

# **The Role of the University Professors as a Reference Group in the Promotion of the National Products of Jordan (Case Study on Universities and Industrial Companies in Jordan)**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to clarify the importance of the university professors in the promotion of the national products of Jordan in the light that the social position of the university professor in the Jordanian society is not less important than any social dignities and leaders who have impacts on the consumer behavior. Moreover, his ability to form the intellectual and cultural backgrounds of the general public through the highest scientific forum; that is the Jordanian universities.

The scientific capacity of university professor and his career make him highly qualified to play a leading role in the development of the product, in cooperation with the management of organizations themselves, and then the formulation of consumer behavior of the Jordanian citizens through several methods. The most important mean is the student, the recipient of lessons daily, as well as through the scientific writings, researches and continuous studies, as well as through the presentation of real examples of the different products during the lectures, television interviews and seminars, scientific conferences and activities of the local community.

## **1. The importance of the Study**

The importance of this study emerges in raising the attention of the organizations managers and Jordanian companies to the university professor position in the society, which is not less than the rest of the opinion leaders. Such position can be utilized to influence the consumer behavior of the Jordanian citizens. The role of university professor in the promotional process lies in his scientific role, and his conviction in any product has a positive impact on the listeners and viewers in significant sectors; the students and citizens.

## **2. Hypotheses of the Study**

This study is based on the direct correlation between the social position of the university professor and the extent of his influence on the Jordanian citizen, as well as between his scientific efforts and ability to promote the national products.

### **2.1. First Hypothesis**

There is no statistical significant relationship between the social position of the university professor and the size of his influence on the Jordanian citizen.

### **2.2. Second Hypothesis**

There is no statistical significant relationship between scientific effort of the university professor and the promotion of Jordanian products.

## **3. Previous Studies**

There are no clear scientific studies address the affect of the university professor on the individual consumer, but there are a set of studies indirectly indicate the importance of this study as a complementary; namely:

1. Mansuor, Yamn (2008) Study the consumer trends in Province of Lathekia city to buy national products, Tishreen University Journal, No. 2, Vol. 30. The researcher pointed out the presence of negative trends among consumers to buy the national products and low impact of the traditional reference groups on the consumer trends, which deepens the idea of this study for the need to create a new influential reference groups.

2. William O. Bearden and Michael J. Etzel (1982) „Reference Group influence on Product and Brand Purchase Decisions", The Journal of Consumer Research, Vol . 9 . The result of this research support hypothesized differences in reference group influence between publicity and privately consumed products and luxuries necessities.

3. Jiaqin Yang, Xihao He and Huei Lee (2007) " Social reference group influence on mobile phone purchasing behaviour : a cross- nation comparative study ", Int . J. Mobile Communications, Vol . 5, No. 3, This paper describes a comparative study investigating the influence of different reference group on consumer purchasing behavior between the mobile phone users of USA and China.

#### **4. The Leading Position of the University Professor in the Jordanian Society <sup>(1)</sup>**

##### **4.1. University, University Professor and the Student**

The University is considered, in the management point of view, an educational service organization transforming the entire inputs; materials, financial, human powers, technological and information into tangible and intangible scientific outputs. It is important to remember that the university professor is deemed the first and most important scientific and educational input relied upon in directing this leading organization in the society according to his scientific and managing perspective. Moreover, the university professor is involved daily with the students in the formulation of scientific material and determines whether the subject is appropriate or not.

The professor is deemed the source of information and entrusted to its development. There is no way to separate between the deliverer of information and the recipient during the educational process in order to obtain a complete academic product. This is known as the interaction between the student and the teacher. The educational process does not mean collection the information only; while in fact it is a reciprocity complementary process that enables the student to engage with his teacher in the formulation of scientific material. The results do not depend on the teacher performance only, but also on the degree of response of the student - as an input - with the lecture, and how he deals with the rest of students, his respect to the lectures time, and his reactions towards the issues and events. The educational process is interactive services based on the teacher and the modern technology means to deliver information not teaching them.

##### **4.2. University Professor and the Reference Groups**

Reference group is a group of individuals who have the physical and moral ability to influence the individual behaviors, in addition to the social behavior, positively or negatively according to their intellectual and backgrounds. Most important examples of the reference groups are family, friends, scientists, celebrities, co-workers and shopping group <sup>(2)</sup>.

