Public Relations: A Tool for Scaffolding Effective Communication Between Moroccan University Professors and Higher Education Administrators

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Abstract

The present study investigates how Public Relations can upgrade effective communication between university professors and higher education administrators. The data was collected through a questionnaire handed out to 135 Moroccan university professors and administrators operating in more than 10 Moroccan public higher institutions. This study aims to show the importance of public relations communication as a propitious tool conducive to quality in higher education. The results of this study corroborate that the Moroccan university professors 'interaction with higher education administration is mainly compatible with some elements of public relations communication. The results also show that Moroccan university professors and higher education administrators are aware of the positive impact of effective communication on the university's reputation and the good functioning of the teaching and scientific research at the tertiary level. The findings also reveal some aspects that hinder effective communication between university professors and administrators.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concern for effective communication in higher education is imperative for today's society. Indeed, "for an active, qualified, and productive education, effective communication skills are needed among school managers and teachers". ((Habaci et al., 2013p. 690).

Accordingly, public relations has emerged lately as a compelling implement for transforming and boosting productivity in higher education because it has renovated and modernised the communication concept. Thus, it is appropriate for the kind of interaction that is suitable for the present globalized world needs. Furthermore, public relations communication can enhance effective communication at the tertiary level and thus enable the university to accelerate human progress and economic and social development. (Savio, 1992). Following the same reasoning, investing in effective communication, especially between university professors and higher education administrators, may lead to radical changes concerning quality in higher education. That is to say, if the administrators in any higher education institution are equipped with sufficient communication skills, they will likely boost understanding and trust

with professors (Duke, 2002). Moreover, to "strengthen teachers' involvement within a school, clear communication systems are necessary" (Sezgin, 2016: 10).

It is worth noting here that the research method approach of this study seeks to delineate some aspects of communication practices between Moroccan university professors and higher education administrators and see to what extent they are compatible with elements of public relations communication.

2. A Theoretical Preamble
2.1. Communication and education

Many experts generally use the word 'communication' to mean exchanging information. Through communication, "others inform and persuade you. And you, in turn, inform and persuade others- to do, to buy, or to t think in a particular way, or to change an attitude, opinion or a value" (De Vito,2000:2). Indeed, the communication process includes different competencies such as thinking, perceiving, advocating, speaking, arguing, etc. This makes the communication concept hard to define, and "only by taking a very close look at the phenomenon may we be able to unravel its real meanings" (Iordache & Josan, 2009:55). Nevertheless, some scholars (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig, 1992- 2000; Kitchen, 1997; Camp et al., 1998), to name but a few, view communication as a dynamic process which is vital for teaching, learning, behaving and dealing with individuals as well as with groups of people. It involves using a channel, which could be signs, symbols or verbal/written language. Therefore, for communication to be successful and effective, it has to attain the target goals of the communicator. In this study, communication is regarded as an instrument that facilitates the sharing and exchanging of ideas, information, knowledge, attitudes or feelings among individuals or groups. In this context, Guruz & Eginili convincingly state that "communication affects people's thoughts and attitudes as well as leading to the sharing of knowledge, sensations and thoughts. In other words, communication is a system of relationships to convey knowledge between people" (cited in Habaci et al., 2013:691).

Accordingly, communication is imperative to education because it is "a fundamental component of life progress culture and civilization, it entails a complex relationship between a sender and the recipient, a dynamic mechanism of mediation, with deep implication in human modelling." (Iordache-Platis et al, 2009: 55). Furthermore, when discussing the concept of communication within the field of education in general and higher education in particular, two significant axes emerge; Management, in this context, administration and teaching, and learning and research. Therefore, administrators and professors should engage in effective two-way communication to market a favourable image of the university or the higher institution and maintain a positive teaching and learning environment. In this two-way communication, the administrators and professors experience cooperative decision-making, information providing and exchanging, and face-to-face communication. In fact, if two-way communication evolves between administrators and professors in a higher education setting, "teachers grow to be proud of working with their directors. This will increase awareness of the director among teachers and vice versa." (Habaci et al., 2013: 697).

2.2. Public relation is a discipline of the twenty-first century

Public relation is a vast field which is difficult to define (Heath, 2001&2005). This is due to many reasons. First, public relation is a discipline and a profession which is diverse and continually evolving. Second, it is complex since each field uses it differently. Finally, every time a scholar comes out with a new definition, it entails a broad scope of debate among researchers who often find that something is missing in the new definition or does not cater for some issues in the field of public relations. This undoubtedly delineates the depth and the subtlety of the field. Theaker (2001) puts it succinctly "The field of PR is a complex and hybrid

subject; it draws on definitions and practices from different fields such as management, media, communication and psychology."(p.3).

