

The Importance of Public Relation's Role in a Company to Achieve Sustainability in the Application of Peace Journalism

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Abstract

This article consists of research that examines the importance of public relations' role in a company in achieving sustainability. This research was conducted with qualitative method towards cases of several forest plantation companies in Indonesia, including PT Arara Abadi in Riau (Sinarmas Group), PT Wirakarya Sakti in Jambi (Sinarmas Group), PT Adindo Hutani Lestari in North Kalimantan (RAPP Group, Soekanto Tanoto) and PT Toba Pulp Lestari (RAPP Group, Tanoto). The non-optimal role of public relations creates communication gaps when informing a company's policies. This research found the importance of implementing peace journalism approach with an environmental communication model in overcoming the gaps in public understanding and the gaps in forming a public opinion that is built in the media (online). The cause is that the role of public relations lacks optimization in practicing the environmental communication model related to reporting with a peace journalism approach.

Keywords: communication gaps, sustainability, company's public relations role, peace journalism approach.

INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons that gaps in environmental communication happen is that there is no optimization in practicing peace journalism approach. Environmental communication has become a pragmatically effective means to educating society about nature and living environment (Wahyudin, 2017). The inevitable implementation of an environmental communication model will be integrated into a policy. In this case, implementing an environmental communication strategy should be done by the right communicator. Based on the definition in Great Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), a communicator is a person or a group of people that can deliver a/some message(s) to the receiver or communicants. And doing the framing is one of the ways of many theories when people create the meaning whilst doing the communication process.

Three main components in communication are communicator, message and communicant. The communicator is the messenger. The message is the thoughts, ideas, feelings or any matters that wants to be delivered (Sendari, 2021). Some of the ways of implementing environmental strategy (Wahyudin, 2017) are situation analysis and problem identification, analysis of the parties

or actors involved, objective communication (increasing knowledge, affecting behavior), communication strategy's development, to motivate and mobilize society, media selection, designing the message that will be delivered, action and reflection, dissemination through media and the implementation along with documentation, monitoring and evaluating process.

Meanwhile, the origin of peace journalism came from the knowledge that was first introduced in 1965 by peace researchers, Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge, in an article published in one of the first editions of *The Journal of Peace Research* (Utne, 2011). As time passed by, the implementation of peace journalism that was often reported consisted of conflict. Other terms defining peace journalism included conflict solution journalism, conflict-sensitive journalism and constructive conflict coverage. It is not rare that a journalist does not like to implement peace journalism, with the excuse that it's mandatory to be critical. When journalists are in a debate about journalism, that later becomes their responsibility on what grounds they reject this proposal (Lynch, 2007).



Figure 1. Illustration of peace journalism (Badri, 2008)

Every review of peace journalism should be started with a brief check of the peace concept itself. Peace is traditionally defined only as no conflict or violence. Johan Galtung has written a myriad of positive peace and negative peace. Galtung said that negative peace is peace without conflict, whereas positive peace is a condition where justice, equality, harmony and whatnot can develop. To assert something about peace journalism must assert something about peace. Meanwhile, to assert peace must also assert the conflict and its resolutions (Galtung, 2015).

Peace journalists try to highlight the individuals and initiatives that search for this harmonious condition and lead constructive public dialogue regarding justice and equality related issues. Journalism, which certainly supports democracy and upholds human rights and peace, acts neutrally. All information given by the journalists through reports/news can be a tool to empower the community as well as to build opinions including increasing the public's understanding and awareness.

There are some other definitions of peace journalism. Jaka Lynch defined peace journalism as a condition when editors and reporters make a choice of what to be reported and how to report it that creates an opportunity for the public to consider and appreciate the reciprocity of non-

violence resolution towards conflict. When journalists ignore peace journalism, they tend to contend with the ideas that are considered the truth and objectivity, as if positioning the opposites (Lynch, 2007).

In another definition, peace journalism is to use conflict analysis knowledge and its transformation to update the concept of balance, justice and accuracy in reporting. This definition also gives a new roadmap to trace the relation between journalists, their sources, the covered stories and their journalism consequences as well as to build awareness of non-violence and creativity in daily practical work of editing and reporting. Information or reports created by a journalist are likely to be an interesting debate, even often misleading and focus on a violent drama that implicates humanity deprivation. This kind of journalism can inadvertently support violent solutions instead of peace (Utne, 2011).

