relations practitioners' population in Kuwait, which prevents a representative sample. To that end, the researcher found that the diffusion of innovation theory covered a wider range of attributes. Hence, the researcher is implementing the diffusion of innovation theory because it includes the attributes that the technology adoption model examines; in fact, it will also examine three more attributes than the technology adoption model examines.

Public Relations in Kuwait

Kuwait is small Arab Middle Eastern country located in the northwestern side of the Persian Gulf. Kuwait is the most multicultural country compared to its three neighbors: Saudi Arabia (south and southwest), Iraq (north and northwest), and Iran (borders on the east). Casey (2007) described the Kuwaiti people as those who originated from the Arabian Peninsula. Nevertheless, historically, since the 1750s, Kuwaitis started migrating from its three neighbors and started their country under the rule of the Al-Sabah monarchy. Indeed, that makes Kuwait a multicultural society.

Kuwait being a multicultural society, the relationship between its people has become more complicated. According to Al-Rujaib (2006), the need for public relations is positively correlated with the complexity of human relations. In other words, people need to utilize public relations practices more when their relationships with others becomes more complicated.

The literature that discussed the history of the state of Kuwait presented it in eras based on the major political issues (Al-Nakib, 2016; Casey, 2007) that caused significant changes in

the country. The first era started with the foundation of Kuwait in the 1750s until the political revolution of Mubarak bin Sabah in 1896. The second era of Kuwaiti history starts after the revolution of Mubarak bin Sabah until the independence of Kuwait and the adoption of its current constitution in 1961. The third era is from the adoption of the constitution in 1961 to the Iraqi invasion in 1990. At the present time, the latest, fourth, era started after the freedom of Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion to the date of writing this piece. Given these points, the history of public relations in Kuwait will be presented respectively.

Era One: Public Relations in the Establishment of Kuwait in 1752.

Kuwait was founded when Al-Sabah, the current monarch, took control of the Bani Khalid fort in the current geographical location of Kuwait in 1752 (Al-Nakib, 2016). However, the political life in that era was very simple and did not have any complications. Al-Nakib (2016) demonstrated that during that era that Al-Sabah did not face any complications in governing Kuwait.

In fact, governing Kuwait was so simple that the English East India Company described the country as a small town that was governed by the ruler in a fatherly way (Al-Nakib, 2016). Likewise, later in 1865, the British Political Resident, Lewis Pelly, reported that the Kuwaiti ruler had simple governing roles (Al-Nakib, 2016). Again, in a simple life, public relations are needed less (Al-Rujaib, 2006).

Conversely, Sharif (2003) indicated that public relations have been practiced by Al-Sabah since they founded Kuwait. Sharif (2003) suggested that the Al-Sabah family started governing Kuwait by practicing Grunig's two-way symmetrical communication. The open-door policy followed by the Kuwaiti monarchs to build relations with the public was an example of the old public relations practiced in Kuwait (Sharif, 2003).

Era Two: Public Relations supporting Mubarak bin Sabah Taking Power in 1896.

Kuwait's seventh ruler, Sheik Mubarak Al-Sabah, named *Al-Kabeer*, which in English means *The Great*, led the first political revolution in Kuwaiti history. In 1896 Mubarak Al-Kabeer killed his elder half-brothers Mohammed and Jarrah, then ruled the country (Al-Nakib, 2016; Rossi, 2008). His revolution aimed to isolate Kuwait from being a part of any external power (Al-Nakib, 2016). Some Kuwaitis at that time were politically supporting his elder brothers. Therefore, Mubarak Al-Kabeer utilized public relations to gain the public's support, and he gained the support of all Kuwaitis at that time.

As an example of how the Kuwaiti government has practiced public relations is the presence of the "*Mubarak kiosk*." It is a small building in the middle of the old Kuwaiti downtown market, called *Souk* in Arabic. Mubarak Al-Kabeer established that two-story kiosk, *Mubarak Kiosk*, which was the building that Mubarak utilized for his two-way symmetrical communication with the Kuwaiti public. Mubarak Al-Kabeer communicated directly with his external and internal public through meetings in this small building (Al-Nakib, 2016). Sharif (2003) also noticed that Western public relations were practiced in that era by the Western oil companies that operated in Kuwait, along with the establishment of the Kuwaiti public and private organizations.

Era Three: Public Relations in Modern Kuwait Starting in 1961.

In 1961 Kuwait gained its independence from Britain. In the same year, the current Kuwaiti constitution was adopted. Henceforth, modern public relations practices have been adopted in Kuwait as a result of implementation of the constitution (Al-Rujaib, 2006; Alsalem, 2010). Although public relations was presented as part of the Kuwaiti organization, its role or duties were not identified (Al-Rujaib, 2006).

Later in the 1980s, the Kuwaiti government started sponsoring and encouraging Kuwaiti students to pursue their higher education majoring in public relations (Al-Rujaib, 2006). Furthermore, Kuwait in the 1980s faced two major crises. First the economic crisis of the Kuwaiti stock market resulted in increasing the private sector public relations efficiency to overcome the challenges they faced (Al-Rujaib, 2006). In addition, terrorists kidnapped the Kuwait airplane named “Aljabiriyah” (Al-Rujaib, 2006). Both examples were addressed in many international public relations conferences (Al-Rujaib, 2006; Alsalem, 2010). At the end of that era, the idea of establishing a Kuwaiti public relations association began in 1983 (Al-Rujaib, 2006). However, the government supported and approved it in 2006 (Alramadan, 2007; “Kuwait Public Relations Association,” 2014).

Era Four: Public Relations Freeing Kuwait in 1991.

The Kuwaiti government had a solid understanding of the influence of public relations. For instance, in 1990, during the Iraqi invasion, the Kuwaiti government appointed Hill and Knowlton, a public relations firm, which was among the best public relations and lobbying firms in the United States, to lobby on its behalf and influence Americans’ public opinion to support Kuwait (A. Alanazi, 1996; Al-Yasin & Dashti, 2008; Miller, 1999).

According to Miller (1999), Hill and Knowlton had been practicing lobbying in a different way. Rather than persuading politicians directly, Hill and Knowlton utilized the two-way symmetrical communication to persuade the public, which influences politicians’ actions (Miller, 1999). In fact, Hill and Knowlton succeeded in influencing American political opinions. As a result, the United States led the war to free Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion in 1991.

Later in 1992, Kuwait University implemented its first public relations educational courses as a part of the mass communication degree (Sharif, 2003). The establishment of the

mass communication major has led to organizing the first public relations conference in Kuwait in 1995 (Al-Rujaib, 2006). Moreover, the first systematic, exploratory public relations study in Kuwait was conducted by Hussain in 1997. He described the public relations department's position in Kuwaiti organizations, and the public relations practices in public and private sectors but without presenting a comparison between them (Sharif, 2003).

New Digital Media Technologies in Public Relations

Digital media technologies have influenced public relations in various ways. For example, scholars assured that the new communication technologies have supported public relations by increasing the practitioners' abilities to reach a larger number of audiences, besides creating better relations with their internal and external public, without the need for media gatekeepers (Eyrich et al., 2008; Hussain, 2011; Kirat, 2007). Others contend that the implementation of digital technologies is limiting the power of public relations by transferring the power of generating information to the public (Taylor & Kent, 2010).

Nevertheless, digital technologies are also challenging public relations specialists in many ways. For instance, technology increases the cost and budget needed, because of the need for improving and developing public relations practitioners' skills to utilize these new digital technologies (Al-Shohaib et al., 2010; Al-Yasin, 2013; Briones et al., 2011). In other words, utilizing new digital technologies is associated with the increase of training and the time of training, plus the cost of getting the new digital technologies (Al-Shohaib et al., 2010; Al-Yasin, 2013; Hussain, 2011; Sharif, 2003).

The main role of public relations practitioners is to build a relationship with their internal and external public (Al-Shohaib, Al-Kandari, & Abdulrahim, 2009; Hussain, 2011). The most effective way to build a relationship with the public is to implement Grunig's (1991) public

relations models. Grunig (1991) considered that adopting a two-way communication between public relations and its public is better than the traditional one-way communication model. A two-way communication feature serves to decrease the gap between organizations and their publics (S. Alanazi, 2013). The internet was the first innovation that increased the interaction communication between public relations and the public (Kirat, 2007).

Many scholars have investigated the influence of implementing the internet in public relations in the Middle East. For instance, Sharif (2003) was the first researcher who studied the implication of the internet among Kuwaiti public relations practitioners. He compared the difference in adoption between public and private organizations, and examined the method of communications. The public relations practitioners in Kuwait did not utilize the two-way communication feature of the internet (F. Almutairi, 2009; Al-Sumait, 2014; Sharif, 2003). Not only did public relations practitioners in Kuwait not use the Internet in a two-way communication, but also, Kirat (2007) concluded, the United Arab Emirates public relations practitioners did not either.

Social media is any digital media technology that is based on interactive communication between adopters, which makes it a helpful public relations tool, especially for building relationships (Briones et al., 2011). Eyrich et al. (2008) are named as the first researchers to examine the adoption of social media in public relations.

They have investigated the use of different social media tools by public relations practitioners under Rogers's (2003) diffusion of innovation theoretical framework. Eyrich et al. (2008) found that public relations practitioners adopted an average of six social media platforms out of the 18 they examined. Other researchers, both in the same or in different cultures,

replicated the study later and reached the same results (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012; Curtis et al., 2010; Diga & Kelleher, 2009).

Further findings reported by Eyrich et al. (2008) show that complexity, compatibility, and trialability were significantly influencing the innovation adoption decision. Moreover, the study identified a positive correlation between personal adoption of social media and its use in the public relations profession (Eyrich et al., 2008). In fact, Eyrich et al.'s (2008) measurements are still valid and reliable and used by researchers to assess the implementation of social media in public relations practices and other fields of studies.

The literature assures the importance of implementing social media as a two-way communication channel. More important is the implementation of two-way symmetrical communication or a dialogue communication that builds relationships with the public (S. Alanazi, 2013). However, most of the public relations practitioners categorized as implementing the two-way communication feature used two-way asymmetrical communication (Alramadan, 2007). The implementation of two-way asymmetrical communication is by researching and getting the public's feedback for the sake of improving public relations practices and persuasion abilities (Daymon & Holloway, 2011).

However, most of the organizations studied were implementing one-way communication in their public relations practices (S. Alanazi, 2013; Briones et al., 2011; Kirat, 2007; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003). Surprisingly, a current study conducted by Go and You (2016) explored how different organizations used social media differently to build their relationships with their customers. Although larger organizations' public relations practitioners are still using social media as a one-way communication channel, smaller, non-profit organizations were utilizing more social media channels with the two-way communications feature (Go & You, 2016).

Digital media can be categorized into five categories based on their features of serving public relations. For example, there are some new digital media technologies that are more text-oriented, such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and Twitter (Doyle, 2016). Moreover, visual-based new digital media is another category that includes: Instagram, Snapchat, Vimeo, Periscope, YouTube (Chandler & Munday, 2016). The call based category would include new digital media technologies such as Viber, Line, Tango, and FaceTime. The multi-feature category would include Facebook, LinkedIn, Yammer, and other applications (apps). Finally, the old digital media category contains digital media that have been out for more than 20 years, such as websites, email, text messages, and fax.

Internet and Social Media in the Middle East.

In the last few years, it is clear that the internet has influenced and changed many aspects of Middle Eastern lives. For example, the internet has rapidly spread democratic values to Middle Eastern people. As a result, many political revolutions were raised and caused a change to many political systems in the Middle East, known as the Arab Spring (Halverson, Ruston, & Trethewey, 2013; Seo & Ebrahim, 2016).

Another example observed by researchers such as Al-Sumait (2014) and Dashti and Mesbah (2015) was the change of lifestyle that was caused by utilizing the new communication technologies in many Arab cultures. Kuwait was one of these countries mentioned whose lifestyle was influenced by the new digital media technologies. The change caused by the new digital media increased Kuwaiti women's degree of freedom to communicate and address their opinions and ideas through social media (Al-Sumait, 2014; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015).

Kuwait, as an Arab Middle Eastern country, also experienced rapid growth in the number of internet users. The internet arrived in Kuwait in the 1990s (Alsalem, 2010). Sharif (2003),

who studied the internet adoption by Kuwaiti public relations specialists, concluded that they did not implement the internet in 2002 because of the low number of Kuwaiti internet users.

Nevertheless, that has changed.

Currently, 80% of the population in Kuwait accesses the internet, and 60% of those are active Facebook users (“Internet World Statistics,” 2017). According to Al-Sumait (2014), Kuwait ranked the second most active of Facebook users among all 22 Arab countries.

Regardless of the population differences among all Arab and non-Arab countries in the Middle East, Kuwait ranked second after Turkey in terms of the number of tweets produced every day (Al-Sumait, 2014). In fact, the Arab social media reported that Kuwait alone produces 7.7% of the total tweets in the Arab world (Salem, 2017).

In sum, the Middle Eastern countries, in general, are open toward adopting new digital technologies (Salem, 2017). With an exception of some countries that were named as not-free countries, or the “worst of worst” in the Middle East, traditional media is the major communication channel (Freedom House, 2017; Khajeheian & Mirahmadi, 2015).

However, Kuwait has a higher degree of freedom, named as a partly-free country in the Freedom House report (“Kuwait Freedom of the Press,” 2015), which is associated with a high income, a high level of education, and an increasing number of its youth population compared to other Middle Eastern countries (Alsalem, 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014; “The World Factbook,” 2017). Therefore, its social system is an open ground for future diffusion studies related to the use of new digital media technologies.

Social Media in Kuwaiti Public Relations.

On one side, researchers such as Taylor and Kent (2010) argued that public relations scholars overstate the importance of social media use in public relations. On the other hand,

Hussain (2011) argued that new communication technologies, invented in the last century, had a significant influence on public relations practices. In fact, social media had the most significant influence on public relations because of adding the interactive feature (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012).

Particularly, in Kuwait, Alsalem (2010) assured that the use of social media is an important skill that public relations practitioners in Kuwait must develop. Scholars discovered that Arabs trusted the message senders (Curtin & Gaither, 2004), rather than the message content sent through social media, which increases the importance of the public relations practitioners (Himmelboim et al., 2014). Keep in mind that 80% of people in Kuwait are internet users, and 72% of those were active Facebook users (“Internet World Statistics,” 2017). Clearly, the internet and social media are a significant part of Kuwaitis’ daily lives.

The wide range of internet and social media adopters will increase the chances of public relations adoption of social media. In fact, that is what Rogers named “critical mass.” Critical mass is when a wide range of individuals adopt an innovation that non-adopters may be forced to adopt (Moya, 2014; Rogers, 2003).

Women in Public Relations

A recent Gallup poll reported that women worldwide are less likely to have a full-time job compared to men (Ryan, 2016). Similar to other work fields, women working in public relations are suffering from a great deal of gender-based discrimination (Dozier et al., 2013). Although there are gender differences in terms of management, women were found to be more effective and productive in some tasks (Hasan & Othman, 2012).

According to Grunig et al. (2013), public relations in the United States is transferring to a more female-dominant field, rather than a male-dominant field. Yet, scholars assert that most female public relations specialists in the United States are being discriminated by being paid less

than men, with many controlling factors (Dozier et al., 2013). Nonetheless, there were some situations where American female public relations practitioners were paid less due to having less experience, which leads to fewer managerial roles and less participation in decision-making. Overall, gender discrimination is practiced everywhere, yet on different levels (L. A. Grunig, 2001; L. Grunig et al., 2013).

Women in the Middle East.

The worldwide average of women filling full-time jobs in 2016 was 19%, compared to 33% of all men having a full-time job (Ryan, 2016). In fact, the Middle East had the lowest rate of female participation in its workforce (Crabtree, 2012). To clarify, women who had a full-time job in the Middle East were only 12% of the female population, which was below the 19% global recorded average (Ryan, 2016).

Women in Gulf Cooperation Council Countries.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), namely the State of Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Sultanate of Oman, and the State of Qatar, produce 22.5% of the world's daily oil supply ("International Energy Statistics - EIA," 2014). Still, similar to the United States (Dozier et al., 2013), women in the GCC earn less than their male counterparts (Kemp, Madsen, & Davis, 2015). Kemp et al. (2015) cited the Gender Gap Report of 2014 that ranked all GCC countries at the bottom of the list.

In contrast, others contend that GCC governments are concerned about women's issues in their countries. For instance, Crabtree (2012) mentions that the GCC governments are supporting the development and increase of women's participation in its workforce. Notably, a recent Gallup report (2016) showed that 19% of GCC women hold a full-time position, which is similar to the worldwide average (Ryan, 2016).

According to Kemp et al. (2015), women's situation in the GCC is influenced by two major factors: external and internal. First, the external factors are the international agreements that aim to empower and support women everywhere. Second, the internal factors that influence women's empowerment in the GCC countries are culture and tradition, religion, education, work environment, family issues, and self-concept.

Even though Kuwait shares some of its cultural values with its neighbors (Al-Sumait, 2014), it differs in its political system, media policies, freedom of expression, and human rights (Kemp et al., 2015; "Kuwait Freedom of the Press," 2015). Kuwait enjoys a partly free media that is ranked third among Arabian and non-Arabian countries in the Middle East, and the first among the GCC countries ("Kuwait Freedom of the Press," 2015). For this reason, several researchers observed the positive role of Kuwait in supporting and empowering women in their country (Al-Sumait, 2014; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015; Kemp et al., 2015; Sabri, 2015).

Women in Kuwait.

Women in Kuwait have been more respected and valued compared to other cultures in the region. For instance, the Kuwaiti government established the first women's association only two years after adopting the current Kuwaiti constitution in 1963, named the "Women's Cultural and Social Society" that is supported and funded by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Social Affairs and Workforce (Al-Mughni, 1996; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015).

Public relations scholars have always encouraged other researchers to examine women's status in different cultural sets (Culbertson & Chen, 1996; L. A. Grunig, 2001; L. Grunig et al., 2013). Henceforth, it is necessary to identify the major Kuwaiti cultural values that influence Kuwaiti women in general, and the public relations practitioners particularly. Scholars named these influential cultural values as religion, tradition, political system, education, economics, and

the workforce (A. Alanazi, 1996; S. Alanazi, 2013; Alsalem, 2010; Al-Shohaib et al., 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015; L. A. Grunig, 2001; L. Grunig et al., 2013).

Religion.

Religion and religious leaders influence the workforce and public relations practices in Kuwait and the region (Al-Shohaib et al., 2009; Curtin & Gaither, 2004). Islam is the main religion practiced in Kuwait (Al-Nakib, 2016) and the influence of Islam on Kuwaiti lives is an ongoing debate among scholars.

On one side, scholars claim that Islamic values are hindering the development of women and public relations practices (S. Alanazi, 2013; Al-Shohaib et al., 2009; Curtin & Gaither, 2004). On the other side, scholars argue that Islam is not a barrier to women's rights. For example, Dashti and Mesbah (2015) blamed Arab tradition and culture by stating that "women have become either presidents or prime ministers in several modern Islamic countries," yet "not a single Arab Muslim country has had a female leader" (p. 5).

In addition, the cultural or traditional changes caused by the media are changing many cultural values. Consequently, it is more acceptable today for women not to wear the traditional veils or other traditional covers (Alsalem, 2010). For example, 73% of Kuwaitis reported that women should be free to decide whether they should wear a veil or not (Kohut, Wike, & Horowitz, 2007).

Tradition.

Each culture has its own specific traditions that influence public relation practices (S. Alanazi, 2013; Al-Yasin, 2013; Culbertson & Chen, 1996; L. A. Grunig, 2001; L. Grunig et al., 2013; Hussain, 2011; Sharif, 2003). In Kuwait, for example, interpersonal face-to-face communication is more effective and appreciated than mediated communications (Al-Sumait,

2014; Sharif, 2003). Keep in mind that Arabic traditions prohibit cross-gender personal communication, which is a challenge facing Kuwaiti female public relations practitioners. As a result, women were less open to accepted careers that expose them more to society, such as media or public relations careers (Dashti & Mesbah, 2015). Equally important, it would hinder women's social activities.