The above quotation manifests the interdisciplinary aspect of public relations. However, many scholars in the field of communication justify the rapid growth of PR by the changes occurring in the present globalised world. Put differently, the present society needs clear, simple and effective communication which satisfies the contemporary public. People today are educated and well informed about their rights and duties. They are conscious of the importance of considering their views and worries and participating in the management rather than merely being consumers.

Public Relations incorporates three major elements: "Informing people, persuading people, or integrating people with people" (Bernays,1952:3). Nevertheless, other academics have come out with different definitions of PR. For example, Harlow (1976) emphasises that PR is"a distinctive management function" (cited in Ralf Tench. Liz Yeomans, 2009:4&5). Another example is that of Grunig and Hunt (1984), who state a succinct and revealing definition in which they explain that: "Public relations is the management of communication between an organisation and its publics." (P: 6). This definition echoes the objectives of this study since it focuses on two essential elements the management of communication and how this affects the relationships between organizations and their public.

The fact that Harlow (1976) focuses on communication management, as well as the importance of external relationships, is justified because the failure of an organisation to meet its goals is mainly due to the mismanagement of communications and the inability to devise appropriate communication programs able to influence the public and gain their trust. Hence, organisations are required to "use communication to coordinate their behaviour with people who can affect and are affected by them" Grunig, Ferrari & France, 2009:12).

In this respect, it is worth noting that later, many researchers extended and developed other updated definitions, among them Kitchen (1997), L'etang(2004), and Botan(et al.,2006). Kichen(1997), for instance, thinks that PR is a current, dynamic, and interesting managerial and theoretical discipline. He adds:

> Public relations as a communication vehicle and as a tool of corporate or marketing management has a vital role to play in developing effective communications or effective relationships with a wide diversity of publics or audiences who could impact organizational performance. (p.23).

The above definition incorporates two key elements: communication management and effective relationships. Indeed, many researchers (Grunig, Ferrari &France, 2009, Grunig(2000), Cutlip et al. (2000) agree that there is a need to consider PR as a communication management discipline since it can play a strategic role in managing organisational relationships with different internal and external publics. Cutlip et al. (2000), for example, point out that PR is "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics on whom its success or failure depends".(p.6). The idea of mutual understanding is apparent in many definitions of PR. For instance, Jefkins, a British writer, states, *"Public relations consists of all forms of planned communication both inward and outward between an organization and its publics to achieve objectives concerning mutual understanding."*(Jefkins, cited in Ofulue, 2006:3).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers worldwide have tackled this study's topic from different angles and contexts. In this respect, (Habaci Et al. 2013) carried out a study that examined the positive impact of using effective communication on the success and improvement of the relationships between an educational and the constituents of an educational institution.

The study's results affirm that since communication constitutes the fundamentals of interpersonal relationships, university managers, school directors, administrators, and teachers need practical communication skills to create an appropriate environment for productivity and

hard work in the educational institution. In this respect, (Habaci Et al. 2013) convincingly state that "effective communication in a school setting influences the motivations and satisfaction of managers, teachers and students." (P: 690). The study's findings further describe that when administrators and school managers communicate effectively and engage in cooperative work with their staff, especially teachers, understanding between all parties is boosted, avoiding communication crises. Put differently, "effective communication creates mutual understanding between management and workers which helps in building genuine relationship among parties in the organisations." (Asamu Festus (2014: 80).

Arlestig (2007) carried out a mixed-method approach study in which she examined the communication practice in Swedish schools between principals and teachers and how it affected the teaching and learning as well as the educational place's image.

The study first revealed that the new educational initiatives in Sweden empowered the academic principals by allowing them to be creative and adopt leadership and communication skills to make the educational place successful and renowned. The study results reveal that the relationships between the constituents of the educational institutions, namely between the principals and the teachers, were unsuccessful since "teachers and principals had a difficult time identifying how to improve internal communication." (Arlestig, 2007: 272). This resulted in one-way communication. The latter did not boost mutual understanding between the principals and teachers, but rather it created an atmosphere of mistrust and avoidance.

