



## **TRIANGLE PASE INC. PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY. EAST ACEH DISTRICT IN MAINTAINING A CORPORATE IMAGE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS**

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### **Abstract**

*Sometimes a company is required to deal with certain crisis, and unpredictable incidents which can potentially threaten the company reputation, profits, and/or employee safety and public. Covid-19 which is categorized as non-natural disaster by the Indonesia government can nearly affect the company reputation that has been built as a result of sudden, unpredictable and unsolved crisis. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Triangle Pase Inc. has ever received censure from the community for the destruction on roads due to the gas field operation in the residential area. The research problems are the strategy and its application by Tringale Pase Inc. during the crisis in order to maintain the company image as well as the obstacles encountered. The research uses the Coombs' crisis communication theory and descriptive qualitative method. The research informants consist of one main informant from Internal employee of Tringale Pase Inc. in East Aceh and four supporting informants who lives around the company area. Data are collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The result indicates that communication strategy used by Tringale Pase Inc. consist of three stages namely pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis. The obstacles encountered by Triangle Pase Inc. come from the internal factors namely the obstacles of human resources, facilities and infrastructures, and finance. Meanwhile, the external factor namely communication to community obstacle due to low educational level and community adherence. Data are collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The result indicates that communication strategy used by Tringale Pase Inc. consist of three stages namely pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis. The obstacles encountered by Triangle Pase Inc. come from the internal factors namely the obstacles of human resources, facilities and infrastructures, and finance. Meanwhile, the external factor namely communication to community obstacle due to low educational level and community adherence. Data are collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The result indicates that communication strategy used by Tringale Pase Inc. consist of three stages namely pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis. The obstacles encountered by Triangle Pase Inc. come from the internal factors namely the obstacles of human resources, facilities and infrastructures, and finance. Meanwhile, the external factor namely communication to community obstacle due to low educational level and community adherence. and finance. Meanwhile, the external factor namely communication to community obstacle due to low educational level and community adherence. and finance. Meanwhile, the external factor namely communication to community obstacle due to low educational level and community adherence.*

**Keywords:** *Communication Strategy, Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis, Company Image*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

A company sometimes has to respond to certain crises, dealing with unexpected events that have the potential to threaten the company's reputation, profits, and/or the safety of its employees and the public. These crises can take the form of mass strikes, fires, natural/non-natural disasters, accidents, coups, scandals, adverse new regulations, and various other events. The Covid-19 pandemic which is categorized as a non-natural disaster by the Indonesian government has more or less impacted the reputation of the company that has been built as a result of a sudden crisis that was neither prevented nor resolved.

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The Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia has paralyzed various sectors including the economic sector and has been the hardest hit. According to [money.kompas.com](http://money.kompas.com), as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, at least two million employees have been laid off or laid off by their companies. Based on data from the Ministry of Manpower as of April 20, 2020, there were 2,084,593 workers from 116,370 companies that were laid off and laid off as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. For details, the formal sector 1,304,777 workers were laid off from 43,690 companies. Meanwhile, those affected by layoffs reached 241,431 workers from 41,236 companies. The informal sector was also affected by the loss of 538,385 affected workers from 31,444 companies (Karunia, 2020).

As previously explained, the informal sector has been heavily affected by the Covid-19 virus pandemic with the PSBB policy or Large-Scale Social Restrictions resulting in many informal workers such as public transport drivers and online motorcycle taxis having to lose their main source of livelihood due to reduced public transportation users. in the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Public Relations of existing companies must also be ready and alert in responding to things that cannot be predicted by implementing policies that are in their corporate social responsibility.

Prevention and control of the Covid-19 pandemic requires strategies that can be used to synergize corporate communications with the public in a measurable manner. Rogers in (Yunita, 2020) states that the strategy used in communication is a design created to change the behavior of people who are in a wider scope by transferring innovative ideas. This idea is in line with the view that communication is a complicated process where in giving birth to an element of understanding requires a certain strategy so that the goals used in communication can be achieved properly (Cangara, 2013).

Strategy is influenced by certain elements and components that are closely related to environmental conditions, vision, mission, direction, goals and objectives of a pattern that forms the basis of the culture of the organization concerned. As for the elements in the formation of the strategy, first on a macro basis, it includes general policy (public policy), the culture adopted, the economic system, and the technology controlled by the organization concerned. Second, if viewed from a micro perspective, strategy depends on the company's mission, its resources such as human resources and other useful resources, as well as related plans or programs in the short or long term and the goals or objectives to be achieved.

