



International Journal of Innovative Science and Technology Studies (IJISTS)

E-ISSN: 3143-3405

Volume 2, Issue 3, August 2026 | Pages. 01–26

The Role of Strategic Public Relations in Enhancing Institutional Reputation and Supporting the Objectives of Saudi Vision 2030: An Applied Study on Government Institutions

Ghazi Saleh Alsubaie ¹

¹ *North Liverpool College, London, United Kingdom*

Received: August 4, 2026 / **Accepted:** August 4, 2026 / **Published:** August 4, 2026

Abstract

This study examines the role of strategic public relations in enhancing institutional reputation and supporting Saudi Vision 2030 objectives within government institutions. It focuses on strategic communication planning, stakeholder engagement, communication transparency, and digital communication effectiveness. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 300 employees working in selected Saudi government institutions. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. The draft findings indicated that strategic public relations had a positive and statistically significant effect on institutional reputation ($\beta = 0.72$, $p < .001$) and support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < .001$). Institutional reputation also demonstrated a significant positive effect on support for Vision 2030 objectives ($\beta = 0.66$, $p < .001$). These findings emphasize the importance of strategic planning, transparent communication, stakeholder engagement, and digital responsiveness in strengthening government credibility and supporting national transformation. The study contributes to public-sector communication literature by integrating strategic public relations, institutional reputation, and Vision 2030 support within a unified framework.

Keywords: *Strategic Public Relations; Institutional Reputation; Government Communication; Stakeholder Engagement; Saudi Vision 2030; Government Institutions.*

1. Introduction

Government institutions increasingly operate in communication environments characterized by rapid information exchange, expanding public expectations, digital media influence, and growing demands for transparency and accountability. Under these conditions, institutional performance is evaluated not only through the quality of public services but also through the institution's ability to communicate its objectives, explain its decisions, engage relevant stakeholders, and respond effectively to emerging issues. Strategic public relations have consequently developed from a primarily technical and publicity-oriented function into an integral component of institutional governance and strategic management.

Strategic public relations can be understood as the planned and continuous management of communication and relationships between an institution and its internal and external stakeholders. Unlike traditional public relations practices that may focus on media coverage, event management, and the distribution of institutional information, strategic public relations are connected directly to organizational objectives and decision-making processes. It involves environmental analysis, stakeholder identification, strategic message development, channel selection, engagement, implementation, and communication-performance evaluation. Hallahan et al. (2007) explain that strategic communication concerns the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission. Accordingly, the strategic value of public relations depends on its ability to align communication activities with institutional priorities and stakeholder expectations.

This strategic function is particularly important in government institutions because their success depends significantly on public understanding, confidence, cooperation, and institutional legitimacy.

Government communication is not limited to announcing policies or reporting achievements. It also involves explaining the public value of government initiatives, facilitating dialogue, addressing misinformation, managing expectations, and enabling citizens and other stakeholders to participate meaningfully in institutional programs. Effective public relations can therefore help reduce communication gaps between government institutions and their stakeholders while reinforcing transparency, responsiveness, and trust.

Institutional reputation represents one of the most important intangible outcomes of strategic communication. Reputation develops through stakeholders' cumulative evaluations of an institution's conduct, performance, communication, and ability to fulfill its commitments. It is not created by promotional messages alone; rather, it emerges from the consistency between institutional actions, communicated values, stakeholder experiences, and demonstrated results. Fombrun (1996) described reputation as a valuable strategic asset based on collective perceptions of an organization's credibility and performance. In the government context, a favorable institutional reputation can improve public confidence, strengthen policy acceptance, support stakeholder cooperation, and increase institutional resilience during periods of uncertainty or crisis.

The relationship between public relations and institutional reputation is therefore both communicative and behavioral. Strategic communication enables an institution to explain its purpose, achievements, responsibilities, and future direction. Stakeholder engagement allows institutional leaders to understand public concerns and incorporate relevant feedback into communication and decision-making processes. Transparency provides stakeholders with accessible and credible information, while effective digital communication expands institutional reach and supports timely interaction. When these practices are implemented consistently, they can influence perceptions of institutional competence, integrity, responsiveness, and social responsibility.

The Saudi Arabian context provides a particularly significant environment in which to examine these relationships. Launched in 2016, Saudi Vision 2030 introduced an extensive national transformation agenda organized around three principal themes: a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation. The Vision emphasizes government effectiveness, accountability, transparency, institutional capability, digital transformation, citizen engagement, and improved public-sector performance (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). These priorities have required government institutions to communicate complex reforms, demonstrate the public value of transformation initiatives, and engage diverse groups affected by institutional and policy changes.

The implementation of Vision 2030 involves more than achieving administrative and economic performance indicators. It also requires stakeholders to understand national objectives, recognize the relevance of government initiatives, and develop confidence in the institutions responsible for implementation. Communication is consequently a central element of national transformation. Government institutions must communicate measurable achievements while explaining how programs contribute to broader national priorities. They must also address stakeholder concerns, manage competing expectations, and maintain credibility in a communication environment where institutional information can be rapidly evaluated and challenged through digital platforms.

Saudi Arabia's recent transformation reports demonstrate the continuing development of institutional capabilities and the growing integration of performance management across government. The Saudi Vision 2030 Annual Report 2025 indicates that institutional capabilities have been strengthened and that performance management has become more embedded within government operations. These developments create a need for equally advanced communication capabilities capable of translating institutional performance into stakeholder understanding, confidence, and participation.

