

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS AND JOB PERFORMANCE: THE TRANSFORMATION IN MALAYSIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Excellence of public relations is all about image, reputation and quality of services provided to stakeholders. The practice of public relations excellence is best viewed as a crucial element for the success of the organization on an ongoing basis. Excellent work performance depends on the practice of public relations excellence among employees of the organization. This study focuses on the relationship between excellences of public relations with job performance among employees in public sector at Putrajaya. In this context, the study focused on public sector organizations on four aspects of excellence of public relations. First, strategic management, integration, participation and employee relations are based on the theory of Excellence of Public Relations by James E. Grunig (1992). A pilot study was conducted and the Cronbach Alpha value was at 0.909. Subsequently, the real research was conducted by distributing questionnaires to 176 respondents from the public sector in Putrajaya. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 22. Pearson Correlation was used to analyze the data and the results showed that the five hypotheses were accepted and this shows that public relations excellence variables in this study has a positive relationship with job performance. The overall relationships of two variables are at a moderate level. It is hoped that with the information obtained from the results of this study, the practice of public relations excellence can be implemented on an ongoing basis to enhance performance.

**Keywords** : Excellences of public relations, job performance, public relations, public sector, government public relations, strategic management.

## **PERHUBUNGAN AWAM DAN PRESTASI KERJA: SATU TRANSFORMASI DI MALAYSIA**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kecemerlangan perhubungan awam adalah berkaitan dengan imej, reputasi dan kualiti perkhidmatan yang diberikan kepada pihak yang berkepentingan. Amalan kecemerlangan perhubungan awam sesuai dipaparkan sebagai elemen penting bagi kejayaan organisasi secara berterusan. Prestasi kerja yang cemerlang bergantung kepada amalan kecemerlangan perhubungan awam dalam kalangan kakitangan organisasi. Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada hubungan antara kecemerlangan perhubungan awam dengan prestasi kerja di

kalangan pekerja dalam sektor awam di Putrajaya. Dalam konteks ini, kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada empat aspek kecemerlangan perhubungan awam iaitu pengurusan strategik, integrasi, penyertaan dan hubungan pekerja. Kajian ini berdasarkan teori Kecemerlangan Perhubungan Awam oleh James E. Grunig (1992). Kajian rintis telah dijalankan dan nilai Alpha Cronbach ialah pada 0,909. Kajian sebenar dijalankan dengan mengedarkan soal selidik kepada 176 orang responden di Putrajaya. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan Pakej Statistik untuk Sains Sosial (SPSS) versi 22. Korelasi Pearson digunakan untuk menganalisis data dan keputusan menunjukkan bahawa lima hipotesis telah diterima dan ini menunjukkan bahawa perhubungan awam mempunyai hubungan yang positif dengan prestasi kerja. Hubungan keseluruhan bagi dua pembolehubah adalah pada tahap yang sederhana. Diharapkan dengan maklumat yang diperolehi daripada hasil kajian ini, amalan kecemerlangan perhubungan awam boleh dilaksanakan secara berterusan untuk meningkatkan prestasi kerja dalam sektor awam.

**Kata kunci:** Kecemerlangan perhubungan awam, prestasi kerja, perhubungan awam, sektor awam, kerajaan perhubungan awam, pengurusan strategik.

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## INTRODUCTION

Excellence of public relations is a systematic and efficient management and crucial in building and retaining image, as well as to protect the reputation of the organization. This is because the practice of public relations is one that reflects the organization's ability to deliver services and information to the various stakeholders. Excellence of public relations is one of ways of stakeholders to find out the purpose of the organization in determining whether an organization is reliable or not.

According to Mohd Hamdan (2008a), the practice of public relations is an important role to the organization as it seeks to attract customers, generate interest on investments, improve financial performance, enhance the image of talented employees, improve return on assets of the organization, creating a competitive advantage and gain a positive view of financial analysts. Government Public Relations (GPR) is one of the important tasks in the public sector regardless of national, state or district. Each department in the public sector to appoint a staff known as the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the aim of creating individuals who act as middlemen in the organization to connect with the audience or between employees and other employees. However, every employee in the organization needs to practice excellence of public relations for the success the vision and mission of the organization.