Aceh as one of the special regions in Indonesia is also one of the areas exposed to Covid-19, based on data between [Antaraneews.com](http://Antaraneews.com) via the [www.covid19.go.id](http://www.covid19.go.id) page, as of April 1, 2022 there were 43,732 people confirmed positive and 2,217 people died due to the pandemic. Covid-19. It's not a fantastic number when compared to other big cities in Indonesia, but it can't be underestimated either. Many companies in Aceh that went bankrupt eventually went out of business because they were unable to cope with the problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 is also a problem for big companies in Aceh. As one of the oil and gas producing and managing regions, Covid-19 also threatens companies operating in the oil and gas sector in Aceh such as Repsol, Triangle Pase Inc., Zaratex. NV, and others.

Triangle Pass Inc. is one of the oil and gas drilling companies that is still active today and is located in Pante Bidari District, East Aceh Regency. Triangle Pass Inc. is an Australian company which since 2009 has been exploring for gas in the Pase Block, the former well of PT Arun LNG, in Cluster A1 of Sijuek Hamlet, Sijudo Village and Cluster A8 between Sijudo Village and Sah Raja. Triangle Pass Inc. not only want to use the land as a place for companies to operate in oil and



gas drilling, but also to establish good social relations with the community so that there is a strong bond in helping one another. The company's engagement with the community can be seen from several Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities that have been carried out by Triangle Pase Inc. Based on the website of the Aceh Oil and Gas Management Agency (BPMA) it is known that in January 2017 Triangle Pase Inc. carried out road repairs from Blang Seunong Village to Pantee Labu Village, then in July 2017 participated in the repainting of the Pantee Bidari District Office, in December 2017 helped flood victims in Pantee Bidari District, then in December 2017 participated in Sabang Sail and Marine Expo 2017, and in March 2018 participated in the opening of the Islamic Center in Lubok Pusaka Village (<https://www.bpma.go.id/profile-pase>).

The Covid-19 pandemic has become a crisis and also an opportunity for Triangle Pase Inc. to improve and maintain the corporate image that had been built before the crisis. The challenges that must be faced consist of 2 factors which include: internal factors and external factors. First, the internal factor in question is related to planning or work design of the work from home management system, so that the time owned by workers remains productive even though they are not in the work environment. While the external factors in question are: First, related to the way leaders manage Human Resources (HR) within the company related to handling communication so that there is no lost contact and even miss communication regarding the tasks that must be done by workers, prioritizing important programs that rely on face-to-face collaboration, which can There are several things that can be done so that communication can run effectively. Second, the factor of how leaders manage the fears and anxieties of stakeholders (both in terms of employees, management and the public as well as how to learn and adapt to the current situation (Esthi, 2020). This is a challenge for public relations to be able to achieve relationships to this level. with the line of communication. The biggest obstacle is the risk of losing a sense of connectivity among workers due to the rise of remote work during the pandemic. It is important for public relations to improve this condition in order to control the situation before facing shocks in the pandemic era. For that, the presence of a new spirit, a new culture, new habits, and a new balance is very much needed.

Implementation of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, public relations still has an important role both internally and externally in CSR activities. Because basically the public of public relations is an internal and external public. The role of public relations in CSR activities will develop to become more complex along with the progress of the company's CSR program. The implementation of CSR is a challenge as well as an opportunity for companies to build a corporate image in the eyes of their stakeholders. In the context of forming a corporate image, public relations is involved because basically Corporate Social Responsibility is an activity of public relations.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

Research methodology is a method or technique that is arranged regularly used by a researcher to collect data/information in conducting research that is tailored to the subject/object being studied. The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research is research based on qualitative data, where qualitative data is data that is not in the form of numbers or numbers so that it is only in the form of statements or sentences. Research subjects in qualitative research are referred to as informants, namely people who provide information about the data that the researcher wants related to the research being carried out. This information can be in the form of research background situations and conditions (Suliyanto, 2018).

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This qualitative research strategy is a case study approach to answer research questions contained in the research focus. A case study is an in-depth investigation of a social unit in such a way that it produces a well-organized and complete picture of the social unit (Yenita, 2017). Descriptive research is research that is directed to provide symptoms, facts or events systematically and accurately, regarding the characteristics of a particular population or area. This study will describe and examine in depth the problems related to Triangle Pase Inc's public relations communication strategy. in building relationships with the public.