Within this environment, strategic public relations can support Vision 2030 through several interconnected functions. First, it can align institutional communication strategies with national priorities and measurable organizational objectives. Second, it can enhance awareness of government programs and explain their expected social and economic value. Third, it can establish mechanisms for stakeholder dialogue and feedback. Fourth, it can strengthen institutional transparency by communicating timely, accurate, and accessible information. Fifth, it can enhance institutional reputation by demonstrating competence, responsiveness, ethical conduct, and alignment with national interests.

Nevertheless, having public relations departments or digital communication platforms does not necessarily mean that public relations is practiced strategically. Some institutions may continue to approach public relations primarily as an operational function responsible for news publication, event coverage, protocol, and media coordination. Although these activities remain relevant, they may provide limited strategic value if they are not integrated with institutional planning, stakeholder research, policy communication, reputation management, and performance evaluation. The central issue is therefore not merely whether government institutions conduct public relations activities, but whether those activities are strategically planned and capable of contributing to reputation and national transformation objectives.

Existing scholarship has addressed strategic communication, organizational reputation, stakeholder relationships, and government communication through different theoretical and institutional perspectives. However, additional empirical research is required to explain how strategic public relations practices affect institutional reputation within Saudi government institutions and how these practices contribute to the communication and implementation of Vision 2030 objectives. Research is particularly needed to distinguish between the effects of strategic communication planning, stakeholder engagement, transparency, and digital communication effectiveness.

Accordingly, this study examines the role of strategic public relations in enhancing institutional reputation and supporting the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 in government institutions. It develops an integrated research model connecting strategic public relations practices with institutional reputation and institutional support for Vision 2030 objectives. By doing so, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence that can inform both public relations scholarship and government communication practice in Saudi Arabia.

1.1 Research Problem

The implementation of Saudi Vision 2030 has significantly expanded the responsibilities of government institutions and increased public expectations regarding transparency, institutional effectiveness, accountability, digital accessibility, and the quality of public services. Government

institutions are not only required to implement national initiatives but must also communicate their objectives, achievements, and societal value to diverse stakeholders. This transformation has made strategic communication an essential requirement for building public understanding, strengthening institutional credibility, and encouraging stakeholder support for national development programs.

Despite the increasing importance of communication within the Saudi public sector, the existence of public relations departments does not necessarily indicate that public relations is being practiced as a strategic management function. In some institutional settings, public relations activities may remain concentrated on operational responsibilities such as publishing news, organizing events, managing protocol, producing media content, and responding to routine inquiries. Although these responsibilities are important, they may not produce substantial institutional value unless they are connected to strategic planning, stakeholder analysis, reputation management, organizational decision-making, and the systematic evaluation of communication outcomes.

This distinction creates an important practical and academic problem. Government institutions may invest considerable financial, technological, and human resources in communication activities without having sufficient empirical evidence regarding the extent to which these activities enhance institutional reputation or support the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030. High levels of communication activity do not automatically lead to greater stakeholder trust or a favorable institutional reputation. The effectiveness of public relations depends on whether communication is strategically planned, transparent, responsive, stakeholder-centered, and consistent with actual institutional performance.

Institutional reputation is particularly important in the public sector because it influences how stakeholders evaluate government competence, credibility, integrity, and responsiveness. A favorable reputation can strengthen stakeholder confidence, increase acceptance of institutional initiatives, and encourage cooperation with government programs. Conversely, inconsistent communication, inadequate stakeholder engagement, limited transparency, or delayed responses may create gaps between institutional performance and public perception. Such gaps can weaken confidence even when the institution has achieved measurable operational results.

Saudi Vision 2030 places considerable emphasis on effective, transparent, accountable, and high-performing government institutions. It also requires institutions to build capabilities that enable them to respond to social, economic, and technological transformation (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). Consequently, government communication must move beyond one-way information dissemination toward a more strategic approach that facilitates dialogue, explains institutional priorities, incorporates stakeholder feedback, and demonstrates the relationship between institutional initiatives and national objectives.

Although previous studies have examined public relations, digital communication, organizational reputation, and stakeholder engagement, the combined relationship among strategic public relations, institutional reputation, and support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives remains insufficiently examined within Saudi government institutions. In particular, limited empirical evidence is available regarding which dimensions of strategic public relations exert the strongest influence on institutional reputation and the extent to which effective public relations contributes to the institutional implementation and communication of Vision 2030 priorities.

Furthermore, existing research frequently examines public relations effectiveness and organizational reputation as separate subjects. This separation may not fully explain how communication practices influence stakeholder evaluations of government institutions or how institutional reputation can strengthen the ability of those institutions to communicate and support national transformation objectives. An integrated empirical investigation is therefore necessary to examine these relationships within a single conceptual framework.

Accordingly, the central research problem lies in the limited empirical understanding of how strategic public relations practices contribute to enhancing institutional reputation and supporting Saudi Vision 2030 objectives within government institutions. The study addresses this problem by examining four central dimensions of strategic public relations: strategic communication planning, stakeholder engagement, communication transparency, and digital communication effectiveness. It subsequently evaluates their influence on institutional reputation and institutional support for Vision 2030 objectives.

The principal research problem can therefore be expressed through the following question:

To what extent does strategic public relations enhance institutional reputation and support the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 within government institutions?

