

Factors Contributing the Effectiveness in Public Relation Practices

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ABSTRACT

To achieve a big success, an organization must emphasis on effectiveness in its practices especially in significant areas such as public relations. To maintain the relationship between an organization and its public, many factors must be recognized. This study explores what factors will contribute in the process of gaining effectiveness in public relations practices. To collect primary data, the researcher had disseminated 384 sets of questionnaires to 384 respondents in Kuala Terengganu and used SPSS version 20 to analyze the data. The finding shows that 4 factors (attitude, trust, skills, and control mutuality) are closely related to effectiveness in public relations practices. However, only attitude and skills affect effectiveness in public relations practices.

Keywords: *Attitude, Effectiveness, Factors, Public Relation, Skills*

INTRODUCTION

Public relation (PR) is the relationship between an organization and its public that consists of liaison, communication, toleration, and belief. Nearly between late 1800s and early 1900s, in America, public relations have become one of the official carriers. As a critical issue that has been debated, the position of public relations as a profession is still a question referring to Jackson (1988), several educators and practitioners agree PR as a profession. In contrast, other scholars such as Agee et al. (1995) and Bivins (1993), said that it is still in the process to gain its status.

Problem Statement

According to Joseph (2017), there are many problems related to public relations and they have the potential to lead it to ineffective and failure, usually involving financial constraint. Any task becomes difficult when public relations has to face poor financing, Besides, low awareness and lack of trust can also bring negativity to the effectiveness of public relations. Everyone needs to adapt rapid changes of internet so that they will not be left behind. The same goes to the public relations practitioners, they need to acknowledge and follow the changes (Bhargava, 2010). Some of practitioners abuse the function of social media by using it for personal benefit instead of for relationships with the public and make the public to assume that they are thoughtless and uncaring about the organization-public relationship.

Therefore, this study is proposed to identify the significant relationships among attitude, trust, skills, and control mutuality with the effectiveness in public relations practices. Moreover, it is meant to examine which factor has the most critical effect on the effectiveness of public relations practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Zeithmal et al. (1996), the public relations that have effective practices can gain customer loyalty that will lead to customer retention. Effectiveness is when the desired output has been achieved, meanwhile public relations is elucidated as “management of communication between an organization and its publics” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Next is an attitude, Rawlins, Grover and Stoker (2003) stated, the quality of ethics can be influenced by the roles of public relations professionals and besides the roles, lack of positive attitude in the public relation field also give a contribution to the ethical conduct that will lead to ineffective in the public relation. To check on the outcome of the organization-public relations needs, attitudes and behavioral intentions as the tool that must be stressed on.

For trust, Kimberly (2004) indicated, commonly organization-public relationships are determined by the factors like commitment and trust. Stress on the importance of trust and reliability as if the trust from the publics enables an organization to exist. Dave (2009) argued over the last few years, public relation had already changed. Same goes to the skill needed by the practitioners. However, fundamental characteristic and traditional skills such as writing skill, communication skill, pro-activeness and others are still important to the practitioners to make sure the practice in public relation is still effective. The findings had demonstrated that knowledge, skills, courses and subjects are taught to undergraduate public relations agreed by the public relations practitioner, educators (who assume themselves to be both practitioners and educators) as crucial matter. Garvey and Buckley (2010) had said, the control mutuality can aid the information exchange that will lead to the formation of the judgment of the public. The organization-public relationships can potentially enhance. This matter can be done by giving more opportunities to control mutuality.

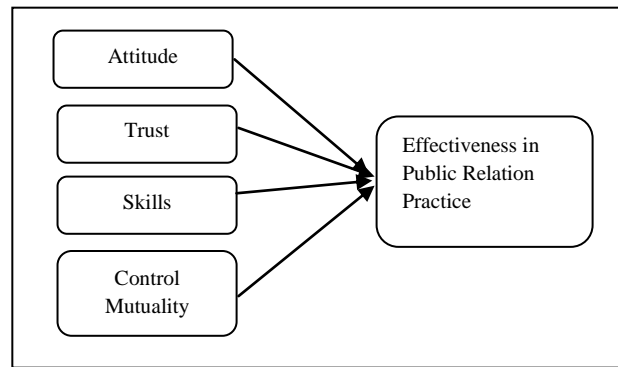


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design for this study is descriptive research design. The researcher uses primary data which are questionnaire and secondary sources which are articles, journal and internet. Kuala Terengganu is selected as the target population with total 586,317. Using tables from Krejcie and Morgan (1970), this will lead to 384 respondents as sample size. For this study, the sampling frames are agreed to be the sample from area in Kuala Terengganu. Non-probability sampling, specifically, the convenience sampling technique was chosen by the researcher. For data collection method, it shows that the researcher had conducted pilot study. The researcher had picked Primula beach hotel with 30 prospective respondents. In questionnaires design, the researcher placed 6 questions in the section A and 5 questions at the rest sections where the questionnaires are adapted from several authors. In data analysis, there were lists of finding and analysis that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Finding and Analysis