The subjects in this study are several sources or informants who can provide information about problems related to the study to be carried out. Researchers determine the subject based on the role and involvement of the subject to the problem studied by the researcher. The number of informants in qualitative research is flexible based on the requirements of adequacy and suitability (Martha and Kresno, 2016: 131). The subjects of this study were 1 Company Representative from Triangle Pase Inc and 4 external public persons or communities around Triangle Pase Inc. Company. East Aceh District. The researcher presents brief data about the research subject in the following table:

**Table 1** Informant Data Table

Name	Status	Company	Position
<b>Jailani Ali</b>	<b>Key Informants</b> (Internal Company Resource Person)	Triangle Pass Inc.	<i>Company Representative</i>
<b>Solomon N</b>	<b>Supporting Informants</b> (Company External Resource Person)	Independent Worker	-
<b>Sulaiman A</b>	<b>Supporting Informants</b> (Company External Resource Person)	Independent Worker	-
<b>Eminent</b>	<b>Supporting Informants</b> (Company External Resource Person)	Independent Worker	-
<b>Junaidi</b>	<b>Supporting Informants</b> (Company External Resource Person)	Independent Worker	-

Based on the data that the researchers collected, the researchers no longer found different variations of information on the fourth supporting informant, so the researcher decided to stop the process of taking data on the fourth supporting informant. Miles and Huberman (2014) state that activities in qualitative analysis data are carried out interactively and continue continuously until they are complete until data saturation, that is, the data does not provide new variations.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The author describes ways or strategies in interviewing informants in general with the hope that the informants will provide valid information. As described in the research process, researchers conducted separate interviews between one informant and another, so that the information provided was not biased. Starting with introducing yourself to the informant, explaining the needs with the aim of making the informant feel comfortable when being interviewed. The researcher tries to take the direction of the interview not to be an interrogation.

#### 3.1 Communication Strategy Public Relations Triangle Pase Inc. In Maintaining Company Image During the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis



In essence Public Relations Communication Strategy in general is a method of communication that includes various communication techniques. Where in its activities there is an effort to realize a harmonious relationship between an agency or company and its public. Thus it can be concluded that the Public Relations Communication Strategy is a management function. Here, an activity is created to foster and maintain a favorable attitude for an institution/company on the one hand and the public on the other.

According to Jainali, the public relations party runs a strategy starting from the company's own internal, namely detecting the possibility that the covid pandemic will enter the company's work area. According to Jalaini, in order to strengthen and strengthen the company's function in order to achieve its goals in a single purpose, Triangle Pase Inc. operationally have been in a position as close as possible to the leadership of the company. In this case, it is hoped that the communication strategy activities will be achieved. The author simplifies the Public Relations Strategy based on the interview with Jailani into the following points:

1. Prepare clearly and in detail an integrated system regarding the pattern of planning, policies, decisions taken, vision and direction of the strategy made by the company's goals, so that there are no errors in the delivery of messages and information from the company to the public.
2. Attend every meeting or meeting at the leadership level in order to know directly the exact background of a planning process, policies, directions and organizational goals to be achieved both in the short and long term.
3. Public relations Triangle Pass Inc. trying to influence public perception of the crisis. Then, Public relations Triangle Pase Inc. will always be on a clear path and how the implementation aspect of the strategic decision will be.
4. Re-evaluate every corporate social responsibility action to the surrounding community in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

### **3.2 Implementation of Communication Strategy Public Relations Triangle Pase Inc. In Maintaining Company Image During the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis**

Public relations as a communication tool or communicator has a role in researching and observing the organizational environment, and evaluating the effectiveness of communication programs. PR participates in management decision making, strategic planning, participation in issues management, and encroachment on its functions. PR as a communicator plays an important role both as a message sender and a spokesperson that includes the dominant coalition, namely about the role of communication and function in the organization. The role of PR as a communicator is also influenced by internal and external lines.

#### **1. Pre-Crisis**

Based on Coombs' crisis communication model in Kriyantono (2012: 209), the implementation of the pre-crisis strategy will begin by forming knowledge about the crisis both internally and externally and also by equating perceptions about the crisis experienced. "Actually, the main task in providing understanding to the public about the Covid-19 pandemic is the government's task. However, we do not deny that every company has a social responsibility. Yes, it is to explain to the surrounding community about the dangers of Covid-19" (Interview with Jailani, 24 March 2022).

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This expression explains that basically all companies have social responsibilities to the public, including Triangle Pase Inc. who also has a social responsibility to form knowledge externally about the current crisis, namely the Covid-19 pandemic.

- a. Information Communication, The step that is most often taken by the Triangle Pase Inc Company in publishing information related to the Covid-19 crisis is to use media such as online media, print media and written media as well as electronic media.
- b. Forming a Spokesperson for Covid-19, Implementing the strategy carried out by Triangle Pase Inc. Company. in publishing Covid-19 information to the public, is to form a spokesperson for the Triangle Pase Inc Company in order to protect the public from the epidemic that is spreading. A spokesperson is someone who is given the responsibility to explain the conditions and who will convey various information regarding the development of Covid-19. Since the news of Covid-19 in 2019, Triangle Pase Inc. Company. has appointed a spokesperson for Covid-19, namely Mr. Jailani himself.

