Mapping the Convergence of Communication Diciplines: A Conceptual Study

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The Asian Conference on Education & International Development 2020
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract
A positive reputation of an organization is needed in order to ensure the organization sustainability. Therefore, communication with internal and external stakeholders become important. The main objective of this paper is to visualize how the concept and practice of organization-communication, corporate-communication and public relations are combined in the process of organization reputation development. Focus group discussion were used to collect data. The participants of the focus group discussion were professionals in communications, upper and middle management, who are member of Indonesia Public Relations Association, and communication academics, who are member of Indonesia Communication Higher Education Association. Result of the study shows that those three concepts are applied together and complement each other in the process of organization reputation development. First step, in the development of internal reputation, the implementation of organization communication concept plays a significant role. Second step, in the external communication process, the concept of public relations played more dominant role. Third step, combining those two processes where communication strategy and its practical execution needed, corporate communication concept played more dominant role. Analyzing these steps, it can be understood that there is a convergence of the three concepts in the process of reputation development. Based on this result, academic in communication discipline should be aware and go beyond in order to prevent continuous misunderstanding across boundaries.

Keywords: communication discipline, corporate communication, organizational communication, public relations, reputation

Introduction

Business competitions are becoming more and more critical in line with the development of some products and services which causing positive impacts to company strategic communication. Such positive impacts among others are the presence of creativity variable on the concepts developement and the implementation of communication strategy that considers the effectivity of its objective. The conceptual and implementation creativity are supported by the development of communication and information technology. In this study, the terminology used is integrated communication.

The previous study concerning integrated communication was conducted among other by Tosun (2008), stated that there must be synergic interaction between corporate Public Relations with point of purchase communications, because this condition will create a maximum efficiency within the system. Meanwhile, Spence and Essoussi (2010) studied on Small Medium Enterprise (SME) brand building and management stressed in his study that integrated communication strategy is very needed to improve and to become creative approach in brand strategy for its development and sustainability. Another study conducted by Christensen, Firait and Comelissen (2009) stated that is needed adaptation between ideal thinks concerning integrated communications with the integration as conducted by the organization and its communications.

Several previous study showed the integrated communication within organization and products by considering the precise choice of strategy and implementation for gaining maximum efficiency. Literaturely, the similar study can't be found in Indonesia. However, it was found some evaluative activities done by companies or its agences concerning program implementation. Such factual conditions support the need of study to provide Indonesian perspective contribution on integrated communiation implementation.

In its development, the integrated communiation implementation to become debate. The ultimate debate came from the managerial level relates to effectivity and efficiency of this model. Some opinions state that to communicate products or services must use integrated communication to enable gaining the objective of maximum communication. Meanwhile, other opinion stated that it is not always using the integrated communication because each communication can use any method.

Based on this unfinish debate, the main objective of this literature study is to visualize how the concept and practice of organization-communication, corporate-communication and public relations are combined in the business process to achieve its goals.

Strategic Management

Managing company internal activities is a part of modern executive responsibility. In such relations, a modern executive must response the presence challenges within external company, both its surroundings or faraway. Its surroundings includes competitors, suppliers, and limited resources, government and its regulations and customers with many changeable desire. The faraway external environment consists

of condition of economy, social, politics and technological development which all must be anticipated, monitored, assessed, and to be included in the executive decisions. To handle effectively some factors that influence the development and profitability of company, the executive applies the management process which is considered to achieve an optimum position of company within competitive environment. To reach the profitability, the company needs to make perfect its process in responding external environment challenges. In this context, the most meaningful and needs attention within the management process is whenever 'the long-period planning, programming, budgeting, and business policy' are integrated by improving focus on environmental forecasting and external consideration within the formulation and implementation of planning. This holistic approach is known as strategic management.

A strategic management is defined as the whole decisions and actions that results formulation and implementation of planning which is designed to achieve the objective of company/ business/ organization. Such planning consists of nine important tasks:
1.   Formulating company mission includes its goal, philosophy, and objectives.
2.   Conducting analysis that reflects internal condition and company capability.
3.   Conducting assessment of company external environment includes competitive and general contextual factors.
4.   Analysing company choices by determining its resources with external environment.
5.   Identifying the best choice by evaluating every option related to company missions.
6.   Choosing a long-term objective apparatus and whole strategy that results to the best choice.
7.   Developing annual objective and short-term strategy compatible to long-term objective and whole strategy has been chosen.
8.   Implementing strategic choice by allocating budget and resources in which intended to tasks, human, structure, technology, and wages system.
9.   Evaluating strategic process achievement as an input to make future decisions.