Research Gap

The study addresses four interconnected research gaps:

1. Contextual gap: Limited empirical research has examined strategic public relations within the specific organizational and transformation context of Saudi government institutions.
2. Conceptual gap: Previous studies have not sufficiently integrated strategic public relations, institutional reputation, and support for Vision 2030 objectives within a unified research model.
3. Dimensional gap: Additional evidence is required to determine how strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, transparency, and digital communication differ in their effects on institutional reputation.
4. Practical gap: Government institutions require empirically supported guidance for aligning public relations strategies with reputation-building efforts and national transformation priorities.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

5. To examine the role of strategic public relations in enhancing the reputation of Saudi government institutions.
6. To assess the contribution of strategic public relations to supporting the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.
7. To examine the relationship between institutional reputation and government institutions' support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the research problem and objectives, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

8. What role does strategic public relations play in enhancing the reputation of Saudi government institutions?
9. To what extent does strategic public relations contribute to supporting the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030?
10. What is the relationship between institutional reputation and government institutions' support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study derives its significance from the growing importance of strategic public relations in strengthening the performance, credibility, and societal influence of government institutions. In the context of Saudi Vision 2030, government institutions are expected not only to implement national transformation initiatives but also to communicate their objectives effectively, engage relevant stakeholders, and build confidence in institutional performance. The significance of the study can be explained through the following dimensions.

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

The study contributes to the literature on strategic public relations and institutional reputation by examining these concepts within the context of Saudi government institutions. It develops an integrated understanding of how strategically planned communication can influence institutional reputation while simultaneously supporting broader national transformation objectives.

The study also extends the application of strategic communication and stakeholder perspectives to the public sector. While a substantial part of reputation research has focused on private companies, government institutions operate under different conditions involving public accountability, policy implementation, diverse stakeholder expectations, and continuous public evaluation. Examining these relationships in the Saudi governmental context therefore contributes to addressing an important contextual gap in the existing literature.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

The findings of this study can assist public relations and corporate communication departments in Saudi government institutions in evaluating the strategic value of their communication practices. The study can help institutional leaders move beyond communication activities centered mainly on news publication, media coverage, and event management toward more strategic practices based on planning, stakeholder engagement, transparency, and measurable outcomes.

The study may also provide government communication professionals with evidence-based recommendations for improving communication effectiveness, strengthening stakeholder relationships, and enhancing perceptions of institutional competence, credibility, responsiveness, and integrity. These recommendations can support the development of communication strategies that are more closely aligned with institutional objectives.

1.4.3 National Significance

The study is nationally significant because it connects public relations performance with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030. The Vision emphasizes effective governance, accountability, transparency, institutional capability, digital transformation, and stronger engagement between government institutions and society. Strategic public relations can contribute to these priorities by explaining government initiatives, increasing stakeholder awareness, facilitating participation, and strengthening confidence in the institutions responsible for implementing national programs.

By examining how strategic public relations supports Vision 2030 objectives, the study highlights communication as an important component of national transformation rather than merely a supporting administrative activity. It can therefore assist government institutions in connecting their communication plans with national priorities and demonstrating the public value of their programs and achievements.

1.4.4 Institutional Significance

A favorable institutional reputation can strengthen stakeholder trust, improve acceptance of government initiatives, and encourage cooperation with public programs. This study can help government institutions understand how their communication practices influence stakeholder evaluations and how reputation may contribute to the effectiveness of institutional efforts supporting Vision 2030.

Furthermore, the proposed research framework can serve as an assessment tool through which government institutions evaluate the effectiveness of their public relations strategies and identify areas requiring improvement. This may contribute to developing more consistent, transparent, and stakeholder-oriented communication practices across the Saudi public sector.

1.4.5 Beneficiaries of the Study

The findings of the study are expected to benefit:

11. Leaders and decision-makers in Saudi government institutions.
12. Public relations and strategic communication departments.
13. Media and government communication professionals.
14. Officials responsible for Vision 2030 programs and initiatives.
15. Researchers specializing in public relations, reputation, and public administration.
16. Training and professional development institutions concerned with government communication.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Strategic Public Relations

Public relations has developed from a technical function focused primarily on publicity, media relations, and event management into a strategic management function that contributes to organizational planning, stakeholder relationships, decision-making, and institutional performance. In its contemporary form, public relations involves the purposeful management of communication

between an institution and its internal and external stakeholders to achieve organizational objectives and establish mutually beneficial relationships (Grunig, 2009; Zerfass et al., 2018).

Strategic public relations differs from traditional public relations because it connects communication activities directly with the institution's mission, strategic priorities, and long-term objectives. It involves environmental scanning, stakeholder identification, communication planning, message development, channel selection, implementation, and performance evaluation. Communication becomes strategic when it is deliberately designed and managed to support an organization's mission rather than being treated as a collection of independent promotional activities (Hallahan et al., 2007).

The strategic value of public relations also depends on the extent to which communication professionals participate in institutional decision-making. When public relations departments are represented at senior management levels, they can communicate stakeholder expectations to decision-makers, identify reputational threats, monitor public attitudes, and ensure that institutional strategies consider the interests of affected groups. Public relations therefore creates greater organizational value when it operates as an advisory and managerial function rather than exclusively as a communication-production unit (Grunig, 2009; Zerfass et al., 2018).

Strategic public relations performs a boundary-spanning role by connecting an institution with its surrounding environment. Communication professionals collect information about stakeholders, emerging issues, public expectations, and environmental changes and then communicate these insights to institutional leaders. At the same time, they explain institutional decisions, policies, and performance to external stakeholders. This reciprocal process helps institutions adapt their actions and messages to changing social and organizational conditions (Grunig, 2009).

In government institutions, strategic public relations carries additional responsibilities because public organizations are expected to serve diverse groups, explain public policies, demonstrate accountability, and protect the public interest. Government communication must therefore extend beyond the distribution of official information to include dialogue, consultation, public education, issue management, and relationship building. These practices can strengthen government legitimacy by enabling stakeholders to understand institutional decisions and participate more effectively in public initiatives (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019).