A significant role of public relations is to construct a relationship with the public (Al-Shohaib et al., 2009; Hussain, 2011). However, the most effective way to construct a relationship with the public is to apply Grunig's (1991) public relations models. Grunig (1991) suggested that adopting two-way communication between public relations and the public is better than the traditional one-way communication model. A two-way communication feature serves in decreasing the gap between organizations and its public (S. Alanazi, 2013). Therefore, without a personal communication available for female public relations practitioners in Kuwait, they would not be as successful as their male counterpart public relations practitioners.

The role of *Dewaniya* in Kuwait would clarify the dilemma. A *Dewaniya* is a separate room of the house used by men to gather and discuss all of their daily issues. *Dewaniya* are utilized in Kuwait as the most effective two-way symmetrical communication channel to build relationships with the public (Al-Sumait, 2014; Sharif, 2003). Although it is a male-dominant gathering, there are a few *Dewaniyas* that welcome women, namely, the more liberal upper-class part of the society (Al-Sumait, 2014).

Of equal importance to *Dewaniyas* are the female-dominant gatherings in Kuwait named *Midday Tea*, when housewives gather at midday to discuss issues. In contrast to *Dewaniya*, discussions that influence Kuwaiti political and economic decisions, *Midday Tea* and any other female gatherings do not influence Kuwaitis' public lives (Al-Sumait, 2014). Nevertheless, it is a

chance for women to increase their interpersonal communication and discuss their issues. However, radical Islamist politicians do not respect the *Dewaniyas* that include women (Al-Sumait, 2014). Further, Islamic political movements and traditions were a significant barrier to women's development in the GCC in general (Kemp et al., 2015), specifically in Kuwait (Dashti & Mesbah, 2015).

Kuwaitis were divided in terms of cross-gender work relationships. A Gallup poll asserts that 57% of Kuwaitis accepted the idea of working with women in the same workplace, while 40% called for a gender-segregated workplace (Kohut et al., 2007).

Politics.

Politics and political leaders were found to be significant influencers of the public relations practices in the GCC (A. Alanazi, 1996; Al-Shohaib et al., 2009). The Kuwaiti government has adopted many strategies to support and empower Kuwaiti women (Alsalem, 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015; Kemp et al., 2015) and the call for women's political rights in Kuwait arose after the freeing of Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion in 1991 (Dashti & Mesbah, 2015). Actually, the rise of women's political rights in Kuwait was a result of what Kemp et al. (2015) named an external factor. According to Kemp et al. (2015), an external factor is an international factor that influences internal issues, for example, an agreement signed by the Kuwaiti government with many international agencies that support human rights.

Finally, in 2005 Kuwaiti women gained their political rights. As a result, women's role in Kuwait grew rapidly (Al-Sumait, 2014). For example, women's representation in the media increased (Al-Sumait, 2014; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015). However, 62% perceived man as better political leaders than women (Kohut et al., 2007). Therefore, the growth of rights was curvilinear

shaped. Since the 2013 Kuwaiti parliament election, until the day of writing this study in 2016, women do not have any politically elected representative in Kuwait.

Education.

In spite of other GCC countries that did not grant equal educational rights for women, the Kuwaiti constitution granted women equal rights for education, which empowered Kuwaiti women (Dashti & Mesbah, 2015). Ninety-four percent of Kuwaitis viewed education as equally important for both genders (Kohut et al., 2007). In 1992 Kuwait University established the first department of mass communication in Kuwait (Sharif, 2003). Consequently, Kuwaiti women's presence in the media field, including public relations, have increased (Dashti & Mesbah, 2015).

Currently, "Kuwaiti women make up 70% of university students" (Alsalem, 2010, p. 55), while 40% of the Kuwaiti workforce are women (Alsalem, 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014). Thus, similarly to the global trend addressed by many scholars (L. A. Grunig, 2001; L. Grunig et al., 2013), the whole Kuwaiti workforce will be shifting its gender makeup in the near future. In fact, women will have a larger role in Kuwaiti society than ever.

Economics.

Women in Kuwait had a significantly higher role in the country's economy compared to other GCC countries (Dashti & Mesbah, 2015; Kemp et al., 2015). Nevertheless, women are rarely represented in the private sector leadership in the GCC, yet Kuwait had a higher representation of women in managerial and leadership positions compared to all GCC countries (Kemp et al., 2015). In fact, Kuwaiti women are barely leading or managing media or public relations related fields (Dashti & Mesbah, 2015).

Workforce.

In general, women public relations specialists were found to be employed more in lower-paying organizations (Dozier et al., 2013). According to a Gallup report published in 2012 regarding the gender gap in workforce worldwide, Kuwait was named as the best with the highest rate of employed women at 88% compared to men 89% (Marler & McGeeney, 2012). Regardless, researchers argued that the Kuwaiti society does not support women to fill leadership positions (Al-Suwaihel, 2010; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015; Tlaiss, 2013). In fact, in the Kuwaiti media field women were filling 54% of the total Kuwaiti workers, but only 32% of these working women in the public sector hold a managerial or leading position (Dashti & Mesbah, 2015). Yet compared to women in the region, Kuwait had the higher representation of women in managerial and leader positions (Kemp et al., 2015).

Organizational Sector

In Kuwait organizations are defined by their sector. There are three major types of organization sectors: public, private, and non-governmental organizations (NGO). Although some argue that the difference among the three types of organizations is blurred today because of merging among them (Ekhtator, 2012), others disagree. For example, Almutairi and Subramanian (2005) defined the private sector as organizations that are not owned by the government, while others defined public sector as organizations that are mostly owned by the government (Black et al., 2017). NGOs are organizations that are legally constituted by people who are volunteering, so their organization's income is not distributed to its members; they are also called non-profit organizations (Black et al., 2017).

In all types of organizations, public relations is considered a significant component (Alangele, 2009). Public relations' role is significant because of its responsibility for the

organizations' communications (Alangele, 2009). In fact, organizations with in-house public relations were found to be more willing to adopt new digital media technologies than organizations that do not have in-house public relations as a part of the organizational body (Curtis et al., 2010). However, scholars claimed that different organization sectors react differently toward adopting new digital media technologies (Al-Shohaib et al., 2010)

PR in Public Sector.

In Kuwait, according to Al-Nakib (2016), the public sector is the most dominant sector because the government controls all of the natural resources. Natural resources, oil and gas, covers about 90% of Kuwait's income ("The World Factbook," 2017). Thus, Kuwaiti public organizations suffer from large numbers of employees, complex organizational bodies, and many other corruptions (Al-Yasin, 2013; "Our problem is corruption - not the expats," 2017; Sharif, 2003).

Public relations is a need for all Arab authoritarian governments in the Middle East because it is the most powerful propaganda tool (S. Alanazi, 2013). Henceforth, public relations in public sector organizations is influenced by political decisions in term of public policies (Sharif, 2003). Yet, some Kuwaiti public relations practitioners in public organizations claim that they participate in organizations' decision-making (Alangele, 2009).

Alangele (2009) addressed that public relations in the Kuwaiti public sector utilize the two-way communication model and the public agency model, which would help to build a relationship and understand their public. Adopting new digital media technologies will increase the level of relationship with the public because they are the best tool to utilize a two-way communication (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012). Yet, scholars assert that the public sector was always a late adopter compared with the other sectors (Moya, 2014). The public sector in Kuwait does

not provide public relations with enough resources to adopt new innovations. For example, Sharif (2003) and Al-Yasin (2013) found that Kuwaiti public relations practitioners were not trained as they needed and they were not equipped with devices needed to adopt new digital media technologies.

PR in Private Sector.

The Kuwaiti private sector is regulated by governmental policies. Regardless of the great role Kuwaiti merchants had in the economy before oil (Al-Nakib, 2016), merchants say their private sector role is limited in the Kuwaiti economy and should be increased (Global, 2017). However, the government is also encouraging and calling the private sector to participate more and support the public sector (Oxford Business Group, 2016).

Accordingly, with the growth of the private sector role in the country's economy, the role of public relations also increased and led to a surge in the adoption of new digital media technologies in the private sector public relations practices (Al-Shohaib et al., 2009). In fact, as a result of the economic crises of the Kuwaiti Stock Markets in the 1980s, the private sector has increased its public relations practices to overcome challenges it faced with audiences (Al-Rujaib, 2006). Henceforth, the private sector hired public relations practitioners with higher education levels compared to the public sector public relations practitioners (Al-Shohaib et al., 2010; Sharif, 2003). Thus, scholars reported that public relations in the private sector implements new policies faster, and cares more about quality, efficiency, and profit (Al-Shohaib et al., 2010; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003). Consequently, the private sector public relations in Kuwait showed more interest and willingness in adopting new digital media technologies compared to their counterpart practitioners in the public sector, by training their public relations practitioners to use new digital media technologies and providing them with the needed equipment (Sharif, 2003).

PR in Non-Governmental Sector.

Some argue that public relations are more important to for-profit than to non-profit organizations (Alangele, 2009). In fact, scholars argue that public relations is as important for NGOs and the public sector as it is for the private sector (Alangele, 2009; Al-Shohaib et al., 2010; Al-Yasin, 2013; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003). Scholars reported that public relations can effectively support NGOs to overcome challenges they face (F. Almutairi, 2009), and build a strong relationship with customers (Briones et al., 2011).

Scholars showed that public relations practitioners in NGOs were found to be late adopters of new digital media technologies compared to the other sectors (Briones et al., 2011). However, a recent study, conducted by Go and You (2016), concluded that public relations in NGOs utilized more new digital media technologies than other sectors. Public relations practitioners in NGOs stated that they use new digital media technologies, such as social media, to educate their audiences about their programs and services, besides using it to communicate with their audiences (Briones et al., 2011).

Research Questions

RQ₁: Which of Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation are associated with the adoption of new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners in Kuwait?

RQ₂: What are the gender differences in perceiving Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation?

RQ₃: What are the organization differences (public – private – NGO) in perceiving Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation?

RQ₄: Which new digital media technologies (e.g. email, websites, blogs, Twitter, Facebook,) are utilized more among public relations practitioners in Kuwait?

Summary

To that end, this second chapter outlined the literature that has led to these research questions and hypotheses. The literature review first rationalized the theoretical framework. Second, it discussed public relations practices in Kuwait by going through the main four eras of Kuwaiti history. Third, the influences of new digital media technologies on public relations practices in the Middle East in general, and Kuwait in particular, were included. Fourth, women's issues, the future dominant workforce in Kuwait, were discussed. Fifth, the major three organizational sectors - public, private and NGO - and the different role of public relations in each sector in Kuwait were reviewed. In conclusion, the literature review chapter addressed the dissertation research questions.

Now that the literature review has appointed the research questions, the next chapter of this dissertation explains the methodological approach. The dissertation implemented a mixed-method research perspective. Joyner et al. (2013) claimed that for descriptive studies, surveys should be the primary method, and interviews could be used as an additional method. Henceforth, the next chapter has clarified the survey and in-depth interview instruments of this dissertation.

Chapter 3

Methodology

On one hand, the implementations of new digital media technologies are changing many cultural values worldwide (L. A. Grunig, 2001; Zhang, Shen, & Jiang, 2009). In particular, Kuwaiti cultural values are also responding to the changes caused by fresh digital media technologies (Al-Najran, 1998; Alsalem, 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015; Sharif, 2003). Indeed, Atkin et al. (2015) encouraged researchers to keep examining the generalization of new digital media technologies and innovations.

On the other hand, the global workforce is shifting its gender balance and the role of women is increasing (L. Grunig et al., 2013; Ryan, 2016). Similarly, the gender makeup of the Kuwaiti workforce is also shifting (Alsalem, 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014). In fact, the media and public relations field is also responding to these gender changes (L. A. Grunig, 2001; L. Grunig et al., 2013). Thus, the Kuwaiti media and public relations field is becoming a female-dominant field (Alsalem, 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014). Thus, Fitch et al. (2015) recommended that future studies should explore how public relations are constructed through gender differences.

From time to time, the organization sectors change their dominant role in terms of contributing to a country's economic development. For instance, scholars argued that the organizational sectors in Kuwait are also shifting their roles (Al-Nakib, 2016). At the present time, the public sector in Kuwait, which was the dominant contributor to the country's economy, is calling on the private sector to increase its role in improving Kuwait's economy (Global, 2017; Oxford Business Group, 2016). Researchers claimed that different organizational sectors have different efficiency levels in public relations practices; consequently it influences public relations

practitioners' intentions of adopting new digital media technologies (S. Alanazi, 2013; Al-Shohaib et al., 2010; Briones et al., 2011; Go & You, 2016; Sharif, 2003).

Literature regarding Kuwait in general, gender differences, organizational sectors, public relations, public relations practitioners, and the implementation of the new digital media technologies in Kuwait, suffers from a lack of research. Hence, many have called on researchers to consider Kuwait as a part of their public relations studies (Alramadan, 2007; "Kuwait Public Relations Association," 2014). Consequently, the purpose of this dissertation is to examine how Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation (relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, complexity, and observability) would differently influence public relations practitioners in Kuwait based on their gender and organization sector. The importance of such topics comes because of this dissertation's exploratory nature. Exploratory types of research are those studying an area that has rarely been discussed in the body of literature (Zhou, 2011).

Mixed- Methods Approach

There is no such scale that will force the researcher to conduct research using a specific method. However, scholars in the communication field are encouraging the mixed-methods approach (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Harrison & Reilly, 2011). Mixed-method research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Implementing both qualitative and quantitative research methods is "complementary rather than competitive" (Zhou, 2011, p. 15), and would "provide more credibility to the field" (Harrison & Reilly, 2011, p. 7).

Further, Bryman (2006) addressed that by using mixed methods, each will help in explaining the other methods' findings, a process called triangulation. Moreover, Harrison and Reilly (2011) stated that mixed methods help to overcome the weaknesses of each research

method that would be used in the research. In fact, the literature suggested that in many cases participants were more honest in their interview methods rather than a survey method (Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2008). Thus, both methods in the research will be strengthened and lead to more generalizable conclusions.

Qualitative In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews are recommended by S. Alanazi (2013), Moya (2014), and Sharif (2003). In-depth interviews help explain quantitative findings; besides it would lead to exploring unexpected results (Harrison & Reilly, 2011). Further, this qualitative method gave the researcher more flexibility in alternating the questions (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Seidman, 2013). In fact, the in-depth interview was named the best method used as “when you are interested in gaining cultural knowledge” (Daymon & Holloway, 2011, p. 222).

Instrument.

The research method is a systematic process (Zhou, 2011). Hence, the researcher designed the in-depth interviews based on the guides that were provided by in-depth interview scholars (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2017; Seidman, 2013). The first step was to identify the in-depth interview type. The researcher applied a semi-structured or focused interviews. A semi-structured interview helps the researcher guide the participants and keep the focused around the topic, which saves the researcher’s time and leads to more detailed description about the issue that is studied (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2017; Seidman, 2013).

The second step of designing was identifying the type of interview questions, which were the mini-tour questions. Daymon (2011) mentions that mini-tour interview questions fall in

between grand-tour questions, which are broad questions, and the structured questions that are used in survey interviews.

The study samples were non-English speakers. Thus, both in-depth interview instruments were developed in English, then translated into Arabic by the researcher. Later both were translated back to English by a translator who is fluent in both Arabic, his mother language, and English, the language he teaches, besides he is a graduate student in the field of mass communications. This back translation would increase the instrument validity. Finally, both established and translated interview questions were compared to ensure the clarity of the questions. Unclear questions were reported by scholars as a survey and interview limitation (Joyner et al., 2013; Seidman, 2013; Sharif, 2003; Wrench et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2009). In addition, to strengthen the research instrument, academic and professional public relations experts from Kuwait and the United States reviewed the instrument.

Participants.

The subjects that make up the sample of in-depth interviews are called participants (Seidman, 2013). Finding participants is the main challenge for public relations research (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012; Avidar, 2009; Curtis et al., 2010; Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Hill & White, 2000; Khajeheian & Mirahmadi, 2015). It is recommended to have a variety of participants in the sample to gain a better understanding and wider range of responses (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Thus, this study gathered its participants from the three organization sectors, public, private and NGOs. The researcher requested a connection with potential participants through LinkedIn with about 700 people who were public relations practitioners located in Kuwait. A snowball sampling method was implemented to recruit interview participants.

Although Seidman (2013) mentioned that the number of participants is not an issue for in-depth interviews. For the purpose of answering this dissertation's questions, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 14 public relations practitioners in Kuwait. Eight participants were men, five of whom worked in the public sector and three of whom were employed in the private sector. Of the six women who participated in the interviews, two worked in the public sector, three worked in the private sector, and one worked at an NGO. A researcher should stop interviews when he has reached data saturation, and the sign of having enough data is when he is no longer collecting new data regarding the topic; in other words, when participants repeat the same data or provide similar responses (Seidman, 2013). The researcher stopped interviewing participants when there was no new data given and participants started to repeat data provided in previous interviews.

Seven public relations practitioners had a direct professional connection with the researcher, three were referred as a snowball sample, and four were reached through LinkedIn.

Data Collection Procedures.

Seidman (2013) encouraged researchers to implement a pilot study for their in-depth interviews. In contrast, Daymon (2011) contends that pilot studies are not recommended for in-depth interviews because it wastes the interviewer's time. However, Gibbs (2013) argues that an interviewer must be knowledgeable and trained to conduct the interviews. Knowledgeable interviewers are those who are conversant in the topic and in interviewing techniques (Seidman, 2013). Henceforth, the researcher who has been a journalist for nine years and conducted many interviews, besides being fluent in both Arabic and English, conducted these interviews.

As mentioned above, the researcher conducted the in-depth interviews. Manipulating or modifying the questions while conducting the interview is a strength of in-depth interviews

(Daymon & Holloway, 2011; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2017; Seidman, 2013). Hence, it was recommended that the researcher slightly change, add, or remove any of the questions to gain more understanding or clarification, or when facing an ethical issue (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2017; Seidman, 2013). In addition, scholars encouraged the interviewer to build a rapport with the participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Similarly, the interviewer must listen to the participants more than talking to them – to make the participant talk is the dominant reason of in-depth interviews – and concentrate on taking notes (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; Seidman, 2013).

Scholars said that deciding to conduct a long-distance in-depth interview using phone or email is to decide to “interview versus not being able to interview at all.” (Seidman, 2013, p. 113). Hence, for this dissertation, the researcher was in the United States and preferred to conduct long-distance interviews using either or both phone and email rather than not interviewing public relations practitioners in Kuwait.

Participants were given the option to response to the interviews by email or through phone calls. However, just one woman answered the interview questions by email. Thirteen participants preferred a voice call for interviews. The average time of all voice call in-depth interviews was 43 minutes, ranging from 23 to 61 minutes. Longer interview time in the in-depth interview method would provide the researcher with a reasonable understanding of the issue being studied (Daymon & Holloway, 2011).

In-depth Interview Questions.

The researcher extracted and modified the interview questions used by previous studies that aimed to explore the adoption of new digital media technologies (Abdulla, 2006; S. Alanazi, 2013; Alghaith, 2016; Alikilic & Atabek, 2012; Alsalem, 2010; Al-Shohaib et al., 2010; Briones

et al., 2011; Curtis et al., 2010; Hill & White, 2000; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003). To develop rapport with participants, an interviewer should start by explaining participants' rights, then asking simple questions, then asking open-ended questions so participants get comfortable talking with the interviewer (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The following in-depth interview question order is not organized according to the dissertation research questions; indeed, they are presented in this methodology chapter in the same order in which they were asked to the participants to keep a normal flow of conversation.