The media has a function as a forum for the public. Those who disagree can also be included in the dialogue. Media, by all means, can play its role in peace by attracting the attention of the public or politicians to facilitate diplomacy or be involved in peace negotiation (Syaputri & Toni, 2020). Ten peace journalism principles defined by Lynch and McGoldrick that was made as the response to a sensational and irresponsible report that neglects and humiliates peace response while exacerbating an already tense, controversial and difficult situation. Irresponsible reporting by some media is a phenomenon that highlights the importance of peace journalism's implementation.

This research aims in revealing the importance of public relations role in using peace journalism approach in a company to achieve sustainability. The qualitative research was done by using document review with analysis of several journalistic activities and media press. The goal of practicing a qualitative approach in this research is to deeply search for facts that do not only appear on the surface.

Literature Review

The operational definition of peace journalism is to give a chance to the public to consider and appreciate a/some non-violent response(s) towards conflict. Peace journalism involves the calls & articulations and non-violent policy and let them delve into the public domain. The implementation of peace journalism is shown in the table related to peace journalism's elements that are activities of recording and reporting an/some event(s) using peace journalism's elements. To explain peace through the peace journalism technique means that all should be about peace that revealed the conflict and the solutions (Galtung, 2015).

Peace journalism takes place with a long history of news publications that originated from the peace movement. Apart from being one of the elements in the history of pacifism and the press of social movements, peace journalism is a set of journalism that occurred in the 1970s. Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist, peace researcher and practitioner, is the one who proposed peace journalism's idea to be followed by journalists. However, Lynch revealed other facts that peace journalism came from the idea that was first introduced in 1965 by Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge in an article published in one of the first edition of *The Journal of Peace Research*.

Peace journalism is aimed to show the bias towards violent action that could be avoided while reporting war and conflict. The goals of peace journalism are to explain the structural cause and violent culture because it affects people's lives in the conflict arena as part of the violent explanation as well as to view conflict as consisting of many parties and pursuing multiple goals rather than a simple dichotomy. Johan Galtung, in discovering the concept of peace journalism, was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi. In Galtung thoughts of violent types include direct-violent, structural-violent and cultural-violent. Galtung then explained what he called triangle of violence that became a contribution for feminists to raise awareness of women Namely, direct, structural and cultural violence. Galtung explained (Eriyanti, 2017) the triangle of violence to help identify various forms of violences. Direct violence that can be seen clearly, including the perpetrators. Meanwhile, structural violence is difficult to hold accountable for the perpetrators of violences that injures basic human needs. Cultural violence on the other hand is a legitimacy for structural and direct violences.

The violence concept by Johan Galtung is widely accepted by various peace studies. Johan Galtung received several prizes such as the Right Livelihood Award, an alternative prize that is equivalent to the Nobel Prize, in 1987, the Norwegian Humanist Prize in 1988, Socrates Prize for Adult Education in 1990 and Bajaj International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values in 1993. He also received the title of Doctor Honoris Causa and Honorary Professor from at least 15 top world universities, which he received starting in 1975 (Eriyanti, 2017).

An explicit aim of peace journalism is to promote peace initiatives from any angle and to allow readers to distinguish between stated positions and real goals. Peace journalism developed through research conducted because there was a fault with typical conflict reporting. The research and practice of peace journalism described various reasons for the existence and domination of war journalism in conflict reports. Journalistic objectivity emerged as part of a bigger movement in academics to epistemology and research paradigm based on reporting empirical facts only. In the 1890s, it was focused on the ideal of objectivity that exists in a mode around the same period, the objectivity of the journalistic in the practice of peace journalism is the best practice.

Ten Principles of Peace Journalism

1. Peace journalism is proactive in examining the causes of conflict and leading discussions about solutions.
2. Peace journalism looks to unite parties that eschew “us vs. them” and “good guy vs. bad guy” reporting.
3. Peace journalists reject official propaganda and instead seek facts from all sources.
4. Peace journalism is balanced, covering issues/suffering/peace proposals from all sides of the conflict.
5. Peace journalism gives voice to the voiceless, instead of just reporting for and about elites and those in power.
6. Peace journalists provide depth and context.
7. Peace journalists consider the consequences of their reporting.

8. Peace journalists carefully choose and analyze the words they use, understanding that carelessly selected words are often inflammatory
9. Peace journalists thoughtfully select the images they use, understand that they can misrepresent an event, exacerbate an already dire situation and re-victimize those who have suffered.
10. Peace journalists offer counter-narratives that debunk media created or perpetuated stereotypes, myths and misperceptions.



Figure 2. Ten principles of peace journalism by Lynch and McGoldrick

METHODS

This research of peace journalism in revealing the importance of public relations role in a company was conducted with qualitative methods. This qualitative research was done by using a document review with an analysis of several journalistic activities and media press. The goal of practicing a qualitative approach in this research is to deeply search for facts that do not only appear on the surface. The depth of revealing a fact characterizes this research that should be revealed by observation (Semiawan, 2010).

