

Digital Public Relations Communication Strategy in Swadaya Gunung Jati University, Indonesia dan Thai Global Bisnis Administration Technological College, Thailand

M. Nuruzzaman¹, Farida Nurfalah^{1,*}, Siti Khumayah¹,
Nico Irawan², and Rifka Noviani Santika¹

ABSTRACT

One part of the practice of digital public relations (PR) is conveying information and communication in an effort to maintain reputation, so the performance and ability of PR practitioners are needed to make the best use of digital media. Research objectives: 1. Segmentation of the digital public relations audience at TGBC based on students from Thailand, England, Myanmar, China, and other international students. Because non-Thai students cannot understand Thai, they have versions of Facebook for English, Chinese, Thai, and Myanmar. Swadaya Gunung Jati University (UGJ) processes, analyzes, and evaluates based on students, prospective students, the academic community, international students, alumni, parents, and stakeholders. Determining the message at TGBC is based on age and nationality, while at UGJ, it is determined who the target is and what the media trends are. The method used at TGBC is feedback from students, which is persuasive and informative, while at UGJ, it uses preferred media and audiences depending on the activities and media displayed. At UGJ, it is based on appropriate communication media. 2. The obstacles faced at TGBC require a larger number of viewers and followers and limited human resources, whereas, at UGJ, they consist of message delivery, physical, semantic, and psychosocial obstacles, as well as equipment and patterns of institutional coordination and human resources. 3. Efforts made at TGBC to collaborate with parents, universities, and other companies, while at UGJ, expand promotions to every high school, getting to know the audience, goals, messages, and methods, and choosing the media used as well as making plans and evaluations of programs.

Submitted: December 18, 2023

Published: February 04, 2024

 10.24018/lejmedia.2024.3.1.30

¹Swadaya Gunung Jati University, Indonesia.

²University of Technology Krungthep, Thailand.

*Corresponding Author:
e-mail: faridanurfalah@gmail.com

Keywords: Communication strategy, digital, obstacles, public relations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital Public Relations (PR) practice is one part of Public Relations activities using information and communication technology at an institution at both national and multinational levels. Public Relations of Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati and Public Relations of Thai Global Business Administration Technological College, Thailand, also implement Digital PR practices in their duties as Public Relations. Seeing the increasing public interest in digital information, especially through the social media Instagram, which is very close to the public. Instagram social media is a means of sharing information with the public or prospective students and implementing digitalization in communication strategies to convey information about the University. The Digital PR tools or media used in implementing an open communication process for the general public are carried out to attract visitors to Instagram social



media, one of which is asking about academic matters being offered and continuing to increase active followers on social media.

Social media is very close to the general public in the digital era. PR has a great opportunity to create a good corporate image through information shared on the company's official social media accounts. According to [Nasution and Nur \(2018\)](#), using digital PR for companies will not be implemented optimally without using social media to carry out its activities. The role of social media is an inseparable part of implementing public relations practitioners' activities to reach the public in the digital world. Breakenridge (year?) provides special notes regarding Public Relations and social media meetings. According to him, the presence of social media has improved communication techniques. The increasing diversity of PR practices and changes to PR roles, functions, and responsibilities.

The activities carried out by PR in order to achieve success in communicating with the public are closely related to the formation of public opinion and changes in attitudes. Some of the roles of PR, according to [Rosady \(2002\)](#), include a communicator (liaison between the company and its public), building relationships, namely efforts to build positive and mutually beneficial relationships with the public, the role of backup management, namely as a supporter of the organization's management function and forming a corporate image, which seeks to create an image for the organization or institution.

[Rosady \(2002\)](#) defines an *image* as an accurate impression, image, or impression (according to actual reality) regarding various policies, personnel, products, or services of an organization or company. A PR person is also responsible for building a positive image of his company. Even though a positive image results from positive public opinion, the formation of opinions and changes in attitudes cannot be separated from the role of PR in building relationships with the audience.

There is a need in two areas for the development of information richness. First, in creating rich content, namely the existence of various forms of content such as words, images, sound, video, diagrams, music, etc., provided to the public and internet technology. The second area is the involvement of people who will add wealth through their online communities, which can then influence increasing wealth and reach in a symbiotic process. This can be achieved in various ways, such as through blogs, forums, and through the development of online sources that create content.