The interviewer started with explaining the participants' rights, and the interviewer asserted that participating is totally voluntarily with no obligations of remaining at any time. Additionally, the researcher got recorded oral permission to voice-record the interviews. The demographics information was kept confidential. Participants were asked about age, marital status, educational level and major, level of income, organizational sector.

The second research question examined the gender differences based on the interview participants' gender. Further, demographic questions aimed to examine the organizational sector difference in perceiving Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation, which was a part of answering the third dissertation research question.

Afterward, participants were asked easy open-ended questions such as, "professional experiences? Experiences in the field? Experience years in the field? Job responsibilities?" These interview questions answered part of the first research question that would explore whether they mentioned new digital media technologies as a part of their job responsibilities.

Next, the fourth research question identified the new digital media that were implemented by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. Therefore, the participants responded to the following questions: "Who are your target audiences? Prioritize them?" In fact, that question was as a lead-

in to the “What are the new digital media technologies you adopt to reach your target? Prioritize? When adopted?”

Then, to study the first dissertation question, which examined the association between Rogers’s (2003) five attributes of innovation and adopting new digital media technologies, participants were asked about the reasons for adopting each of the new digital media technologies they have implemented, with their pros and cons. Additionally, to identify the factors that encouraged the adoption of all new digital media technologies they have mentioned, they were asked: “What are the main factors that influence your decision in adopting each of new digital media technology to reach your audiences?” Also, “In your opinion, is the Kuwaiti culture open to adopting new digital media technologies? Why?” was asked to illustrate the influence of critical mass on public relations practitioners’ decision to adopt new digital media technologies. Further, “What digital media technologies have you stopped using? When? Why?” was asked to find the explanations of giving up a digital media technology.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity in qualitative research has different values than reliability and validity in quantitative methods: in qualitative studies, it refers to trustworthiness and authenticity (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; Hesse-Biber, 2017; Seidman, 2013). Daymon and Holloway (2011) stated that it seems harder to examine qualitative research’s reliability and validity compared to quantitative research methods.

Reliability is the concept that when repeating the same research methods, a researcher would reach similar results. In qualitative in-depth interviews, works differently. For example, it is impossible to reach the same findings when implementing the same exact questions to people other than those who were interviewed in the first study. However, Daymon and Holloway

(2011) stated that reaching similar results in qualitative research would be through “decision trail”. Decision trail is the idea that a researcher addresses the data, methods and decisions he made during the study clearly to increase the reliability of qualitative research. However, Seidman (2013), criticizes that and claims that it is very hard to reach a high level of reliability in qualitative in-depth interviews.

Validity is the accuracy of the measurement used to answer the questions asked in the study. Daymon and Holloway (2011) pointed to the importance of internal validity, which is the true responses of participants, and external validity, which is the generalizability that applies the findings to similar population. Similar to reliability, validity is harder to achieve in qualitative research methods (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; Hesse-Biber, 2017).

Trusting the participants, comparing meanings of experiences, and examining their feelings while the interview is in progress would give the researcher a sense of validity (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; Seidman, 2013). According to Seidman (2013), validity in in-depth interviews is reached when the researcher makes sense of participants’ words. Furthermore, modifying the questions would also increase the research validity (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). To overcome validity issues in qualitative in-depth interviews, scholars recommended that the researcher link the findings to a theory (Daymon & Holloway, 2011)

To overcome any of the in-depth interview issues related to reliability or validity, it is recommended that a researcher spend more time interviewing participants to get reasonable understanding regarding the topic (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). In this dissertation, the average time of in-depth interviews was 50 minutes. In addition, the researcher has also demonstrated the member-checking method to overcome reliability and validity issues in interviews. The member-

checking method is to summarize and paraphrase participants' responses during the interview to assure that the interviewer understood participants' responses (Daymon & Holloway, 2011).

Finally, triangulation, which is a combination of more than one perspective, was adopted to also decrease reliability or validity issues (Hesse-Biber, 2017). Triangulation is to gather the qualitative data from multiple sources, such as different group settings or methodology triangulation (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). Hence, this study interviewed different group settings of public relations practitioners. The group differences were in gender, education level and country of education, age, organizational structure. Methodological triangulation is used to implement different research methods to examine the same issue. As was mentioned, this dissertation is implementing a mixed-method approach, which is a methodological triangulation.

Analysis of Data.

After conducting the in-depth interviews, the researcher kept the voice records saved to assure the confidentiality of participants. However, as approved by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB), the voice records were shared with the dissertation chair. Afterwards, the interviewer translated the interviews, which were conducted in Arabic, to English. The translated English interviews were sent to a translator to translate them back to Arabic, and they were found to match the first translation, with some minor clarifications of examples that were provided by the participants. Then, the data was organized to start the analysis.

According to Löfgren (2013), in-depth interview analysis should follow a systematic path starting by exclusively reading through all the transcripts, taking notes and reading again. Second, the researcher coded or indexed the interviews by labeling data relevant to the dissertation's research questions (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Löfgren, 2013; Seidman, 2013). For instance, the researcher coded words, phrases, sentences, and sections that surprised the

interviewer, that were mentioned in the literature, that related to the diffusion of innovation theory, or that the interviewee repeated or highlighted as important, as recommended by Löfgren (2013).

Third, the researcher identified the significant codes and categories, and prioritized their relation to the topic being studied (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Löfgren, 2013; Seidman, 2013). The best way was to combine related categories or to ignore categories that did not serve the purpose of this dissertation (Löfgren, 2013). As an example of ignored categories, some participants mentioned the use of new digital media technologies in their personal life, which did not serve answering the research questions.

Quantitative Survey

“Surveys are administrated to assess opinions, perceptions, and attitudes” (Joyner et al., 2013, p. 80). The quantitative survey is a set of systematic methods used to gather data from a larger proportion of society to answer researchers’ questions or test hypotheses (Khajeheian & Mirahmadi, 2015; Wrench et al., 2008; Zhou, 2011). As result, many researchers implemented a survey method to examine the adoption of new communication technologies by public relations specialists (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012; Al-Omouh, Yaseen, & Atwah Alma’aitah, 2012; Al-Shohaib, 2005; Curtis et al., 2010; Khajeheian & Mirahmadi, 2015; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003).

For example, Khajeheian and Mirahmadi (2015) investigated the use of new digital media verses traditional media in public relations in a non-Arab Middle Eastern country. They conceptualized their variables based on public relations practices. According to Khajeheian and Mirahmadi (2015), all of public relations practices or functions can be classified under three categories: information seeking, public communication, and advertising. The researchers constructed each of the functions based on the description of each category. For example, if they

found that the public relations practitioners used social media more to collect information, then it was categorized as an information-seeking category.

Even though Khajeheian and Mirahmadi (2015) solidly conceptualized and constructed their study, they had many gaps and limitations in their operationalization. For instance, their study surveyed a sample of 36 public relations practitioners. Further, they implemented just a hard copy survey, which was found to limit the number of respondents (Dutwin et al., 2014). In addition, their main gap was implementing a single quantitative research method.

Another survey research example is Curtis et al. (2010). They examined the role of credibility in adopting new digital media technology by public relations practitioners, and conceptualized the credibility of social media based on UTAUT factors. Although this dissertation does not examine adoption based on UTAUT, Curtis et al. (2010) operationalization and measures can be modified and combined by other valid and reliable measurements to examine Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation. However, the limitation was the use of a solo quantitative survey method; otherwise, compared to other studies (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012; Khajeheian & Mirahmadi, 2015) this research is more generalizable because they had a higher sample than others.

Correspondingly, a study done by Al-Omoush et al. (2012) studied the cultural motivation of adopting social media in Arab culture. The researchers reported that the credibility of social media was a major motivator of adoption. Hence, they conceptualized the credibility of social media by asking their sample whether they trusted social media and to what level they trusted these new digital media technologies. Although they were not examining public relations practitioners, Diga and Kelleher (2009) recommended that such questionnaires be modified and adopted to study public relations topics. Hence, the researcher considers this as a potential

measurement that was found to be valid and reliable to serve this dissertation topic. Although Bryman (2006) argued that a solo method in research is a limitation, Al-Omouh et al. (2012) adopted a single quantitative method approach.

In addition, Alikilic and Atabek (2012) utilized a survey to explore the implementation of social media in Turkish internal and external public relations practices. Researchers emphasized two major independent variables to predict their dependent variable, which was the adoption of social media. Their first independent variable was public relations practices, which were eight functions that they conceptualized and constructed based on UTAUT. The second independent variable was the use or adoption of social media. Alikilic and Atabek (2012) operationalized by adopting previous measurements such as those of Eyrich et al. (2008), who were named as the first researchers examining the adoption of social media by public relations practitioners.

Nevertheless, Alikilic and Atabek (2012) stated that the major limitation they faced was the process of collecting data. They could not reach enough Turkish Public Relations Association members. They noted that similar researchers faced a low response rate in public relations studies in other countries such as Bosnia, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, and Taiwan. However, the researchers used their interpersonal relationships to increase the response rate (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012).

The last example of survey researchers who examined the adoption process of an innovation were Sharif (2003), Al-Shohaib (2005), and Moya (2014). These studies conceptualized their research based on Rogers's conceptualization of the five attributes of innovation as: first, relative advantage: whether the innovation is beneficial or useful for the potential adopters' tasks or not. Second, compatibility: whether the innovation is compatible or consists of the potential adopters' tasks or not. Third, complexity: the ease of using the

innovation. Fourth, trialability: whether the potential adopters had the chance to test the innovation before the adoption decision or not. Fifth, observability: potential adopters observed the benefits of adopting the innovation by others.

Most of communication research seems to be constructivism, which aims to make sense of human acts and intends to answer questions or examine hypotheses (Zhou, 2011). Notably, Sharif (2003) constructed the five attributes by combining and modifying previous measurements. For example, the construction of relative advantage was based on the speed of accomplishing some public relations tasks, such as collecting information or communication with the public. The construction of compatibility examined the innovation's compatibility with religious beliefs, tradition, and cultural values. Complexity was examined through the ease of using the innovation. Trialability was constructed to find out whether the sample had the chance to use the innovation before adopting it or not. Finally, observability was constructed to find whether the adopters were willing to share their experience with the innovation with others or not.

However, there were differences between Sharif's (2003) and Moya's (2014) studies. Sharif (2003) modified other researchers' measurements before operationalizing them. In contrast, Moya (2014), adopted the exact measurements of Al-Shohaib (2005) to examine the adoption of social media without any modification, which was a major gap in her study.

To sum up, all of the quantitative survey research that was presented shared similar limitations. First, the low response rate is a downside of surveys (Wrench et al., 2008). Second, scholars who have examined the association between Rogers's (2003) attributes of innovation and public relations practitioners' adoption decisions have implemented outdated measurements. For example, Moya (2014) studied the adoption of social media by public relations practitioners

in the United States through a measurement that was developed by Al-Shohaib (2005) to examine internet adoption by Middle Eastern public relations specialists. Lastly, almost all of the previous researchers encouraged future studies that consider similar topics to follow a mixed-method approach, namely, quantitative survey and qualitative in-depth interviews (S. Alanazi, 2013; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003).

Population.

Descriptive research describes the population characteristics by examining a direct sample of the population. This dissertation focused on the public relations practitioners in Kuwait who have agreed to take part in the study. Since Sharif (2003) conducted his study about internet adoption by public relations practitioners in Kuwait, he asserted that there was no list or database of public relations practitioners in Kuwait contact information.

Although the Kuwaiti Public Relations Association was established in 2006 (“Kuwait Public Relations Association,” 2014), Al-Yasin (2013) found neither a contact list nor a database of public relations practitioners in Kuwait, yet he estimated that there are about 6,000 public relations practitioners in Kuwait. However, Al-Yasin’s (2013) estimation of the Kuwaiti public relations practitioners is overestimated. Al-Yasin (2013) in the same study claimed that in a developed European country there is one public relations practitioner for every thousand people of the country’s total population. Keeping that in mind, and knowing that the Kuwaiti population in Kuwait is about four million (“The World Factbook,” 2017) then the estimation of the current public relations practitioner population in Kuwait, which is still developing, would be much less than 4,000 practitioners.

In the hope that the researcher identifies the public relations practitioners’ population in Kuwait, the researcher contacted the major organizations that would have an exact population,

which are Kuwaiti Public Relations Association and the Civil Services Commission.

Unfortunately, both were non-helpful: the Kuwaiti Public Relations Association never responded to emails, voice calls, or text messages, while an official in the Civil Services Commission responded that these numbers are confidential.

Sample.

A sample is a part of the population that is being studied (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; Zhou, 2011). Not having a clear population of public relations practitioners in Kuwait, in addition to the closed Kuwaiti culture to outside questioners, leads to a non-probability sampling. A non-probability sampling is a sample that was designed without giving the whole population of the study an equal chance to participate and be part of the study (Wrench et al., 2008). Thus, this study, in line with other studies (Al-Yasin, 2013; Sharif, 2003), distributed the survey to a non-probability snowball sample, by “managing interpersonal relationships” (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012, p. 58) with public relations practitioners. A non-probability snowball sample was defined as finding participants through others’ referrals and used when the sample or “informants are not easily accessible” (Daymon & Holloway, 2011, p. 215).

Also, based on the in-depth interviews that were conducted for this study, the researcher found that public relations practitioners in Kuwait identify themselves as marketers or social media specialists too. In fact, many mentioned that their organizations have combined public relations and marketing duties under many different names. For example, participants named their divisions or departments as public relations and marketing, media relations, media and public relations, digital marketing and relations, corporate communications, and public relations. Additionally, some interview participants identified themselves as public relations practitioners working in marketing departments. Therefore, any person working in public relations, marketing,

corporate communications, media relations, advertising and as a social media specialist was considered as a sample for this study.

Response Rate.

The major problem associated with the survey research approach is the low response rate (Dutwin et al., 2014). Notwithstanding, many scholars argued that a low response rate is acceptable and expected in public relations studies (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012; Avidar, 2009; Curtis et al., 2010; Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Khajeheian & Mirahmadi, 2015). For example, the researcher emailed, called, and texted the Kuwaiti Public Relations Association asking for their support in distributing the survey to a random sample through their members list, but they never responded back.

As a snowball sampling method, it is hard to identify the number of public relations practitioners who were invited to answer the survey. However, the invitation messages sent with the survey link were tailored to invite public relations practitioners 18 years and older and working in Kuwait to participate in the study. In addition, at the end of the invitation message the researcher asked to forward the link to other colleagues working in the field of public relations.

The survey link was directly sent to (N=697) to start spreading it to other public relations practitioners working in Kuwait. Of these, 44 of them had direct connection with the researcher, so the link was texted to them. The remainder (n=653) was connected with the researcher through LinkedIn and sent the invitation to them as a LinkedIn direct message.

The survey was open for two weeks for the public relations practitioners. As suggested by scholars, to increase the response rate, the researcher should send follow up messages or letters as a reminder to the sample to complete the survey (Joyner et al., 2013). Therefore, during

the two weeks, the researcher sent three follow-up messages to all of the public relations practitioners who he reached directly to increase the response rate (N=697).

The total number of people who entered the link were 423. Public relations practitioners were qualified to answer the survey were ($n = 238$), who indicated that they were 18 years or older, working in the field of public relations in Kuwait. However, ($n = 147$) only completed the survey, which were included in the results.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions.

The conceptual framework and constructional definitions of this dissertation were developed by reviewing the extensive literature on the factors influencing the adoption decision of new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners. The researcher operationalized the study by modifying, updating, and combining previous survey scales (Al-Shohaib, 2005; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003) to measure the research constructs.

Dependent Variables.

This study aimed to examine the association of attributes of innovation with the adoption decision of public relations practitioners in Kuwait, and the influences of gender and organization differences on adoption decisions. Therefore, for the first research question, which examined the association of attributes with the adoption decision, the dependent variable to be explored was the adoption of new digital media technologies. In measuring that, the researcher asked respondents a nominal question about whether the public relations practitioners adopted new digital media technology. For the second and third research questions, the dependent variables were Rogers's (2003) attributes of innovation, which are relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, trialability, and observability.

First, relative advantage of an innovation is perceived as more beneficial and useful than the current technology. Second, compatibility means how well new digital media technologies work with the tasks needing to be accomplished by public relations practitioners, and with the culture that public relations is practiced in. Third, complexity is the ease of using the new digital media technologies. Fourth, trialability is the ability of trying or testing new digital media technologies before the decision of adopting. Fifth, observability was explained as the degree of visibility of results or consequences of using new digital media technologies for others.

Independent Variables.

This study is based on Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation theory. As was stated under the theoretical framework of this dissertation, Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation have been found to adequately examine the adoption of new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners. Consequently, for the first research question these five attributes of innovation were the independent variables.

The second research question's independent variable was gender difference, which is a nominal variable. The third research question's independent variable was the organization sector – public, private, and NGO – which is also a nominal variable.

Instrument

The study samples were non-English speakers. Thus, both survey and in-depth interviews instruments were developed in English, and then translated into Arabic by the researcher. Later both instruments were translated back to English by a translator who is fluent in both Arabic, his mother language, and English, the language he teaches. Finally, both established and translated questions were compared to ensure the clarity of the questions. Unclear questions were reported by scholars as a survey and interview limitation (Joyner et al., 2013; Seidman, 2013; Sharif,

2003; Wrench et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2009). In addition, to strengthen the research instrument, academic and professional public relations experts from Kuwait and the United States reviewed the instrument.

Questionnaire.

To answer the dissertation's four research questions, the researcher extracted and modified the survey questions that were used by previous studies mentioned in the literature review. All of the studies that the researcher used as sources to write this dissertation's survey were exploring the adoption of new digital media technologies (Abdulla, 2006; Alikilic & Atabek, 2012; Al-Shohaib, 2005; Al-Shohaib et al., 2009, 2010; Briones et al., 2011; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003). As with any survey, this survey included demographics to serve in describing the public relations practitioners who participated in the study. Besides the gender differences and organizational sectors were dependent variables of the second and third research questions.

The first research question explored the association between Rogers's (2003) attributes of innovation and the decision of public relations practitioners in Kuwait of whether to adopt new digital media technologies. The researcher extracted and modified scales that were implemented by previous researchers to measure this dissertation's independent variables, which are Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation (Al-Shohaib, 2005; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003). Note that the five-point Likert-scale was coded (1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree).

First, relative advantage was measured by implementing the five-point Likert-type scale questions asking whether new digital media technologies enable users to accomplish tasks quickly, provide fast access to information, allow users to communicate better with audiences,

allow users to get audience feedback and comments, and are useful tools for public relations tasks.

Second, compatibility was measured by implementing the five-point Likert-type scale questions asking to what level they agree or disagree with these statements: whether new digital media technologies were compatible with all aspects of public relations work, compatible with their religious beliefs, compatible with their personal social values, compatible with the Kuwaiti culture, and provide them with the information they need.

Third, complexity was measured by implementing five-point Likert-type scale questions asking to what extent they agree or disagree with these statements: Learning to use new digital media technologies is easy for them, the language of new digital media technologies is not a barrier for them, and accessing new digital media technologies at work is easy.

Fourth, observability was measured by implementing a five-point Likert-type scale questions asking to what extent they agree or disagree with these statements: they would not had difficulties telling others about using new digital media technologies, they can observe the results of using new digital media technologies, they could express to others the results of using new digital media technologies, and their organization, the resources needed to access new digital media technologies are available for them.

Fifth, trialability was measured by implementing five-point Likert-type scale questions asking to what extent they agree or disagree with these statements: they had the opportunity to try many new digital media technologies, access to new digital media technologies was available to them to adequately test-run them, and before adopting any new digital media technology, they properly tried it.