The expansion of digital media has further transformed strategic public relations by allowing institutions to communicate directly with stakeholders without relying entirely on traditional media organizations. Government websites, social media platforms, mobile applications, and digital-service portals can support immediate information sharing, interaction, feedback, and crisis response. However, digital communication contributes to institutional objectives only when it is accurate, responsive, accessible, credible, and integrated with a broader communication strategy (Wang et al., 2023).

Strategic public relations must also be evidence-based and measurable. Communication effectiveness cannot be evaluated solely by counting media reports, social media posts, website visits, or institutional events. Meaningful evaluation should examine whether communication activities improve stakeholder awareness, understanding, engagement, confidence, relationship quality, and institutional reputation. This outcome-oriented approach enables public relations departments to

demonstrate their contribution to institutional performance and strategic objectives (Zerfass et al., 2018).

Based on the literature, this study conceptualizes strategic public relations through four interconnected practices: strategic communication planning, stakeholder engagement, communication transparency, and digital communication effectiveness. Together, these practices reflect the extent to which government institutions plan communication purposefully, establish meaningful stakeholder relationships, provide credible information, and use digital channels effectively to support institutional and national objectives (Hallahan et al., 2007; Zerfass et al., 2018).

2.2 Institutional Reputation

Institutional reputation refers to stakeholders' collective and accumulated evaluations of an institution's performance, behavior, credibility, and ability to fulfill its responsibilities. Reputation is developed over time through direct experiences, institutional communication, media information, stakeholder interactions, and observations of organizational conduct. It is therefore broader than institutional image, which may reflect a more immediate impression created through a particular message or communication activity (Fombrun, 1996; Veh et al., 2019).

Reputation is considered an important intangible institutional asset because it influences stakeholder trust, cooperation, support, and willingness to maintain relationships with an organization. Institutions with favorable reputations are generally perceived as more credible, competent, responsible, and reliable. A strong reputation can also provide institutional resilience during crises because stakeholders may be more willing to give a trusted institution sufficient time and credibility to explain or correct a difficult situation (Fombrun, 1996; Luoma-aho, 2007).

In the public sector, institutional reputation is related to perceptions of government competence, integrity, transparency, responsiveness, fairness, and service quality. Unlike private companies, government institutions are not evaluated primarily through profitability or customer loyalty. They are evaluated through their ability to create public value, use public resources responsibly, provide accessible services, apply policies fairly, and respond to citizens' needs. Public-sector reputation is therefore closely connected to legitimacy, accountability, and public confidence (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019; Luoma-aho, 2007).

Institutional reputation is influenced by both communication and actual performance. Communication can explain achievements, clarify decisions, correct inaccurate information, and provide stakeholders with evidence of institutional effectiveness. Nevertheless, communication alone cannot sustain a positive reputation if stakeholder experiences conflict with institutional claims. Effective reputation management consequently requires consistency between what an institution communicates, what it does, and what stakeholders experience (Fombrun, 1996; Romenti, 2013).

Transparency represents a central element of reputation formation in government institutions. Timely and understandable disclosure of institutional objectives, procedures, decisions, and achievements can reduce uncertainty and demonstrate accountability. In contrast, inconsistent, delayed, or incomplete information can weaken stakeholder confidence and create space for misinformation. Transparency is most effective when institutions provide information that is not only available but

also accessible, relevant, accurate, and responsive to stakeholder concerns (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019).

Stakeholder engagement also contributes to institutional reputation because it enables stakeholders to communicate their expectations and participate in institutional conversations. Engagement demonstrates that the institution recognizes its publics as active participants rather than passive receivers of information. When stakeholders perceive that an institution listens, responds, and considers their interests, they are more likely to evaluate its credibility and responsiveness favorably (Lock & Seele, 2020).

Digital communication has made institutional reputation more dynamic and vulnerable to rapid change. Stakeholders can now evaluate government announcements, share service experiences, challenge institutional claims, and circulate information across online networks. Government institutions must therefore monitor digital discussions, respond promptly to legitimate concerns, and maintain consistency across communication platforms. Digital communication can strengthen reputation when it supports openness and responsiveness, but it can damage reputation when it is used only for one-way promotion (Wang et al., 2023).

Accordingly, institutional reputation in the present study is understood as stakeholders' overall evaluation of a government institution's credibility, competence, transparency, responsiveness, integrity, and contribution to society. This definition recognizes that reputation is created through the interaction of institutional performance, communication quality, stakeholder experience, and public expectations (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019; Fombrun, 1996).

2.3 Strategic Public Relations and Institutional Reputation

Strategic public relations contributes to institutional reputation by creating a structured connection between organizational performance and stakeholder understanding. Institutions may achieve important results, but these achievements may not influence reputation unless stakeholders receive clear, credible, and relevant information about them. Strategic public relations helps translate institutional activities into messages that explain their value and connect them to stakeholder needs and expectations (Fombrun, 1996; Romenti, 2013).

Strategic communication planning can enhance reputation by ensuring that institutional messages are consistent, evidence-based, and aligned with organizational behavior. Planning enables communication departments to identify priority stakeholders, anticipate potential issues, establish measurable objectives, and coordinate communication across different departments and platforms. Consistent communication reduces contradictory messages and helps stakeholders develop a clearer understanding of the institution's identity and performance (Hallahan et al., 2007; Zerfass et al., 2018).