[Phillips and Young \(2009\)](#) explain the reach of Cyber PR. Reach, or public reach for content, can be created in various ways. Companies can use several techniques so that company website pages can be easily found by the public, such as search engine optimization and hyperlink exchange. Apart from that, reach can also be achieved through engagement or online communities that make people closer to the company, where the company also becomes part of the community conversations formed online.

As previously explained, effective measures achieve predetermined goals or objectives. Based on the statement by [Phillips and Young \(2009\)](#), to achieve success in practicing PR online, there are four basic elements of online PR that PR practitioners must pay attention to, namely transparency, porosity, the internet as, an agent, richness in content, and reach. So, the author assumes that cyber public relations can be effective if it fulfills these four elements.

Instagram is related to cyber-PR activities. Social media is a digital communication channel that can reach people who are sensitive to the internet, so it can facilitate interaction and speed the dissemination of information, which causes public opinion to target all levels of society with various opinions. Social media-based reputation management is likened to a double-edged sword in managing public opinion. The more positive the opinion formed, the better the image and reputation of the government organization. Conversely, the more negative public opinion, the worse the government's image and reputation. ([Nurfalah et al., 2023](#)) This study found that almost all students use and have social media accounts. They use it to access education and entertainment and increase their local, national, and international knowledge, especially among those participating in the Merdeka Learning program. In contrast, students from the Philippines participate in the international lecture program. With the existence of social media, they rarely watch television, radio, and newspapers. However, some Indonesian informants still like to read newspapers. There are differences in the interest in using social media by Indonesian and Filipino students. Not everyone can feel the same way right now because this is also influenced by the performance and ability of PR practitioners to utilize digital media as best as possible. This research will be analyzed using the theory from [Phillips and Young \(2009\)](#) regarding the four basic elements of online public relations that PR practitioners must pay attention to, so that from this research a digital PR practice can be produced that appropriate and measurable from a theoretical perspective as well as existing reality, thereby contributing to the development of science and technology as well as the discovery of new theories and concepts or models. Thus, the problem formulation is based on the background of the problem as follows:

1. What is the Digital Public Relations communication strategy at Swadaya Gunung Jati University, Indonesia, and Thai Global Business Administration Technological College, Thailand?

2. What are the obstacles faced in the Digital Public Relations communication strategy at Swadaya Gunung Jati University Indonesia and Thai Global Business Administration Technological College, Thailand?
3. What efforts have been made for Digital Public Relations communication strategies at Swadaya Gunung Jati University, Indonesia, and Thai Global Business Administration Technological College, Thailand?

2. METHOD

The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection through interviews, observation, and documentation, and the Informant selection technique uses purposive sampling of 8 informants consisting of Public Relations and TIM, prospective students, and the community of both countries so that from this research a result can be produced. PR digital practices that are appropriate and measurable from the perspective of theory and existing reality contribute to the development of science and technology and the discovery of new theories and concepts or models. Parameters are recognition of communication targets, selection of communication media, assessment of the purpose of communication messages (Phillips & Young, 2009), and inhibiting factors and efforts made by Public Relations. Based on the elemental approach, the author assumes that digital public relations can be effective if it has fulfilled these four elements.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *Digital Public Relations Communication Strategy at Swadaya University Gunung Jati Indonesia and Thai Global Business Administration Technological College, Thailand*

There is audience segmentation in digital public relations at the university because everyone uses social media. However, for social media, the campus has its audience segmentation: students and prospective students who want to register. However, some people access it just to look, not to find information on social media, but to find out about social media. The audience segmentation is segmentation is based on language-Thai and English, “Thai students, Myanmar, Chinese and other International students” at TGBC Thailand while at UGJ students, prospective students, the academic community, International Students, alumni, students’ parents, and the general public, as well as stakeholders.

The strategy for determining audience segmentation is based on the following interview results. The strategy determines its audience segmentation at TGBC Thailand through English, which is usually the basic language because non-Thai students cannot understand Thai. They have separate versions of Facebook in English, Chinese, Thai, and Myanmar. At UGJ, by determining who to target in terms of social media, for example, if you want to target young people, make social media the way young people want it, over time segmentation is formed, making brochures and advertisements on social media, determining the target market, knowing problems and needs consumers, understand consumer behavior, carry out brand positioning for company products, process and analyze data, and evaluate market response.