Table 4.1: Respondent’s Demographic Profile

| Demographic variable | | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Age | 18 – 30 | 117 | 46.8 |
| | 31 – 40 | 51 | 20.4 |
| | 41 – 50 | 54 | 21.6 |
| | 51 and above | 28 | 11.2 |
| | Total | 250 | 100 |
| Gender | Male | 97 | 38.8 |
| | Female | 153 | 61.2 |
| | Total | 250 | 100 |
| Ethnicity | Malay | 229 | 91.6 |
| | Chinese | 16 | 6.4 |
| | Indian | 3 | 1.2 |
| | Others | 2 | 0.8 |
| | Total | 250 | 100 |
| Education level | Diploma | 30 | 12.0 |
| | Bachelor Degree | 155 | 62.0 |
| | Master | 19 | 7.6 |
| | PHD | 8 | 3.2 |
| | Others | 38 | 15.2 |
| Occupation | Total | 250 | 100 |
| | Business owner | 27 | 10.8 |
| | Government Sector | 83 | 33.2 |
| | Private Sector | 49 | 19.6 |
| | Others | 91 | 36.4 |
| Did you receive any public relation training? | Total | 250 | 100 |
| | Yes | 94 | 37.6 |
| | No | 156 | 62.4 |

Table 4.1 shows this research has 384 publics as respondents where questionnaires are distributed to all respondents. The researcher had only received 300 questionnaires returned from respondents. However, only 250 are completed and useful. Among these respondents, the researcher has categorized them into 4 groups of age. In which, 46.8 percent of the total respondents comes from 18 – 30 years old, 20.4 percent respondents in the range of 31 – 40 years old, 21.6 percent respondents aged 41 – 50 years old and lastly, 11.2 percent respondents from 51 years old and above.

As for the gender, this table indicated 97 of 250 respondents are male, which are 38.8 percent and the rest of the respondents are female that consist of 153 from 250 respondents which are 61.2 percent. Next is ethnicity. There are 4 groups, Malay, Chinese, Indian and others. For Malay, we have the highest number which are 229 respondents indicates 91.6 percent, followed by Chinese which are 16 respondents (6.4 percent) and Indian which are 3 respondents (1.2 percent). Lastly, only 2 respondents from others ethnicity, which indicate 0.8 percent.

In term of education level. 62 percent of the total respondents have a Bachelor Degree, followed by others which indicate 15.2 percent. 12 percent of the total respondents hold a Diploma while 7.6 percent of the total respondents come from Master level. Lastly, only 3.2 percent of the total respondents have a PhD.

Occupations of respondents show 91 respondents or 36.4 percent are coming from others. Next, government sector holds 33.2 per cent where 83 respondents. Followed by the private sector, 49 respondents which are 19.6 percent. And the rest are business owners, 27 respondents or 10.8 percent.

The last in respondent’s demographic profile is the survey on “did you receive any public relation training”. The respondents should answer either yes or no. The researcher has 62.4 percent from “no” where it has 156 respondents. And the rest is “yes” where it contributes 37.6 percent or 94 respondents.

Reliability Analysis

Table 4.2: Cronbach’s Alpha

| Variables | Cronbach’s Alpha | No of items |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| Attitude (IV) | 0.708 | 5 |
| Trust (IV) | 0.761 | 5 |
| Skills (IV) | 0.794 | 5 |
| Control Mutuality (IV) | 0.794 | 5 |
| Effectiveness in public relations practice (DV) | 0.821 | 6 |