What distinguish the university professors from others is their participation in the formulation and manufacturing the various products, identify their features and specifications, in addition to the indirect involvement in the promotion through their influence on the entire students and citizens. The most significant features of the university professor compared to other reference groups are:

- High credibility in communication. The credibility of the sender is the most element that warrants the success of the communication process in general and promotional communication in particular.
- The social position, which emerge out of the awareness of the citizen that the choice of a university professor to any product is not random, but based on the process of informed decision making. Therefore, most people follow the university professor in his consumer

tendencies. Clear evidence on this statement is the model of car he drives, location of his house, or the health, tourist and banking services he prefers.

- His participation in the formulation of the product. Citizens are convinced that the university professor is the first participant in the process of manufacturing of the commodity, service or information product, which forms a state of safety feeling and semi consumer assurance to the citizen on taking consumer decision simulating the professor's decision.
- Quality association with the students and citizens, as the university professor has less contact, quantitatively, than the rest of reference groups, but more influential due to the qualitative feature he has. He is there, spirituality and intellectually, during the dialogue sessions, especially that concerns the political, social or consumer decision making.
- The scientific vision of the university professor, which is deemed the real corner stone that characterizes the university professor from the other opinion leaders and reference groups, because his decision is based on systematically studied before, during and after the purchase or use.
- Eliminating of consumer risk theory. The professor is the best person sought by the individual consumer to charge him for the responsibility of his consumer decision or what is known as the psychological elimination of the consumer risks in its various forms; financial, psychological, technical and social.

## **5. The Promotional role of the University Professor**

The status of a university professor in the teaching process is considered the starting point in the process of understanding the mechanism of the impact of the professor on the consumer decisions of the citizen, as the professor is the first and most important input in the educational process. He is the teacher, a decision maker, the one who chooses the scientific material, as well as choosing samples of scientific exhibit of various products, the examples required during the lectures, laboratories, course, or managing the administrative process of the university organization. He is also the author of the scientific outputs represented in the information carried by the graduates and embodied in scientific books and researches and other magazines, movies and websites.

The second role of the university professor is his participation in the development of the product, follow-up its life cycle in the markets, or in the formulation of the marketing combinations<sup>(3)</sup>. Constantly and continuously, the university professor is taken into consideration in the consumer decision-making of the citizen.

The last role of the university professor is reflected in the promotional process in practical. It is originally derived from the conviction that the professor is a manufacturer of the product, develops it, and audible when talking about the product. Therefore, the impact of the professor on the listeners, especially students, is obvious through the holy atmosphere group that pertaining in the

university organization and in the light of respect atmosphere by students towards their professor, as well through and during the communication process in which the student is the recipient of the information delivered by the university professor who can be described as the best source of information.

## 6. Statistical Analysis

### 6.1. Stability of the Study tool

To ensure the stability of the study tool, the internal consistency coefficient Cronbach Alpha has been calculated, which ranged (0.70-0.76). Table (1) shows these coefficients and these ratios were deemed suitable and appropriate for the purposes of this study.

Table (1) Internal consistency Coefficient Cronbach Alpha

Area	Internal Consistency
The Paragraphs make-up the first Hypothesis	0.70
The Paragraphs make-up the second Hypothesis	0.73
The tool as a whole	0.76

6.2. First Hypothesis: "the position of the university professor in the community and his role in shaping the consumer image and his impact on citizen." To ensure the validity of this hypothesis, the arithmetic means and standard deviations for performance of the sample for the paragraphs related to the first hypothesis, have been calculated as shown in the table herein under:

Table (2) The Arithmetic and Standard Deviations for the Performance of the Study sample for the Paragraphs related to the First Hypothesis arranged in descending order according to the arithmetic means

Rank	No.	Paragraphs	Arithmetic means	Standard Deviation
1	1	The university Professor has a distinguished position in the community	4.78	0.46
2	3	The university professor has the moral ability to influence the students and citizens in general	4.62	0.66
3	2	Citizens have a willingness degree to accept the view of the university professor	4.01	0.22
4	5	Consumer convictions formed through access to books and articles of professors in scientific books and newspapers	3.99	0.86
5	4	There is a clear imitation and influence of the university professors on the citizens in the consumer choices	3.81	0.42
		Paragraphs related to the first Hypothesis as whole	4.24	0.27