Furthermore, the survey examined whether public relations practitioners adopted new digital media technologies. Those who adopted were asked to check all digital media technologies they had adopted at the time of answering the survey. The sample had 24 options to choose from, and an open-ended option to mention other new digital media technologies. As well, adopters were asked to rank the digital media technologies they use.

In contrast, public relations practitioners who responded that they did not adopt new digital media technologies were directed to another set of questions. The non-adopters were asked about obstacles that prevented them from adopting new digital media technologies through checking any applicable statements, starting with new digital media were: not useful for their tasks (examined the relative advantage); not compatible with my work (examined compatibility); complicated and hard to use (examined complexity); I did not observe them (examined observability); I did not try them, (examined trialability); lack of training; and one other option with an open-ended feature to let the non-adopters mention other issues that prevented them from adopting digital media technologies for their public relations practices.

Pilot study.

According to Wrench et al. (2008), it is always better to test the survey scales before the final survey to prevent mistakes. According to Joyner et al. (2013) a pilot study should examine 10% to 15% of the population. As mentioned above, the researcher was not able to identify the actual number of public relations practitioners in Kuwait, which are the population of the study. Therefore, this scale was tested in a pilot study that surveyed a small sample of (N=5) public relations practitioners in Kuwait derived from the actual population, which were not included in the results.

Validity and Reliability.

Scholars encouraged adopting previous survey scales to overcome the instrument validity concern (Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003). To repeat, modifying a scale to examine a different cultural set would increase the scale validity (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Therefore, the researcher adopted and slightly modified the adopted scale that was used by other researchers (Al-Shohaib, 2005; Al-Shohaib et al., 2009, 2010; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003) to meet Kuwaiti cultural values and to fit in measurement of new digital media technologies.

The researcher ran a Cronbach alpha coefficient test to determine the reliability of the research instrument. The Cronbach alpha test measured the consistency of each scale item. The Cronbach alpha reported for Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation relative advantage scale was reliable at (.85), indicating good reliability. The compatibility scale was reliable at (.74), indicating acceptable reliability. The complexity scale was found to be reliable at (.55), indicating poor reliability. The observability scale was reliable at (.74), indicating acceptable reliability. The trialability scale was found to be reliable at (.84), indicating good reliability.

Table 1 presents the results of the reliability analysis.

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha for Rogers's (2003) Attributes of Innovation

Scale	No. of Items	α
Relative Advantage	5	0.85
Compatibility	5	0.74
Complexity	3	0.55
Observability	4	0.74
Trialability	3	0.84

Analysis of Data.

The researcher used Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) to examine the dissertation's descriptive and inferential statistical tests. Descriptive statistics were implemented to describe the sample demographical characteristics. Inferential statistical tests have tested the research questions. The significance level was set at $p < .05$.

Inferential analysis was used to examine the significance of the first three research questions. Logistic regression was the statistical test that would find the significance of the first research question. The first research question examined the association of Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation to public relations practitioners in Kuwait decisions of adopting new media technologies. However, to examine dichotomous dependent variables of this first research question, which was the adoption of new digital media technologies, only 1% of the sample responded that they were not adopting new digital media technologies for their public relations practices in Kuwait. As a result, logistic regression was not a valid statistical test for this first research question.

Hence, for the first research question the researcher ran Pearson correlation analyses between Rogers's (2003). Pearson correlation examines the strength of connection between two variables. The correlation outcome is valued between -1, which indicates a perfect negative relationship, and +1, which indicates a perfect positive relation between variables.

The second research question examined the gender differences in perceiving Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation. A *t*-test was used to examine this research question. The independent sample *t*-test determines the significant differences between two groups.

The third research question examined the differences among organizational sectors in perceiving Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to answer this third dissertation research question. ANOVA fits as a statistical test when the independent variables have more than two levels; this research question contains three levels for the independent variable: public, private, and NGO.

Finally, frequencies were implemented to answer which of the new digital media technologies were used more among public relations practitioners in Kuwait.

Summary

This third chapter has explained the methodological approach of this study. In the beginning, it rationalized the implementation of a mixed-methods research approach. The researcher thoroughly described the qualitative in-depth interview method that was used. Afterward, the methodology chapter comprehensively defined the in-depth interview procedures that were followed to utilize this qualitative research approach. Likewise, this chapter reported the quantitative survey questions, measurements, and the statistical analyses that have been implemented.

The coming fourth chapter of this dissertation presents the results and the analysis of data to answer the dissertation's research questions. The results chapter is presented in two sections: First, providing the descriptive data of the study sample and participants; second, presenting the answers to the dissertation research questions with inferential statistics.

Chapter 4

Results

This chapter presents the results from the data collected in this dissertation. The chapter has two sections. First, the demographic characteristics of the in-depth interview participants and survey sample as presented. Then the chapter presents the data collected from in-depth interviews and survey data analyses to answer the dissertation research questions and report the findings.

Demographic Characteristics

Qualitative In-Depth Interviews.

A summary of the qualitative in-depth interview participants is presented. The researcher interviewed (N=14) public relations practitioners, who all were 18 and older, working in Kuwait. Eight were men, ($n = 5$) working in the public sector, and ($n = 3$) employed in the private sector.

Six women participated in the interviews, ($n = 2$) worked in the public sector, ($n = 3$) in the private sector, and ($n = 1$) worked at an NGO.

Participants' age average was 33 years, ranging between 28 and 47 years. Their average years of experience was 7 years, ranging between 1 and 15 years in the public relations field.

Nine interviewees had bachelor's, ($n = 4$) master's, and ($n = 1$) was a high school graduate. In addition, ($n = 7$) participants majored in mass communication, ($n = 1$) public relations, and ($n=1$) journalism. Other participants majored in ($n = 1$) information technology, ($n = 1$) business management, ($n = 1$) linguistics, and ($n = 1$) psychology major. Table 2 below represents a summary of the in-depth interview participants' characteristics. Note that names in Table 2 are codes that were given by the researcher to public relations practitioners, to assure participants' confidentiality. For example, 1M, the number one refers to the first participant was

interviewed, while letter M refer to the participant gender, which was male. As another example, 14F, number fourteen refers to the interview order, and letter F is the participant's gender, which was female.

Table 2: In-depth Interview Participants' Characteristics

Name Code	Gender	Sector	Age	Education	Position	Years of Experiences
1M	M	Public	35	M.A. Psychology	Technician	9
2F	F	Private	28	B.A. Linguistics	Manager	7
3F	F	NGO	36	M.A. Info. Tech.	Manager	11
4M	M	Public	31	B.A. Mass Com.	Administrator	8
5M	M	Private	32	B.A. PR	Manager	11
6M	M	Private	32	B.A. Mass Com.	Manager	12
7M	M	Public	34	B.A. Mass Com.	Administrator	8
8M	M	Private	31	M.A. Mass Com.	Technician	1
9F	F	Private	47	B.A. Journalism	Technician	15
10F	F	Public	36	High school	Administrator	4
11F	F	Public	34	B.A. Mass Com.	Administrator	10
12M	M	Public	32	B.A. Mass Com.	Administrator	1
13M	M	Public	31	B.A. Mass Com.	Manager	5
14F	F	Private	32	M.B.A.	Manager	5

Quantitative Survey.

Summary statistics were calculated for each interval and ratio variable. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for each nominal and ordinal variable. The researcher received ($n = 147$) surveys completed by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. Below is the description of the survey sample.

Age.

The results indicated that public relations practitioners, both men and women, in Kuwait are relatively young. The most frequent observed category of age was 25 to 34 ($n = 77$, 52%). The ages of 35 and 44 represented ($n = 46$, 31%) of the sample. However, only a small portion of public relations practitioners in Kuwait ($n = 14$, 10%) were 45 years or older. Table 3 below presents the percentage breakdown of respondents' age.

Table 3: Percentage Breakdown of Respondents' Age

Age	<i>n</i>	%
18-24	10	7 %
25-34	77	52%
35-44	46	31%
45 - 54	9	6%
55-64	4	3%
65 or older	1	1%
Total	147	100%

Gender.

Most of the survey respondents were men ($n = 84$, 57%) public relations practitioners in Kuwait. Women public relations practitioners represented ($n = 63$, 43%) of the sample. Table 4 below shows the percentage breakdown of respondents' gender.

Table 4: Percentage Breakdown of Respondents' Gender

Gender	<i>n</i>	%
Male	84	57%
Female	63	43%
Total	147	100%

Organization Sector.

The observation of organization sector indicated that ($n = 84$, 57%) of public relations practitioners who completed the survey worked in public organizations. Private organizations were represented in the sample by ($n = 58$, 39%), while only ($n = 5$, 3%) were affiliated with NGOs. Table 5 below shows a breakdown of respondents' organization sector.

Table 5: Percentage Breakdown of Respondents' Organization Sector

Organization Sector	<i>n</i>	%
Public	84	57%
Private	58	39%
NGO	5	3%
Total	147	100%

Education level.

Survey participants showed a high level of education. All public relation practitioners participating had a high school degree level or higher. A majority of sample ($n = 89$, 61%) held a bachelor's degree. There were ($n = 33$, 22%) who held a master's degree, ($n = 7$, 5%) higher diploma / graduate certificate, and ($n = 5$, 3%) of the sample held a doctoral degree. Table 6 below represents a breakdown of respondents' education level.

Table 6: Percentage Breakdown of Respondents' Education Level

Education	<i>n</i>	%
Less than high school degree	0	0 %
High school graduate	1	1%
Associate degree in college (2-year)	12	8%
Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	89	61%
Higher Diploma / Graduate Certificate	7	5%
Master's degree	33	22%
Doctoral degree	5	3%
Total	147	100%

Marital Status.

The majority of public relations practitioners who participated were married. Married public relation practitioners represented ($n = 90$, 61%) of the sample. Single practitioners were ($n = 48$, 33%), divorced were ($n = 9$, 6%) of sample. Table 7 below shows a breakdown of respondents' marital status.

Table 7: Percentage Breakdown of Respondents' Marital Status

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	%
Single	48	33%
Married	90	61%
Divorced	9	6%
Other	0	0%
Total	147	100%

Income Level.

A small number of public relations practitioners ($n = 14$, 10%) earn a monthly income below 750 KD. Monthly income of 750 to 999 KD was reported by ($n = 20$, 14%) of the sample. A majority of the participants ($n = 64$, 44%) earned a monthly income between 1000 and 1499 KD. Seventeen percent of the sample earned 1500 to 1999 KD a month ($n = 25$), while ($n = 24$, 16%) reported a monthly income of 2000 KD or over. Table 8 reports a breakdown of respondents' income level.

Table 8: Percentage Breakdown of Respondents' Income Level

Income Level	<i>n</i>	%
Less than 750 KD	14	10 %
750-999 KD	20	14%
1000-1499 KD	64	44%
1500-1999 KD	25	17%

2000 KD and more	24	16%
Total	147	100%

Years of Experience.

The observation of years of experience in the public relations field ranged from zero, those who just entered the field, to senior public relations practitioners with 38 years of experience. The average experience reported was 9.95 years ($SD = 6.73$). Table 9 shows the descriptive analysis for participants' years of experience in the field.

Table 9: Years of Experience

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Min.	Max.
Years of Experience	9.95	6.73	147	0	38

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1.

The first research question examined the association of Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation with the decision to adopt new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. To examine this question, the researcher did a mixed-method study, in-depth interviews followed with a survey. Below are the findings.

Qualitative in-depth interviews.

Relative advantage.

According to 1M, "people in Kuwait encourage us to shift and adopt new digital media technologies rather than using the traditional media or old media technologies, such as email."

1M stated that “in the fast communication age, we consider the fastest technology in terms of reaching our audiences.” Likewise, 2F, 3F, 5M, 10F, 11F, and 12M emphasized that faster media technology, to reach audiences or get information, will increase the efficiency of public relations practices. According to interviewee 5M, “these new technologies help public relations practitioners to reach the information they are seeking faster than all previous technologies.”

Participant 1M added, “another main influencer on our decision to adopt a new digital media technology is to increase our abilities to reach more audiences in Kuwait and GCC countries.” Similarly, 6M, 11F and 12M reported the importance of reaching more audiences.

In addition, interviewee 2F said, “we mostly use new digital media so we can directly communicate with our customers rather than mediated communications, so we influence our customers’ buying decisions.” 2F added, “new digital media technologies are found to be the best communication technology that could deliver feelings.” For example, “videos on Snapchat are more efficient for delivering feelings to the customers, so we can touch their emotions and influence them better.”

3F and 13M said that professionalism is an important factor associated with their adoption decision. For example, 3F said “Snapchat is not relevant to our work because it is not professional and our work is more professional and official.”

However, 3F said that “multi-features digital media technologies are more relevant to public relation practices.” 4M said that “new digital media technologies are more relevant to public relations practitioners because the comments that the audiences write is the fastest way to get feedback.” In fact, 5M said, “implementing these new digital technologies is reducing cost because work is done faster with less personal customer attendance.” In contrast, 8M said that

old digital media, such as email, is cheaper than newer digital media, because they do not require special skills.

According to 4M, “I shift to use a newer digital media when it is simpler than older technologies.”

Compatibility.

Participant 1M gave an example, “It is more acceptable for our audiences to click a link and submit their application, rather than coming in person, which wastes time.” Public relations practitioners 6M and 12M had a similar opinion. Interviewee 6M said “there are some new digital media technologies that kill my time, which is not compatible in public relations, Facebook, for example, wasted my time before I stopped using it.”

Participant 2F said that new digital media should be compatible with society: “we noticed that because as soon as we announce about adopting a new digital media, we see that followers directly follow us.” In fact, 2F gave an example: “in Kuwait, we use Instagram and Snapchat because it is compatible with Kuwaitis. However, we use Facebook to communicate with our non-Kuwaiti audiences, because it is more compatible with their uses.”

Interviewee 3F, who works for a huge multi-national NGO, said that “compatible media technologies for both public relations practitioners and their audiences, are those that build a relationship between them.” She, 3F, emphasized that “new digital media today is not just compatible with Kuwaiti society, indeed, all the global societies that we deal with are so keen to use these new digital media technologies.”

Public relations practitioners 5M, 12M, and 13M reported that new digital media are compatible with their public relations tasks and are welcomed by the Kuwaiti society. Likewise, 9F said “We look for the booming digital media technologies that fit and serve to accomplish our

public relations goals.” Practitioner 11F said “multi-feature digital media technologies help a public relations practitioner be able to accomplish more tasks”; 13M had a similar opinion. To emphasize, 10F and 12M said that new digital media that archives posts were more compatible with public relations tasks.

Similarly, 6M and 11F perceived newer digital media technologies as more compatible and supportive of public relations duties. In fact, 6M and 13M said main feature benefiting their public relations practices was getting detailed feedback directly from their customers. However, 11F and 13M perceived some feedback negatively. For instance, 11F said that “feedback and comments could serve as propaganda against the organization.”

According to 7M, older digital media technologies have other important features that serve their public relations duties. For instance, 7M said “there are some features that are found in older digital media, such as the massive spread of messages that are not found in newer ones.” 7M added that “reaching mass audiences is a feature that is more found in older digital media technologies.” As an example, “Text messages, which is an old digital media technology, would reach more mass audiences through bulk messages, while WhatsApp does not provide this feature.” However, 14F argued that new digital media serves public relations practitioners in reaching their mass audiences better than traditional media.

Participant 8M had a different opinion; he said, “new digital media increase public relations practitioners’ reputation.” 8M explained: “for example, visual-based digital media technologies are more trustworthy, because it is harder to manipulate visual media content compared to other types of media, which increases our reputation.”

Complexity.

Participant 3F said that public relations practitioners should increase their skills in using new digital media technologies to complete their tasks. 1M said that the adoption decision is “directly related to the easiness of reaching our audiences, and to what extent the new digital media technology is effective and easy to reach our targeted audiences.” Public relations practitioners 3F and 2F agreed with 1M, in that new digital media that would make them reach newer audiences would be less complex to public relations practitioners.

Interviewee 2F said that “newer digital media technologies are mostly easier to use.” In contrast, other practitioners, such as 11F and 12M, said that newer digital media technologies would be harder to use. For instance, 11F said “it would need more effort and it would complicate the task.”

Some features of new digital media technologies make a public relations practitioner’s task easier. As an example, 6M said “accessing newspapers online is much easier than reading a printed newspaper.” Further, 13M said that new digital media technologies are “easy and they can access them anytime and anywhere.”

In fact, 6M said some features make the adoption decision easier, especially fewer features digital media.” To clarify, 6M gave an example: “Instagram is known as a picture-based platform, so any public relations practitioner considering adopting it would only have to be knowledgeable in pictures more than text or videos.”

In addition, 6M said “the easiness of the device needed to use the new digital media would count.” As an example, 6M said “any newer media technology that requires a more accessible device, such as smartphones that are easy to use, would be worth a try.”

Interviewee 8M said that “the major issue was that the higher administration does not know how to use new digital media technologies.” In other words, 8M said “higher

administrations were afraid of the complexity of the new digital media technologies.” In line with 8M, 9F said “nowadays new digital media consumers are adopting easier technologies, therefore, we as public relations practitioners are also using simpler digital media technologies, such as Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat.”

Practitioner 7M said that although there are some complex digital media platforms such as Facebook, some features make it easier. 7M said, “For example, the only reason that we still use Facebook is that it is easy to share posts on other platforms, such as Instagram, through Facebook.”

Furthermore, 7M said that “the feature that is in almost all of the new digital media technologies, which is keeping public relations practitioners always and directly connected with their audience, complicates public relations tasks.” 13M also reported that direct communication would make the public relations duties more complex.

Observability.

In terms of observability, public relations practitioner 1M addressed that he did not consider adopting digital media technologies because he did not observe or have the equipment to access. Participant 2F addressed observability by saying “studies showed that 80% of customers buy based on word of mouth rather than any other recommendations.” Similarly, 5M and 3F agreed on the influence of observing study findings in the adoption decision.

5M explained the importance of observability on the adoption decision of new digital media technologies in public relations by saying “about 70% of the Kuwaiti population is youths who are more attracted to and present in new digital media technologies; therefore, we implement these technologies to advertise our services to the youth population.” He, added, “I also depend on studies that clarify the most-used digital media in Kuwait.”

Participant 10F mentioned that when an organization is presented in new digital media technologies they are more respected by the public compared to organizations that are not implementing new digital media technologies. 10F said “I noticed that Kuwaitis respect organizations that are presented in new digital media technologies, which was a major factor that encouraged us to adopt these media technologies in our public relations practices.”

Moreover, 12M said organizations that adopted new digital media technologies were more trusted by their audiences. Practitioner 12M said “adopting new digital media technologies would build the audience's trust.”

In contrast, other public relations practitioners found that observation is negatively associated with the adoption decision of new digital media technologies. For example, 7M stated that “we observed that as many people move to use new digital media technologies, they return to TV and/or radio.” However, 7M also mentioned that his observation of how fast news is spread in Kuwait through Twitter encouraged him to adopt that digital media platform. Other practitioners, such as 5M, and 8M, also reported that the observation of fast communication would increase their intention to adopt new digital media technologies.

Trialability.

Most of participants said that trialability hinges on the cost of new digital media technologies. For example, 1M said “I like to try new digital media technologies, especially when they are free.” Similarly, 6M 10F, and 12M indicated that free digital media would be the main influential feature that would encourage them, as public relations practitioners, to try it, which would probably lead to adopting that free new digital media technology. In line with others, 2F said “I try new digital media technologies because they are free.” She that added “in

the new digital media technologies you hear and see the experience and review of any product directly from the social media influencers.”

Interviewee 3F said “I use any new digital media for at least one year before suggesting its implementation as a public relations communication tool.” Also in relation to timing, 5M said that he tries any new digital media technologies as soon as he knows that it is out there for the public to use.