The reliability of the dependent variable (effectiveness in public relations practice) and independent variables (attitude, trust, skills, control mutuality) are shown in Table 4.2 above. Attitude’s Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.708 or can be regarded as accepted as good reliability. This shows that the whole questions and answer on this variable is reliable and can be employed to find the outcome of the study. Next is trust, its Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.761. This can be interpreted as the questions are dependable. This explains that the reliability of this variable is good. Therefore, it can be employed to find the results of this study. The Cronbach’s Alpha value of skills is 0.794. Means here, the questions are reliable. Thus, the reliability of this variable is good. Besides that, the Cronbach’s Alpha value for control mutuality is also 0.794 or regarded as the questions are accepted and relevance. The reliability for control mutuality is good. Lastly, for the dependent variable, effectiveness in public relations practice. Its Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.821 or can be said as the set of questions is dependable. Therefore, its reliability is very good. As conclusion of the analysis, these reliabilities show that every variable in the questionnaires to dependent variable capable of produce exact and unambiguous results.

Descriptive Statistic Analysis

Table 4.3: Descriptive Analysis

| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|-----|--------|--------------------|
| Effectiveness in Public Relations practice | 250 | 4.0552 | .59745 |
| Attitude | 250 | 4.0672 | .54541 |
| Trust | 250 | 3.6932 | .66235 |
| Skills | 250 | 4.2088 | .56348 |
| Control Mutuality | 250 | 4.0544 | .59631 |

For this analysis, the effectiveness in public relations practice as dependent variable has 4.0552 as the value. Refer to Table 4.3, skills have the highest mean which is 4.2088. Then it is followed by attitude as the second rank by value, 4.0672. At the third rank goes to control mutuality with the value 4.0544. And the last rank is the trust with the value 3.6932. From the findings, the researcher able to determine that all the factors influencing on effectiveness in public

relations practice are accepted. These explain that the most respondents agree that the third independent variable, skills are the most influential factor on the effectiveness in public relations practice.

Table 4.4: Pearson’s Test Correlation

| | A | T | S | CM | PR |
|----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| A | 1 | .473** | .512** | .435** | .528** |
| | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 |
| T | .473** | 1 | .403** | .479** | .390** |
| | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 |
| S | .512** | .403** | 1 | .571** | .547** |
| | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 |
| CM | .435** | .479** | .571** | 1 | .417** |
| | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 |
| PR | .528** | .390** | .547** | .417** | 1 |
| | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

0.528 is the correlation coefficient value for the attitude. At level 0.000 (2-tailed), it is significant. Thus, it shows that moderate relationship between attitude and effectiveness in public relations practice. For trust, there is a significant relationship between attitude and effectiveness in public relations practice at level 0.000 (2-tailed). The correlation coefficient value for this variable is 0.390. Where, it has a small but definite relationship. At level 0.000 (2-tailed), skills have a significant relationship as the correlation coefficient value is 0.547. There is a moderate relationship between skills and effectiveness in public relations practice. The correlation coefficient value for control mutuality is 0.417. There is a significant relationship at the level 0.000 (2-tailed). There is a moderate relationship between control mutuality and effectiveness in public relations practice.

Table 4.5: Regression Analysis Summary of the Research Model

| Hypotheses | t-value | Sig | Result |
|--|---------|-------|---------------|
| H1: There is a significant relationship between attitude and the effectiveness in public relations practice | 4.714 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H2: There is a significant relationship between trust and the effectiveness in public relations practice | 1.524 | 0.129 | Not Supported |
| H3: There is a significant relationship between skills and the effectiveness in public relations practice | 5.036 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H4: There is a significant relationship between control mutuality and the effectiveness in public relations practice | 0.912 | 0.363 | Not Supported |

The R square value describes the percentage of the whole variation of in the dependent variable that considered for all independent variables. Based on the regression analysis, R square value is 0.394 or 39.4% affects the effectiveness in public relations practice, while another 0.606 or 60.6% can be explained by other factors.

As a result, from table 4.5, attitude has $\beta = .292$ and $t = 4.714$. It shows that, attitude has significant influence towards effectiveness in public relations practice as the value is 0.000 which is lower than 0.05. For Trust, it has $\beta = .092$ and $t = 1.524$. The significant value of trust is 0.129. This shows that trust has no significant influence towards effectiveness in public relations practice as the value is > 0.005 . Next is Skills. Skills have $\beta = .327$ and $t = 5.036$. The significant value of skills is 0.000 which is lower than 0.005. This shows that skills have significant influence towards effectiveness in public relations practice. Lastly, Control mutuality has $\beta = .059$ and $t = 0.912$. It

shows that, control mutuality has no significant influence towards effectiveness in public relations practice as the value is 0.363 which is >0.05 .