Accordingly, every employee in the public sector needs to practice public relations with excellence because the staffs are individuals who are responsible to deliver information and services to the community as well as the success of the organization's objectives, mission and vision of the organization. Consequently, according to Toth (2007) the involvement of public relations in decision-making to determine the direction of organization is an effective measure, particularly for long-term planning organization. Thus, the public relations can identify and communicate with stakeholders to effective organization which will bring a positive or negative impact on the organization. Strategic management is also a key element

to excellence of public relations at organization. According Poister and Streib (2005), strategic management is a task that has the potential to determine the progression or regression of an organization. Whereas, Barzelay and Jacobsen (2009) noted that strategic management is a very effective strategy to change a state bureaucracy, particularly in the case studies undertaken, namely the European Commission.

Moreover, according to Bahtiar et al. (2005), public relations activities are not limited to certain media such as television and newspapers, but are solely focused on the promotion of products or services just like any other review in some quarters. Rather, it involves the use of media as a means of integration that can function to strengthen and maintain the good name and mutual understanding between an organization and the public. Li and Hambrick (2005) in their study found that the conduct that did not practice integration is a negative thing, especially in terms of job performance. This will form a weak association as negative behaviour will affect the poor and prolonged exposure to the organization. So, in this context, the conduct of members of the organization has to do with integration in the organization and their level of participation in a holistic manner.

Participation and support of efficient governance will provide a sustainable advantage, especially with the practice of transparency; accountability and governance. Therefore, participation is an important aspect for the development of the organization. The study of effects of participation on organizational performance is often used as an important mechanism as well as a reference to ensure that the organization would work on planning (Batt & Doellgast 2005). Organizations that emphasize on the participation of workers are more likely to produce work that has quality to give an impact the public and further enhance the image and identity of the organization.

The relationship between employees represented by physical, emotional and thinking power within each individual to carry out tasks and responsibilities are assigned. Thus, the relationship of the employee has various dimensions (physical, emotional and thought) which leads to the diversity and overall experience (Rich et al. 2010). Employee relationship is featured in the organization's culture to ensure organizations can act according to a predetermined plan. Besides that, good employee relations will form positive attitude among employees.

Elements contained in the public relations excellence is more focused on the context of relations between workers and management. This relationship can be seen through the communication process that occurs in the organization. Moreover, this relationship will also determine whether an organization is wise in managing all resources owned or otherwise. Public organizations that serve and provide services to the public, evaluation and critique of all the activities carried out were not spared. In fact, Yaeger and Sorensen (2009) asserted that the key role of strategic management is to strike a balance between the goals and mission of the organization and the organization's ability to achieve its mission and objectives. In this case, strategic management is seen as an important aspect of the success of an activity. This is because, the organization should be aware that the development organization linked to strategic management is carried out to ensure that the organization is on the right track (Head 2009). In addition, integration is also an important element in ensuring the strategic management can be implemented effectively.

Integration between human resource management and organizational development is a strategy that shows human capital development organization produces no improvement in terms of productivity and performance of the organization. It serves to promote human resource management system which is more systematic (Lawler and Worley, 2006). Thus, the researcher believes that integration in every part of human capital development will mainly benefit organization to maintain its quality for sustainability. The participation of employees in the organization also plays an important role. Daft (2005) suggest that the role of a supervisor or leader is to manage any resistance to change, control the negative impact of the changes and create a conducive atmosphere to encourage open communication. Good leadership behaviour within the organization has given a positive start to the staff while the development process in an organization requires continuous participation of members of the organization. Meanwhile, Noe et al. (2013) asserts that the organization takes into account employees' participation in decision making. The involvement of employees in the formulation and implementation of wage policy has been associated with job satisfaction. The satisfaction of getting higher salaries are one of the possibilities for workers to have a better understanding and a greater commitment to policies that are produced during their involvement. Meanwhile, the entries shown in the organization tends to create harmonious and supportive relationships among members of the organization, especially during the communication process.

