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IMPACT OF CULTURE ON PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE IN KAZAKHSTAN

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ВЛИЯНИЕ КУЛЬТУРЫ НА ПРАКТИКУ СВЯЗЕЙ С ОБЩЕСТВЕННОСТЬЮ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to frame the existing scientific literature on the influence of culture on the practice of public relations. The global public relations literature review has hardly paid attention to Kazakhstan's cultural specifics, which influence the practice of public relations in the country. The research problem is that the topic has received very scarce scientific attention both in the Kazakh as well as in the international scientific literature. The employed method in the paper is narrative literature review. The paper contributes to the scientific literature on Kazakhstani culture and public relations in English language and will help international researchers to have a source of reference.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Целью данного исследования является рассмотрение существующей научной литературы на тему влияния культуры на практику Связей с общественностью. В мировой литературе на тему Связей с общественностью едва ли было уделено внимание культурным особенностям Казахстана, которые имеют влияние на практику Связей с общественностью в стране. Проблема данного исследования – это то, что данной теме было уделено недостаточное внимание как в казахстанской, так и в мировой научной литературе. В исследовании был использован метод литературного обзора. Данное исследование внесет вклад в научную литературу о казахстанской культуре и связях с общественностью на английском языке и поможет международным исследователям получить первоисточник о данной теме.

Keywords: public relations, Global Public Relations Framework, Kazakh culture, high context culture, low context culture

Ключевые слова: связей с общественностью, рамки глобальных связей с общественностью, казахская культура, высококонтекстная культура, низкоконтекстная культура

Introduction

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the globalization process, which takes place across the globe. As one of the main consequences of this process, the majority of countries started to build economic relationships with each other. Recently, the trade agreement between Japan and Europe Union came into force, which will eliminate all tariffs between them. Japan declared its initiative to build expanded strategic partnership with Kazakhstan, during former president Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Japan [1]. In such situations, Global Public Relations becomes an essential part of managing the relationships between two potential partners. The globalization process itself requires a significant number of public relations professionals who could educate newcomers or students to encounter multicultural audiences. However, Sriramesh, Kim and Takasaki commented

that (1999) "it becomes obvious that very little empirical evidence is currently available about the nature of public relations in different regions of the world" [2, p 271]. In other words, the field of public relations is not deep enough explored compared to countries such as the US, UK and Western Europe.

Statement of the Problem

There is a little doubt that global public relations tend to flourish in countries where the development of the political system and economic system go hand in hand with the growth of media, culture, and activism. According to Sriramesh and Vercic (2009), these variables have tight boundaries with the level of development of Global Public Relations. However, the majority of research studies in this field cover the US, British and Western Europe's practices [3]. Moreover, public relations professionals are still undermining culture, as a key variable in their global practice.

Further, to have a beneficial partnership with the target country, it is essential to study the cultural features of that country. However, there are almost no research studies, which discuss the cultural features of Kazakhstani people from public relations perspective.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory research is to shed light on the specifics of Kazakh cultural that influences the practice of public relations in the country within the global framework of public relations. It is worth noting that cultural differences could become a barrier for international enterprises to build successful and beneficial business connections. However, there is very scarce research or data at a satisfactory level informing about Kazakh cultural specifics, which influence public relations in the country.

Methodology

This research method that was applied in the paper is a narrative literature review. The purpose of narrative (semi-structured) literature review is to review the existing and conceptualized research on a particular topic. "This type of analysis can be useful for detecting themes, theoretical perspectives, or common issues within a specific research discipline or methodology or for identifying components of a theoretical concept" [4, p. 335]

RQ1. What literature exist on the impact of culture on the practice of public relations?

Results

Public relations and a country's main systems

Public relations and a country's political system

Political conditions impact the social structure of a country, and it is common knowledge that public relations practice depends on public opinion, which leads to the consideration that strategic public relations could be practiced only in countries where cultural diversity exists. However, the reality indicates that nature public relations in those societies, where the government usually ignores public opinion, could be considered as not complicated and has a tendency to be one-way propagandistic, regardless to the fact that almost each of the United Nations' participating country states to be a democracy.