Table (2) shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the paragraphs make-up the first hypothesis. The arithmetic means ranged between (3.81 – 4.78), as the first paragraph which reads “The university Professor has a distinguished position in the community” was ranked first with arithmetic means (4.78), while the paragraph No. 4 which reads “There is a clear imitation and influence of the university professors on the citizens in the consumer choices” was ranked the last with arithmetic mean (3.81). The arithmetic mean of the first hypothesis as a whole was (4.24). The arithmetic mean of the paragraphs formed the first hypothesis has been compared to the standard point (3) – the standard point of acceptance the hypothesis – by using “t-test” as shown in the Table No. (3).

Table (3)

The Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations and t-test for the Paragraphs make-up the First Hypothesis compared to standard (3)

	Number	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Value of T	Degree of Freedom	Statistical Significance
First Hypothesis	100	4.24	0.27	45.727	99	0.000

The above-mentioned table shows that there are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the arithmetic mean and the standard point (3) whereas the value of the “t” has been 45.727 with statistical significance 0.000, which indicate the rejection of null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis.

### 6.3. The second hypothesis

“The promotional ability of the university professor during the delivery of the scientific material in the classroom” To verify the validity if this hypothesis, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the study sample performance for the paragraphs pertinent to the second hypothesis, have been calculated as shown in the following table:

Table (4)

The Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Study Sample Performance for the Paragraphs Pertinent to the Second Hypothesis Arranged in Descending Order According to the Arithmetic Means

Rank	No.	Paragraphs	Arithmetic means	Standard Deviation
1	1	The university Professor uses different real examples about the industrial products in the classroom	4.70	0.50
2	5	There is a lack of cooperation between the organizations and universities in supporting the Jordanian national product	4.43	0.67
3	4	There is clear unawareness of the organizations to the university professor role in the promotion of their products	4.34	0.52
4	3	The university professor tends to present, during his lecture, the product he heard or read about	4.26	0.63
5	2	The university professor is fully free to select the industrial product pertinent to the topic of his lecture	4.08	0.54
		Paragraphs related to the first Hypothesis as whole	4.36	0.36

Table (4) shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the paragraphs make-up the second hypothesis. The arithmetic means ranged between (4.70 – 4.08), as the paragraph No. (1), which reads “The university Professor uses different real examples about the industrial products in the classroom” was ranked first with arithmetic means (4.70) , while the paragraph No.(2) which reads “The university professor is fully free to select the industrial product pertinent to the topic of his lecture” was ranked the last with arithmetic mean (4.08). The arithmetic mean of the second hypothesis as a whole was (4.36).

The arithmetic means of the paragraphs formed the second hypothesis has been compared with the standard point (3) – the standard of acceptance the hypothesis – by using the “t-test” as shown in the following table No.( 5)

Table (5)

The Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations and t-test for the Paragraphs make-up the Second Hypothesis compared to Standard (3)

	Number	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	T value	Degree of Freedom	Statistical Significance
First Hypothesis	100	4.36	0.36	37.914	99	0.000

The above table shows that there are differences of statistical significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the arithmetic mean and the standard point (3) whereas the value of the “t” has been 37.914 with statistical significance 0.000, which indicate the rejection of null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis.

Pearson correlation coefficient has also been calculated between the total of paragraphs that represent each of the hypotheses, valued 0.567, which is a positive and statistically significant.

		H2
H1	Pearson Correlation	.567(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

It is important to the Jordanian organizations and companies, in all sectors and forms, to recognize the importance of a university professor in the discovery and development of the product; then the more important role, which is the promotion of such product through his scientific and social position. So, all parties must take practical steps, such as:

1. Conducting joint scientific conferences with the participation of the managers of the public and private organizations, as well the capital holders of the private sector, in the university scientific conferences.
2. Inviting the university professors to visit the companies frequently and to form consultative commissions of the university professors in all public and private organizations, ministries and various companies.

3. Provides the university professors with samples of the national products for recognition and know their evaluations through personal interviews or field visits.
4. Advisory participation in the commercial and industrial exhibitions set by the companies; locally and internationally.
5. The adoption of providing the university professors with direct financial support for publication of the researches, books and scientific travels.

### **8. Margins**

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