The relationship between these workers has a positive impact on the development and growth of the organization, which in turn promote the goals and objectives of the organization. Organizations that promote good relations between workers will create a positive organizational culture that are efficient and effective. According to Gray et al. (2007), the relationship between subordinates or superiors has distinctive value. With limited employee relations conducted in management, information dissemination is limited and only certain information is provided. The network will open when you want to get valuable information and will close when the information obtained is expected to be confidential. Good employee relations will benefit each member of the organization if practiced well. This shows that employee relations will be more focused on the acceptance of ideal information to improve the quality of work and organizational performance. Thus, in this context researchers strongly believe that a close relationship among the staff of the organization is very important for the purpose of disseminating information accurately and correctly.

Employee relations that exist within the organization aim to share and get new information to develop strategies and operational processes. Organizations get information by interaction of labour relations and new information shared will be used to form products, services and new processes. This new information is considered as an innovation to organizations that can enhance organizational performance (Mu et al. 2008). Therefore, the relationship between each other in this network is a two-way communication that enables organizations to get new information in addition to strengthening the existing information. Employee relation carries positive impact on the development of the organization and also the quality of working life prevailing among the members of the organization.

Therefore, this paper focuses on four (4) aspects of excellence of public relations namely, the aspects of strategic management, integration, participation and employee's relations among civil servants in three ministries, namely the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). Its aim is to

examine the relationship of organizational communication that focuses on public relations excellence in ministry implemented by the Public Relations excellence Theory introduced by James. E. Grunig (1992).

## **METHOD**

This descriptive study involved public sector employees in the Executive Group level (Grades 1 to 39) in three ministries in Putrajaya. The total employment for this group 257 people. The questionnaire used in this study tries examine the relationship with the achievement of excellence in public relations work in the public sector. Likert scale is used to measure attitudes by asking respondents to respond to any questions, see the extent to which they agree and take advantage of the cognitive and affective components of attitude. Likert scale is suitable for measuring the views expressed by respondents in a particular area on an ongoing basis about perceptions and attitudes (Cohen et al. 2000). Category positive attribute options are based on a five point Likert scale appropriate to the size of the hose where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = quit agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Researchers choose the type of simple random sampling design because it coincides with this study to examine the relationship of public relations excellence with performance in the public sector. Random sampling is the process of taking or using samples when every individual in the population has an equal chance to be selected (Mohd Majid Konting, 2009). This sampling method provides many advantages where it provides an opportunity for researchers to choose samples and to save time and enable researchers to achieve the real purpose of the study.

## **FINDINGS**

A total of 176 respondents responded to the questionnaire. Selection of respondents for this study is executive staff in the three ministries. Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents by gender, age and length of services. The findings show the distribution of respondents by gender, age and length of services and the results revealed that there were 64 to 36.4 percent of respondents are male. Meanwhile, as many as 63.6 percent of a total of 112 respondents were female.

In this context, the age of the respondents showed that most respondents in this study aged between 20 to 29 years of 80 and 45.5% followed by 43.2 per cent in the age range of 30 to 39 years, which is a total of 76 people. 6.3 per cent represents respondents aged between 40 to 49 years, that is a total of 11 people. Respondents aged 50 years and over had the lowest percentage at 5.0 percent with only 9 people. The tenure of respondent who served between 5 to 10 years had the highest percentage of 54.5 percent with a total of 96, followed by 33.6 percent of respondents who work less than 5 years, i.e. a total of 59 people. While respondents who worked 15 years and above carries a total percentage of 6.8 per cent, a total of 12 people and for respondents who work 11 to 15 years and above only recorded a percentage of 5.1 per cent with only 9 people.

**Table 1 Respondent's Profile**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	64	36.4
	Female	112	63.6
<b>Age</b>	20-29	80	45.5
	30-39	76	43.2
	40-49	11	6.3
	50	9	5.0
<b>Services</b>	Less than 5 years	59	33.6
	5-10 years	96	54.5
	11-15 years	9	5.1
	15 years and above	12	6.8
<hr/> <b>Total (N=176)</b> <hr/>			

### **Excellences of Public Relations**

This study focuses on aspects of public relations excellence which including strategic management, integration, participation and employee relations among employees at three ministries. The mean scores were compiled from the highest to the lowest as shown in Table 2. Out of the 28 statements used to describe the aspects of excellence of public relations among executive staff in the ministry, the results showed that all statements obtained high scores within the standard deviation of 0.633, mean 4.18 to 4.20 mean and standard deviation of 0.659. This finding suggests that, perception and the employees have positive view of each of the statement. This shows that staff has excellent in line with the organization, particularly in the image and reputation of ministry. Next, the employee's applied the excellent aspect of public relations (strategic management, integration, participation and employee relations) which contributed to the excellence of public relations in Malaysian ministries.