According to Informant 5, the strategy for determining the message (theme) to attract the attention of the audience is as follows:

1. The theme must be designed and delivered in such a way as to attract the target’s attention,
2. The theme must evoke the target party’s personal needs and provide some means of obtaining those needs,
3. The theme must be easy to remember so that it has an interesting impression.

As for the strategy in determining material to attract the attention of audiences at TGBC Thailand based on age and nationality, they post many photos and always update campus activities on that page. The material must suggest a way to obtain a need appropriate for the target group’s situation. In contrast, at UGJ, to determine who is being addressed so that the specified message is conveyed to the intended audience, determine the target age group by using words as short and informative as possible by using educational techniques, which means an effort to influence the audience from a general statement made, can be realized in the form of messages that will contain opinions, facts, and experiences. Educating means giving the public an idea of what it is based on facts, opinions, and experiences that can be justified in terms of truth, deliberately, regularly, and planned to change human behavior in the desired direction. The material is light, easy to understand, and appeals to our target audience, yet concise and on point.



Fig. 1. A photo from the UGJ's Instagram account.

The strategy for determining the message material to attract the attention of the audience is to use educational techniques, which means an effort to influence the audience from a general statement made can be realized in the form of a message that will contain opinions, facts, and experiences:

Educating means giving the public an idea of what it is based on facts, opinions, and experiences that can be justified in terms of truth in a deliberate, orderly, and planned manner to change human behavior in the desired direction.

As for the strategy in determining material to attract audiences' attention at TGBC Thailand based on age and nationality, they post many photos and continually update campus activities on that page (see Figs. 1 and 2). The material must suggest a way to obtain a need that is appropriate for the situation of the target group while at UGJ with determine who is being addressed so that the specified message is conveyed to the intended audience, determine the target age group by using words as short and informative as possible, by using educational techniques which means an effort to influence the audience from a general statement made, can be realized in the form of messages that will contain opinions, facts, and experiences. Educating means giving the public an idea of what it is based on facts, opinions, and experiences that can be justified in terms of truth, deliberately, regularly, and planned to change human behavior in the desired direction. The material is light, easy to understand, and appeals to our target audience, but it should be concise and on point.

Thus, with feedback from students, the method used at TGBC Thailand uses persuasive and informative methods to attract attention and persuade the audience to see the excellent potential of their higher education. In contrast, at UGJ, by choosing the right ones to choose and are relevant to determine implementation methods, strategies communication must be structured systematically as an effort to change the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of the audience or target so that the implementation and delivery of the message can be achieved effectively, so the communicant needs to know the audience, determine goals, compose the message, find methods and choose the media used, determine methods for implementing a task or project can vary greatly depending on the objectives and context. Redundancy is used to strengthen the message or information you want to convey. Then, the informative method is useful for conveying factual information clearly and objectively. Persuasive



Fig. 2. Sample photo from the UGJ activities posted on the UGJ Instagram account.

methods are used to influence or convince an audience about an idea or opinion. Educational methods are used to teach or provide new understanding to the audience. The cursive method is used to express the writer's or speaker's opinions or feelings, and choosing the proper method must consider the audience, objectives, and type of message to be conveyed. Sometimes, a combination of several methods can effectively achieve the desired results. Also, make sure to understand the context and policies that apply in certain situations, such as communication in professional, educational, or entertainment environments (conveying informative and persuasive messages regarding PMB/UGJ activities and educational messages to the public) regularly to target audiences through mass media while messages using the cursive method are for information related to leadership policies that will be conveyed to all employees.

The choice of communication media is based on the results of the interview as follows: The selection of communication media at TGBC Thailand with target audience usage and preferred media, the country's most prevalent social media, Depends on the activity and the media we want to show, it can be video, Facebook live, or photos, and by looking at the target country such as Myanmar, the majority of which uses Facebook, while in UGJ it is based on the communication media that we want to go. It must be indirect, one-way, and open to determine the communication media we will use to receive the message well. Choosing suitable media plays a vital role in efficiency in reaching communications and choosing communication media currently widely used by the target audience.

3.2. Obstacles Faced for Digital Public Relations Communication Strategies at Swadaya University Gunung Jati Indonesia and Thai Global Business Administration Technological College, Thailand

The interview results revealed some obstacles we faced at TGBC Thailand: We need more viewers and followers but have limited human resources. In contrast, in UGJ, there is a lack of outreach to certain high schools to increase the number of prospective students at the university itself. If we promote it to every high school, prospective students will know more about the university and choosing the university it promotes, the delivery process, physical, semantic, and psycho-social obstacles, as well as lack of equipment, coordination patterns, institutions, human resource competence, and still a lack of commitment from top leadership, because we are in higher education so communication must be hierarchical.