Pearce and Robinson (2013) visualized the process of strategic management formulation as shown in the following model.

Model 1. Strategic Management Source: Robinson, 2013
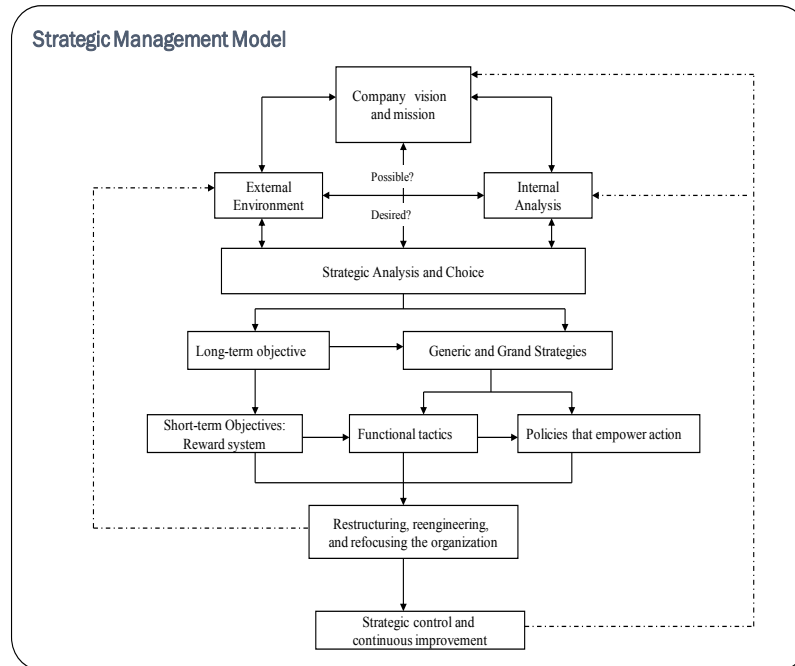
Strategic management is the whole decisions and actions that results formulation and implementation of planning which is designed to achieve the objective of company. Considering that this strategy relates to long-term decision, forward-orientation, and involving huge amount of resources, it must be involvement of top management. With this in mind, strategic management is a three-step process involving company, business, and functional designers. Strategic management model has been discussed to become structural foundation to understand and to integrate all ultimate phases of the formulation and strategic implementations. Strategic management process is centred at the trust that company mission can be achieved through systematic and comprehensive assessment toward internal capability and external environment. To define the company mission is a difficult task within strategic management. Principal value of mission-statement is specification of the final objective of the company. Such mission-statement will provide all managers toward a direction. This mission consolidates value and strengthening company commitment toward a responsible action.

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Organizational Communication

Goldhaber (1993) defined organization communication as process of creating and exchanging messages within interdependent relationship-network to overcome the environmental uncertainty. Organization communication itself is delivery of information and knowledge among members of organizaation with the aim of gaining efficiency and effectivity of organization. In principle, the most virtual character of organization communication is the concept of relation. Goldhaber (1979) defined organization as 'an interdependant reation network'. In which anything is interdependant, it means that such thing is influened and to influence eaach other.

Pattern and character of relationship within organization can be determined by the duty and role determined to its duty includes the important role of manager. Kartikawangi (2013) described that in the perspective of internal company, the manager plays an vital role in communication. As an interpersonal contact, to become leader that makes effort a good working atmosphere and motivates and develop his sub-ordinates, as information processor, as disseminator that disseminate facts and valuable information to his sub-ordinates, as a decision maker, and as entrepreneur that design and commence changes within organization.

Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement is an empowerment of organization members toward their working-role within engagement, people use and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally, and mentally during their performance. Meanwhile Aon Hewitt (2009) defined employee engagement as an instrument to measure emotional commitment and workers intelectuality to gain the organization success. According to Hewitt, the engaged workers will contribute organization through their best performance and tend to talk positive about their organization, defend to maintain working within organization and assist organization by working effectively every day. Employee engagement is influenced by engagement driver among others are company brand, leadership, performance, the work, the basic needs, and company practices. Employee engagement relates significantly with the productivity, profitability, worker's retency, safety, and customer satisfaction (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999).