**Table 2 Overall average scores of Excellence of Public Relations Aspect**

STATEMENTS	5 Very Agree	4	3	2	1 Very Disagre e	Mean <sup>z</sup>	Standard Deviation
<b>Strategic Management</b>							
Strategic management is an action that resulted in achieving organizational objectives.	55	10 1	18	2		4.19	.654
Strategic communication management is fundamental to excellence in strategic management and communication.	52	10 3	18	3		4.16	.666
Effective strategic management organization provides a balance between the goals and mission of the organization.	46	11 4	15	1		4.16	.587
I believe that strategic management is a process that involves strategic communications, strategic planning and organizational development.	55	95	24	2		4.15	.688
Integrated strategic management to benefit the development of the organization.	48	10 6	20	2		4.14	.645
Strategic management ensures the organization is on the right track.	42	11 2	21	1		4.11	.609
Making strategic management activities in an organization can be implemented in accordance with the strategy that has been designed.	48	10 1	25	2		4.11	.672
<b>Integration</b>							
System integration is practiced within the organization helps the organization in terms of human capital and productivity needs of staff.	58	96	21	1		4.20	.659
I firmly believe that integration is the core of the strategic management of the organization.	52	10 6	15	3		4.18	.648
Staff to communicate and integrate with each other to achieve organizational goals and establish a competitive team.	54	10 0	22			4.18	.633
Integration between staff and customers have a positive impact on the organization.	55	10 0	18	3		4.16	.739
Integration between human resource	50	10	23	1		4.14	.648

management and organizational development will generate human capital to improve productivity and organizational performance.		2					
Integration brings changes to the level of thought and participation among employees.	56	92	23	5		4.13	.741
Integration may establish working groups to contribute to the development of the organization.	40	11 6	17	3		4.08	.688
<b>Participation</b>							
Participation of the community has a positive impact on the organization.	44	10 9	20	1	2	4.09	.695
Staff participation brings a harmony atmosphere to the organization.	39	11 4	20	1	2	4.06	.677
Employee involvement of all levels of decision-making provides a good understanding of the organization.	39	11 3	19	3	2	4.05	.708
The staff can highlight the advantages of self with continuous investment.	38	10 9	25	2	2	4.02	.713
Public participation leads to increased organizational performance because of information provided by the community is a significant and positive elements.	34	11 5	24	1	2	4.01	.676
Public participation is a good element to form an agreement between the organization and society.	31	11 9	24	2		4.01	.646
<b>Employee's Relations</b>							
I have good ties and continue to cooperate with colleagues.	56	99	20		1	4.19	.671
Interaction between employees to provide information and input new to the organization.	57	93	24		2	4.15	.736
Employee relations create two-way communication between staff and make the work environment more conducive.	51	10 4	19		2	4.15	.693
Failure to create harmony in the relationship will lead to internal conflict, disagreement and selfish behavior.	57	95	19	3	2	4.15	.764
Employee relationship is a partnership network that will benefit the organization.	47	11 2	14	1	2	4.14	.674
Employee relationship and seeks to provide opportunities for organizations to change and innovate.	47	10 6	20	1	2	4.16	.705
Employee relationship is seen as one of the elements to guarantee the quality of work at my workplace.	48	10 3	20	2	3	4.09	.762

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I feel a bit limited relationship with the superiors.      47      90      26      11      2      3.96      .877

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*\*Likert Scales 1-5: 1= very disagree, 2= disagree, 3= quite agree, 4= agree, 5= very agree*

Accordingly, in our Malaysian context, the study found that public sector employees are more focused on integration as practiced in organizations through integration which can benefit the organization in terms of human capital needs and staff productivity. In addition, strategic management is also an action that resulted in achieving organizational objectives. Through strategic management proper practice will improve work performance among public sector employees.