Robert Gratz and Salem (1982) undertook a study to examine the role and importance of communication in a higher education setting. Gratz and Salem (1982) stated that adequate communication is vital in any organisation to attain coordination and understanding among all the participants. They added that higher education institutions should be aware of the communication process so that they could improve their basic effectiveness and efficiency.

Gratz and Salem (1982) claimed that communication difficulties in academic institutions mainly occur in three principal areas. First is the flow of information, that is, disseminating information to the right people at the correct times. Second, the issue is related to the quality of the information provided. This means that the information should be plausible, persuasive and motivating in order to enable the target people to pay attention and be satisfied. The third is the communication process itself. That is to say, understanding how it functions and how it influences and shapes the procedures and policies of the institution to boost its management and decision-making.

 Gratz and Salem (1982) further stated that these communication difficulties result in an unmanaged flow of information. In other words, some organisational members receive too much information while others get inadequate one. Besides, these communication problems also influence the functioning of university committees. In this context, Gratz and Salem (Ibid) noticed that some committee members tend to employ a win-lose rather than a win-win orientation. The study suggested setting up an "information agenda" to help different members of the organisation plan communication more effectively. The study also recommended adopting approaches that can minimize the win-lose orientations in faculty committees and in other groups representing a wide variety of interests in the higher education system.

Yi Luo (2005) undertook a qualitative study (face-to-face, in-depth interviews) in which he used(Dozier et al.,1995) and Grunig's (1992) Excellence theory of Public Relations Communication Management to examine how two US universities use and practice public relations. At the beginning of this study, Yi Luo (2005) stated that many higher education institutions worldwide have recently established public relations services to boost communication with university staff, students, alumni and other publics. Yi Luo also added that the study was based on other researches carried out by Brunner and Hon (2002). The latter found out that universities which used PR communication to identify target publics, devised communication programs for the university, conducted evaluations and informed the higher

education authorities on a regular basis about the changes that occurred inside and outside the university, were much better in terms of management and reputation.

In his study, Yi Luo used some of Grunig's principals of an excellent communication department to examine whether these principals were operational in the two universities he took as a case study. As for the result of this study, Yi Luo first confirmed that both universities had good internal and external communication. In this context, he stated that there were regular meetings (every two weeks) between heads of all departments and the deans and the staff in charge of the communication department. These meetings tackled all issues related to the flow of information among the university staff as well as the challenges facing effective communication. Furthermore, the findings of the study delineate that although two-way communication was occasionally used when communicating with professors, students and some "publics" like donors, there was a dominance of one-way communication in both universities. That is to say, communication programs used mainly the information model, which presented only favourable information about the universities.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study seeks to explore the communication practices between Moroccan university professors and higher education administrators and see if they match elements of public relations communication. A questionnaire was administered to university professors and administrators to obtain the quantitative data. The adoption of this research instrument is justified because of the nature of the issue under study. Creswell (2012 &2014) elaborates on the importance of questionnaires in social sciences. In this respect, he states that "one can approach research in two ways- through a quantitative study or a qualitative study depending on the type of problem you need to research" (2012:2).

Quantitative research, or what (Newman& Benz, 1998) referred to as "hypothesis testing", is a tool used in research to explain phenomena through the collection of various numerical data, which are analysed using different mathematical operations. Creswell (2012) further explains that the main characteristic of quantitative research is "describing a research problem through a description of trends or a need for an explanation of the relationship among variables" (p.13). In this study, the questionnaire is structured and employs many kinds of question and response modes, including closed-ended questions (Bowling, 2005), (Cohen et al., 2007) and (Dawson, 2009. This is justified by the fact that "highly structured closed questions are more suitable for large scale surveys as they are quick for respondents to answer and are easy to analyse using statistical techniques enabling comparisons to be made across groups"(Lewin,2005:219).

4.1.Procedures of analysis

Dornyei (2003) convincingly states that "having designed a questionnaire and administrated it to an appropriate sample is half the battle" (p: 96). Indeed, the analysis of the data is very crucial and decisive. In the context of this study, the data were analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). This is to "produce professional graphs, tables and pie charts which can be used in your final report" (Dawson, 2002:123).

5. THE RESULTS

This part embarks to present and discuss the results obtained from the quantitative data.