Qualitative research is interpretive and uses many methods in examining the problems. Qualitative researchers commonly review the natural things around them and understand and interpret the meaning of the mentioned things (Mulyana, 2018). The method that enhances the document review is by observing journalists' reporting activities in conflict areas, as well as acknowledging public relations' role in handling the conflict, issues that are of public concern and becoming news in the media based on the results of field reports. This research highlights the news in some medias regarding cases of PT Arara Abadi in Riau (Sinarmas Group), PT Wirakarya Sakti in Jambi (Sinarmas Group), PT Adindo Hutani Lestari in North Kalimantan (RAPP Group, Soekanto Tanoto) and PT Toba Pulp Lestari (RAPP Group, Tanoto).

Reporter Annabel McGoldrick and academician Jake Lynch argued that non-critical report from official sources is oftentimes appreciated by those sources. This activity was conducted

through an information transaction. This convention also creates a gate where the gatekeeper in journalism can opt-in or opt-out several realistic aspects in the final publication.

In war journalism, violence is generally shown as the cause of the conflict, disregarding the possibility of structural and psychological causes. For the reason that violence is taken as having no cause or explanation (just like the requirement of lost parties), the report of conventional conflict can make the viewer conclude that the only “natural” response toward violence is more violence. So, the focus of news reporting is only on physical violent behavior.

Johan Galtung identified war journalism as the main weakness in responding to intercommunal conflict by identifying it as a conservative error. Negative news will be admired more than positive news (Galtung & Ruge, 2009).

On the other hand, war journalism has so far been understood as conflict reporting in a way that imposes artificially closed space and closed time, with causes and solutions that only exist in conflict areas. Peace journalism can then be understood as journalism that averts external coercion, which more objectively assesses the possibility of conflict occurring in open space and open time with several causes and solutions.

Peace journalism analysis shows that typical conflict-related news with a bias toward violence and group of violence has an imperative effect on conflicted parties. First, peace journalism supporters argue that the bias which supports publicity for some violent parties and the violence itself play a role in the interests of violent actors to intimidate and disturb the peace process.

Peace journalism in conflict analysis and peace research will map a strong base that gives meaning and pulls out the diversity. Lynch (2007) shows that both disciplines are an important base for peace journalism to finish the conflict by cause of practicing academic precision from social sciences like openness, first assumption to observe and interpretation.

Reporting that is then revealed in the news is not an easy task for journalists considering the demands that they need to be fair and cannot show that they take sides. Even though the public's thought that the mass media are often unbalanced in reporting, especially related to conflict, is inevitable. Moreover the competition for mass media in the digitalization era today is required to be fast-paced in presenting news, this often makes the news given to the public become unbalanced.

In peace journalism, mass media is encouraged to be more aware and care about conflicts that happen in society. Journalists are oftentimes perplexed during reporting conflicts in the fields by elites, an organization's leader and/or a company's public relations (Budianto, 2012). In Budianto's theory, public relations have developed into theory-based applied communication that has the potency to inform several communication fields including mass communication and offers useful theoretical and conceptual tools including political communication (Taylor & Botan, 2006). The understanding of capability and skills needed by the public relations profession is integrated and much more appreciated in the organization's structure. Encouraging an understanding of the ability needed by the public is the key to becoming a strategic advisor, business environmental trend observer and also becoming digital expert (Dottori, Sévigny, & Thurlow, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the grouping of data from the peace journalism approach about the importance of communication between public relations with the society and media in achieving sustainability, the researcher figured out some cases in some online media toward cases in PT Arara Abadi in Riau (Sinarmas Group), PT Wirakarya Sakti in Jambi (Sinarmas Group), PT Adindo Hutani Lestari in North Kalimantan (RAPP Group, Soekanto Tanoto) and PT Toba Pulp Lestari (RAPP Group, Tanoto). Normally, each media chooses the sentences to deliver messages to the public by framing every sentence in the news that is conformable to the news' title.

I. In a news article titled "Close PT. TPL is Getting Louder in Toba" (LamS, 2021), the researcher sees that there is an element of peace journalism in the article. The journalist and the editor peacefully deliver their aspiration. An environmental activist, Togu Simorangkir, walks on purpose to meet President Joko Widodo. Togu was accompanied by two partners, Anita Hutagalung and Irwandi Sirait, in delivering the local community's aspiration so PT Toba Pulp Lestari, a paper's staple industry located on Sosor Ladang Porsea Village, to be closed immediately.