However, public sector employees can also foster good relationships and continue to cooperate with colleagues to create a harmonious and conducive atmosphere in the workplace. In addition, the employees are confident that integration is the core of strategic management in the organization because every staff can relate to each other. With that, the staff will always communicate and integrate with each other to achieve organizational goals and establish a competitive team. Therefore, in the context of the public sector in Malaysia integration is the most important element in creating excellence of public relations practice among public sector employees in Putrajaya.

### **Job Performance**

Performance is measured to include four (4) principles of performance proposed by Lal et al. (1995), namely the coordination of tasks, job evaluation, reward and planning. Analysis (see Table 3) showed that 25 statements submitted produced high mean scores within the range of 4.22, the standard deviation of 0.678. to 4.27 with a standard deviation of 0.758. This illustrates that the majority of ministry staff are very positive to agree with every statement that involves the performance of work in the ministry. In this case, it is assumed that the ministry staff work performance is important and should be implemented to ensure that the ministry can carry out its functions better in the future.

**Table 3      Overall average scores of Job Performance Aspect**

STATEMENTS	5 Very Agree	4	3	2	1 Very Disagree	Mean <sup>d</sup>	Standard Deviation
<b>Task Coordination</b>							
Coordination tasks will reduce complexity in the process of organizational communication.	61	100	13		2	4.24	.684
Cooperation of key personnel in coordination tasks for different tasks in scope.	54	112	8		2	4.23	.637
Top management is responsible for coordinating the tasks to subordinates so that the tasks assigned are in line with corporate	58	103	13		2	4.22	.678

objectives and vision and mission of the organization.							
Coordination tasks of governance encourage systematic work in the organization.	55	107	12	1	1	4.22	.641
Managing work easier implemented in coordination work.	51	113	10	1	1	4.20	.617
Coordination tasks will be to create awareness and enhance the skills of employees.	43	117	14	1	1	4.14	.617
<b>Work's Evaluation</b>							
Evaluation of the work to improve staff motivation.	47	115	11	1	2	4.16	.657
Consultation and cooperation between supervisors and employees favourable to both parties.	45	117	11	1	2	4.15	.651
Evaluation of the work is good practice and generate job satisfaction.	44	116	13		3	4.13	.681
For the purpose of organizational development, I received a job evaluation by employers.	52	104	15	1	4	4.13	.771
Appraisals provide good value to the organization.	41	120	11	1	3	4.11	.680
I strongly agree that the supervisor has the power in the job evaluation process.	40	109	23	2	2	4.04	.712
We were allowed to speak during the evaluation of the work carried out.	34	99	33	6	4	3.87	.842
<b>Reward</b>							
I strongly agree that there should be a system of rewards to employees who are high achievers.	70	90	12	1	3	4.27	.758
Rewards are effective strategies to motivate.	61	87	21	6	1	4.14	.798
The reward system is the motivation that led to changes in organizational development.	48	109	14	3	2	4.13	.714
I agree that the staff managed to convey information properly to customers should be rewarded or awards.	51	100	21	3	1	4.12	.719
I am convinced that the benefits offered to employees is commensurate with work performance.	44	105	22	3	2	4.06	.738

I strongly agree rewards given to me is based on the feedback provided by the customer.	49	98	21	5	3	4.05	.816
<b>Planning</b>							
Planning is an on-going process to help leaders in an organization to think more critically and flexibly.	56	108	11		1	4.24	.614
I need to understand and appreciate each design produced by the government	59	100	16		1	4.23	.654
The organization's strategy is based on how planning organization or individual targets.	53	108	13	1	1	4.20	.642
Efficacy was based on the objectives and goals that result in organizational planning.	46	118	10	1	1	4.18	.603
I agree that planning is a process that has been defined and outlined	51	105	19		1	4.16	.651
Planning is a form of decision-making by individuals in organizations.	47	112	15	1	1	4.15	.636

*\*Likert Scales 1-5: 1= very disagree, 2= disagree, 3= quit agree, 4= agree, 5= very agree*

Based on the analysis conducted, public sector employees see rewards as an element that can improve performance and create a work culture that is very good and the employees realize their work is valued by the organization. This can have a positive impact on employees as rewards given to them are based on performance. In addition, the organization is planning a process to help leaders in the organization to think more critically. When every organization has a leader who is always thinking and planning and is flexible, can aspire success to the organization, job performance among employees can be enhanced as a result of encouragement and planning adopted by the leaders.