Figure 1. Gender
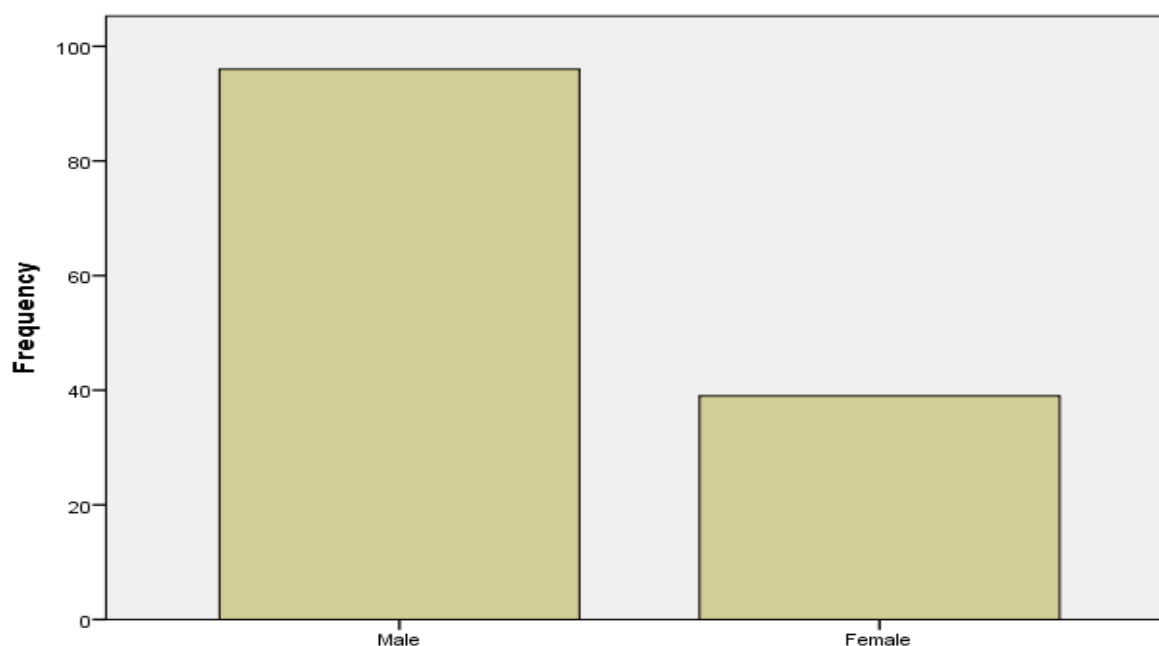
These results indicate that females are less represented in Moroccan higher education institutions. This, of course, might influence the interaction between professors and administrators.

Table 1. The respondents' Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 30	3	2,2	2,2	2,2
31-40	39	28,9	28,9	31,1
41-50	54	40,0	40,0	71,1
More than 51	39	28,9	28,9	100,0
Total	135	100,0	100,0	

The above table describes the respondents' age. The findings convincingly depict that the majority of Moroccan professors are still young. Indeed, people are energetic, creative and willing to cooperate and interact well at this age.

5.2. Professors/ administration communication

The elements in this part of the questionnaire are derived from the communication models stated by different academics; Grunig's excellence theory of communication management (1992), Grunig and Hunt's (1984) public relations models of communication, Stacks' (2011) communication models, to name but a few. Actually, these items constitute the backbone of this study since they tackle deep issues related to professors/ administrators' communication and how they relate to public relations communication.

5-2-1 Professors administration meetings

Table: 2. Professors /administration meetings

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	123	91,1	91,1	91,1
No	12	8,9	8,9	100,0
Total	135	100,0	100,0	

Five questionnaire items dealt with the professors' meetings with the university administration. The first item asked the respondents if the university administration called professors for meetings. The results showed that the majority of the respondents said yes (91.1%), while a small percentage of respondents said no (8.9%). Hence, we can say that nearly all higher education institutions' administrations call professors for meetings.

The second item demanded that the subjects of this study if they attend these meetings. The results showed that (32.6%) of the respondents always attended these meetings, (48.9%) of the informants said that they sometimes did, (8.9%) of the respondents revealed that they rarely did and (2.2%) of the respondents confirmed that they never attended meetings between professors and the university professors. Table 3 emphasizes these results.