3.3. Efforts Made for Digital Public Relations Communication Strategies at Swadaya Gunung Jati University, Indonesia, and Thai Global Business Administration Technological College, Thailand

There have been several attempts to carry out digital public relations communication strategies at the university. The results of the interview with Informant 1 are as follows:

1. Attracting more students to enroll in higher education by collaborating with parents and other universities with many interesting activities,
2. Making companies and other universities interested in campus and connecting and partnering active on social media,
3. Expanding promotions to every high school, getting to know the audience, determining goals, compiling messages, determining methods, and choosing the media used, as well as defining public relations problems (situation analysis),
4. Making plans and programs, action and communication, evaluating program assessment and determining segments to be communicated because the tricks and approaches are different for each person. Segmentation provides insight into the institution, compiling messages to be

conveyed in the form of releases or oral reporting, as well as choosing the media to be used and other supporting sources so that the strategy can be better prepared.

4. CONCLUSION

1. Digital Public Relations audience segmentation at TGBC is the segmentation is based on language-Thai and English, Thai students, Myanmar, Chinese, and other International students, while at UGJ, it is students, prospective students, the academic community, International Students, alums, parents, students, and stakeholders. The strategy determines audience segmentation at TGBC Thailand through language because non-Thai students cannot understand Thai; they have a Facebook version that uses English, Chinese, Thai, and Myanmar. Different from UGJ, it determines targets, processes and analyzes data, and evaluates market response. The strategy for determining messages to attract attention at TGBC Thailand is with age and nationality and By the different language contents shared by each language page version so that you know which country segmentation to target, while at UGJ Indonesia, it is by determining who is the target and keeping up with the times and technology. The strategy for determining material at TGBC Thailand is based on age and nationality. They post lots of photos and always update campus activities on that page. The material must suggest a need that is appropriate for the target group's situation, whereas at UGJ, by determining who it is aimed at, using short and informative words, and even using educational techniques that contain opinions, facts, and experiences that can be justified to change behavior, material that is light, easy to understand and attracts the target audience. The method used at TGBC Thailand is student feedback, using persuasive and informative methods to see their higher education potential. In contrast, at UGJ, choosing the right one to determine the implementation method is structured systematically to change the audience's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior so that the implementation and delivery of messages can be conveyed effectively. Selection of communication media at TGBC Thailand with target audience usage and preferred media: The country's most prevalent social media depends on the activity and the media we want to show. It can be video, Facebook lives, or photos, and by looking at the target country such as Myanmar, the majority of which uses Facebook, while in UGJ, it is based on the communication media that is right too.
2. The obstacles faced at TGBC Thailand are that we need more viewers and followers and limited human resources, while at UGJ to promote to prospective students related to delivery, physical, semantic, and psycho-social obstacles as well as equipment, institutional coordination patterns, and human resources.
3. Efforts to carry out a Digital Public Relations communication strategy at TGBC Thailand lack of understanding of culture, attract more students to apply for our college, share with the parents and other universities that we have a lot of interesting activities, make other companies and universities interested in our college and want to connect and be a partnership with us and are active on social media, while at UGJ expanding promotions to every high school, getting to know the audience, determining goals, compiling messages, determining methods and choosing the media used, as well as making plans and programs, evaluating the program.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Nasution, Y. E., & Nur, R. T. H. (2018). Pengelolaan digital public relations rumah sakit "JIH" Yogyakarta tahun 2017 [Management of digital public relations for "JIH" Yogyakarta hospital in 2017]. *CHANNEL: Jurnal Komunikasi*, 6(2), 205–216.
- Nurfalah, F., Brajadenta, G., Siraj, N., Santika, R. N., & Forrer, C. (2023). Social media for Indonesian and Philippines students. *Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi*, 11(1), 49–58.
- Phillips, D., & Young, P. (2009). *Online Public Relations: A Practical Guide to Developing an Online Strategy in the World of Social Media* (2nd ed.). Kogan Page Limited.
- Rosady, R. (2002). *Kiat dan strategi kampanye Public Relations [Public Relations Campaign Tips and Strategies]*. PT Raja Grafindo Persada.