In addition, aspects of coordination task is also a major factor for employees to enhance performance because it can reduce the complexity in the process of organizational communication. Therefore, the cooperation of all key personnel in coordination task is vital because each employee has a different scope of tasks. Meanwhile, top management has a responsibility in coordinating tasks to subordinates so that the tasks assigned are in line with corporate objectives and vision and mission of the organization. Therefore, the coordination task is important for employees to improve work performance and to create a work environment that is more conducive and productive with a strong workforce to increase productivity.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

This section describes the findings through inferential analysis that aims to describe the relationship between variables and associate it with the characteristics of the study sample to the population. Therefore, in this study, researchers have developed five (5) hypotheses to be tested using correlation analysis to measure the strength and direction of the relationship of

two (2) variables with a correlation coefficient of either strong or weak and positive or negative. In this study, Pearson correlation analysis was used to analyse the relationship between excellence of public relations and job performance aspects in reliance with Guildford's Rule of Thumb. The findings showed that the correlation between excellence of public relations and job performance resulted in a positive value of 0.689 with a significance level of  $p < 0.01$ . The results of the study explained that there is a significant positive and substantial relationship with the moderate correlation between the two items. It shows that public relations is essential in supporting the performance of work in the Ministry. According to Moss (2009), excellence of public relations is a key element that has always given priority in the organization. Excellence of public relations means good management practice organization in terms of public relations among employees and the public. Therefore, excellence of public relations plays an important role in improving work performance and create a conducive working environment that enhance productivity to continue towards achieving organizational goals.

**Table 4 Correlation Pearson The relations of Excellence Public Relations with Job Performance**

	<b>Job Performance</b>
<b>Excellence of Public Relations</b>	0.689**
<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.000
<i>** <math>p &lt; 0.01</math></i>	

**Table 5 Hypotheses Results**

<b>HYPOTHESES</b>	<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>RESULTS H<sub>a</sub></b>
HP <sub>1</sub>	There is a significant positive relationship between aspects of public relations excellence with aspects of job performance among public sector employees in the ministry.	Accepted
HP <sub>2</sub>	There is a significant positive relationship between public relations excellence of strategic management aspects with aspects of job performance among public sector employees in the ministry.	Accepted
HP <sub>3</sub>	There is a significant positive relationship between public relations excellence of integration with the aspect job performance among public sector employees in the ministry.	Accepted
HP <sub>4</sub>	There is a significant positive relationship between public relations excellence with the participation aspect of job performance among public sector	Accepted

	employees in the ministry.	
HP <sub>5</sub>	There is a significant positive relationship between public relations excellence of aspects of labor relations with job performance among public sector employees in the ministry.	Accepted

## CONCLUSION

Overall it can be concluded that this study focuses on excellence in public relations among ministry staff through performance aspects of the work to see to what extent the success of the practice of ministry staff, especially in terms of public relations excellence that can assist the ministry in achieving its goals. The results of the study cover all the elements of excellence in public relations, namely strategic management, integration, participation and employee's relations. Meanwhile, a combination of job performance, coordination tasks, job evaluation, reward and planning are dependent variables for this research. The analysis of the overall review of the findings of descriptive statistics found that the majority of staff in ministries agree and understand any statement contained in aspect of excellence of public relations and job performance. This is because these two aspects are tested to produce high value mean. However, in terms of the relationship and the relationship between these two aspects showed a positive and significant but modest relationship.

However, in general it can be concluded that ministry staffs have positive outlook and perception of the importance of the excellent practice of public relations in achieving the goals of the ministry. Similarly, the performance of the work in which ministry staffs are very positive and confident will pave way to the transformation of ministries to improve the performance of work.

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