Public relations practitioner 6M said that “less features in a new digital media technology attracts me more to try it.” As an example, 6M said “Twitter mainly is based on text, so it is only one feature that makes it easier to try, while Facebook is multi-featured, which makes it harder to learn.” Additionally, 6M and 10F said that if the device was easier to use then they would be more willing to try new digital media technology on that device.

As another factor, 8M said, “encouraging higher administration to examine a new media technology would increase the possibility of adopting it by public relations practitioners in the organization.”

In addition, public relations practitioner 10F mentioned that before even thinking of trying new digital media, she should understand its features. To explain, 10F said “I would be more willing to try new digital media that provides features that would help my public relations practices, such as archiving my posts.”

In fact, almost all of the interview participants mentioned that it is important that new digital media technology is accepted by their audiences before they even think to try it. For instance, 12M mentioned that “prior to trying a new digital media technology, I would assure that my audiences would accept adopting that new technology, otherwise, it would not be worth

it to give it a try.” Likewise, 2F, 3F, and 6M reported that they would adopt a digital media technology that their targeted audiences adopt.

Quantitative survey.

The researcher aimed to run a logistic regression to find the significant differences among Rogers’s five attributes of innovation and public relations practitioners’ adoption of new digital media technologies. However, out of the 147 responses received by public relations practitioners in Kuwait, only ($n = 2$, 1%) of the sample indicated that they were not adopting new digital media technologies. Therefore, logistic regression would not fit as a statistical test for this research question.

Consequently, the researcher ran a Pearson correlation analysis among relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, observability, and trialability. Cohen evaluation of the strength of relationships was adopted. According to Cohen (1988), coefficients between .10 and .29 show a small effect size, between .30 and .49 show a moderate effect size, and coefficients above .50 indicate a large effect size.

The correlation results showed a significant positive correlation between relative advantage and compatibility ($r = 0.23$, $p = .005$). The correlation coefficient between relative advantage and compatibility was 0.23, indicating a small effect size. This indicates that as relative advantage increases, compatibility tends to increase.

In addition, there was a significant positive correlation between relative advantage and complexity ($r = 0.41$, $p < .001$). The correlation coefficient between relative advantage and complexity was 0.41, indicating a moderate effect, which indicates that as relative advantage increases, complexity tends to increase.

Further, the Pearson correlation reported a significant positive correlation between relative advantage and observability ($r = 0.31, p < .001$). The correlation coefficient between relative advantage and observability was 0.31, indicating a moderate effect size. This indicates that as relative advantage increases, observability tends to increase.

Moreover, a significant positive correlation between relative advantage and trialability ($r = 0.36, p < .001$). The correlation coefficient exists between relative advantage and trialability was 0.36, indicating a moderate effect size. This indicates that as relative advantage increases, trialability tends to increase.

Likewise, there was a significant positive correlation between compatibility and observability ($r = 0.34, p < .001$). The correlation coefficient between compatibility and observability was 0.34, indicating a moderate effect size. This indicates that as compatibility increases, observability tends to increase.

Furthermore, there was a significant positive correlation between complexity and observability ($r = 0.51, p < .001$). The correlation coefficient between complexity and observability was 0.51, indicating a large effect size. This indicates that as complexity increases, observability tends to increase.

In line with others correlation tests, there was a significant positive correlation between complexity and trialability ($r = 0.33, p < .001$). The correlation coefficient between complexity and trialability was 0.33, indicating a moderate effect size. This indicates that as complexity increases, trialability tends to increase.

The last correlation test indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between observability and trialability ($r = 0.48, p < .001$). The correlation coefficient between observability and trialability was 0.48, indicating a moderate effect size. This indicates that as

observability increases, trialability tends to increase. Table 10 below presents the results of the Pearson correlations.

Table 10: Pearson Correlation Matrix among Relative Advantage, Compatibility, Complexity, Observability, and Trialability

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Relative advantage	-				
2. Compatibility	0.23	-			
3. Complexity	0.41	0.14	-		
4. Observability	0.31	0.34	0.51	-	
5. Trialability	0.36	0.15	0.33	0.48	-

Note. The critical values are 0.16, 0.21, and 0.27 for significance levels .05, .01, and .001 respectively.

Research Question 2.

The second research question examines whether Rogers's five attributes of innovation differ by gender. To inspect the gender differences, the researcher conducted a mixed-method study, in-depth interviews followed with a survey. Below are the findings.

Qualitative in-depth interviews.

The five attributes of innovation were examined in the first research question. The second question will highlight gender differences in perceiving the five attributes of innovation. Previous researchers presented their in-depth interview findings in a table to get a clear comparison (Briones et al., 2011). Therefore, the following will present the in-depth-interview

findings for both male and female public relations practitioners regarding each of Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation in tables.

For the first attribute of innovation, relative advantage, public relations practitioners addressed 12 features. Both male and female public relations practitioners named six of them: Faster communication, faster in accomplishing public relations tasks, faster in reaching information, more efficient than older media technologies, reach newer audiences, and seems more professional than older media technologies. These features would encourage them, as public relations practitioners, to adopt the newer digital media technologies.

Three relative advantage features were only mentioned by women, while another three features were only mentioned by men. Table 11 below identifies the gender differences in terms of relative advantage features.

Table 11: In-depth Interviews: Gender Differences in Terms of Relative Advantage

Attribute of Innovation	Features	Gender	
		Male	Female
Relative Advantage	Faster communication	X	X
	Faster in PR tasks	X	X
	Faster reach of information	X	X
	Faster feedback	X	
	More efficiency	X	X
	Reach new audiences	X	X
	Direct communication with audiences		X
	Deliver feelings and emotions		X

Professionalism	X	X
Multi-feature		X
Reducing cost	X	
Simpler to use	X	

The second attribute of innovation is compatibility. The public relations practitioners named 13 features for compatibility during their interviews. Both male and female public relations practitioners mentioned five of them: Faster communication, compatible with public relations tasks, digital media that archived the posts, and digital media that reach mass audiences were perceived as compatible; multi-feature was viewed as both negative and positive toward the adoption decision.

Two compatibility features were mentioned by women only, and men only also named two features. Table 12 below identifies the gender differences in terms of compatibility features that were mentioned by public relations practitioners in the interviews.

Table 12: In-depth Interviews: Gender Differences in Terms of Compatibility

Attribute of Innovation	Features	Gender	
		Male	Female
Compatibility	Faster for audiences	X	
	Faster in PR tasks	X	
	Faster communication	X	X
	Compatible with audiences		X
	Build relationship		X

Compatible with PR tasks	X	X
Multi-feature	X	X
Archive posts	X	X
Detailed feedback	X	
Direct feedback	X	
Reach mass audiences	X	X
Increases reputation	X	
Increases trust	X	

Third attribute of innovation is complexity. Public relations practitioners in Kuwait named 13 features for complexity during the in-depth interviews. Male and female public relations practitioners, both named three of them, which were that newer digital media technologies were sometimes harder than older media technologies, and that public relations practitioners needs new skills to adopt new digital media technologies. Furthermore, both men and women shared that the more easily they can reach new audiences, the less complex they perceive the new digital media technology.

Two of the features were mentioned only by female practitioners. Nine of the complexity feature were mentioned only by male public relations practitioners. Table 13 below identifies the gender differences in terms of complexity features.

Table 13: In-depth Interviews: Gender Differences in Terms of Complexity

Attribute of Innovation	Features	Gender	
		Male	Female
Complexity	Newer easier to use		X
	Newer harder to use	X	X
	Easiness of reaching new audiences	X	X
	New skills needed	X	X
	More effort to use will complicate		X
	Accessing information easier	X	
	Using anytime	X	
	Using anywhere	X	
	Fewer features is easier	X	
	Devices to access the technology	X	
	Higher administration knowledge	X	
	Sharing posts between platforms	X	
	Direct communication with audiences increases complexity	X	

The fourth attribute of innovation is observability. Participants reported nine features for observability. Both male and female public relations practitioners agreed on one feature, which indicated that their observation of studies regarding the implementation of new digital media technologies would encourage them to adopt new digital media technologies in their public relations practices. Five features were addressed only by male public relations practitioners,

while two features were mentioned only by female practitioners. Table 14 below identifies the gender differences in terms of observability features.

Table 14: In-depth Interviews: Gender Differences in Terms of Observability

Attribute of Innovation	Features	Gender	
		Male	Female
Observability	Adopting only what observed	X	
	Availability of equipment	X	
	Studies	X	X
	Observation of audiences' adoption	X	
	Other organizations' adoption		X
	Org. adopted were more respected		X
	Org. adopted were more trusted	X	
	Observability discourages adoption	X	
	Faster communication	X	

The last attribute of innovation is trialability. The public relations practitioners in in-depth interviewed mentioned ten features for trialability. Both male and female public relations practitioners shared three features. The first shared feature was that the cost of adopting newer digital media technology would influence their decision to try it or not. The second feature of trialability that both men and women practitioners shared was that a new digital media technology that required easier devices would encourage them to try it. The third shared feature

of trialability was that their targeted audiences would accept or already adopted the new digital media technology.

Three trialability features were mentioned by men only, while four features were addressed by their counterpart women. Table 15 below identifies the gender differences in terms of trialability features.

Table 15: In-depth Interviews: Gender Differences in Terms of Trialability

Attribute of Innovation	Features	Gender	
		Male	Female
Trialability	Cost of newer media technologies	X	X
	Personally, likes to try	X	
	Observation encourages trialability		X
	Time of trialability		X
	Knowing the features		X
	Fewer features increases trialability	X	
	Devices to access technologies	X	X
	Higher administration support	X	
	Technologies support PR tasks		X
	Targeted audiences' acceptance	X	X

Quantitative survey.

To answer the second research question, the researcher ran an independent samples *t*-test to examine whether the mean of each of Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation was significantly different between male and female public relations practitioners in Kuwait.

First, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine whether the mean of relative advantage was significantly different between the male and female public relations practitioners, which are categories of gender. The result of the independent samples *t*-test was not significant, $t(143) = -1.56, p = .121$, suggesting that the mean of relative advantage was not significantly different between the men and women public relations practitioners. Table 16 below presents the results of the independent samples *t*-test.

Table 16: Independent Samples t-Test for the Difference between Relative Advantage (Male) and Relative Advantage (Female)

Variable	Male		Female		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Relative advantage	1.22	0.34	1.34	0.58	-1.56	.12	0.25

Note. Degrees of Freedom for the *t*-statistic = 143. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

A second independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine whether the mean of compatibility was significantly different between men and women. The result of the independent samples *t*-test was not significant, $t(143) = 1.25, p = .22$, suggesting that the mean of compatibility was not significantly different between the categories of gender. Table 17 below shows the results of the independent samples *t*-test.

Table 17: Independent Samples t-Test for the Difference between Compatibility (Male) and Compatibility (Female)

Variable	Male		Female		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Compatibility	1.87	0.65	1.75	0.55	1.25	.22	0.21

Note. Degrees of Freedom for the *t*-statistic = 143. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

The third independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine whether the mean of complexity was significantly different between the male and female categories. The result of the independent samples *t*-test was not significant, $t(143) = -0.39$, $p = .70$, suggesting that the mean of complexity was not significantly different between men and women public relations practitioners. Table 18 below reports the results of the independent samples *t*-test.

Table 18: Independent Samples t-Test for the Difference between Complexity (Male) and Complexity (Female)

Variable	Male		Female		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Complexity	1.46	0.54	1.49	0.59	-0.39	.70	0.07

Note. Degrees of Freedom for the *t*-statistic = 143. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

The fourth independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine whether the mean of observability was significantly different between the male and female categories. The result of the independent samples *t*-test was not significant, $t(143) = 0.33, p = .74$, suggesting that the mean of observability was not significantly different between men and women public relations practitioners. Table 19 below presents the results of the independent samples *t*-test.

Table 19: Independent Samples *t*-Test for the Difference between Observability (Male) and Observability (Female)

Variable	Male		Female		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Observability	1.61	0.61	1.57	0.59	0.33	.74	0.05

Note. Degrees of Freedom for the *t*-statistic = 143. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

The last independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine whether the mean of trialability was significantly different between the male and female categories. The result of the independent samples *t*-test was not significant, $t(143) = -1.86, p = .07$, suggesting that the mean of trialability was not significantly different between men and women. Table 20 below shows the results of the independent samples *t*-test.

Table 20: Independent Samples t-Test for the Difference between Trialability (Male) and Trialability (Female)

Variable	Male		Female		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Trialability	5.05	2.28	5.82	2.74	-1.86	.07	0.31

Note. Degrees of Freedom for the *t*-statistic = 143. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

Research Question 3.

The third dissertation research question examined how public relations practitioners in different organization sectors – public, private, and NGO – in Kuwait perceive Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation. To inspect the differences among organization sectors the researcher conducted a mixed-method study, in-depth interviews followed by a survey. Below are the findings.

Qualitative in-depth interviews.

The five attributes of innovation were examined in the first research question. The third research question will address the differences in organization sector on how the five attributes of innovation are perceived. Previous researchers presented their in-depth interview findings in a table to get a clear comparison (Briones et al., 2011). Therefore, the following will present the in-depth-interview findings for differences among public, private, and NGO regarding each of Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation.

For the first attribute of innovation, relative advantage, public relations practitioners addressed 12 features. Public relations practitioners in the three organization sectors shared four features of relative advantage: Faster communication, faster in accomplishing public relations

tasks, faster way to reach information, and more efficient new digital media. These features would influence their decision to adopt the newer digital media technologies.

Public and NGO only shared the professionalism feature. Three features were mentioned by public sector practitioners only. Three other features were reported by public relations practitioners in the private sector only. Table 21 below identifies the organization differences in terms of relative advantage features.

Table 21: In-depth Interviews: Organization Differences in Terms of Relative Advantage

Attribute of Innovation	Features	Org. Sector		
		Public	Private	NGO
Relative Advantage	Faster communication	X	X	X
	Faster in PR tasks	X	X	X
	Faster reach of information	X	X	X
	Faster feedback	X		
	More efficiency	X	X	X
	Reach new audiences	X		
	Direct communication with audiences		X	
	Deliver feelings and emotions		X	
	Professionalism	X		X
	Multi-feature			X
	Reducing cost		X	
	Simpler to use	X		

The second attribute of innovation is compatibility. The public relations practitioners addressed 13 features for compatibility during their interviews. There was no feature recorded that was shared by all three organization sectors. However, public and private sectors shared: Faster to serve audiences, faster communication tool for public relations, compatible with public relations tasks, provides detailed feedback, and reaches mass audiences to attract new customers.

Two of the compatibility features were mentioned by public sector only, and private sector practitioners also mentioned two features that were not shared with other sectors. NGO has one feature that was not mentioned by other two sectors. Table 22 below identifies the organization sector differences in terms of compatibility features, according to public relations practitioners who were interviewed.

Table 22: In-depth Interviews: Organization Differences in Terms of Compatibility

Attribute of Innovation	Features	Org. Sector		
		Public	Private	NGO
Compatibility	Faster for audiences	X	X	
	Faster in PR tasks		X	
	Faster communication	X	X	
	Compatible with audiences		X	
	Builds relationship			X
	Compatible with PR tasks	X	X	
	Multi-feature	X		
	Archive posts	X		
	Detailed feedback	X	X	

Direct feedback	X	X
Reaches mass audiences	X	X
Increases reputation		X
Increases trust		X

The third attribute of innovation is complexity. Public relations practitioners in Kuwait named 13 features for complexity during the in-depth interviews. Public relations practitioners in all three organization sectors shared only one complexity feature, which is that a new digital media that makes reaching new audiences easier would be more considered for adoption.

Six complexity features were stated only by public sector organizations public relations practitioners. Five features were addressed only by private sector practitioners, while one feature was mentioned only by a public relations practitioner in a NGO. Table 23 below identifies the differences among organization sectors in terms of complexity features.

Table 23: In-depth Interviews: Organization Differences in Terms of Complexity

Attribute of Innovation	Features	Org. Sector		
		Public	Private	NGO
Complexity	Newer easier to use		X	
	Newer harder to use	X		
	Easiness of reaching new audiences	X	X	X
	New skills needed			X
	More effort to use will complicate	X		
	Accessing information easier		X	

Using anytime	X	
Using anywhere	X	
Fewer features is easier		X
Devices to access the technology		X
Higher administration knowledge		X
Sharing posts between platforms	X	
Direct communication with audiences increases complexity	X	

The fourth attribute of innovation is observability. Public relations practitioners reported nine features for observability. None of the three sectors public relations practitioners shared an observability feature. Nevertheless, the private and NGO shared that their observation of study results regarding a new digital media technology would influence their adoption decision. The public and private sectors shared an observation feature, which is that observing a fast communication digital media would influence their adoption decision.

Six observability features were addressed only by public relations practitioners of the public sector. One feature was mentioned by the private sector public relations practitioners. Table 24 below identifies the differences among organization sectors in terms of observability features.

Table 24: In-depth Interviews: Organization Differences in Terms of Observability

Attribute of Innovation	Features	Org. Sector		
		Public	Private	NGO
Observability	Adopting what observed only	X		
	Availability of equipment	X		
	Studies		X	X
	Observation of audiences' adoption		X	
	Other organizations adoption	X		
	Org. adopted were more respected	X		
	Org. adopted were more trusted	X		
	Observability discourage adoption	X		
	Faster communication	X	X	

The last attribute of innovation is trialability. Public relations practitioners participating in in-depth interviews listed ten features for trialability. There was a single trialability feature addressed by public relations practitioners of all organization sectors, which was that they as public relations practitioners would be willing to try a new digital media that was found to be accepted and adopted by their targeted audiences.

Interview participants of public and private sectors shared the following trialability features: They would try new digital media technology with low or no cost, they would try technologies because it is a part of their personal character and interest, by knowing the features of the new digital media technologies they would be more willing to try it, the availability and easiness of devices needed to access the digital media technologies is also associated with their

trialability. Three features were addressed by private sector practitioners only. One feature was mentioned only by public sector practitioners, and another single trialability feature was also reported by NGO only. Table 25 below identifies organization sector differences in terms of trialability features.

Table 25: In-depth Interviews: Organization Differences in Terms of Trialability

Attribute of Innovation	Features	Org. Sector		
		Public	Private	NGO
Trialability	Cost of newer media technologies	X	X	
	Personally likes to try	X	X	
	Observation encourages trialability		X	
	Time of trialability			X
	Knowing the features	X	X	
	Fewer features increase trialability		X	
	Devices to access technologies	X	X	
	Higher administration support		X	
	Technologies support PR tasks	X		
	Targeted audiences' acceptance	X	X	X

Quantitative Survey.

To examine the dissertation third research question, the researcher conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine whether there were significant differences in each of

Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation by organization sector, which are public, private, and NGO.

The first ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in relative advantage by organization sectors. The results were not significant, $F(2, 142) = 0.03$, $p = .97$, indicating the differences in relative advantage among the levels of organizations were all similar (Table 26). The means and standard deviations are presented below in Table 27.

Table 26: ANOVA Table for Relative Advantage by Organization Sector

Term	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>l</i>	η^2_p
Organization sector	0.01	2	0.03	.97	0.00
Residuals	30.27	142			

Table 27: Means, Standard Deviations, and Sample Size for Relative Advantage by Organization Sector

Organization Sector	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Private	1.26	0.34	58
Public	1.28	0.53	82
NGO	1.28	0.44	5

Second ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in compatibility by organization sector. The results were not significant, $F(2, 142) = 1.66$, $p = .19$, indicating the differences in compatibility among organization sectors were all similar (Table 28). The means and standard deviations are showed in Table 29 below.

