

Public Relations Communication Strategies of PT Semen Padang for Building Corporate Image and Stakeholder Relationships

Relly Anjar Vinata Wisnu Saputra^{1*}, Tri Nurza Rahmawati²

¹ Universitas Negeri Padang; rellyvinata@fis.unp.ac.id

² Universitas Negeri Padang; trinurzarahmawati@gmail.com

Abstract. *This study aims to analyze the communication strategies of Public Relations (PR) at PT Semen Padang in building corporate image and maintaining relationships with stakeholders. This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation of the company's communication activities. The findings reveal that the PR function is positioned under the Corporate Communication and Secretariat Unit, which is divided into three main sections: household affairs, communication and institutional-external relations, and protocol. In implementing its role, PR categorizes stakeholders based on business processes, including upstream (government and regulatory aspects), operational processes (vendors and private partners), and downstream (distributors and end consumers). The main finding indicates that the communication strategy is predominantly emotional and dialogic, emphasizing mediation as a primary approach in conflict resolution. This strategy is implemented through active involvement in social programs, collaboration with government institutions, and interpersonal engagement with communities and educational institutions. These approaches have proven effective in building a positive corporate image, enhancing stakeholder trust, and ensuring organizational sustainability.*

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*Correspondence: Relly Anjar Vinata Wisnu Saputra
Email: rellyvinata@fis.unp.ac.id

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serta seksi protokoler. Dalam menjalankan fungsinya, PR melakukan pemetaan stakeholder berdasarkan proses bisnis yang meliputi hulu (pemerintah dan perizinan), proses (vendor dan mitra swasta), serta hilir (distributor dan masyarakat). Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa strategi komunikasi yang diterapkan bersifat emosional dan dialogis, dengan mengedepankan pendekatan mediasi dalam menyelesaikan konflik. Pendekatan ini diwujudkan melalui keterlibatan dalam program sosial, kerja sama dengan pemerintah, serta hubungan interpersonal dengan masyarakat dan institusi pendidikan. Strategi tersebut terbukti efektif dalam membangun citra positif, meningkatkan kepercayaan stakeholder, dan menjaga keberlanjutan perusahaan.

Abstrak. *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi komunikasi Public Relations (PR) PT Semen Padang dalam membangun citra perusahaan dan menjalin hubungan dengan stakeholder. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi terhadap aktivitas komunikasi perusahaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa fungsi humas berada di bawah Unit Komunikasi dan Kesekretariatan Perusahaan yang terbagi ke dalam tiga fokus utama, yaitu seksi rumah tangga, seksi komunikasi dan hubungan institusional-eksternal,*

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Introduction

In the era of globalization and rapid development of information technology, organizational communication has become one of the crucial aspects in determining the success of a company. Communication does not only function as a means of conveying information, but also as a strategic instrument in building relationships, trust, and corporate image in the eyes of the public (Fitriani, 2020). In this context, Public Relations (PR) plays an important role as the manager of communication between the organization and its various stakeholders, both internal and external.

Public Relations is understood as a management function responsible for building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). In addition, PR also plays a role in shaping the image and reputation of the organization through planned and sustainable communication strategies (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2013). In practice, PR does not only focus on message delivery, but also creates two-way, dialogic communication to understand the needs and expectations of stakeholders.

Along with the increasing complexity of the business environment, companies are required to be able to manage relationships with various stakeholders who have diverse interests. Stakeholders do not only include the government and business partners, but also the community, consumers, and educational institutions. Therefore, adaptive and contextual communication strategies are needed so that companies can maintain harmonious relationships and build public trust in a sustainable manner (Freeman, 1984).

In the industrial context, companies operating in strategic sectors such as the cement industry have a high level of interaction with various parties, especially communities around their operational areas. This makes the role of PR increasingly important, not only as a disseminator of information, but also as a mediator in managing potential conflicts and maintaining the stability of social relations. Thus, the communication approach used by PR becomes a key factor in shaping public perception and corporate image within society. PT Semen Padang, as the oldest cement company in Indonesia, has an important role in supporting national development, particularly in the West Sumatra region. In carrying out its operational activities, the company interacts with various stakeholders, including the government, vendors and business partners, distributors, and surrounding communities. The complexity of these relationships requires communication strategies that are not only effective but also capable of accommodating diverse interests.

In practice, managing communication with stakeholders does not always proceed without challenges. Differences in interests, potential social conflicts, and demands for transparency are issues that must be addressed by the company. Therefore, PR is required to design communication strategies that are not only informative but also persuasive and dialogic. Communication approaches that emphasize emotional aspects and interpersonal relationships become important in building closeness and trust among stakeholders.

One approach that has developed in Public Relations practice is the use of emotional-based communication strategies and mediation in resolving conflicts. This approach positions communication as the primary tool in building mutual understanding, rather

than merely as a means of one-way message delivery. Thus, PR acts as a facilitator of dialogue capable of constructively bridging the interests of the company and its stakeholders.