Stakeholder engagement strengthens reputation through dialogue, consultation, access, and responsiveness. When an institution provides opportunities for stakeholders to ask questions, express concerns, and submit feedback, it demonstrates respect and relational commitment. Research on government–public relationships indicates that access to organizations can contribute to trust and

relationship satisfaction, particularly when stakeholders believe that institutional representatives are available and responsive (Chon et al., 2021).

Communication transparency can strengthen institutional credibility by reducing uncertainty and showing that the institution accepts accountability for its policies and performance. Transparent communication requires more than publishing a large volume of information; it requires presenting accurate and understandable information that enables stakeholders to evaluate institutional actions. Institutions that communicate honestly about achievements, challenges, and corrective measures are more likely to develop reputations for integrity and responsibility (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019; Romenti, 2013).

Digital communication effectiveness can also influence reputation by improving the speed, accessibility, and interactivity of institutional communication. Digital platforms allow government institutions to reach diverse groups, provide service information, respond to questions, and correct misinformation. However, their reputational value depends on whether communication remains timely, credible, interactive, and consistent with institutional actions (Lock & Seele, 2020; Wang et al., 2023).

Empirical and conceptual research therefore supports the expectation that strategic public relations is positively associated with institutional reputation. Its influence is likely to be strongest when communication is integrated with senior management, informed by stakeholder research, and evaluated through relationship and reputation outcomes. This study consequently expects strategic public relations practices to contribute positively to the reputation of Saudi government institutions (Grunig, 2009; Zerfass et al., 2018).

2.4 Strategic Public Relations and Saudi Vision 2030

Saudi Vision 2030 represents a comprehensive national transformation framework based on three main pillars: a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation. Its implementation requires substantial changes across government administration, economic development, digital infrastructure, education, culture, tourism, public services, and institutional governance. The Vision also emphasizes effective government, accountability, transparency, performance measurement, and the development of institutional capabilities (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016).

Government institutions play a central role in translating Vision 2030 priorities into programs, services, regulations, and measurable outcomes. Their responsibilities include implementing initiatives, coordinating with public and private stakeholders, reporting performance, and explaining the relevance of national transformation to society. Effective communication is therefore necessary to connect broad national objectives with the daily experiences and expectations of citizens and other stakeholders (Saudi Vision 2030, 2026).

Strategic public relations can support Vision 2030 by increasing stakeholder awareness of national programs, explaining institutional responsibilities, presenting evidence of progress, and encouraging participation in government initiatives. It can also help institutions manage expectations by communicating the time, resources, and behavioral changes required to implement large-scale transformation. These functions are particularly important when policies affect multiple sectors or

require cooperation between government institutions, private organizations, and members of society (Al-Bayedh & Abu Anza, 2024; Alqahtani, 2023).

Alqahtani (2023) examined the persuasive use of public relations in communicating Saudi Vision 2030 and indicated that public relations techniques were used to present the Vision's objectives and strengthen audience engagement with the national transformation process. The study emphasized that communication surrounding Vision 2030 includes persuasion, identity construction, public engagement, and national rebranding, demonstrating that public relations plays a broader role than merely reporting government announcements (Alqahtani, 2023).

Similarly, Al-Bayedh and Abu Anza (2024) examined the contribution of public relations strategies to promoting Vision 2030 initiatives using a quantitative approach and a sample of 100 respondents. Their findings indicated that media relations, social media management, and stakeholder engagement contributed positively to public awareness and support for Vision 2030 initiatives. The study recommended adopting audience-oriented content and maintaining continuous stakeholder communication (Al-Bayedh & Abu Anza, 2024).

Government institutions must ensure that their communication about Vision 2030 is connected to verifiable institutional performance. Repeated promotional communication without clear evidence may reduce credibility, whereas communication supported by performance indicators, service improvements, and measurable outcomes can strengthen stakeholder confidence. Strategic public relations can therefore support Vision 2030 by connecting national narratives with institutional evidence and stakeholder experiences (Saudi Vision 2030, 2026).

Saudi Arabia's ongoing digital transformation has also increased the importance of digital government communication. Digital platforms enable government institutions to provide services, publish performance information, communicate national initiatives, and collect stakeholder feedback. As government services become more digitally integrated, communication quality becomes a component of the stakeholder's overall evaluation of institutional effectiveness and national transformation (Saudi Vision 2030, 2026).

The contribution of strategic public relations to Vision 2030 can consequently be evaluated through several indicators, including communication alignment with national priorities, stakeholder awareness of government initiatives, public participation, cross-sector collaboration, communication transparency, and the perceived ability of institutions to explain their contribution to national development. These indicators provide a foundation for measuring institutional support for Vision 2030 in the present study (Al-Bayedh & Abu Anza, 2024; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016).

2.5 Institutional Reputation and Support for Saudi Vision 2030

Institutional reputation may influence the ability of government institutions to gain stakeholder support for Vision 2030 programs. Stakeholders are more likely to accept information and participate in initiatives when they perceive the responsible institution as competent, credible, transparent, and responsive. Reputation can therefore function as an institutional resource that strengthens the persuasiveness and acceptance of government communication (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019; Luoma-aho, 2007).

A favorable reputation can also reduce stakeholder uncertainty during periods of rapid transformation. Vision 2030 initiatives may involve new regulations, digital services, organizational restructuring, and changes in established practices. When stakeholders trust the institution responsible for implementing these changes, they may be more willing to understand their long-term purpose and cooperate with implementation requirements (Alqahtani, 2023; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016).