Table 3 . Professors attending university administration meetings

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Always	44	32,6	35,2	35,2
Sometimes	66	48,9	52,8	88,0
Rarely	12	8,9	9,6	97,6
Never	3	2,2	2,4	100,0
Total	125	92,6	100,0	
System	10	7,4		
Total	135	100,0		

The third item inquired the respondents about the different issues discussed in the meetings which professors had with the university administration. In this context, a note shall be made that the respondents were given a list of four choices. The results indicated that (72.6%) of the subjects agreed that these meetings tackled issues related to the general management of the faculty, while (17%) said no. Moreover, (72.8%) of the respondents declared that these meetings discussed ways to enhance the quality of teaching and research in the faculty; however (14.8%) said no. Similarly, (43.7%) of the informants revealed that these meetings discussed the students' performance, while (45.9) answered no. The last item in the choices asked the respondents whether these meetings talked about the professors' problems. The results displayed that (47.4%) of the respondents agreed while (42.2%) of the respondents said no. Therefore, we can say that the meetings between the university administration and the university professors debated all the issues cited in the choices.

The fourth item queried the respondents if they participated actively in the meetings between professors and the university administration. The results indicated that (72.6%) of the respondents always expressed their opinions and gave their suggestions during these meetings. Similarly, (14.8%) of the respondents confirmed that they sometimes did. However, (2.2%) of the respondents reported that they rarely expressed their opinions or gave suggestions during these meetings. As shown in table 4, the number of the respondents who participated actively in these meetings outnumbers those who did not.

Table 4. Professors' participation in meetings with the administration

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Always	98	72,6	81,0	81,0
Sometimes	20	14,8	16,5	97,5
Rarely	3	2,2	2,5	100,0
Never	121	89,6	100,0	
Total	14	10,4		
System	135	100,0		
Total	98	72,6	81,0	81,0

The fifth item requested the respondents if the administration took their suggestions into account. The results indicated that (5.2%) of the informants acknowledged that their suggestions and queries were always considered. Similarly, (50.4%) of the subjects said that sometimes their requests were taken into consideration by the administration. On the other hand, (28.9%) of the respondents admitted that their suggestions and queries were rarely welcomed. While, (2.2%) of the respondents confirmed that their suggestions were never considered. The above results obviously showed that the majority of the subjects thought that the university administration sometimes took their suggestions about different issues discussed in the meetings into account. Table 5 further illustrates these results.

**Table 5.Reaction of the university administration to professors' suggestions**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Always	7	5,2	6,0	6,0
Sometimes	68	50,4	58,1	64,1
Rarely	39	28,9	33,3	97,4
Never	3	2,2	2,6	100,0
Total	117	86,7	100,0	
System	18	13,3		
Total	135	100,0		

5-2-2.University decision makers' communication with professors

Items: six, seven, eight, and nine of the questionnaire examined an important aspect of public relations communication. That is to say; these items targeted the daily communication practice between the university administration and the professors. Hence, the sixth item asked the respondents whether the decision-makers in the institutions where they worked used a participative approach when dealing with different academic and managerial issues. The results stipulated that (66.7%) of the respondents thought that they do. However, (33.3%) of the subjects of this study thought the opposite. Figure 2 delineates these results.

Figure 2. University decision makers' use of a participative approach
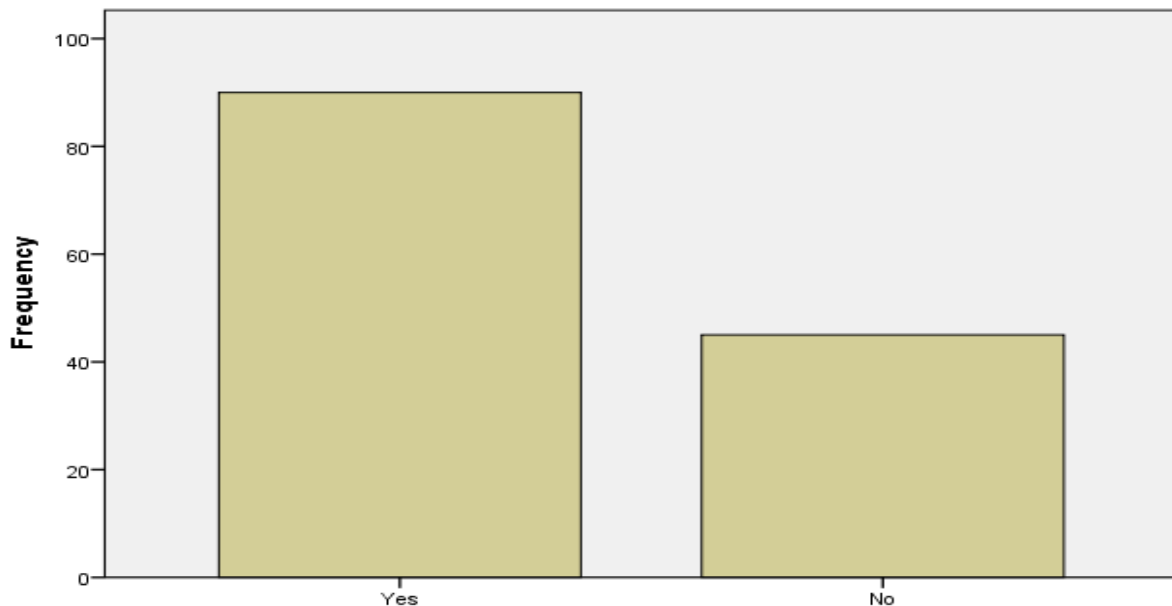
The seventh item solicited the respondents about their appraisal of this participative approach. The results indicated that (6.7%) of the respondents evaluated it as (100%), (45.2%) thought it was (50%), (17%) of the respondents assessed it as (25%), while (31.1%) of the respondents thought that it was (10%). These results showed that more than half of the respondents positively evaluated the participative approach between the university decision makers and the university professors by giving it a high percentage (50%). Table 6 below further explains these results.