In the 1990s, the world started increasingly developing, which has also affected the political, economic and societal conditions of many countries. Notably, the majority of post-Soviet Union countries have undergone political and market changes, which creates a challenging environment for public relations practitioners. The political system used to be divided into three types as Western industrialized democracies, Communist states and the non-Western, developing countries. However, these designations have become questionable after the breakdown of the Soviet Union and its influence on the worldwide political structure. In recent years political system is being classified into seven types such as democracies, restricted democratic practices, monarchies, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, colonial and imperial dependencies, and protectorates.

Overall, there is still much to be explored about the impact of each political systems on public relations; however, it could be considered that the 20th century

has become the time of modern public relations' increase. Although the degree of democratization of society has increased, the nature of the public relations profession is also sophisticated. However, there is no doubt that strategic public relations thrive in countries, which value cultural diversity [5, pp. 4-5].

Public relations and country's economic development

The economic development of a country, which depends on the political system, offers public relation professionals various opportunities. It is common to think that the public relations field has more freedom to develop in those countries, whose economic conditions are superior. However, the reality is that public relations are still considered as redundancy, even in some developed countries. As a result, financial resources in those countries is tend to be spent on more essential needs of organizations. Despite this fact, it is hard to deny that strategic public relations are more advanced in pluralistic countries because developed economy causes the high level of competition among the significant number of organizations [6, pp. 8-9]. To succeed at their goals, those organizations need to receive remarkable social support and approval, which consequently demands a certain number of public relations experts as their employees or advisers.

Public Relations and a country's media system

It is hard to deny that the mass media and public relations have tight relationships, which tend to be interrelated and mutually profitable. Public relations practitioners would agree that media relations are critical for them because the majority of their work activities depends on mass media. On the other hand, mass media also use public relations professionals as their information providers [7, pp. 14-15].

To establish prosperous media relations, Public relations practitioners need to understand who controls media organization in their country and does it affect the editorial materials [8, p. 17]. The Freedom House Report (2017), which covered 199 countries, found that only 13% of the world's mass media is free. It was the lowest in the last 13 years. Dunham (2017) stated with relation to that that politicians attack and undermine the credibility of the media "through alarmingly hostile rhetoric, personalized abuse online, and indirect editorial pressure" [9, p. 4]. It shows that very few countries are democratic ones. Activism is also a key indicator for a country's democratic development in the context of the freedom of expression.

Activism is also another measure of public relations development, which is influenced by political and economic indexes of the country. Depending on the political system, activism could be perceived in positive as well as negative way. Moreover, the economic development of a country also has an impact on the degree of activism. In the reality of developing countries, citizens are more worried about the satisfaction of their physiological needs rather than the protection of their public stance. In the past century, the majority of Asian and African countries participated in social movements to reach independence for their nations. However, that achievement brought change to one part of these countries' degree of activism – it has

plunged due to their political and economic conditions. Activism creates places where public relations professionals could develop their activities, and, these days, it becomes usual that public relations practitioners serve two opposite in their nature social movements. The connection between activism and public relations is being ignored for a long time, and there is still much to study it [10, p. 9].

Culture and Public Relations

In organizational management, the significance of the culture has been integrated at the end of 1980s. Whereas in contrast, the concept of culture in the public relations field is still being disregarded by its occupants. The majority of literature and research studies which covers this topic is concentrated on American, British and Western European cultures. However, the number of researches which explore the culture of other countries has increased, compared with past years [11, pp. 12-13].