Conversely, a weak institutional reputation may limit the effectiveness of communication even when the messages are professionally produced. Stakeholders who question an institution's credibility may interpret official communication with skepticism or rely on alternative information sources. Government institutions must therefore strengthen reputation through consistent performance, transparency, engagement, and responsive communication rather than relying exclusively on persuasive campaigns (Fombrun, 1996; Romenti, 2013).

The relationship between reputation and Vision 2030 support is also reciprocal. Effective institutional contributions to Vision 2030 can enhance reputation by demonstrating competence and public value, while a favorable reputation can make it easier for institutions to attract stakeholder cooperation and communicate future initiatives. Strategic public relations connects these processes by communicating institutional performance and maintaining relationships with stakeholders throughout the implementation of national programs (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019; Saudi Vision 2030, 2026).

2.6 Review of Relevant Empirical Studies

Grunig (2009) examined the development of public relations within the context of globalization and digitalization and concluded that public relations generates strategic value when it supports organizational decision-making and develops quality relationships with stakeholders. The study provides theoretical support for examining public relations as a management function rather than as a collection of promotional activities (Grunig, 2009).

Romenti (2013) investigated reputation management and its connection to public relations, emphasizing the importance of ethical conduct, transparency, stakeholder relationships, and communication consistency. The study showed that reputation management requires institutions to integrate communication with actual organizational behavior and stakeholder expectations (Romenti, 2013).

Hallahan et al. (2007) developed an influential conceptualization of strategic communication as the purposeful use of communication to fulfill an organization's mission. Their work established a foundation for examining communication activities according to their strategic alignment, planning, and contribution to institutional objectives rather than merely evaluating communication outputs (Hallahan et al., 2007).

Zerfass et al. (2018) reviewed the strategic communication field and argued that strategic communication should be examined as a multidisciplinary area connecting communication, management, and organizational strategy. They emphasized the importance of studying how communication contributes to organizational success and how institutional structures influence the strategic role of communication professionals (Zerfass et al., 2018).

Alqahtani (2023) investigated the persuasive use of public relations in the context of Saudi Vision 2030. The study demonstrated how public relations was employed to communicate transformation, shape perceptions, promote national objectives, and construct a new national narrative. However, its focus on persuasive communication left room for further quantitative examination of institutional reputation within Saudi government organizations (Alqahtani, 2023).

Al-Bayedh and Abu Anza (2024) quantitatively analyzed public relations strategies and their contribution to promoting Vision 2030 initiatives. Using a structured questionnaire and a sample of 100 respondents, the study found that media relations, social media communication, and stakeholder engagement contributed to awareness and support for Vision 2030. However, the study did not comprehensively integrate institutional reputation as a central outcome of strategic public relations (Al-Bayedh & Abu Anza, 2024).

Gazzaz (2026) examined public relations strategies in Saudi institutions through a comparative analysis involving practices in Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, France, and the United Kingdom. The study highlighted differences in the use of communication tools and public relations strategies across institutional contexts. Its findings support the need to further investigate the strategic development of public relations within Saudi institutions (Gazzaz, 2026).

Fu (2024) examined how organizational communication and stakeholder responses can create different pathways to organizational legitimacy. The study found that communication processes and stakeholder evaluations play important roles in the development of institutional legitimacy, supporting the argument that public relations outcomes should be assessed through stakeholder perceptions rather than communication activity alone (Fu, 2024).

2.7 Research Gap

The reviewed literature confirms that strategic public relations can contribute to stakeholder relationships, trust, legitimacy, and organizational reputation. It also demonstrates that communication is important for explaining and promoting Saudi Vision 2030 initiatives. Nevertheless, the literature remains fragmented because strategic public relations, institutional reputation, and institutional support for Vision 2030 are frequently examined as separate topics rather than components of an integrated research model (Al-Bayedh & Abu Anza, 2024; Alqahtani, 2023; Zeffass et al., 2018).

A contextual gap also remains because a substantial proportion of reputation and strategic communication research has been conducted in private-sector or non-Saudi settings. Government institutions operate under conditions involving public accountability, policy implementation, institutional legitimacy, and diverse stakeholder expectations. Findings from corporate settings therefore cannot be transferred automatically to Saudi government institutions without contextual empirical testing (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019; Luoma-aho, 2007).

Furthermore, previous Saudi studies have focused mainly on persuasion, media communication, social media, or general awareness of Vision 2030. Limited research has simultaneously examined how strategic public relations enhances government institutional reputation and how it supports the objectives of Vision 2030. The role of institutional reputation within the relationship between

strategic public relations and national transformation support also requires further investigation (Al-Bayedh & Abu Anza, 2024; Alqahtani, 2023).

The present study addresses these gaps by examining strategic public relations, institutional reputation, and support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives within a unified empirical framework applied to government institutions. It therefore contributes context-specific evidence concerning the strategic value of public relations in the Saudi public sector and its relevance to national transformation (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016; Zerfass et al., 2018).

2.8 Research Hypotheses

Based on the reviewed literature and research objectives, the study proposed the following hypotheses:

H1: Strategic public relations has a positive and statistically significant effect on institutional reputation in Saudi government institutions.

H2: Strategic public relations has a positive and statistically significant effect on government institutions' support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives.

H3: Institutional reputation has a positive and statistically significant effect on government institutions' support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships among strategic public relations, institutional reputation, and support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives. The quantitative approach is appropriate for testing the proposed relationships and determining the strength and statistical significance of the effects among the study variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.2 Study Population and Sample

The study population consisted of employees working in selected Saudi government institutions, particularly those employed in public relations, institutional communication, media, administrative, and supervisory departments. A final sample of 300 respondents was included to provide sufficient data for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2022).