This research is important as it seeks to examine in depth how Public Relations communication strategies are implemented in the context of industrial companies, particularly in building corporate image and stakeholder relationships. Unlike previous studies that tend to focus on the general role of PR, this research emphasizes the communication strategies specifically applied in practical settings.

Furthermore, this study focuses on PT Semen Padang as the object of analysis by considering the complexity of its stakeholder relationships. This research examines how the public relations organizational structure is established, stakeholder mapping based on business processes, and the communication strategies implemented in building relationships with various parties. Thus, this research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of Public Relations studies, particularly in the context of organizational communication strategies. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the Public Relations communication strategies of PT Semen Padang in building corporate image and establishing relationships with stakeholders.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of the Public Relations (PR) communication strategies of PT Semen Padang in building corporate image and stakeholder relationships. The qualitative approach was selected because it is capable of exploring phenomena comprehensively through data in the form of narratives, experiences, and informants' perspectives (Wahidmurni, 2017; Creswell, 2014). The case study method was chosen to allow an intensive and contextual analysis of a particular organization within its real-life setting (Yin, 2018).

This research was conducted at PT Semen Padang, specifically within the Corporate Communication and Secretariat Unit responsible for Public Relations functions. The researcher's presence in this study serves as the primary instrument (human instrument) who is directly involved in the data collection and analysis processes, which is a fundamental characteristic of qualitative research (Moleong, 2017; Sugiyono, 2019).

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants from the Public Relations division of PT Semen Padang. Meanwhile, secondary data were collected from company documents, activity reports, and publications relevant to organizational communication activities. Data collection techniques were carried out through three methods: (1) in-depth interviews to obtain information related to PR communication strategies and stakeholder relationship management; (2) observation to directly examine communication activities conducted by PR; and (3) documentation study to complement data obtained from interviews and observations (Creswell, 2014; Sugiyono, 2019).

The data analysis technique in this study uses an interactive analysis model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted by selecting and simplifying data relevant to the research focus. Data display was presented in the form of descriptive narratives, while conclusion drawing was carried out gradually based on the findings obtained in the field (Miles et al., 2014).

To ensure data validity, this study employs triangulation techniques, including both source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from various informants, while method triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Thus, the data obtained can be scientifically justified (Sugiyono, 2019; Moleong, 2017).

Results and Discussion

Structure and Strategic Position of Public Relations within the Organization

PT Semen Padang is one of the oldest cement companies in Indonesia, established in 1910. With more than a century of experience, the company has encountered various dynamics, both internal and external, including increasingly competitive industry competition. Nevertheless, PT Semen Padang has been able to maintain its existence as a company with a positive reputation and image in the eyes of the public. This positive image cannot be separated from the company's contribution to various social programs and its involvement in community life. The company's presence, which is not solely profit-oriented but also attentive to social aspects, is one of the main factors in building public trust. In this context, the role of Public Relations (PR) becomes highly important as a communication manager capable of bridging the relationship between the company and its stakeholders.

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of Public Relations practices at PT Semen Padang, this study conducted interviews with the public relations division. The results of these interviews serve as the basis for analyzing the roles and communication strategies implemented by PR in maintaining relationships with stakeholders.



Figure 1. Logo of PT Semen Padang

Structurally, the Public Relations function at PT Semen Padang is positioned under the Corporate Communication and Secretariat Unit. This unit plays a strategic role in managing the company's communication comprehensively. Within this unit, there are several supporting divisions, such as the communication and secretariat bureau, the corporate social responsibility (CSR) bureau, the legal bureau, and the security bureau. Specifically within the public relations function, the organizational structure is divided into three main sections, namely:

1. *The Household Section*, which is responsible for managing internal organizational needs;
2. *The Communication, Institutional Relations, and External Relations Section*, which focuses on managing relationships with stakeholders;
3. *The Protocol Section*, which handles official activities and formal corporate relations.

This structural division indicates that the Public Relations function does not merely act as a disseminator of information, but also as a manager of strategic relationships involving various parties. Particularly within the institutional and external relations section, the role of PR becomes highly crucial in maintaining effective communication with stakeholders.

The strategic position of PR is further reflected in its role in managing institutional relationships. PR is not only responsible for conveying information, but also functions as a liaison that ensures effective communication with various stakeholders. Thus, PR serves as a representation of the organization in shaping perceptions and maintaining public trust in the company.

Stakeholder Mapping and Relationship Patterns in the Business Process

The results of the study indicate that PT Semen Padang conducts stakeholder mapping based on stages of the business process, namely upstream, process, and downstream. This approach reflects an awareness that each stage of the company's operations involves different actors with interests and expectations that are not always aligned.



Chart 1: Stakeholder Map Based on Business Process

At the upstream stage, the primary stakeholders are the government, which holds authority over licensing aspects such as land use, facility development, and production operations. The relationship with the government is highly crucial as it is directly related to the company's legitimacy in carrying out its activities. Therefore, communication established at this stage tends to be formal, regulatory, and compliance-oriented.