In this news writing, the researcher underlies Galtung's theory that negative peace is peace without conflict, whereas positive peace is a condition where justice, equality, harmony and whatnot can develop. The title of this news was made to remind the public that there is a demand from the local community, helped by intervention from the government, to close PT Toba Pulp Lestari. In the body of the article, the journalist and the editor convey the message and the aspirations of all three activists that are peacefully described in the article. For the researcher, the action done by the activists cannot be taken as representing the local community in demanding the closing of PT Toba Pulp Lestari. The news is also packed with titles and contrasting sentences but contains similar meaning, accentuating peace journalism in the body text by *tribunnews.com* titled "Dear President Joko Widodo, a Master Degree of Oxford University Walks from Toba-Jakarta to Close TPL".

II. The news titled "Conflict PT TPL-Natumingka Society has not Finished, Regional Secretary Requests Every Party to Restrain" fulfils peace journalism's element (Pardosi, 2021). This news tries to accentuate a peaceful attitude in the conflict between the local communities with PT TPL. Journalists took the point of view by interviewing the local government so the confrontation that happened previously will not happen again in the future. One of Galtung's ideas is that peace journalism can be applied by journalists. In this news, the researcher associated Galtung's concept that there is an element of peace journalism that highlights the individual and the initiative on searching for a harmonious condition through dialogue that is related to justice and equality.

III. The researcher also found that there is another element in the news titled “It Turns Out that The Cases of Child Abuse Accused by the Public Relations of TPL is a Manipulation”. (Sinik, 2021). The journalist received the results of the field report that was later on distributed. The editor conveyed that there was an allegation of manipulation done by Bahara Sibuea, the public relations of PT Toba Pulp Lestari (TPL) Sector Aek Nauli at that time. The case complaint of child abuse was submitted on September 16th 2019 located in Nagori Sipahoras, Pematang Sidamanik District, Simalungun Regency. The researcher looks this news is not balanced and only came from one point of view. One of the conditions of peace journalism is the confirmation from the accused party to also be included in the news to maintain the information’s balance.

This case was discovered after two years, subsequently the victim’s father conveyed the actual event. The researcher concluded that there is a manipulation discovered in the news. Is the accusation described on the news was true or to discover a manipulation in the manipulation of the information that the journalist had. Ethically, the news does not violate any policy, however, there is no explanation from the accused party that leaves an impression on the society that the field reporting by the journalist was just a scenario. In this digitalization era, delivering a problem cannot be seen fully in the news.

Today’s online media will usually feed information or the right to reply through further news. Dr. Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick in their book *Innovative Peace Journalism*, in introducing peace journalism by Johan Galtung, define peace journalism as “when editors and journalists make choices—about what to be reported and how to report it—that creates an opportunity for the public to consider and appreciate the reciprocity of non-violence resolution towards conflict”.

IV. One of the objectives of peace journalism that was initiated by Galtung is positive peace. Peace journalism is to give a voice to peacemakers whilst making peace initiatives and non-violence solutions to be noticed and worthy. Just as important is the consideration of the matters that are not peace journalism (Maradjo, 2021).

Later, the researcher found the peace journalism concept in the news article titled “The Land of Momugo Village’s People Caught on Fire, APP Sinar Mas Sent Water Bombing Helicopter”. The researcher concluded that the news title in this news article prioritizes the peace journalism concept.

Editor straightforwardly described the land-owner, which in this news is APP Sinar Mas, did a responsible action to counteract the fire. In the body of the article, the journalist described the data from the field as a warning for the local community that they cannot burn the land

carelessly for the action will have a bad impact, including the cause of the fire. Another term for the broad definition of peace journalism conveyed by Johan Galtung is conflict solution journalism, conflict-sensitive journalism and constructive conflict coverage.

- V. “Local Community Asks NGO to No Longer Provoke Farmers with Customary Land Issues”. is a news article’s title from online media *idntimes.com*. The researcher sees that peace journalism’s elements were highlighted in purpose to reveal another solution to the conflict that is still happening, prioritising dialogue and reminding that there should be no provocation so old confrontations will not be happening again in the future. The journalist mentioned that Pius Sitanggang confessed in 2009 that he formed Hutan Marsada Farmers Group, Simataniari Village, Parlilitan District, Humbang Hasundutan Regency. Pius worried that the NGO’s involvement could provoke the local community. (Team, 2021). He explained—based on some evidence from the legacy of former plants from generation to generation—that farmers and the local community were asked to refuse the company that organized the industrial forest, which is TPL, and ended with conflict.
- VI. Delivering some solutions and/or answers for conflict through peace journalism was revealed in a news article titled “Decades of Operations, Regent: It is Normal for a Company to Contribute to the Development of Pelalawan” (SR18, 2022). The local journalist published a fact conveyed by the local regent regarding a company that operates in the districts, which are PT Sari Lembah Subur (SLS), PT Pertamina Hulu Energi (PHE), PT Inti Indo Sawit (IIS), PT Gandahera Hendana Plantation, PT CAS, PT Mekar Alam Lestari (MAL) and PT Arara Abadi.