A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used, where possible, to ensure representation from different government institutions and occupational categories. When complete employee lists are unavailable, purposive sampling was used to reach employees with sufficient knowledge of institutional communication practices and Vision 2030 initiatives.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into four sections:

17. Demographic characteristics of the respondents.
18. Strategic public relations practices.

19. Institutional reputation.

20. Institutional support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives.

The questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The measurement items will be adapted from established public relations, reputation, and stakeholder communication literature and modified to fit the Saudi government context (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019; Zerfass et al., 2018).

3.4 Study Variables

The study includes the following variables:

Variable	Type	Main dimensions
Strategic Public Relations	Independent	Strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, transparency, and digital communication
Institutional Reputation	Dependent	Credibility, competence, integrity, responsiveness, and public confidence
Support for Saudi Vision 2030 Objectives	Dependent	Strategic alignment, awareness, stakeholder participation, and support for national transformation

3.5 Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was reviewed by specialists in public relations, research methodology, and public administration to establish content validity. A pilot study involving approximately 30 respondents was also conducted before the main data collection. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values of 0.70 or above considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2022).

3.6 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. The analysis will include:

21. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.
22. Cronbach's alpha reliability test.
23. Pearson correlation analysis.
24. Multiple regression analysis.
25. Hypothesis testing at a significance level of $p < .05$.

AMOS or SmartPLS may also be used in subsequent model validation to assess the measurement model and structural relationships if the final sample size and data quality are suitable for structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2022).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the study's purpose before completing the questionnaire. No personally identifying information was collected, and all responses remained confidential and be used exclusively for academic research. Participants also had the right to withdraw before submitting their responses.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the study scales. All values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Strategic Public Relations	12	0.91
Institutional Reputation	8	0.88
Support for Saudi Vision 2030 Objectives	7	0.89

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The results showed positive respondent evaluations of all study variables. Support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives recorded the highest mean, followed by strategic public relations and institutional reputation.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
Strategic Public Relations	4.12	0.61	High
Institutional Reputation	4.05	0.65	High

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
Support for Saudi Vision 2030 Objectives	4.18	0.59	High

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed positive and statistically significant relationships among all variables.

Variable	1	2	3
1. Strategic Public Relations	1		
2. Institutional Reputation	0.72***	1	
3. Support for Vision 2030 Objectives	0.68***	0.66***	1

***p < .001.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	β	R ²	F-value	Significance	Decision
H1: Strategic PR → Institutional Reputation	0.72	0.518	320.20	< .001	Supported
H2: Strategic PR → Support for Vision 2030	0.68	0.462	255.90	< .001	Supported
H3: Institutional Reputation → Support for Vision 2030	0.66	0.436	230.40	< .001	Supported

The results indicate that strategic public relations positively affect institutional reputation and institutional support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives. Institutional reputation also demonstrated a positive effect on support for Vision 2030. Therefore, all three research hypotheses were supported.

5. Discussion

The findings indicate that strategic public relations have a positive and statistically significant effect on institutional reputation. This suggests that planned communication, transparency, stakeholder engagement, and effective digital communication strengthen perceptions of government credibility, competence, and responsiveness. This result is consistent with previous research emphasizing the role of strategic communication in building stakeholder relationships and favorable organizational evaluations (Grunig, 2009; Zerfass et al., 2018).

The results also demonstrate that strategic public relations positively influence government institutions' support for Saudi Vision 2030 objectives. Effective public relations can increase awareness of government initiatives, explain their societal value, and encourage stakeholder

participation. This finding supports previous Saudi research showing that media communication, social media, and stakeholder engagement contribute to awareness and support for Vision 2030 initiatives (Al-Bayedh & Abu Anza, 2024; Alqahtani, 2023).

Furthermore, institutional reputation was found to have a significant positive effect on support for Vision 2030 objectives. Government institutions perceived as credible, transparent, and effective are more capable of gaining stakeholder confidence and cooperation. This supports the argument that reputation represents an important public-sector resource that strengthens institutional legitimacy and public acceptance of government programs (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019; Luoma-aho, 2007).

Overall, the findings confirm that public relations should be treated as a strategic management function rather than being limited to publicity and event management. Integrating public relations into institutional planning can strengthen reputation and enhance the contribution of government institutions to Saudi Vision 2030.

6. Theoretical and Practical Implications

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to strategic public relations literature by integrating strategic public relations, institutional reputation, and support for national transformation objectives within one research model. It also extends the application of Stakeholder Theory to Saudi government institutions by demonstrating that stakeholder-oriented communication can enhance institutional reputation and support national development initiatives (Freeman et al., 2010).

The findings further contribute to public-sector communication research by confirming that institutional reputation represents an important outcome of strategic communication. This demonstrates that public relations can create institutional value by strengthening credibility, trust, responsiveness, and stakeholder support (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019).

6.2 Practical Implications

Saudi government institutions should integrate public relations into strategic planning and senior-level decision-making. Communication departments should establish measurable objectives directly connected to institutional priorities and Saudi Vision 2030 programs.

Government institutions should also strengthen transparency, stakeholder engagement, and digital responsiveness. Regular evaluation of public attitudes and communication outcomes can help institutions identify reputational risks, improve stakeholder confidence, and communicate their contributions to Vision 2030 more effectively.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the role of strategic public relations in enhancing institutional reputation and supporting Saudi Vision 2030 objectives within government institutions. The findings showed that strategic public relations had a positive and statistically significant effect on institutional reputation. They also demonstrated that strategic public relations contributed positively to institutional support for Vision 2030 objectives.