The relationship with the government is maintained through formal communication and adherence to regulations. The informant explained:

“If it is with the government, the main thing is that we comply with regulations. Taxes must be paid on time, and we also support government programs.” (FY, interview, December 2, 2025)

The next stage is the production process, which involves private sector actors such as vendors and business partners. At this stage, the relationships established emphasize professionalism and the sustainability of cooperation. The stability of relationships with vendors is an important factor in maintaining smooth production, so communication is not only transactional but also aims to create long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. In addition, in the context of relationships with private stakeholders, the strategy employed is to maintain fairness in cooperation, including in pricing decisions. This is intended to preserve trust and the sustainability of business relationships.

Meanwhile, at the downstream stage, stakeholders include distributors, building material stores, and the community as end consumers. At this stage, the company interacts directly with a broader public, making the communication dimension more complex. Public perception of the company is greatly influenced by both direct and indirect experiences in interacting with the company's products and activities. At this downstream stage, the relationships established become highly important as they are directly related to the company's image. The approach taken tends to be more personal and based on social proximity. The informant stated:

“The community cannot be approached only formally; we must engage directly, know the local figures, and be sensitive if there are issues around the company.” (FY, interview, December 2, 2025)

In addition to the classification based on business processes, stakeholders can also be categorized into four main groups, namely government, community, private sector, and educational institutions. Each group requires a different communication approach. In practice, PR at PT Semen Padang does not only focus on message delivery but also seeks to understand the needs and expectations of each stakeholder, so that the relationships established are not one-way in nature.

In the education sector, the company is also actively building relationships through internship programs, research collaborations, and the provision of educational facilities. These programs function not only as a form of social responsibility but also as an effort to build a positive image among the younger generation.

Emotional Communication Strategies in Building Image and Resolving Conflicts

One of the key findings of this study is the use of emotional-based communication strategies in building relationships with stakeholders. This approach emphasizes the importance of interpersonal interaction and emotional closeness as the foundation for

building trust. In the perspective of public relations theory, this finding aligns with the dialogic and relational approach, where communication is not merely about message delivery but about fostering mutual understanding and long-term relationships (Edwards, 2014; Iriantara, 2019).

In practice, emotional communication is manifested through various forms of informal interaction, such as direct meetings, joint activities, and involvement in social events. This approach is considered more effective in creating sustainable relationships compared to purely formal communication, as it allows the development of trust through personal engagement and shared experiences. As Browning (2010) suggests, relationship-building in modern public relations increasingly relies on authentic and interactive communication rather than one-way information dissemination. The informant explained:

“Sometimes what matters more is not formal meetings, but how we can sit casually, chat, eat together—that is what actually makes the relationship closer.” (FY, interview, December 2, 2025)

In addition to building relationships, emotional communication strategies are also used in conflict resolution. PR at PT Semen Padang tends to avoid approaches that rely solely on financial compensation and instead prioritizes communication and mediation. This reflects a shift from transactional to relational communication practices, where resolving issues is grounded in dialogue and mutual understanding rather than material exchange (Coombs, 2022). This was emphasized by the informant as follows:

“I believe not all problems can be solved with money. Communication and mediation are the most important in resolving issues.” (FY, interview, December 2, 2025)

This mediation approach positions PR as a bridging agent that connects the interests of the company and its stakeholders. By prioritizing humanistic aspects, the company can create solutions that are more acceptable to all parties while maintaining long-term relationships. Such an approach is consistent with the concept of relationship management in public relations, which highlights trust, commitment, and mutual benefit as key indicators of successful stakeholder engagement (Kaur & Soch, 2018).

Furthermore, communication strategies that combine emotional and mediation approaches have proven to contribute significantly to shaping a positive corporate image. This image is not only constructed through communicated messages but also through stakeholders' direct experiences in interacting with the company. In this context, corporate image is formed through consistent interaction and perceived organizational behavior, rather than solely through symbolic communication (Iriantara, 2019). Thus, communication becomes the primary instrument in creating trust and strengthening the company's reputation in the eyes of the public.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the Public Relations (PR) of PT Semen Padang has a strategic role in building the corporate image and managing relationships with stakeholders in a sustainable manner. The position of PR under the Corporate Communication and Secretariat Unit indicates the integration of communication functions with other organizational aspects. In its implementation, PR applies stakeholder mapping based on business process stages, namely upstream, process, and downstream, reflecting the company's understanding of the characteristics and interests of each party. This approach enables the company to formulate adaptive and contextual communication strategies in establishing relationships with the government, community, private partners, and educational institutions.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the communication strategies employed by PR at PT Semen Padang tend to emphasize emotional and interpersonal approaches through direct interactions that build closeness and stakeholder trust. In conflict resolution, the company prioritizes communication and mediation over transactional approaches based on financial compensation, placing humanistic aspects as the primary element. This strategy has proven effective in creating harmonious relationships, increasing public trust, and strengthening the company's positive image. Thus, communication not only functions as a tool for conveying information but also as a strategic instrument that plays an important role in supporting organizational sustainability amid the dynamics of a complex environment.

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