Table 6.Professors' appraisal

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
100/100	9	6,7	6,7	6,7
50/100	61	45,2	45,2	51,9
25/100	23	17,0	17,0	68,9
10/00	42	31,1	31,1	100,0
Total	135	100,0	100,0	

The eighth item in the third part of the questionnaire requested the informants whether the higher authorities in the university where they worked had ever administered questionnaires to know their opinions about different academic or managerial issues. Consequently, the results demonstrated that (62.2%) of the respondents reported that they had never received any questionnaire from the higher authorities in the university. (21.5%) of them thought that they had often received questionnaires from the university decision-makers and expressed their views. Similarly, (16.3%) of the respondents reported that they were sometimes given questionnaires from the university higher authorities asking them to give their opinions about different academic and managerial issues. Therefore, we may state that the results shown in table 7 below clearly clarify that more than half of the respondents confirmed that the administration never asked them to express their opinions about issues related to the management of the university they worked in.

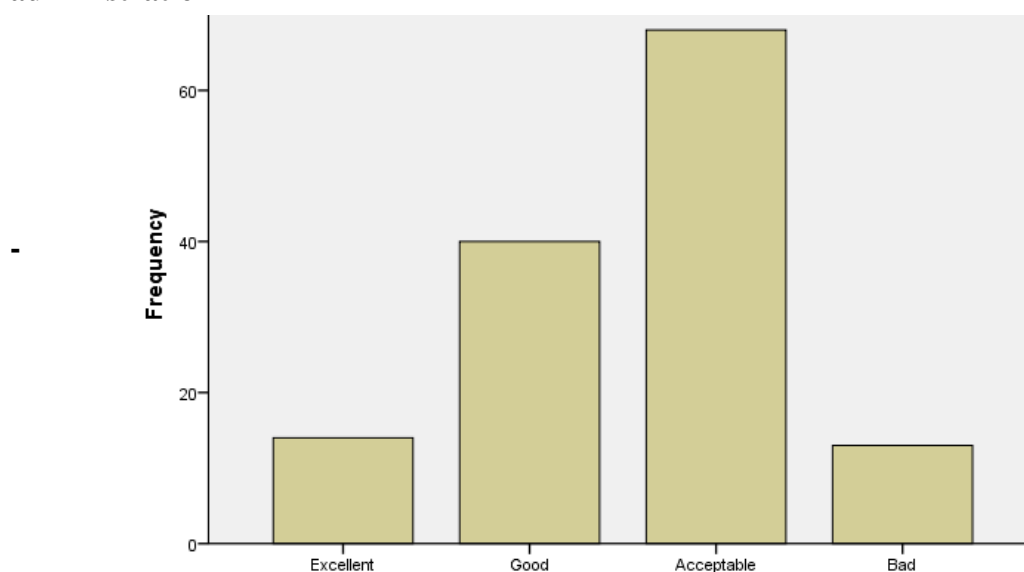**Table 7. The university administration's quest for the professors' opinions**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sometimes	22	16,3	16,3	16,3
Often	29	21,5	21,5	37,8
Never	84	62,2	62,2	100,0

| Total | 135 | 100,0 | 100,0 |

The ninth item of the questionnaire demanded that the subjects of this study evaluate the communication between the university administration and the university professors. The results pinpointed that (10.4%) of the respondents thought that it was excellent. Similarly, (29.6%) thought that it was good, and (50.4%) reported that it was acceptable. However, (9.6%) said that it was bad. The results clearly showed that the majority of the respondents (more than 80%) positively evaluated the communication between the university administration and the university professors. Figure 3. Illustrates more the above results:

Figure 3. Professors' evaluation of the communication between them and the university administration

3. University professors' perception of the communication between administration and professors in other Moroccan universities

Items: ten, eleven and twelve of the questionnaire dealt with the university professors' perception of the communication between the university administration and professors in other Moroccan universities. The first item in this section inquired whether the informants were aware of the kind of relationship between the administration and professors in different universities in Morocco. The results indicated that (76.3%) of the respondents answered positively, while (23%) of the respondents answered negatively. These results are interesting since they obviously imply that Moroccan university professors are inquisitive about the kind of communication between the decision-makers and professors in other Moroccan higher institutions. Figure 4 below further embodies these results.

Figure 4. Professors' relation with the administration in other universities
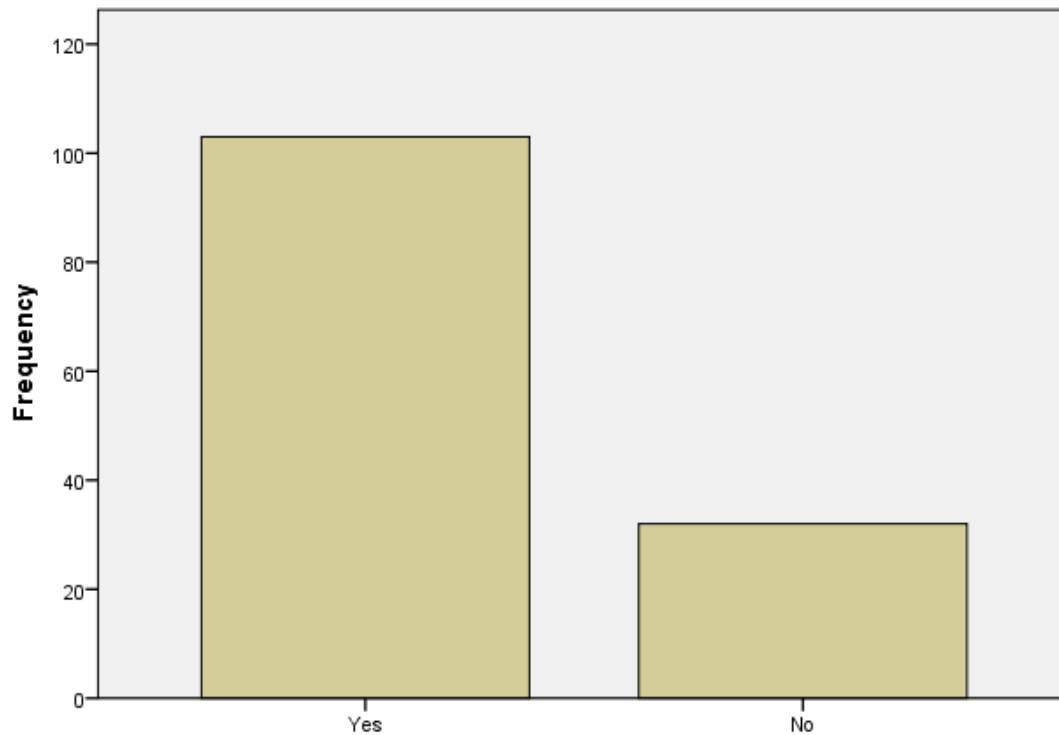
The eleventh item in this part of the questionnaire investigated whether the respondents who answered the tenth item affirmatively thought that the relationship between the university administration and the professors in other Moroccan universities was the same as in the universities they worked in. The results showed that (17.8%) of the informants answered that it was the same, while (60.7%) of the respondents said that it was not the same. Hence, these results clearly showed that the respondents thought that the relationship between the university administration and the university professors in the universities they worked in was different from those in other universities. Table 8 displays the above results.

Table 8. The same or different relationship

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	24	17,8	22,6	22,6
No	82	60,7	77,4	100,0
Total	106	78,5	100,0	
Missing System	29	21,5		
Total	135	100,0		

To justify this difference, the item above asked the respondents who claimed that the relationship between the university administration and the universities in other Moroccan universities was different from the one in the universities they worked in. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that four were given choices. The first choice asked the respondents whether they thought the difference was due to the nature of the decision-makers in these universities. The results indicated that (90.7%) of the respondents answered yes, while (9.3%) said no. Therefore, we may infer that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the university's decision makers affected the communication between the administration and the professors.