A key to reach employee engagement is the presence of internal communication and the presence of organization with effective communication to its workers will have a better engagement level (Hayase 2002). Communication challenge is possible to occure within organization, particularly to individu which is given a wider chance within organization, he creates greater conflicts among members, between members and manager within the organization. Such problem can't merely be solved by managerial activity, but needs communication skills to connect individu as organization member. The workers commitment which is caused by internal communication is 'how far an individu to pay full attention and integrate within his own role' (Saks, 2006; 2019). According to Gallup (2020) an internal communication increase some important foundation for organization includes productivity and profitability. In this regards, communication plays four main functions within group or organization, i.e. supervision, motivation, emotional visualization, and information. Communication acts to handle members' behaviour in several ways. Each organization has authority hierarchy and formal guidance line that must be obeyed by the workers. If the workers are ordered to communicate every complaint relates to his job to his direct superior and do the job according to his job-description and in accordance with company policy, it means that communication within such organization has played its control function.

Public Relations

The strategic public relations, which is commonly known as the Excellence Model of Public Relations was introduced by James F. Grunig on 1992. Environment's crises and turbulence push organizations toward communication excellence. Everything the organizations do is related to relations with outside world. Thus Grunig was given a special grant by the International Association of Business Communication (IABC)

Foundation for a three-nation study of public relations. The PR Excellence study was intended to provide managers and practitioners of public relations with critical information to their own professional growth. The term PR Excellence and Communication Excellence were used interchangeably in the Excellence Study. *"Communication excellence is a powerful idea of sweeping scope that applies to all organizations, large and small, that need to communicate effectively with publics on whom the organizations' survival and growth depends."* In fact, *"communication excellence represents an ideal or perfect state that no organization can reasonably expect to achieve fully."*(Dozier & Broom, 1995). In the continuing environment's changes, there was a growing demand for having consistently high standards of operating system and procedure, particularly in environmental matters and local community's life quality. The call for strategic public relations, professionals changed the way to conceive the nature public relations. PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) adopted the new concept of public relations. The old definition of 1982 was then replaced by a new definition which was formulated in 2012. As a reminder, these definitions are presented as follows:

- *PRSA (2012): Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.*
- *PRSA (1982):Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other.*
- *Cutlip, Center, Broom (1994): Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends.*
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The third definition was presented by Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center, and Glen M. Broom in *Effective Public Relations,* which may be the most famous public relations education textbook. The definition by PRSA (2012) is simple and straightforward. It focuses on the basic concept of public relations as one that is *strategic in nature* and emphasizes the '*mutually beneficial relationships*. The (strategic communication) *'process'* indicates that the communication phenomenon is ongoing, ever changing, and continuous. 'Relationships' deals with public relations role in helping to bring together organizations with their stakeholders. The term 'publics' refers to various social groups who have special interest in the organization's affairs. 'Stakeholders' are various interest groups which may influence and be influenced by the organization's decisions. Public relations is also a management function which encompasses the following:

• Anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes, and issues that might impact the operations and plans of the org;

• Counseling management at all levels in the organization related to policy decisions, courses of action and communication, taking into account the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities;

• Researching, conducting, and evaluating, on a continuing basis, programs of action and com to achieve the informed public understanding of organization's success in achieving goals through various relations programs (marketing, financial, employee, community or government relations and other programs;

• Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy. Setting objectives, planning budgeting, recruiting, and training staff, developing necessary facilities.

Public relations can render strategic contributions if the competence of the public relations officer is worth belonging to corporate team of strategic management. Or put differently public relations becomes an integral part of the corporate strategy. Moreover, public relations itself has to be managed strategically. Or as Grunig (2006) has put the matter aptly:

We show that public relations must be managed strategically before it contributes to organizational effectiveness. Therefore, we conclude that strategic management of public relations is the key characteristic of excellent public relations at the micro or programmatic level of public relations. ... Strategic management balances these internal activities with strategies for dealing with external factors.

Being part of the strategic management team is the most critical characteristics of the 'Excellence PR Model'. To exercise the Excellence PR Model' public relations office had to be empowered in order to gain the core knowledge, shared expectations, and participative culture of their staff members. Excellence public relations model consists of three component: Firstly, 'core knowledge' which concerns with professionalism in communication; secondly, 'shared expectations' which means there are shared expectations about communication between the top communicators and the senior managers in the organization; thirdly, corporate culture which means shared values which guide and motivate all organizational members to achieve corporate goals. Both 'core knowledge' and 'shared expectations' are embedded in the corporate culture. The nature of Excellence of Public Relations Model was described by Grunig (2009) on his key note speech in Jakarta as follows:

- *It [Excellence public relations] is essentially a communication process between an organization and its publics*
- *A profession based on scientific knowledge;*
- *A management function rather than communication techniques;*
- *A counseling function rather than publicity matters.*