High and Low context culture theory

In order to identify Kazakh cultural differences, this study aims to use High and Low context culture theory, which was implemented by Edward Hall in 1976. Low and High Context cultures theory combines three concepts such as context, information and meaning [12]. These three integrate in such a way that context as a system of meaning for exchanging the information within or between groups of individuals. With this understanding, Hall's context dimensions offer a framework that affords individuals to understand such communication forms as non-verbal, which consists of body language, hand gestures, body language and verbal, such as written texts and spoken words, which aims to understand the meaning of mentioned communication instruments. In high context, individuals could understand the meaning of received messages without full definitions of them, because extrinsic information, which was sent by an opponent, could help to describe it. On the contrary, individuals in a low context culture demand information, which was provided with an indirect way by spoken words. The reason for that is that the representatives of such cultures depend on the information that was received through direct and explicit communication.

Cultural context of Kazakhstan

Gluchshenko and Kutubayeva (2014) state that:

"Kazakh culture can be referred to as a high context culture. Traditionally, Kazakh business culture dictates a strict hierarchical structure where leaders separate themselves from a group and power is distributed from the top. People tend to make decisions based on face-to-face communication as quite often, and we focus more on how people talk rather than on the content of the conversation. The fact that more than half of MBA students consider themselves as high context communicators also proves that Kazakh people are classified as high context communicators. However, it should be noted that rather a high percentage of the interviewed MBA students (one third) classify themselves as low context communicators. That can be explained not only by their traits but, to a considerable degree, by globalization

process that facilitates implementation of new business standards and models, including communication styles [13, p. 5-6]. According to the mentioned information, it could be considered that Kazakh culture is classified as "in-between context culture", which means that it has high-context communication features as well as low-context communication ones.

According to Samovar et al. (2013) using Hall and Hall's theory "A high context communication is one in which most of the information already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. Low context communication is just the opposite. The mass of the information is vested in the explicit code" [14, p. 215]. In High context cultures, communication style is influenced by the closeness of human relationships, well-structured social hierarchy, and healthy behavioral norms [15]. In a high context (HC) culture, the inner meaning is usually embedded deep in the information, so not everything is explicitly stated in writing or when spoken. In an HC culture, the listener is expected to be able to read "between the lines", to understand the unsaid, thanks to his or her background knowledge. In a low context (LC) culture, meanings are explicitly stated through language. People communicating usually expect explanations when something remains unclear. As Hall (1976) explains, most information is expected to be in the transmitted message in order to make up for what is missing in the context. The human side is critical when it comes to doing business in Kazakhstan. Personal relationships do matter [16].

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**ПРЕДВАРИТЕЛЬНЫЕ ИТОГИ ГЛОБАЛЬНОЙ КАМПАНИИ «ПАНДЕМИЯ КОРОНАВИРУСА»:
НОВОЕ СЛОВО В УПРАВЛЕНИИ МАССОВЫМ СОЗНАНИЕМ НА ОСНОВЕ
СУЩЕСТВУЮЩИХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ**

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**PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN «CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC»:
A NEW WORD IN MASS CONSCIOUSNESS MANAGEMENT BASED
ON EXISTING TECHNOLOGIES**

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АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье анализируется течение глобального кризиса принципиально нового типа на основе PR-кампании «пандемия коронавируса». Показаны идеологические истоки кризиса, его причины, цели и возможные последствия. Перечислены диагностические признаки PR-кампании. Приведены примеры взаимодействия двух антагонистических подсистем, трех сверхдержав и четырех глобализующих идеологий. Эпидемическая картина коронавируса остается нерасшифрованной.

ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the course of the global crisis of a fundamentally new type based on the PR campaign «coronavirus pandemic». The authors shows the ideological origins of the crisis, its causes, goals and possible consequences. Diagnostic signs of a PR campaign are shown. Examples of interaction between two antagonistic subsystems, three superpowers and four globalizing ideologies are given. The epidemic picture of the coronavirus remains not decrypted.

Ключевые слова: волны жизни, зомби-паразитизм, инфодемия, конспирология, пандемия коронавируса, пятая власть

Key words: conspiracy theories, coronavirus pandemic, infodemic, waves of life, zombie parasitism