6. Discussion of the results

The results of this study show efficiently that in their regular interaction, Moroccan university professors and administrators use many elements of public relations communication.

Indeed, the findings are very compelling since they resonate well with the contentions of renowned experts in PR, namely Grunig (1992& 2011). In this respect, (Grunig et al., 2002 asserted that one of the public relations' functions is harmonising the interests of an organisation with those of the people on whom its success depends. Overall, the findings of this study were valuable since they highlighted some interesting aspects of public relations communication.

One of these aspects was concerned with the meetings between professors and the administration inside the institution where they worked. The findings revealed that (32.6%) of the respondents always participated actively in meetings with higher education authorities, and (48.9%) confirmed that they sometimes did. This finding obviously showed the professors' willingness to communicate and contribute to improving their institutions. Besides, the results also indicated that (72.6%) of the respondents acknowledged that those meetings tackled issues related to the general management of the university as a whole and (72.8%) of them revealed that the meetings discussed ways to enhance the quality of teaching and research in the faculty. Indeed, the finding mentioned above obviously resonates well with (Gunig et al. (2002) and Botan (2006). They both explained that symmetrical communication inside a workplace helps build a participative culture, which in turn promotes employee satisfaction.

Another aspect of public relations communication, which was apparent in the findings, was professors' awareness of the importance of participative approach. To illustrate more, more than half of the respondents positively evaluate the participative approach between the university decision makers and the university professors. This of course is very revealing and of great importance since it meets Grunig& Hunt (1984), Grunig (1992) and (Grunig et al., 2002) views about the importance of strengthening vertical and horizontal communication within an organisation.

Nevertheless, some elements about professors and high education administrators were not compatible with public relations communication. One example was involving the university professors in different managerial and academic issues through the administration of questionnaires or surveys. With regard to this point, Grunig (1992) and (Cutlip et al., 2006) explained that organisations, be them public or private, should seek to know their publics' needs, worries and suggestions through carrying out research or surveys. The finding indicated that (62.2%) of the respondents confirmed that the higher education administrators in their universities had never administered a survey or a questionnaire to ask them about their opinions concerning issues related to management, teaching, research and others. This is a tangible example of what Grunig and Hunt (1984) called one-way asymmetrical communication. According to these theorists, this model often leads to dissatisfaction and impedes the 'publics' from establishing a favourable image for the university.

7. Conclusion

Many researchers, such as Grunig (2011) and (Baines et al., 2004) think that one of the key elements to organisational effectiveness and success in this century is relationships. Indeed, if great attention is paid to the issue of relationships, especially in higher education institutions, it can surely promote cooperation, reduce conflicts and increase quality. Similarly, listening and being open to the 'publics' opinions, needs and suggestions are imperative to organisational effectiveness these days. In other words, this century, which is characterised by the evolution in the field of technology accompanied with the spread of the internet and the emergence of a new culture related to the right to be informed and the right to participate in decision-making, needs a sophisticated kind of communication. In the case of this study, it is public relations communication.

Accordingly, the results of this study are significant since they delineate fascinating aspects of the communication between Moroccan university professors and the administrators at the tertiary level. First, despite the absence of public relations services in the Moroccan university, several elements related to public relations communications were noticed in the

interaction between the Moroccan university professors and administrators. Moreover, even though these communication activities are not defined in PR terms, they belonged to PR communication .Second, these findings revealed that both the Moroccan university professors and the higher education authorities in Morocco were aware of PR communication and they used some of its elements. Third, although there is an endeavor from the part of Moroccan higher education administrators and university professors to communicate effectively , the communication models which are omnipresent in the Moroccan university are what Grunig and Hunt (1984) called 'one-way or 'two-way asymmetrical communication'. That is to say, Moroccan higher education administrators and professors tend to focus only on the transmission of their messages without making an effort to engage in strategic cooperation.

To conclude, (Landrum et al., 2001) state, "The image portrayed by institutions of higher education plays a critical role in the attitudes of the institution's publics towards that institution" (Landrum et al., 2001), Cited in Jonathan Ivy, 2001:276). The corollary of this is that the results of this study, do not only concern the professors and the higher education administrators, but also the university and society as a whole. Nowadays, many universities all over the world have started to benefit from public relations communication so that they could improve the quality of their interaction with their publics and scaffold a favourable image of their universities.

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