Table 28: ANOVA Table for Compatibility by Organization Sector

Term	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>t</i>	η^2_p
Organization sector	1.22	2	1.66	.19	0.02
Residuals	52.21	142			

Table 29: Means, Standard Deviations, and Sample Size for Compatibility by Organization Sector

Organization Sector	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Private	1.89	0.63	58
Public	1.79	0.60	82
NGO	1.40	0.32	5

A third ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in complexity by organization sector. The results were not significant, $F(2, 142) = 0.76, p = .47$, indicating the differences in complexity among the organization sectors were all similar (Table 30). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 31 below.

Table 30: ANOVA Table for Complexity by Organization Sector

Term	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>t</i>	η^2_p
Organization sector	0.47	2	0.76	.47	0.01
Residuals	44.34	142			

Table 31: Means, Standard Deviations, and Sample Size for Complexity by Organization Sector

Organization Sector	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Private	1.45	0.56	58
Public	1.50	0.56	82
NGO	1.20	0.45	5

A fourth ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in observability by organization sectors. The results were not significant, $F(2, 142) = 1.18, p = .31$, indicating the differences in observability among the levels of organization sector were all similar (Table 32). The means and standard deviations are shared below in Table 33.

Table 32: ANOVA Table for Observability by Organization Sector

Term	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2_p
Organization sector	0.84	2	1.18	.31	0.02
Residuals	50.39	142			

Table 33: Means, Standard Deviations, and Sample Size for Observability by Organization Sector

Organization Sector	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Private	1.52	0.58	58
Public	1.66	0.61	82
NGO	1.40	0.45	5

The last ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in trialability by organization sectors. The results of the ANOVA were significant, $F(2, 142) = 3.31, p = .04$, indicating there were significant differences in trialability among the levels of organization sectors (Table 34). The eta squared was 0.04, indicating organization sector explains approximately 4% of the variance in trialability. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 35.

Table 34: ANOVA Table for Trialability by Organization Sector

Term	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2_p
Organization sector	4.48	2	3.31	.04	0.04
Residuals	95.98	142			

Table 35: Means, Standard Deviations, and Sample Size for Trialability by Organization Sector

Organization Sector	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Private	1.59	0.85	58
Public	1.95	0.82	82
NGO	1.60	0.43	5

To further examine the differences among the variables, *t*-tests were calculated between each pair of measurements. Tukey pairwise comparisons were conducted for all significant effects. For the main effect of organization sector, the mean of trialability for public relations practitioners in the private sector ($M = 1.59, SD = 0.85$) was significantly smaller than for public relations practitioners in the public sector ($M = 1.95, SD = 0.82$). Note that the five-point Likert-

scale was coded (1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree). No other significant effects were found.

Research Question 4.

The fourth dissertation research question identified which new digital media technologies were adopted by public relations practitioners in Kuwait, and which ones were more important for public relations tasks. Therefore, to answer this question a descriptive analysis of both in-depth interview participants and the survey sample will be presented. In addition, the description and rationalization of use by both interview participants and the survey sample will also be presented in a table format.

Qualitative in-depth interviews.

To explore the digital media technologies adopted by public relations practitioners in Kuwait to help them complete their public relations tasks, the researcher asked participants to name all digital media technologies that they use in their profession, also asking them which was the most important for public relations practices and the reason for its significance in public relations in Kuwait.

Instagram was the most adopted digital media technology by public relations practitioners who participated in the in-depth interviews ($n = 13$, 93%). Then, came Twitter ($n = 12$, 86%), followed by WhatsApp ($n = 11$, 79%). One public relations practitioner, 14F, said she did not adopt any digital media technology for her public relations duties. Table 36 below illustrates the percentage breakdown of digital media that were public relations practitioners said they adopted, when asked during the in-depth interviews.

Table 36: In-depth Interview Participants: Percentage Breakdown of Adopted Digital Media Technologies

Digital Media Technology	<i>n</i>	%
Instagram	13	93%
Twitter	12	86%
WhatsApp	11	79%
Facebook	9	64%
YouTube	8	57%
Website	8	57%
Email	6	43%
Snapchat	3	21%
Text messages SMS	3	21%
LinkedIn	2	14%
Other (ATM Screen)	1	7%
None	1	7%

In the following tables, each participant was asked to explain the reason for adopting the new digital media technologies they mentioned. The interview participants' responses are presented in separate tables for the first four most used digital media technologies: Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Facebook. Then a single table will include the reason for adopting all other digital media technologies (YouTube, websites, email, Snapchat, text messages, and LinkedIn).

The first digital media technology is Instagram. The public relations practitioners mentioned 15 reasons for adopting Instagram as a digital media technology for their public relations tasks. The most important feature, which ($n = 9, 64\%$) of interviewees identified is that it is widely adopted in Kuwait. Both visual features and using Instagram as a tool to publicize their news or events were reported as second reason for adopting it, ($n = 4, 29\%$). Table 37 below presents the percentage breakdown of reasons for the adoption of Instagram for public relations tasks.

Table 37: Interview Participants' Reasons for Adopting Instagram for PR

New Digital Media Technology	Reason for Adoption	<i>n</i>	%
Instagram	Widely adopted	9	64%
	Visual features	4	29%
	Publicity	4	29%
	Easiness of use	3	21%
	Advertising	2	14%
	Adoption of targeted audiences	2	14%
	Serves PR tasks better	2	14%
	Archiving feature	2	14%
	Better features	1	7%
	Direct communication feature	1	7%
	Feedback	1	7%
	Faster feedback	1	7%
	Share posts feature	1	7%

Visuals are more trustworthy	1	7%
Fast tool	1	7%

The second digital media technology is Twitter. The public relations practitioners mentioned 12 reasons for adopting Twitter as a digital media technology for their public relations tasks. The most important feature, which ($n = 4$, 29%) of interviewees identified, is that it is widely adopted in Kuwait. Table 38 below presents the percentage breakdown of reasons for the adoption of Twitter for public relations tasks.

Table 38: Interview Participants' Reasons for Adopting Twitter for PR

New Digital Media Technology	Reason for Adoption	<i>n</i>	%
Twitter	Widely adopted	4	29%
	Fast to reach news	2	14%
	Fast to share information	2	14%
	Publicity	2	14%
	Adoption of targeted audiences	2	14%
	Share posts feature	2	14%
	Reach new audiences	2	14%
	Fast tool	2	14%
	Influential tool	1	7%
	Better features	1	7%
	Feedback	1	7%
	Verified account gives credibility	1	7%

The third digital media technology is WhatsApp. The public relations practitioners mentioned nine reasons for adopting WhatsApp as a digital media technology for their public relations tasks. The most important feature, which ($n = 5, 36\%$) of interviewees mentioned, was that it is a fast communication tool. Both the direct communication feature of WhatsApp and the fact that it serves public relations tasks better than other digital media technologies was recorded by ($n = 4, 29\%$) of interviewed public relations practitioners. Table 39 below presents the percentage breakdown of reasons for the adoption of WhatsApp for public relations tasks.

Table 39: Interview Participants' Reasons for Adopting WhatsApp for PR

New Digital Media Technology	Reason for Adoption	<i>n</i>	%
WhatsApp	Fast tool	5	36%
	Serves PR tasks better	4	29%
	Direct communication feature	4	29%
	Adoption of targeted audiences	3	21%
	Widely adopted	2	14%
	Group communication feature	2	14%
	Fast to reach news	1	7%
	Easiness of use	1	7%
	Better features	1	7%

The fourth digital media technology is Facebook. The public relations practitioners mentioned eight reasons for adopting Facebook as a digital media technology for their public relations tasks. The most important feature, which ($n = 5, 36\%$) of practitioners mentioned, was

that Facebook is adopted only to reach audiences who are not geographically located in Kuwait. Table 40 below presents the percentage breakdown of reasons for the adoption of Facebook for public relations tasks.

Table 40: Interview Participants' Reasons for Adopting Facebook for PR Tasks

New Digital Media Technology	Reason for Adoption	<i>n</i>	%
Facebook	Audiences outside of Kuwait	5	36%
	Adoption of targeted audiences	4	29%
	Non-Kuwaiti audiences in Kuwait	3	21%
	Publicity	1	7%
	Better features	1	7%
	Direct communication feature	1	7%
	Share posts feature	1	7%
	Forced to have an account so we can buy	1	7%
	Instagram adv.	1	7%

Lastly, in Table 41, are the other digital media technologies that public relations practitioners mentioned during the interviews and the reason behind the adoption of the following digital media technologies: YouTube, Website, Email, Snapchat, Text messages, and LinkedIn.

Table 41: Interview Participants' Reasons for Adopting YouTube, Websites, Email, Snapchat, Text Messages, and LinkedIn for PR Tasks

New Digital Media Technology	Reason for Adoption	<i>n</i>	%
YouTube	Archiving feature	3	21%
	Share posts feature	2	14%
	Audiences outside of Kuwait	1	7%
Website	Publicity	2	14%
	Digital identity	2	14%
	Fast to share information	1	7%
	Adoption of targeted audiences	1	7%
Email	Direct communication feature	3	21%
	Group communication feature	2	14%
	Widely adopted	1	7%
	Lower cost	1	7%
	Fast to share information	1	7%
	Audiences outside of Kuwait	1	7%
Snapchat	Widely adopted	1	7%
	Visual features	1	7%
	Advertising	1	7%
	Hard to use	1	7%
	Less professional	1	7%
	Direct communication feature	1	7%

	Feedback	1	7%
Text messages	Direct communication feature	2	14%
	Reach new audiences	2	14%
	Widely adopted	1	7%
	Adoption of targeted audiences	1	7%
	Fast tool	1	7%
LinkedIn	More professional	1	7%
	Serves PR tasks better	1	7%

Quantitative survey.

To explore which new digital media technologies was adopted among public relations practitioners in Kuwait, the researcher named 15 digital media technologies plus an open-ended “other” option (asking the respondent to specify). Then the respondents were asked to rank the digital media technologies they chose based on their importance to public relations tasks.

The survey results were similar to the in-depth interview results. Most public relations practitioners who completed the survey, sample of ($n = 145$), ($n = 119$, 81%), reported the adoption of Instagram, which makes it the most-implemented digital media technology in public relations practices in Kuwait. Likewise, ($n = 101$, 69%) of the sample reported the adoption of Twitter, which makes it the second-most-adopted digital media technology by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. Email was adopted by ($n = 93$, 63%) practitioners. WhatsApp was adopted by ($n = 91$, 62%) practitioners for public relations tasks.

Table 42 presents the percentage breakdown of new digital media technologies adopted by public relations practitioners in Kuwait.

Table 42: Survey: Percentage Breakdown of New Digital Media Adoption

Answer	<i>n</i>	%
Instagram	119	81%
Twitter	101	69%
Email	93	63%
WhatsApp	91	62%
Website	72	49%
YouTube	68	46%
Facebook	57	39%
Snapchat	55	37%
Text messages SMS	52	35%
LinkedIn	29	20%
Applications (Apps)	24	16%
Viber	12	8%
Telegram	10	7%
Line	8	5%
Other	6	4%
Yammer	2	1%

Summary

This fourth chapter has presented the results and the analysis of data to answer the dissertation's research questions. The results chapter was presented in two sections: the first

provided the descriptive data of the study sample and participants for both methods; the second presented the answers to the dissertation research questions with inferential statistics.

The coming fifth chapter of this dissertation presents the discussion. The researcher provides an explanation of results. In fact, the discussion chapter will also circle the findings back to the literature review so the reader will understand what this dissertation is adding to the field of knowledge.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This discussion chapter presents an explanation of results. Further, the discussion chapter will also relate the findings to the literature available regarding the topic to highlight the contribution of this dissertation in the body of knowledge. The aim of this study was to examine the attitudes and factors that influence the decision to adopt new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. Therefore, the research examined the association of Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation with the adoption decision. Moreover, the study examined the gender differences and organization sector differences in perceiving these five attributes of innovation: Relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, observability and trialability. Scholars recommended the continued examination of such topics (Atkin et al., 2015).

To examine the dissertation's research questions, the researcher implemented a mixed-methods study based on the recommendation of previous researchers (S. Alanazi, 2013; Al-Shohaib, 2005; Moya, 2014; Sharif, 2003). In fact, this is the first study to examine these research questions in Kuwait, which makes it an exploratory descriptive study. Exploratory studies are those that investigate an area not widely presented or discussed in the literature (Zhou, 2011). The researcher in this chapter also relates the qualitative in-depth interview findings to the quantitative survey results to justify the findings and reach a clear understanding of the research questions.

Demographics

This study interviewed (N=14) public relations practitioners in Kuwait and surveyed another (N =147). Two of the survey sample were excluded because they were not adopting any digital media technologies in their public relations practices.

In both study methods, most public relations practitioners in Kuwait were relatively young, aged between 25 and 34, ($n = 77$, 52%) of the survey sample, and ($n = 10$, 71%) of interview participants. This is consistent with Al-Yasin (2013), Sharif (2003), and Al-Shohaib (2005) finding most public relations practitioners in Kuwait are young. Besides, it reflects the Kuwaiti population, where most of its population are young, 24 years or under (“The World Factbook,” 2017).

Both methods had the same gender participation percentages. Men participated in interviews ($n = 8$, 57%), while women were ($n = 6$, 43%). Similarly, male survey respondents were ($n = 84$, 57%), while female respondents were ($n = 63$, 43%), which was also the exact percentage of gender differences that participated in Sharif (2003).

Kuwait was named as the highest rate, worldwide, of employed women, at 88% compared to men 89% (Marler & McGeeney, 2012). However, consistent with Dashti and Mesbah’s (2015) findings, women were less represented in the public relations field. Yet, compared to women in the region, Kuwait had the higher representation of women in the media and public relations field (S. Alanazi, 2013; Al-Shohaib, 2005; Kemp et al., 2015).

Consistent with similar studies, most participants in this study were from public sector organizations, then private (Sharif, 2003), and few NGO public relations practitioners. The dominant sector in Kuwait is the public sector (Al-Nakib, 2016; Al-Yasin, 2013). Therefore, having the most survey respondents and interview participants from the Kuwaiti public sector organizations reflects the workforce distribution in Kuwait.

Ninety-four percent of Kuwaitis viewed education as equally important for both genders (Kohut et al., 2007), and the majority of public relations practitioners, survey sample and interview participants, held a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Kuwait is a small wealthy country that contains about 6% of the total world oil reserves with no population under the poverty line (Corby, 2016; “The World Factbook,” 2017). Therefore, it was expected that public relations practitioners in Kuwait have a high income. Most of survey and interview respondents reported that they receive a monthly salary of 1000 Kuwaiti Dinars (U.S Dollars 3300) or more. This income increased compared to Sharif (2003), who was the last researcher to report the income of public relations practitioners in Kuwait.

Research Questions

Rogers’s attributes of innovation and adoption decisions.

Only ($n = 2$, 1%) of survey respondents indicated that they did not adopt any digital media technologies for their public relations practices. Both were working in public organizations. However, one woman, who had 20 years’ experience in public relations, indicated that she did not adopt a digital media technology because they are not compatible with her public relations tasks, and the organization did not support her in adopting new digital media technologies.

The second survey respondent who also did not adopt a digital media technology was a man in the 25 to 34 age category, who responded in the survey that he did not adopt a digital media technology for his public relations tasks because of the lack of training in using these digital media technologies. Although it is only one response, yet it is consistent with Al-Yasin’s (2013) findings, which were most that public relations practitioners in Kuwait reported that they need to get more training.

The Pearson correlation showed a significant small positive effect between relative advantage and compatibility. In fact, the public relations practitioners mentioned three features that were all perceived as relative advantage and compatibility features that are associated with

the decision to adopt a new digital media technology. The shared features between relative advantage and compatibility were: Faster communication, speeding the accomplishment of public relations tasks, and a new digital media that is multi-featured.

Another moderate positive significant correlation between relative advantage and complexity was found. Three shared features between relative advantage and complexity were mentioned by public relations practitioners: Reaching new audiences, direct communication with audiences, and simpler digital media. These were perceived as less complex and more advantageous to digital media technology. To explain, interviewees mentioned that reaching newer audiences and direct communication features in newer digital media technologies are more relevant than older media technologies; yet, they are also associated with complicating the use of that new digital media technology.

There was also a moderate positive significant correlation between relative advantage and observability. One digital media feature that was shared between relative advantage and observability was faster communication. A new digital media that was perceived by public relations practitioners in Kuwait to increase the speed of communication was more advantageous than older technologies. Also, the observation of how fast a new digital media technology was associated with their adoption decision.

Furthermore, the survey sample showed that relative advantage had a significant moderate positive correlation with trialability. That explains that when public relations practitioners perceive a new digital media as more relevant to their public relations tasks they would be more willing to try that digital media.

In addition, compatibility had a significant moderate positive correlation with observability. The interview participants mentioned three shared features between compatibility

and observability: faster communication, compatible and adopted by the targeted audiences, and increases trust between organization and its audiences. Public relations practitioners addressed that they would be more willing to adopt a new digital media when they observe it as a fast communication tool. Also, practitioners would more be willing to adopt technologies that are adopted by their audiences, or their audiences are open to adopting that technology in the future. Moreover, practitioners mentioned that digital media technology that increases the trust between them and their audiences would be more compatible. In fact, practitioners also observed that other public relations practitioners who adopted new digital media technologies were more trusted by the public and their targeted audiences.

A significant large positive correlation was found between complexity and observability. That indicates that when practitioners perceive the new digital media as more complex, they would observe it more. The public relations practitioners, during the in-depth interviews, did not link or share any complexity and observability features. Perhaps, as suggested by Sharif (2003), observability alone was a significant predictor of adopting digital media technologies.

Moreover, a significant moderate positive correlation was recorded between complexity and trialability. The in-depth interview showed that there are three features shared between complexity and trialability: Fewer features makes it less complex and worth a try, if the device used to adopt a new digital media was easier then practitioners would try it, and getting the support of higher administration is associated with their decision to try that new digital media technology.

The last significant finding was a positive moderate correlation between observability and trialability. That indicates that as observability increases, trialability tends to increase. In fact, Sharif (2003) reached a similar finding. Public relations practitioners in in-depth interviews

clearly stated that observation of new digital media technologies would encourage the decision to try that technology. In addition, practitioners mentioned that the observation of acceptance of targeted audiences would also increase their intention to try a new digital media technology.

Gender differences.

Although the survey method did not report any significant differences between male and female public relations practitioners in Kuwait, the qualitative interviews would explain a part of these differences. Therefore, the following discussion of gender differences in perceiving Rogers's (2003) attributes of innovation is based on the qualitative in-depth interview findings.

Female public relations practitioners.

As stated in the literature, on one hand, direct communication is more appreciated in the Arabic Kuwaiti culture (Al-Sumait, 2014). On the other hand, the Arabic traditions in Kuwait prohibit cross-gender personal communications, which is a challenge facing Kuwaiti female practitioners (Dashti & Mesbah, 2015). In fact, Kuwaitis were divided in terms of cross-gender work relationships. A Gallup poll found that 57% of Kuwaitis accepted the idea of working with women in the same workplace, while 40% called for a gender-segregated workplace (Kohut et al., 2007). Consequently, without personal communication available for female public relations practitioners in Kuwait, they would not be as successful as their male counterparts.

Therefore, many female public relations practitioners, during the in-depth interviews, mentioned that new digital media technologies with a direct communication feature with their targeted audiences would be more advantageous for them compared to older digital media technologies. Hence, these new digital media technologies with a direct communication feature would increase women practitioners' ability to implement two-way communication to decrease the gap between practitioners and their public; in other words, it increases women practitioners'

efficiency in accomplishing their public relations tasks (S. Alanazi, 2013; L. A. Grunig, 2001; Hussain, 2011). Further, women perceived the new digital media technologies that are more compatible with their audiences as compatible technologies for them to adopt.

Other features reported by women only were that new digital media technologies that are able to deliver more feelings and emotions were more advantageous to them. Previous studies also found that women tend to use digital media technologies to engage more with communities through exchanging emotions and feelings (Chen, 2015). Female interviewees also mentioned that digital media that helps them build a relationship with their audiences would be more compatible to them as public relations practitioners.