In the news writing, according to Johan Galtung, negative peace is peace without conflict, whereas positive peace is a condition where justice, equality, harmony and whatnot can develop. Journalists described the local community’s aspiration through the regent to all seven companies to give justice.

One of them is to contribute by building sufficient road infrastructure that can be used by the local community. The local community thought that it was a reasonable request following the companies’ fortune by operating for decades in Pelalawan, so they had the responsibility to give welfare to the local community. Pelalawan Regent, H.Zukri, affirmed the local community’s aspirations to the representatives of all seven companies.

- VII. Averting the happening of conflict in the future, prioritizing dialogue through peace journalism is also framed in the news article titled “Environment Department of Pelalawan Stated that PT Arara Abadi’s Canal on Lintas Bono Street Is Not Included in Their Environmental Permit”. An online media, *Riau1.com*, through its field journalist reported the head of the Environment Department of Pelalawan, Eko Novitra, reminded PT Arara Abadi

who opened the canal without following the applicable procedure did not get the environmental permit (Ogas, 2021).

The researcher sees that this news article was aimed to prevent the local community's protests in the future. The journalist prioritized peace journalism techniques in the news article to remind the mentioned company to follow the application procedure and to repair the road. The appeal that was conveyed witnessed by the local regent, in this event was Pelalawan Regent H. Zukri. The news writing was focused on the construction of a grand canal belonging to PT Arara Abadi that increased water discharge and impacted on damaging three box culvers in Lintas Bono Road.

This news also disclosed the company's attitude towards the aspiration delivered to the company, reminded by the head of Palelawan District of the problems that could lead to conflict in the future. One of peace journalism's elements is to voice the voiceless, not only to report for and about elites and those who have power. Peace journalists also give depth to the context.

The sample used in research about peace journalism with an environmental communication model is a/some report(s) of news about the approach of peace journalism with an environmental communication model in solving the gaps in a company's communication to the society could be achieved. The application of peace journalism by the journalists, especially in Sumatera, Indonesia based on the news that happened to be this research's subject, could put forward the optimization of environmental communication in resolving the communication gaps between a company and the local community. This research was done through the application of peace journalism towards cases of PT Arara Abadi in Riau (Sinarmas Group), PT Wirakarya Sakti in Jambi (Sinarmas Group), PT Adindo Hutani Lestari in North Kalimantan (RAPP Group, Soekanto Tanoto) and PT Toba Pulp Lestari (RAPP Group, Tanoto).

Peace journalism concepts can avoid the repetition of an anarchist act as well as educate and voice the local community's aspiration towards the problem they face. One of the concepts is to emphasize circumspection in choosing and analyzing the sentences that will be used in the information for the public. Moreover, in reporting a conflict that is wrapped that emphasizes peace, revealing the company's communication pattern to the local community facilitated with media in achieving sustainability. Even though the implementation of peace journalism is linked with the news subject that is used as the focus of this research, gaps still can be found to be criticized in purpose to achieve a better communication pattern and to achieve sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

Sensitivity combined with the cognition of a journalist in composing reports is an imperative thing in describing the thoughts that will be delivered to the public. Though sometimes

the analysis' results composed by a journalist from a field report are not always similar to the revealed facts and/or the reports delivered on news. From several news samples, the researcher conveyed several journalism points of view in revealing the facts.

Linked with the news-composing technique through the peace journalism approach, the balance inside information is essential. The role of public relations in a company to pack the information by combining the point of view of journalism in applying peace journalism is a necessity. This is in line with Galtung's concept. As he scrutinized the role of negative peace, which is also known as security, to decrease the suffering of people and nature because of all violence. Meanwhile, a positive peace role is to increase the fulfilment of people and nature, more than just to fulfilling necessities.

The most important thing that based this research that linked to the peace journalism concept is Galtung's idea, one who described peace. The other thing is the violence concept described by Galtung is widely accepted in several peace studies. Cited from Eriyanti (2017), Galtung is a peace lecturer in several universities and a negotiator in some international conflicts. He was involved as a facilitator for conflict resolution, for example for North Korea and South Korea, Israel and Palestine in the gulf region, and also former Yugoslavia.

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