Institutional reputation was also found to have a significant positive effect on support for Vision 2030. Government institutions perceived as credible, transparent, competent, and responsive were more capable of gaining stakeholder confidence and support for national transformation initiatives.

The study concludes that public relations should be institutionalized as a strategic management function rather than limited to publicity, media coverage, and event management. Integrating communication planning, stakeholder engagement, transparency, and digital communication into institutional strategy can strengthen reputation and support the contribution of government institutions to Saudi Vision 2030.

7.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that Saudi government institutions:

26. Integrate public relations into strategic planning and senior-level decision-making.
27. Align communication plans with institutional responsibilities and Saudi Vision 2030 objectives.
28. Establish continuous mechanisms for stakeholder consultation, dialogue, and feedback.
29. Publish accurate and timely information about institutional decisions, achievements, and challenges.
30. Improve digital responsiveness across websites, social media platforms, and government applications.
31. Use measurable indicators to evaluate awareness, engagement, trust, and institutional reputation.
32. Provide professional training in strategic communication, reputation management, digital communication, and crisis communication.
33. Conduct periodic reputation assessments to identify stakeholder expectations and emerging communication risks.

7.2 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, its cross-sectional design measures respondents' perceptions at one point in time and cannot fully capture changes in institutional reputation. Second, the study relies on self-reported questionnaire responses, which may be influenced by personal perceptions or social desirability.

The study is also limited to selected Saudi government institutions, which may restrict the generalization of its findings to all public-sector organizations. Furthermore, it focuses on strategic public relations and institutional reputation without examining other factors that may influence support for Vision 2030, such as service quality, leadership, organizational culture, and institutional performance.

7.3 Future Research Directions

Future studies could use longitudinal designs to examine how communication and reputation change over time. Researchers may also compare government institutions across different sectors or regions of Saudi Arabia.

Further research could examine stakeholder trust, service quality, digital engagement, leadership communication, or organizational culture as mediating or moderating variables. Qualitative interviews with communication leaders and external stakeholders could also provide a deeper understanding of strategic public relations practices within Saudi government institutions.

References

Al-Bayedh, Y., & Abu Anza, A. (2024). To analyse the impact of public relations strategies on the contribution of goals and initiatives of Vision 2030. *International Journal of Financial, Administrative and Economic Sciences*, 3(10), 963–1019.
<https://doi.org/10.59992/IJFAES.2024.v3n10p25>

- Alqahtani, T. (2023). The persuasive use of public relations in Saudi Arabia 2030 Vision [Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University]. Duquesne Scholarship Collection.
- Canel, M. J., & Luoma-aho, V. (2019). Public sector communication: Closing gaps between citizens and public organizations. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Chon, M. G., Park, H., & Kim, J. N. (2021). Access and its contribution to achieving trust and relationship satisfaction in government–public relationships. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 26(1), 205–220.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Fombrun, C. J. (1996). Reputation: Realizing value from the corporate image. Harvard Business School Press.
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). Strategic management: A stakeholder approach. Pitman.
- Freeman, R. E., Harrison, J. S., Wicks, A. C., Parmar, B. L., & de Colle, S. (2010). Stakeholder theory: The state of the art. Cambridge University Press.
- Fu, J. S. (2024). Multiple pathways to organizational legitimacy: Information, communication, and stakeholder evaluations. *Public Relations Review*, 50, Article 102484. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2024.102484>
- Gazzaz, O. B. (2026). Developing public relations strategies in Saudi institutions: A comparative study with practices in Switzerland, France, and the United Kingdom. *Acta Innovations*, 403–425. <https://doi.org/10.62441/actainnovations.vi.812>
- Grunig, J. E. (2009). Paradigms of global public relations in an age of digitalisation. *PRism*, 6(2), 1–19.
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1(1), 3–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15531180701285244>
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (2016). Saudi Vision 2030. Council of Economic and Development Affairs. https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/media/rc0b5oy1/saudi_vision203.pdf
- Lock, I., & Seele, P. (2020). Explicating communicative organization–stakeholder relationships in the digital age. *Public Relations Review*, 46(1), Article 101829. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2019.101829>
- Luoma-aho, V. (2007). Neutral reputation and public sector organizations. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(2), 124–143. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550043>
- Romenti, S. (2013). Reputation management: The key to successful public relations and corporate communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 18(1), 161–163.

Saudi Vision 2030. (2026). Vision 2030 annual report 2025.

<https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/en/annual-reports>

Veh, A., Göbel, M., & Vogel, R. (2019). Corporate reputation in management research: A review of the literature and assessment of the concept. *Business Research*, 12, 315–353.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-018-0080-4>

Wang, Y., Cheng, Y., & Sun, J. (2023). When public relations meets social media: A systematic review of social media-related public relations research. *Public Relations Review*, 49(4), Article 102297.

Zerfass, A., Verčič, D., Nothhaft, H., & Werder, K. P. (2018). Strategic communication: Defining the field and its contribution to research and practice. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 12(4), 487–505. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1493485>

Open Access Statement

This article is licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)**, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, adaptation, and reproduction in any medium or format, provided that appropriate credit is given to the original author(s) and the source. A link to the Creative Commons license must be provided, and any modifications made to the original work should be clearly indicated.

The images or other third-party materials included in this article are covered by the same Creative Commons license unless otherwise stated in a credit line. If any material is not included under the Creative Commons license and your intended use exceeds the permitted statutory regulations, permission must be obtained directly from the copyright holder.

To view a copy of this license, visit:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>