Women perceived new multi-feature digital media as more advantageous than older media technologies. This finding is consistent with Ilie et al. (2005), who found that women found new digital media technologies easier and less complex to use. However, one female practitioner said that she considered a new digital media to be complex if it needed more effort to adopt. In general, women interview participants mentioned complexity less than men participants did.

In terms of observability, only two features were mentioned by women. First, women who observed other organizations' adoption of new digital media technologies associated this with their own adoption decision. Second, female practitioners addressed that they observed other organizations that adopted a new digital media technology were more respected, and that influenced their adoption decision.

This study also supported Ilie et al. (2005) findings that women were more influenced by trialability. Women participants mentioned most of the trialability features. The first trialability feature addressed by women only was that their observability would increase their trialability. Second, women showed more interest in a longer period of trying a new digital media

technology before making an adoption decision. Third, women focused on knowing the new digital media features and how they would support their public relations tasks.

Male public relations practitioners.

In contrast, men practitioners in this study said that they perceive simpler and easier digital technologies as more advantageous to their public relations tasks. That was also in line with Curtis et al. (2010) and Ilie et al. (2005). Further, male public relations practitioners cared more about getting faster feedback and reducing the cost in considering the new digital media as more advantageous to their public relations duties.

In terms of compatibility, male public relations practitioners were more concerned about adopting newer digital media technologies that are faster for audiences to use, and faster in completing their public relations tasks. In addition, men interviewees mentioned that digital media that provides detailed and direct feedback would be more compatible. Moreover, compatible digital media technologies for men are those that increase their reputation, and their audiences' trust in them as public relations practitioners.

Similar to Ilie et al. (2005), men in this study perceived new digital media technologies as more complex compared to women. In fact, during in-depth interviews men mentioned most of the complexity features. As an example of complexity features mentioned only by men: first, they needed an easier technology to access information. Second, they focused on devices that are less complex to access digital media anywhere and anytime.

An interesting outcome of the interview with men public relations practitioners was that some perceived the feature of direct communication with audiences increasing the complexity of their public relations tasks. Men's perception of direct communication was the opposite of

women's perception of direct communication, which is consistent with other research findings (Al-Sumait, 2014; Dashti & Mesbah, 2015).

In addition, male interviewees asserted that the support and knowledge of the higher administration is associated with their adoption decision. Practitioners would be more willing to adopt a digital media technology with the support of their higher administration.

According to Ilie et al. (2005), observability encouraged men in the U.S. to adopt new digital media technologies more than women. In this study, in-depth interviews with public relations practitioners in Kuwait supported Ilie et al. (2005) findings regarding observability, demonstrating that observability is a common factor that may not vary across cultures.

Men reported that they would not adopt a technology that they did not observe, and some interviewees added they should also observe their audiences adopting the digital media technology. Further, faster communication and increasing the trust between public relations practitioners and their public was an observability feature that was addressed by men, consistent with Sharif (2003). In contrast, one male practitioner mentioned that observability had discouraged his adoption decision. Similar to Sharif (2003), this study found that personal interest and use of a new digital media technologies influences the adoption decision.

Organization sectors.

The third research question of this dissertation examined the differences among public relations practitioners in different organization sectors – public, private, and NGO – in Kuwait, in perceiving Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation. The results reported only one significant finding of the survey, which was that private sector public relations practitioners were more influenced by trialability than public sector practitioners. However, the qualitative interviews provided an explanation of all other sector differences regarding Rogers's (2003)

attributes of innovation. To discuss the differences the researcher will highlight the non-shared features of all attributes of innovation that were mentioned only by practitioners in one organization sector but not in the others.

For example, in terms of relative advantage, only public relations practitioners in public organizations mentioned that a new digital media that provides them with faster feedback from their audiences would be more advantageous for public relations practitioners to adopt. Furthermore, the public sector practitioners mentioned to the interviewer that a technology that would widen their audiences and help them reach new audiences would also be more a feature associated with their adoption decision. Another relative advantage feature associated with the adoption decision was that new technologies are simpler to use than older media technologies.

On the other side, public relations practitioners of the private sector reported that new digital media technologies provide a direct communication feature with their audiences, and this would be considered as a more relevant technology. Private sector practitioners added that they would also find technologies that tackle or influence feelings and emotions would provide more relative advantage than other technologies. For example, video would deliver more emotions than text-based digital media technologies. Finally, digital media that reduce cost were also perceived, by private sector interviewees, as having more relative advantage than older technologies.

NGO public relations practitioners cited only one feature that was not shared with other organization sectors. A new digital media technology that is multi-featured was reported as more advantageous and associated with the public relations practitioners' adoption decision.

Many variances among public relations practitioners in sectors were recorded in terms of compatibility features associated with the adoption decision of new digital media technologies.

Public sector practitioners mentioned that a multi-feature digital media technology that archives posts would be more compatible with their public relations tasks, which influences their adoption decision of a new digital media technology.

Compatibility features mentioned only by public relations practitioners in private organizations were those technologies that support practitioners in completing their public relations tasks faster, and increase their reputation and trust. In addition, private sector practitioners found that new digital media that were more compatible with their audiences would be more compatible with their duties and influence their adoption decision.

Only one feature of compatibility was addressed by NGO public relations practitioners: that they cared more in building a relationship with their targeted audiences.

There were six complexity features that were mentioned by public sector interview participants only. First, newer digital media were described as harder to use compared to older technologies. Second, new technologies needed more effort, which increases their complexity. Third and fourth were that a digital media technology that could be used anytime and anywhere would be less complex than other technologies that are restricted by time or geographical locations. Fifth, digital media technologies that do not offer the feature of sharing posts with other digital media platforms were perceived as more complicated. Last, public sector practitioners reported that the direct communication feature with audiences would increase their tasks' complexity.

In contrast to public practitioners, private practitioners mentioned that newer digital media technologies are easier to use and adopt. In addition, private sector practitioners reported that newer technologies with fewer features make accessing information easier. Further, the higher administration support and knowledge in new digital media technology would decrease

the adoption complexity. Last, private sector practitioners said that if simpler and fewer devices are needed to access the digital media technology, which is associated with the complexity of an innovation that influences their adoption decision. Similarly, Sharif (2003) found that the devices used to access digital media and higher administration support influence the adoption decision of a new digital media technology.

Only one feature was mentioned by public relations practitioners in NGOs for complexity. New skills and training needed to adopt new digital media technology was perceived as a feature that increases the adoption complexity.

In terms of observability differences among organization sectors, there was one feature mentioned by practitioners in the private sector only, while six features were only mentioned by public relations practitioners in the public sector.

Private sector practitioners' only feature mentioned was that when they observe a new digital media technology that was accepted and adopted by their targeted audiences, they consider adopting that technology too.

Public relations practitioners from public sector organizations first mentioned that they would not consider adopting a digital media technology that they did not observe. Second, and consistent with Sharif's (2003) findings, the availability to observe the equipment or devices needed to adopt new digital media technology was also found to influence the adoption decision. The third feature mentioned only by public organizations practitioners was that their observation of other organizations' adoption of new digital media technologies encouraged them to adopt. The fourth and fifth observation features were that organizations that adopted newer digital media technologies were found to be more respected and trusted by the public. The last observability feature mentioned only by public sector participants was that their observation

sometimes would discourage their adoption decision of newer digital media technologies. In fact, that is consistent with Al-Nakib's (2016) description of the public sector in Kuwait.

In-depth interviews with public relations practitioners addressed some differences in terms of trialability and its influence on the adoption decision of new digital media technologies. For example, only one trialability feature was mentioned by NGO public relations practitioners, which was that the time they spend trying the new digital media technology would influence their decision to adopt. Another single feature of trialability mentioned by public sector interviewees was that they would try a digital media technology that would support their public relations tasks.

Three trialability features were mentioned only by private sector practitioners. First, observation would encourage their trialability. Second, new digital media with fewer features will also encourage them to try using it. Last, private sector were keener to try new digital media technologies when their higher administration supported adopting newer media technologies.

As mentioned above, the only statistically significant outcome of the survey was found by the ANOVA to examine the differences in trialability by organization sectors $p = .04$. That finding explains that the adoption decision of new digital media technologies for public relations in the private sector organizations was more influenced by trialability than it was for public relations in the public sector. Trialability was also found to be a significant influence on public relations practitioners' decision to adopt internet for their public relations tasks in Sharif's (2003) study.

New digital media in public relations.

Many scholars have concluded that new digital media technologies are seen as beneficial for public relations tasks (Alikilic & Atabek, 2012; Briones et al., 2011; Hussain, 2011; Moya,

2014); this study also supports that. As mentioned previously, the last research question of this study aimed to explore which of the new digital media technologies have been adopted by public relations practitioners in Kuwait and which are perceived as more beneficial for their public relations practices.

In line with many recent studies that discussed the implementation of new digital media technologies in Kuwait (Alghaith, 2016; Al-Kandari, Al-Sumait, & Al-Hunaiyyan, 2017; Salem, 2017), this study also found through its in-depth interviews and surveys that Instagram was the most preferred digital media technology adopted by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. Eighty-one percent of survey respondents, and, 93% of interview participants reported that they have adopted Instagram for their public relations practices ($n = 13$). Although Kuwait has a low population compared to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa, Kuwait ranked fifth among them in terms of Instagram posts (Salem, 2017).

Public relations practitioners participating in in-depth interviews said that the biggest reason for adopting Instagram was that it was widely adopted in Kuwait. The wide adoption of an innovation is called “critical mass” (Rogers, 2003). Further, many practitioners justified their Instagram adoption because it is easy to use, and the visual feature was more accepted by their targeted audiences in Kuwait. Additionally, most public relations practitioners perceived Instagram as the best digital media technology serve their publicity communication. Publicity is when a public relations practitioner implements a one-way communication to publish information, announce events, and distribute news regarding their organization (J. Grunig, 1991). That finding is similar to previous studies, which found that public relations practitioners in region still practice one-way communication more than two-way communication (S. Alanazi, 2013).

According to Salem (2017), Kuwait is the most active, among all 22 Arab countries, on Twitter. Twitter adopters in Kuwait produced an average of 4.2 tweets per day (Salem, 2017). In fact, in this study, Twitter was second-most-adopted digital media technology in public relations in Kuwait. Sixty-nine percent of survey respondents have adopted Twitter, and 86% of interviewees adopted it for their public relations ($n = 12$).

Interviewees identify some reasons behind adopting Twitter for public relations. The most important feature mentioned by public relations practitioners is that Twitter is widely adopted in Kuwait. Then there were features that influenced their adoption of Twitter, which are the ability to reach information and news quickly.

An interesting finding of survey respondents was that email was adopted by ($n = 93$, 63%), while WhatsApp was ($n = 91$, 62%). However, most of the interview participants mentioned that WhatsApp, as a new digital media technology, replaced emails, which they named as old digital media technology, but the survey shows that some old digital media technologies are still being used for public relations tasks.

Summary

This fifth chapter has presented the discussion. The researcher provided an explanation of results. The discussion chapter also related the findings to previous studies in the literature so the readers would understand what this dissertation added to the field of knowledge.

The coming sixth and last chapter of this dissertation presents the conclusion. The conclusion chapter will start by summarizing the key points of the research. Then the researcher will explain the implication of this study. Next, the researcher will present the limitations of the study. Lastly, the researcher will close with recommendations for future researchers.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

As previously mentioned, this study explored the attitudes and factors influencing the decision to adopt new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. This final chapter of the dissertation restates the research problem and reviews the methods used to answer this study's research questions. The major section of this chapter summarizes the results and discusses their implications.

As explained in Chapter 1, this dissertation is exploratory research in a developing country in the Middle East. Kuwait's public relations practitioners have been found in the past to be slow in adopting new communication technologies (Sharif, 2003), and this used to be the case before this study's results. Kuwait now ranks among the highest in the Middle East in terms of new digital media consumers (Al-Sumait, 2014; Salem, 2017), and has a high rate of internet access at 92% (Central Agency for Information Technology, 2016).

In reality, the recent public relations conference held in Kuwait concluded that the public relations field in Kuwait is still developing and needs to benefit more from implementing new digital media technologies ("Digital Public Relations Conference," 2016). Hence, the problem was that the lateness of public relations practitioners in Kuwait in adopting new digital media technologies creates a lag in communication technology updates when compared with Western new digital media usage level and subsequent effects (Eyrich et al., 2008; Kirat, 2005).

The study examined the association of Rogers's attributes of innovation with the decision to adopt new digital media technologies by public relations practitioners in Kuwait. In addition, the researcher examined how public relations practitioners differently perceive these five attributes of innovation based on their gender and the organization sector they belong to.

This dissertation implemented a mixed-method research perspective, using qualitative and quantitative methods. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the researcher in-depth interviewed 14 public relations practitioners working in Kuwait, and surveyed 147 others.

Implications

Here and further, because this study found that almost all practitioners in Kuwait were adopting digital media technologies for public relations practices, future research should not further explore the rate of adoption.

Although the survey data analyses identify trialability as the only significant influencer on public relations practitioners' decision to adopt new digital media technologies in Kuwait, the qualitative research findings, in Chapter 4, highlight all of the important features of the attributes of innovation. Therefore, digital media technology producers or inventors should work to convince public relations practitioners to try their new media technology to encourage practitioners to adopt it for public relations tasks.

In addition, there were a number of significant correlations among Rogers's (2003) attributes of innovation, mentioned in the results chapter, which were associated with public relations practitioners in Kuwait deciding to adopt new digital media technologies. The research also explored the gender and organization sector differences in perceiving Rogers's (2003) five attributes of innovation.

In terms of gender differences, women public relations practitioners cared more about breaking the communication barriers that prevent them from directly communicating with their audiences and the general public. Hence, organizations should encourage women to adopt and practice implementing new digital media technologies as a direct communication tool for cross-gender communication in Kuwait.

In terms of organizational differences, it was found that public relations practitioners were more influenced by trialability than their counterparts in public organizations. Therefore, private organizations should encourage their practitioners to try the new technologies available in the market to increase their public relations efficiency.

In addition, public relations practitioners mentioned that they would be more willing to consider new digital media technologies when they feel their higher administration supports it. Hence, it is recommended for higher administration to encourage and support their public relations practitioners to adopt new digital media technologies. Adopting new digital media technologies were found in this study to reduce public relations costs. In fact, other researchers such as Briones et al. (2011) also found that digital media technologies reduce public relations costs.

Many public relations practitioners mentioned in this study, strongly depends on the adoption of their audiences for their adoption decision. The implication of this for public relations practitioners is that they should keep an eye on which digital media technologies are more adopted by their targeted audiences, so they reach them more effectively.

Further, the researcher agrees with scholars who mentioned that the diffusion of innovation theory continues to be valid to examine the adoption of new innovations in many different fields (Atkin et al., 2015; Moya, 2014). In fact, public relations practitioners should also know which of these attributes of innovation influence their decision to adopt new digital media technology to better identify which of these new technologies would serve their public relations tasks better.

Limitations

Similar to all other studies, there are limitations to address. This dissertation faced a geographical barrier. The researcher could have reached a wider sample of public relations practitioners to be included in both qualitative interviews and the quantitative survey. In the same manner, while Daymon and Holloway (2011) showed that non-direct interviews are better, Seidman (2013) argued that rapport increased the quality of interviews is developed in personal interviews. In fact, the Kuwaiti culture respects and appreciates personal face-to-face communication more than mediated communication (Alsalem, 2010; Al-Sumait, 2014; Curtin & Gaither, 2004; Sharif, 2003).

The second limitation is that the researcher did not have access to public relations practitioners who were members of the Kuwaiti Public Relations Association. That association is the only association that would help a public relations researcher reach practitioners in Kuwait. Getting the public relations association's support would help researchers to reach a probability sample of public relations practitioners.

The third, and similar to previous studies' limitations, such as Kemp et al. (2015), the researcher had limited access to women. Therefore, and based on cultural restrictions in Kuwait, female researchers should further examine such questions. Finally, the Cronbach alpha coefficient test found the complexity measurements not reliable.

Recommendations

Additional research is needed to continue examining innovations and technologies adopted in the public relations field. For example, any scholar considering examining Rogers's five attributes of innovation should further develop the measurement of complexity to increase the reliability of this measurement.

In future studies conducting in-depth interviews, researchers should ask public relations participants more structured questions about their perceptions of each of Rogers's five attributes of innovation, rather than asking semi-structured questions, for example, directly asking "how would complexity influence your adoption decision?" and so on for the other four attributes of innovation. In addition, researchers could conduct the study in Kuwait to increase the number of public relations practitioners in the survey sample and interview participants.

In sum, the Kuwaiti Public Relations Association and many other scholars have addressed that public relations in Kuwait suffers a paucity of research discussing Kuwaiti public relations issues and challenges. Many have called on public relations researchers to consider Kuwait as a field of study (Alramadan, 2007; Al-Yasin, 2013; Hussain, 2011; "Kuwait Public Relations Association," 2014). In addition, several well-known public relations scholars encouraged public relations researchers to examine and measure public relations practices, theories and models in different cultures (A. Alanazi, 1996; Culbertson & Chen, 1996; L. A. Grunig, 2001).

To that end, the researcher also encourages future researchers to replicate this study in Kuwait or in any other public relations culture to track the differences caused by different locations or times. This would contribute to the public relations body of knowledge, which would help public relations practitioners in any culture overcome the challenges they face.

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Appendices

Appendix A: In-depth Interviews

IRB Approval of Protocol



APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL

December 27, 2016

Husain Ebrahim
husain@ku.edu

Dear Husain Ebrahim:

On 12/27/2016, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Factors and Attributes Affecting the Adoption of Digital Media Technologies by Public Relations Practitioners in Kuwait
Investigator:	Husain Ebrahim
IRB ID:	STUDY00140394
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Interviews Arabic Oral Consent IRB Approved, • Interviews English Oral Consent IRB Approved, • Application form15122016-HSCL-NewSubmission-Form-V3.pdf • Husain Ebrahim's English In-depth Questions, • Husain Ebrahim's Arabic In-depth Questions

The IRB approved the study on 12/27/2016.

1. Notify HSCL about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at https://rgs.drupal.ku.edu/human_subjects_compliance_training.
2. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported immediately.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity.

Continuing review is not required for this project, however you are required to report any significant changes to the protocol prior to altering the project.

Please note university data security and handling requirements for your project:
<https://documents.ku.edu/policies/IT/DataClassificationandHandlingProceduresGuide.htm>

You must use the final, watermarked version of the consent form, available under the "Documents" tab in eCompliance.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Dyson Elms, MPA
IRB Administrator, KU Lawrence Campus

English: Oral Consent Form

As a student in the University of Kansas's School of Journalism and Mass Communications, I am conducting a research project about the adoption of digital media technologies in the public relations. I would like to interview you to obtain your views on the factors and attributes that influence the adoption decision. Your participation is expected to take about 60 minutes. You have no obligation to participate and you may discontinue your involvement at any time.

Your participation should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. Although participation may not benefit you directly, the information obtained from the study will help us gain a better understanding of a new digital media adoption in the Kuwaiti public relations field. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

**It is possible, however, with internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may hear your response.*

***This interview will be recorded. Recording is required to participate. You may stop taping at any time. The recordings will be transcribed by me. Only I, the investigator, and the faculty supervisor will have access to recordings which will be stored in an external hard drive that cannot be accessed without a security password and will be destroyed in a year after completing this dissertation.*

Participation in the interview indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old. Should you have any questions about this project or your participation in it you may ask me or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Jerry Crawford II at the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Research Protection Program at (785) 864-7429 or email irb@ku.edu.