Excellent companies successfully develop strong cultures which identity (and pride) to all organizational members who are able to communicate effectively to internal as well as external stakeholders which results in favorable images among the different groups of stakeholders. Having investigated many effective companies, Fombrun (1996) draws the following two conclusions: *In companies where reputation is valued, managers take great pains to build, sustain, and defend that reputation by following practices that (1) shape a unique identity and (2) project a coherent and consistent set of images to the publics.*

Corporate Communications

Corporate communication is essentially a strategic communication concept. It is developed to gain a competitive advantage for corporate survival. Strategic communication can be defined as "communication aligned with the company's overall strategy, [intended] to enhance to strategic positioning." (Argenti, 2013). Corporate communication is described as a management function that offers a framework of the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favorable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent. It is essentially an

integrated approach to managing communication. Unlike specialized frame of reference, corporate communication goes beyond the specialties of individual communication practitioners (branding, media relations, investor relations, public affairs, internal communication, etc.) and crosses these specialized boundaries to harness *the strategic interests of the organization at large*. Corporate communication indicates an idea that the sustainability and success of accompany depends on how it is *viewed by key stakeholders*, and *communication is a critical part of building, maintaining, and protecting such reputation.* As a reminder, it seems worth mentioning that corporate communication unifies or integrates (through identity, image, and strategy) three main forms of communication, namely management communication, organizational communication, and marketing communication. (Van Riel, 2000) *Management communication* facilitates the accomplishment of work through other people. Thus, management is only possible with the consent of the managed." Communication is vitally necessary to an organization, because it does not only transmit authority information, but also to achieve cooperation. Practically management communication concerns with the following matters:

- Developing a shared vision of the company within the organization;
- Establishing and maintaining trust in the organizational leadership;
- Initiating and managing the change process; and
- Empowering and motivating employees.

Corporate communication facilitates organization to accomplish responsibilities for taking initiatives in minimizing discrepancies between the desired identity and the desired image---in the framework of strategy, image and identity; establishing profile of the company behind the product or service brand; identifying communication strategy which has to be formulated and executed to fit the company's overall strategy. The following two definitions are among the most frequently referred to by researches: "*By corporate communication we mean the corporate's voice and the images it projects of itself on a world stage populated by its various audiences or we refer to as its constituencies.*" (Argenti, 2003). While Van Riel (2000) stated "*Corporate communication is an instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonized as effectively and efficiently as possible, so as to create a favorable basis for relationships with groups upon which the company is dependent.*"

Corporate communication is closely linked to the company's strategy. It is a totally integrated corporate communication function or a unified corporate communication function. It deals particularly with creating and enhancing corporate's reputation because reputation is essentially an antinomy of crisis. Good reputation leads to corporate credibility because it earns investor confidence, builds stakeholder loyalty, secures talented employees, gains market leadership, and creates business growth. In other words, the corporate reputation is a powerful source of credibility because it builds relations with all the company's stakeholders based on product and service quality, financial performance, social responsibility, favorable workplace environment, and vision and leadership. The strong culture through which the reputation is developed allows consistent communication practice in the framework of ideal managerial climate with all groups of stakeholders—internal as well as external stakeholders. Corporate communication includes five components which are as follows: supportiveness, trust, openness, participative decision making, and high-performance goals. Being communicated through the framework, the corporate image

is strongly cultivated among all stakeholders. More specifically   the corporate image is trustworthy for the employees, credible among financial investors, reliable among customers, and responsible among community members. In other words, the corporate image is saved from the corporate conspiracy of silence, because the internal stakeholders share common values, and the external stakeholders get consistent messages about the image and reputation of the company from interpersonal communication (with employees), marketing communication, and external communication.

Based on the conceptual description of organizational communication, public relations and corporate communication and its role in strategic communication, a map of the convergence of the three can be drawn as shown in Model 2. Map of Communication Discipline Convergence

Model 2. Map of Communication Discipline Convergence

Conclusion

Organizational communication explains the interaction among employee and employer in organization. Internal communication is important in building internal reputation through employee engagement. Public relations work closely with management in identifying, building and nurturing relationships between the company and various publics by promoting organization's reputation through highly visible channels, using reporters and editors to communicate about your employer based on information you provide. Corporate communications encompass all communication activities that an organization undertakes, both within and outside the organization. Internally, help management build bridges between departments so that communication flows smoothly. Externally, help management preparing information and engage with external stakeholders.

Three concepts are applied together and complement each other in the process of organization reputation development. First step, in the development of internal reputation, the implementation of organization communication concept plays a significant role. Second step, in the external communication process, the concept of public relations played more dominant role. Third step, combining those two processes where communication strategy and its practical execution needed, corporate

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