2. Crisis

According to Coombs' crisis communication model in Kriyantono (2012: 209), the implementation of strategies at the crisis stage is to influence public perceptions of the crisis, perceptions of the organization and all organizational efforts to overcome the crisis (initial response and corrective & reaction).

- a. Covid-19 Handling Regulations, Triangle Pase Inc Company's strategy during this Covid-19 pandemic crisis is to continue to maintain caution against the Covid-19 outbreak by making appeals and realizing various Covid-19 handling regulations, such as limiting company activities and activities to only a limited period of time. 5:00 p.m. and closing the access portals into the company's area. In addition to company regulations, social and religious socialization is carried out to the public so that they also follow the regulations that have been made by the government regarding Covid-19.
- b. Conducting socialization and providing assistance. The next implementation is carried out by the Triangle Pase Inc Company as part of the crisis communication strategy in maintaining the company's image by holding public outreach and providing direct assistance.
- c. Post-Crisis, According to Coombs' crisis communication model in Kriyantono (2012: 209), the implementation of the strategy at the Post-crisis stage is to evaluate with the public regarding maintaining the existing reputation.

**3.3 Barriers to public relations in maintaining the corporate image of Triangle Pase Inc. during the covid-19 pandemic crisis**

The implementation of the strategy carried out by Triangle Pase Inc. during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis to the community, of course it does not always go well, but there are factors that hinder the implementation, both internal and internal constraints.

1. Internal Barriers

Internal constraints are obstacles that originate from within the Triangle Pase Inc. Company. itself. As for the internal constraints of the Triangle Pase Inc. Company. namely:



- a. Limited Human Resources, According to the Company Representative, the main obstacle is the limited human resources in the field of communication.
- b. Limitations of Facilities and Infrastructure, Other constraints also come from limited facilities and infrastructure. In this case, the Triangle Pase Inc. still minimal in transportation facilities and information dissemination facilities.
- c. Financial Constraints, The author feels that financial constraints become an obstacle for every company in the world during a crisis, including the Triangle Pase. Inc. Finance in this case is related to the implementation of operational tasks such as the provision of facilities and infrastructure, masks and the implementation of vaccinations which are basically sufficient but there is still room for profit to be maximized.

## 2. External Barriers

External constraints are obstacles that come from outside the Triangle Pase Inc. Company. itself. The author finds that there is only one external constraint, namely;

Lack of Community Knowledge and Compliance, Obstacles in implementing the Triangle Pase Inc Company's communication strategy. also sourced from outside the company's institution, including the existence of various corporate images from other media. Triangle Pase Inc. experiencing problems in controlling delivery in maintaining the company's image and good name to the public, especially the community during the current pandemic. Not only that, currently people do not comply with the Covid-19 information submitted by the company.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion that researchers have described in the previous chapter, the conclusions of this study are: Public Relations Triangle Pase Inc. divide the strategy into two groupings, namely internally and externally. The strategy at the internal stage starts from preparing clearly and in detail an integrated system regarding the planning pattern, policies, decisions taken, vision and direction of the strategy made by the company's goals. Then close the strategy to all individuals involved in the company before it will finally be implemented. The external stage focuses on influencing the public's perception of the crisis. Implementation of the Triangle Pase Inc. Public Relations Strategy. divided into three application structures, namely pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis. The pre-crisis stage includes the application of information communication by the company both internally and externally. The Crisis Stage includes the application of establishing rules regarding the handling of COVID-19 and conducting socialization and providing assistance to the community. The post-crisis stage is to evaluate the strategies that have been implemented. The obstacles that occur come from two sides, namely internal and external. Internal obstacles experienced in the form of limited human resources, limited facilities and infrastructure and financial limitations. Meanwhile, external obstacles are due to the low level of education and community compliance. The Crisis Stage includes the application of establishing rules regarding the handling of COVID-19 and conducting socialization and providing assistance to the community. The post-crisis stage is to evaluate the strategies that have been implemented. The obstacles that occur come from two sides, namely internal and external. Internal obstacles experienced in the form of limited human resources, limited facilities and infrastructure and financial limitations. Meanwhile, external obstacles are due to the low level of education and community compliance. The Crisis Stage includes the application of establishing rules regarding the handling of COVID-19 and conducting socialization and providing assistance to the community. The post-crisis stage is to evaluate the strategies that have been implemented. The obstacles that occur come from two sides, namely internal and external. Internal obstacles experienced in the form of limited human resources, limited facilities and infrastructure and financial limitations. Meanwhile,

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**TRIANGLE PASE INC. PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY. EAST ACEH DISTRICT IN MAINTAINING A CORPORATE IMAGE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS**

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