Table 4.6: ANOVA Table

| Model | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| Regression | 8.747 | 39.770 | .000 ^b |
| Residual | .220 | | |

Refer to table 4.6, F-statistics of the research is shown. Its value for all independent variables is 39.770 and significant value stated above is 0.000. As the significant value is 0.000 which is lower than 0.05, it is significant and acceptable. Thus, the test is significant and hypothesis can be tested.

Conclusions

Refer to previous chapter, for attitude, the coefficient is significant at level 0.000. In which the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted and null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Means here, attitude has a significant relationship with the effectiveness in public relations as the attitude does affect the effectiveness in public relations practice. Based on the coefficient of trust in chapter 4, its value is not significant at level $0.129 > 0.05$. The null hypothesis for trust is accepted (H_0). Trust does not influence on effectiveness in public relation. There is no significant relationship between trust and effectiveness in public relations practice.

According to table 4.9, skills also have a coefficient that is significant at level 0.000. The alternative hypothesis (H_1) also being accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between skills and the effectiveness in public relations practice. It shows skill to have a critical effect on effectiveness in public relations practice. Regarding to table 4.9, the coefficient of control mutuality is not significant at level 0.363. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. In otherwise, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) for control mutuality is rejected. Control mutuality has no significant relationship to the effectiveness in public relations practice as it has an influence on it.

Recommendation

Public relations practitioners

There is a significant relationship between attitude and effectiveness in public relations practice. It shows attitude is very important to the public relations practitioner. Positive attitude should be remained and negative attitude needs to be improved. Every practitioner cannot ignore the significance of attitude when they serve the public. They must consider all of the consequences derived from the experience of public.

Trust has a significant relationship to the effectiveness in public relations practice. Hence, trust is accepted as priority to public relations practitioners. To establish a vital relationship, trust is the main ingredient to engage in relationship with public. Practitioners must stay honest with their public. This is an effective way because if practitioner dishonest, it will only tear the practitioner and its public apart.

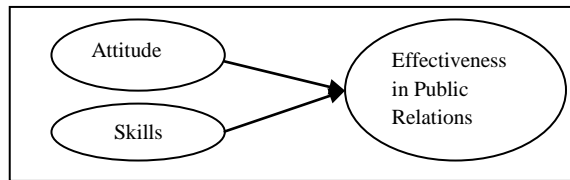
There is a significant relationship between skills and the effectiveness in public relations practice. And as mentioned in the previous chapter, skills have the most critical influence on effectiveness in public relations practice. Public relation practitioners and skills cannot be apart as public relation is not just about having an excellent degree. It wants more. To be a successful practitioner, they need to have several skills, including writing, communicate, creative, research and also skill in managing social media.

Control mutuality has a significant relationship to the effectiveness in public relation practice. Thus, control mutuality is crucial in public relation. Control mutuality is when the parties in certain situation agree to have

influence on each other. As the researcher refers to previous study, control mutuality is considered related to bilateral control, mutual legitimacy, distribution of power in relationship, and reciprocity.

Academic

Due to the findings of this research show that only two independent variables (attitude, skills) were significant, whereas the rest (trust, control mutuality) are not significant, the researcher come out with a new framework as below.



The researcher assumes the R^2 will get higher if the independent variables decreased to only two significant independent variables. Another suggestion, replace the independent variables that are not significant with a new independent variable that capable of affects the effectiveness in public relations practice.

Future researcher

This research is important to the future researcher as they can use this study as references and guideline for citation, quotation, or exegesis. It provides a lot of information, including previous finding of the past research from famous scholar. Future researchers also need to face the limitation of the study intelligently.

Another limitation is concerning the time limit. The researcher should manage his or her time by creating a timetable and obey with discipline. They also need to have laser focus in completing the study. Next is the inefficiency of writing in the English language. The researchers have to be more efficient in writing English language to be an excellent researcher. They can improve their weaknesses by going to extra class to learn deeper in English language.

Third, lack of knowledge on how to conduct the study. If the future researchers face this problem, they need to consult with their advisor as the first step. Be honest and do not be shame to gain some knowledge. Next is doing some search to get extra information from books or internet. And also, do the material exchange among classmates. Lastly, respondent bias. The future researcher is advised to be more open in the scope of population and also use probability sampling to prevent bias in the result.

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