Sincerely,

Husain Ebrahim

Husain@ku.edu

English: In-depth Interview Questions

1. Demographics: age – education level – educational background – organization sector (Public, private, or NGO) – level of income K.D. (Less than 750 – 751 to 1000 – 1001 to 1500 – 1500 to 2000 – More than 2000) – marital status.
2. What are your job responsibilities as a public relations practitioner?
 - a. Years of PR experience.
3. What is your definition of PR?
4. Who are your PR audiences or targets?
 - a. Prioritize them?
5. What are the digital media technologies you adopt to reach your target?
 - a. Prioritize them?
 - b. When started?
 - c. Why do you use these digital media technologies?
 - d. Advantages?
 - e. Disadvantages?
6. What are the main factors that influence your decision in adopting a new digital media technology professionally? (In detail)
7. In your opinion, is the Kuwaiti culture open to adopting new digital media technologies?
 - a. Why?
8. What digital media technologies have you stopped using?
 - a. Why?
 - b. When?

Arabic: Oral Consent

الموافقة الشفهية

كطالب في كلية الصحافة والإعلام في جامعة كانساس، فإنني أجري بحثاً حول (استخدام) وسائط الإعلام الرقمية في العلاقات العامة. لذلك، أود مقابلتكم لمعرفة وجهة نظركم في العوامل والسمات المؤثرة في قرار (استخدام) الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية الحديثة في مجال العلاقات العامة. من المتوقع أن تستغرق المقابلة (60 دقيقة). تعتبر هذه المقابلة تطوعية ويحق لكم الانسحاب بأي وقت.

هذه المقابلة لن تكون شاقّة، بل إنها مشابهة لمقابلات الحياة اليومية، على الرغم من أن المشاركة لن تعود عليكم بالنفع المباشر ولكن المعلومات التي ستنتج من هذه الدراسة ستساعد على اكتساب معرفة أفضل حول أسباب (استخدام) الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية الحديثة في مجال العلاقات العامة في الكويت. مع العلم أنه لن يتم إفشاء معلوماتكم الخاصة إلا إذا ألزمتنا القانون/ سياسة الجامعة، أو وافقتم خطياً على ذلك.

* من الاحتمالات الواردة، في التواصل عبر الانترنت، بقصد أو غير قصد، أن يستمع أحدهم لردودكم.

** هذه المقابلة سيتم تسجيلها. التسجيل شرط أساسي لإجراء هذه المقابلة. يمكننا إيقاف التسجيل بأي وقت. أنا المسؤول عن تفرغ التسجيلات. سيتم الاحتفاظ في التسجيلات الصوتية في قرص خارجي مع كلمة مرور لا يعرفها إلا أنا لكوني الباحث، والوحيد الذي يمكنه الاستماع للتسجيلات هو المشرف على الأطروحة، وسيتم مسح كل التسجيلات بعد سنة من استكمال الأطروحة.

إجراء المقابلة يعتبر موافقة منكم على المشاركة في هذا البحث، وتأكيداً أن عمرك لا يقل عن 18 سنة. إذا كان لديكم أي تساؤل حول هذا البحث أو مشاركتكم فيمكنكم التواصل معي أو مع المشرف على هذه الأطروحة البروفيسور جيرري كراوفورد في كلية الصحافة والإعلام في جامعة كانساس. إذا كان لديك أي استفسار عن حقوقك كمشارك في هذا البحث، يمكنك التواصل مع برنامج حماية المشاركين في الأبحاث في جامعة كانساس على الهاتف (7429-864-785-1+) أو البريد الإلكتروني (irb@ku.edu).

الباحث

حسين إبراهيم

Husain@ku.edu

Arabic: In-depth Interview Questions

العوامل والسمات المؤثرة على اختيار استخدام تقنيات الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية من قبل ممارسي العلاقات العامة في الكويت

(أسئلة المقابلة الشخصية)

1. الديمغرافية: العمر – المستوي العلمي – التخصص العلمي – تعمل في منظمة تابعة للقطاع (الحكومي – الخاص – النفع العام) – مستوى الدخل الشهري بالدينار الكويتي (أقل من 750 د.ك – 751 إلى 1000 د.ك – 1001 إلى 1500 د.ك – 1500 إلى 2000 د.ك – أعلى من 2000 د.ك) – الحالة الاجتماعية.
2. ما هي مسؤوليات عملك كممارس علاقات عامة؟
 - a. عدد سنوات الخبرة في مجال العلاقات العامة؟
 3. ما هو تعريفك للعلاقات العامة؟
 4. من هو جمهور العلاقات العامة المستهدف لدى منظمتمكم؟
 - a. رتبهم حسب الأولوية
 5. ما هي وسائل الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة التي تستخدمونها للتواصل مع جمهوركم؟
 - a. ترتيبها حسب الأولوية؟
 - b. متى بدأت استخدامها؟
 - c. لماذا تستخدمون هذه الوسائل الرقمية؟
 - d. المزايا؟
 - e. العيوب؟
6. ما هي العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر على قرار اختيار استخدام وسيلة إعلامية رقمية حديثة دون سواها في مجال عملك؟ (ارجو التفصيل)

7. برأيك، هل ثقافة المجتمع متقبلة لاستخدام وسائل الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة؟

a. لماذا؟

8. ما هي وسائل الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة التي توقفت عن استخدامها؟

a. لماذا؟

b. متى؟

Appendix B: Survey

IRB Approval of Protocol



APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL

March 3, 2017

Husain Ebrahim
husain@ku.edu

Dear Husain Ebrahim:

On 3/3/2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Modification
Title of Study:	Factors and Attributes Affecting the Adoption of Digital Media Technologies by Public Relations Practitioners in Kuwait
Investigator:	Husain Ebrahim
IRB ID:	STUDY00140394
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Arabic Informational Statement, • English Informational Statement, • Arabic Informational Statement, • Initial Review For Survey, • English Information Statement, • English Survey, • Arabic Survey

The IRB approved the study on 3/3/2017.

1. Notify HSCL about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at https://rgs.drupal.ku.edu/human_subjects_compliance_training.
2. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported immediately.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity.

Continuing review is not required for this project, however you are required to report any significant changes to the protocol prior to altering the project.

Please note university data security and handling requirements for your project:
<https://documents.ku.edu/policies/IT/DataClassificationandHandlingProceduresGuide.htm>

You must use the final, watermarked version of the consent form, available under the "Documents" tab in eCompliance.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Dyson Elms, MPA
IRB Administrator, KU Lawrence Campus

English: Informational Statement

Information Statement

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

We are conducting this study to better understanding of new digital media adoption in the Kuwaiti public relations field. This will entail your completion of a survey. Your participation is expected to take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The content of the survey should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life.

Although participation may not benefit you directly, we believe that the information obtained from this study will help us gain a better understanding of the new digital media adoption in the Kuwaiti public relations field. Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. Your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission. It is possible, however, with internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response.

If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, please feel free to contact us by phone or mail.

Completion of the survey indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429 or write the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, email irb@ku.edu.

Sincerely,

Husain Ebrahim
Principal Investigator
School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Stauffer-Flint Hall
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045
+1 (785) 864-0607
Husain@ku.edu

Jerry Crawford II, Ph.D.
Faculty Supervisor
School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Stauffer-Flint Hall
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045
+1 (785) 864-0603
Jcrawford@ku.edu

English: Survey Questions

1. Do you work in Kuwait?
 - Yes
 - No

2. What age group you belong to?
 - 17 or younger
 - 18-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45 - 54
 - 55-64
 - 65 or older

3. Is your work related to any of the following fields: Public relations, Marketing, Corporate communications, Media relations, Advertising, Social media specialist?
 - Yes
 - No

4. Organization sector:
 - Public
 - Private
 - Non-governments organization

5. Gender:
 - Male
 - Female

Instructions: Please answer the following questions about using new digital media in your profession

6. What digital media technologies do you use in your work for communicating with your audiences: (Check all that apply)

- Instagram
- Twitter
- Snapchat
- WhatsApp
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Email
- LinkedIn
- Text messages SMS
- Website
- Viber
- Line
- Telegram
- Yammer
- Applications (Apps)
- Other (please specify)
- None

7. Prioritize your choices, based on their importance for communicating with audiences.

8. Briefly, why have you ranked (first option in the previous question) as your primary digital media technology for public relations?
9. What are the obstacles that prevent you from using new digital media technologies to communicate with your audiences (Check all that apply)?
 - They are not useful for my tasks
 - They are not compatible with my work
 - They are complicated and hard to use
 - I did not observe them
 - I did not try them
 - Lack of training
 - Organization does not support me
 - Other (please specify)
10. Prioritize, based on the most important obstacles, what prevents you from using new digital media technologies in public relations.

Instruction: In the following questions, we are interested in your perception of new digital media technologies in your profession

11. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: New digital media technologies . . . (five-point Likert-type scale)
 - Enable me to accomplish tasks quickly.
 - Provide me with fast access to information.
 - Allow me to communicate better with my audiences.
 - Allow me to get audiences feedback and comments.
 - Are useful tools for my tasks.

12. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: New digital media technologies . . . (five-point Likert-type scale)

- Compatible with all aspects of my work.
- Compatible with my religious beliefs.
- Compatible with my personal social values.
- Compatible with the Kuwaiti culture.
- Provide me with the information I need.

13. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (five-point Likert-type scale)

- Learning to use new digital media technologies is easy for me.
- The language of new digital media technologies is NOT a barrier for me.
- Accessing the new digital media technologies at work is easy.

14. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (five-point Likert-type scale)

- I would not have difficulties telling others about using new digital media technologies.
- I can observe the results of using new digital media technologies.
- I could express to others the results of using new digital media technologies.
- In my organization, the resources needed to access new digital media technologies are available for me.

15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (five-point Likert-type scale)

- I have the opportunity to try many new digital media technologies.

- Access to new digital media technologies is available to me to adequately test-run them.
- Before adopting any new digital media technology, I can properly try it.

16. Marital status:

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Other

17. Educational level:

- Less than high school degree
- High school graduate
- Associate degree in college (2-year)
- Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
- Higher Diploma / Graduate Certificate
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree

18. Please indicate your primary field of study:

- Mass Communications
- Public Relations
- Journalism
- Media Studies
- Radio/TV
- Advertising

- Communication Studies
- Visual Communications
- Information Technology
- Linguistics
- Business fields
- Other (please specify)

19. Monthly income:

- Less than 750KD
- 750 KD – 999 KD
- 1000 KD – 1499 KD
- 1500 KD – 1999 KD
- 2000 KD and more

20. Years of experience in the following fields: Public relations, Marketing, Corporate communications, Media relations, Advertising, Social media specialist:

Arabic: Informational Statement

عزيزي المشارك \ عزيزتي المشاركة ،،،

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

إن كلية الصحافة والإعلام في جامعة كانساس حريصة على الحقوق الإنسانية للمشاركين في أبحاثها العلمية. نقدم لكم المعلومات التالية لئيتسنى لكم اتخاذ قرار المشاركة أو عدم المشاركة في هذا البحث العلمي. نؤكد أنه يحق لكم الانسحاب من المشاركة في هذا البحث العلمي في أي وقت ودون أي التزام من طرفكم. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة أفضل حول أسباب استخدام الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية الحديثة في مجال العلاقات العامة في دولة الكويت، عن طريق إكمال هذا الاستبيان. لا تتجاوز مدة إكمال هذا الاستبيان أكثر من 10 دقائق. المشاركة في هذا البحث لن تكون شاقّة، ولن يكلفكم عناءً غير المعتاد عليه في ممارسات الحياة اليومية. على الرغم من أن المشاركة لن تعود عليكم بالنفع المباشر ولكن المعلومات التي ستنتج من هذه الدراسة ستساعد على اكتساب معرفة أفضل حول أسباب استخدام الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية الحديثة في مجال العلاقات العامة في الكويت. مع العلم أنه لن يتم إنشاء معلوماتكم الخاصة إلا إذا أُلزمتنا القانون/ سياسة الجامعة، أو وافقتم خطياً على ذلك. أيضاً من الاحتمالات الواردة، في التواصل عبر الانترنت، أن يتم ذلك بقصد أو غير قصد. إذا أردتم الحصول على أي معلومة حول هذه الدراسة، يحق لكم التواصل معنا عبر الهاتف أو البريد الإلكتروني المذيل في هذه الورقة.

استكمال هذا الاستبيان يعتبر موافقة منكم على المشاركة في هذا البحث، وتأكيداً أن عمركم لا يقل عن 18 سنة. إذا كان لديكم أي استفسار عن حقوقكم كمشاركين في هذا البحث، يمكنكم التواصل مع برنامج حماية المشاركين في الأبحاث في جامعة كانساس على الهاتف (785-864-7429-1+) أو ارسال رسائل الى برنامج حماية الأبحاث البشرية على العنوان التالي:

University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563 ، أو البريد الإلكتروني

(irb@ku.edu).

حسين إبراهيم
الباحث الأساسي
كلية الصحافة والإعلام
مبنى ستوفر-فلنت
جامعة كانساس
لورنس، كانساس 66045
0607 – 864 (785) 1+
Husain@ku.edu

البروفيسور جيري كرافورد الثاني
المشرف الأكاديمي
كلية الصحافة والإعلام
مبنى ستوفر-فلنت
جامعة كانساس
لورنس، كانساس 66045
0603 – 864 (785) 1+
Jcrawford@ku.edu

Arabic: Survey Questions

1. هل تعمل في الكويت؟

○ نعم

○ لا

2. الفئة العمرية التي تنتمي إليها:

○ 17 أو أقل

○ 18-24

○ 25-34

○ 35-44

○ 45-54

○ 55-64

○ 65 أو أكبر

3. هل تعمل في أحد المجالات التالية: العلاقات العامة، التسويق، الاتصال المؤسسي، العلاقات الإعلامية، الإعلان،

أخصائي وسائل التواصل الاجتماعية؟

○ نعم

○ لا

4. جهة العمل:

○ قطاع حكومي

○ قطاع خاص

○ جمعيات النفع العام (منظمة خيرية)

5. الجنس:

○ ذكر

○ أنثى

التعليمات: أرجو الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية بناء على استخدامها في مجال عملك فقط.

6. ما هي وسائط الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة التي تستخدمها للتواصل مع جمهوركم: (يمكنكم اختيار أكثر من إجابة)

- انستقرام
- تويتر
- سنابشات
- واتساب
- فيسبوك
- يوتيوب
- البريد الإلكتروني
- لنكدان
- الرسائل القصيرة
- الموقع الإلكتروني
- فايبر
- لاين
- تليغرام
- يامر
- التطبيقات الإلكترونية
- أخرى (أرجو التحديد)
- لا شيء

7. رتب وسائط الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة حسب أهميتها كوسيلة تواصل مع جمهوركم.

8. باختصار، لماذا تعتبر (اختيارك الأول في السؤال السابق) اهم وسيلة إعلامية رقمية للتواصل مع الجمهور؟

9. ما هي العقبات التي تمنعك من استخدام وسائط الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة في التواصل مع الجمهور؟ (يمكنكم اختيار

أكثر من إجابة)

- غير مجدية لتأدية مهام في العمل
- لا تتماشى مع عمل المنظمة
- معقدة ويصعب استخدامها
- لم أجد لها نتائج من تجارب الغير
- لم أجربها شخصيا
- نقص في الدورات التدريبية
- لا أجد الدعم من المنظمة
- أخرى (أرجو التحديد)

10. رتب التالي حسب أشد العقبات التي تحد من استخدام وسائط الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة للتواصل مع الجمهور.

التعليمات: في الأسئلة التالية، نهدف إلى قياس مدى ميولك أو انطباعك حول الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية الحديثة في مجال

عملك (1 موافق بشدة، 2 موافق، 3 محايد، 4 غير موافق، 5 غير موافق بشدة):

11. يرجى الإشارة إلى أي مدى توافق أو لا توافق مع كل من العبارات التالية: الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية الحديثة ... (1)

موافق بشدة، 2 موافق، 3 محايد، 4 غير موافق، 5 غير موافق بشدة)

- تمكّني من إنجاز المهام بشكل أسرع.
- توفر طريقة أسرع للوصول إلى المعلومات.
- تمكّني من تقوية الاتصال مع الجمهور.
- تمكّني من الحصول على ردود أفعال وتعليقات الجمهور.
- وسائل جيدة تساعدني على إتمام مهام عملي.

12. يرجى الإشارة إلى أي مدى توافق أو لا توافق مع كل من العبارات التالية: الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية الحديثة ... (1)

موافق بشدة، 2 موافق، 3 محايد، 4 غير موافق، 5 غير موافق بشدة)

- متوافقة مع جميع متطلبات عملي.
- متوافقة مع معتقداتنا الدينية.
- متوافقة مع معتقداتي وقيمي الشخصية.

○ متوافقة مع ثقافة المجتمع الكويتي.

○ توفر لي المعلومات التي أحتاجها.

13. يرجى الإشارة إلى أي مدى توافق أو لا توافق مع كل من العبارات التالية: الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية الحديثة ... (1)

موافق بشدة، 2 موافق، 3 محايد، 4 غير موافق، 5 غير موافق بشدة)

○ استعمالها سهل بالنسبة إلي ويمكنني أن أتعلم استخدامها بسرعة.

○ لا تعتبر اللغة الإنجليزية عائقا بالنسبة لي عند استخدامها.

○ استخدام الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية الحديثة في مقر عملي أمر سهل وبسيط.

14. يرجى الإشارة إلى أي مدى توافق أو لا توافق مع كل من العبارات التالية: (1 موافق بشدة، 2 موافق، 3 محايد، 4

غير موافق، 5 غير موافق بشدة)

○ أستطيع ان أشرح للآخرين استخدام وسائط الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة.

○ نتائج استخدام وسائط الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة واضحة بالنسبة لي.

○ أستطيع ان أشرح للآخرين نتائج استخدام وسائط الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة.

○ المنظمة التي أعمل بها تسهل وتوفر الوسائل المطلوبة لاستخدام وسائط الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة.

15. الرجاء الإجابة بما يتفق مع تفضيلاتك الشخصية: (1 موافق بشدة، 2 موافق، 3 محايد، 4 غير موافق، 5 غير موافق

بشدة)

○ توفرت لي الفرصة لتجربة العديد من وسائط الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة.

○ الإمكانيات المطلوبة لاستخدام وسائط الإعلام الرقمية الحديثة كانت متوفرة لي للقيام بتجربتها قبل قرار تبنيها.

○ توفرت لي الفرصة الكافية لتجربة واختبار الوسائط الإعلامية الرقمية الحديثة قبل قرار تبنيها.

16. الحالة الاجتماعية:

○ أعزب

○ متزوج

○ مطلق

○ أخرى

17. أعلى شهادة علمية حصلت عليها:

- أقل من الثانوية العامة
- الثانوية العامة أو ما يعادلها
- دبلوم (سنتين)
- بكالوريوس (4 سنوات)
- دبلوم عالي (فوق البكالوريوس)
- ماجستير
- دكتوراه

18. التخصص الرئيسي لأعلى درجة علمية:

- إعلام
- علاقات عامة
- صحافة
- دراسات إعلامية
- إذاعة وتلفزيون
- إعلان
- علم الاتصال
- الاتصال المرئي
- تقنية المعلومات
- لغويات
- مجالات الإدارة
- أخرى (أرجو التحديد)

19. الدخل الشهري:

- أقل من 750 دينار

○ 750 - 999 دينار

○ 1000 – 1499 دينار

○ 1500 – 1999 دينار

○ 2000 دينار أو أعلى

20. إجمالي عدد سنوات خبرة العمل في جميع المجالات التالية: العلاقات العامة، التسويق، الاتصال المؤسسي، العلاقات

الإعلامية، الإعلان، اخصائي وسائل التواصل الاجتماعية: