



Participatory Communication in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Practices: Evaluation Process in Cross-Sector Partnership for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Participatory communication in the effort to reach sustainable development goals can create a relationship among all the stakeholders to develop understanding in the context of language usage, channels, and space to ensure the successful implementation of group discussion between the government, companies, and society in CSR program. This study aims to analyze the participatory communication in the practice of CSR in the form of CSR forum case study. This study uses qualitative approach, which is an in-depth interview with the company and government and conducts focus group discussion by involving communities, program beneficiaries, which consists of the opinion leaders and nongovernmental organization (NGOs). From the result of the analysis in the communication component, there are nine significant basic components to evaluate the success of three sector partnership in achieving sustainable development. This study shows that the communication relationship in the practice of ideal CSR is in line with sustainable development goals.

Keywords: Participatory Communication; Cross-Sector Partnership; Evaluation; Sustainable Development

Introduction

The CSR agenda in sustainable development shows credibility in the global ranking, especially in the context of developing countries. Therefore, the concept of CSR is used as a corporate strategy to contribute to the development process because CSR is able to play a significant role in creating employment opportunities and improving people's welfare (Barney, 2003; Jenkins, 2005; Hamman, 2006). Even though, it cannot be denied that each company has its advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, it is necessary to realize the strategic cooperation that can support sustainable development goals (Reed & Reed, 2009; Steger et al., 2009). The expected collaboration achieved through the

partnership of the companies, governments, and communities which so-called partnerships of the three parties or the Tri Partiet Partnership (Bäckstrand, 2006; Tennyson, 2003). Several researchers state that this partnership is a three-sector partnership (Nelson & Zadek, 2000; Selsky & Parker, 2005). By taking serious commitment and develop good cooperation, then they can give the strength to overcome various issues of the country such as health, education and economic issues. It requires solid and harmonious communication to attain sustainable development goals.

To provide guidance and encourage the best implementation for sustainable development, then in 1997, the leading experts developed the Bellagio Principles for global measurement and assessment (Bossel, 1999). The Bellagio Principles Report is a practical assessment leading to the progress toward achieving sustainable development goals. This report is very important for all founders to understand about the basis of the important sustainable development activities measured. Effective communication is one of the essential principles for the needs of good communication, to attract all parties as broadly as possible and reduce the risk of misuse, assess progress toward achieving sustainable development goals by using clear and tangible language; convey objectives in a fair and objective manner and be able to build trust; using innovative visual tools and graphics to help interpret and tell stories; make available detailed data that can be trusted and implemented.

A research conducted by Steger et al. (2009) conveys that there is a big gap of knowledge about sustainability issues based on the perceptions of business management and the government. This case is influenced by the theory of perception that has different perspectives towards the whole insight which integrated with sustainable development. According to Godemann and Michelsen (2011), the concept of sustainable development requires a process of social understanding that touches on the roots of development and solutions. Besides, the process of communication and equality of perception in understanding is part of sustainable development.

Bessette (2004) defines participatory communication as a planned activity of the participation process. On the other hand, it can be defined as a planned activity for media and interpersonal communication that will facilitate discussion among different stakeholders. This activity aims to solve the problem and achieving the development goals together to carry out the activity that can contribute to the accomplishment, awareness, and encouraging activities.

According to Nair and White (2004), participatory communication involves open discussion sessions, where the speakers and participants interact with each other to think about a situation constructively, identify the needs of development and its issues to improve the situation and actions to overcome the problems. To develop a situation constructively, several significant principles underlie the participatory communication. These principles are the result of global thinking that influences and contribute to the developed framework of participatory communication. The first principle is that interpersonal channels have a more important role than media (Rogers et al., 1981).

Furthermore, the second principle, Hedebro (1995) conveys that participatory communication has a two-way communication structure at every level of society. The third principle is the organization of free and open discussion has become the initial principle in participatory communication (Bessete, 2004). This principle aims to increase the effort of local stakeholders in managing the process of communication to develop appropriate local content (WCCD, 2006).

Participatory communication can strengthen the process of empowering local communities to discuss and respond to the implementation and natural resource issues that involves other stakeholders to create better environmental policies. Participatory communication is a term that indicates the theory and implementation of communication used to involve decision-makers in the development process. This term has a similar meaning as the term of communication. Both terms come from the Latin word *communis*,

which has a general meaning (Mody, 1991). Therefore, the purpose of participatory communication must be general and easily understood by all people, and also can share goals widely. This is related to the meaning of sharing, perception, worldview, and knowledge.

In this regard, the participatory communication in the implementation of CSR in Indonesia increasingly considered important in a three-sector partnership between the company, government, and the society that is expected to be able to overcome the development issues in the country. The involvement of the stakeholders is expected to be able to solve the problem of CSR company cases and sustainable development. They must create a vision together, make ownership at whole levels, and initiate activity of change. The result of the implementation of three-sector partnership collaboration in Indonesia is the realization of the CSR forum.

Research Method

In the study of CSR forum in West Java, a qualitative approach is used. The aspect to be measured in this study is the aspect of participatory communication in the partnership between the company, government, and the society in the CSR Forum. This is in line with the idea of Bogdan and Biklen (1982) which states that the case study is a study on the status of the subject investigated. The study also has a relationship with the specific situation taken from the overall view of the aspects being studied, personnel, research subjects, groups, institutions, or communities in the area of study.

Only 10 companies were selected to be the respondent from 70 companies which belong to the West Java CSR forum. The 10 companies are the members of the West Java CSR forum which has contributed to the development of the West Java region since 2015. The selected respondents had following features: 1) Major of business managers carrying out CSR activities in local companies; 2) Individuals representing companies, governments and community members of the CSR Regional CSR Forum; 3) External stakeholder affected by the partnerships established.

Finding and Discussion

The Evaluation Process of Participatory Communication in Cross-sectoral CSR Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The result of the evaluation of participatory communication that is used to build cross-sectoral partnerships in the West Java CSR Forum in supporting sustainable development goals is consists of 9 components. Identification of the problems of this 9 components are; (a) Perceptions of CSR (b) Perceptions of Sustainable Development (c) Sustainable vision (d) Understanding of sustainable issues (e) Building mutual trust (f) open and sustainable discussion (g) Stakeholder involvement (h) Joint activities in CSR activities (i) Mutual agreement as a proof of commitment.

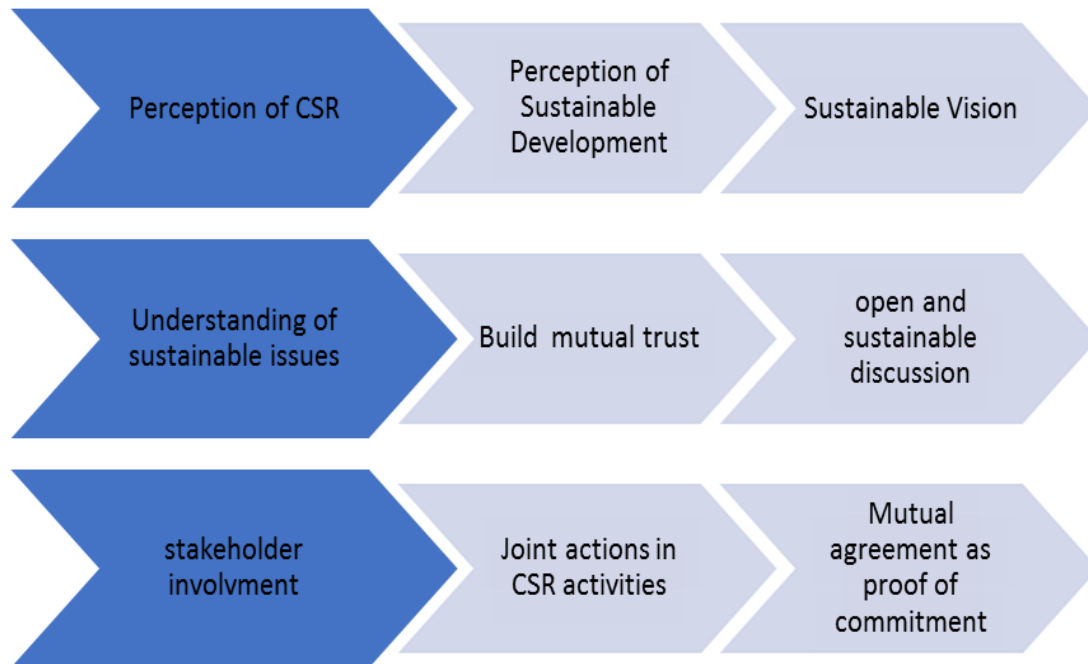


Image : 9 Components of Participatory Communication for Sustainable Development

The evaluation result of the cognitive development process on various parties within the company and the society. (a) The perception of members of the West Java CSR forum about the concept of CSR is closely related to the process of improving the quality of life and the ability of beneficiary communities to make an action of change on the social conditions they encounter. This belief is necessary as a principle in building an independent society as explained by Budimanta (2008) who conveys that social development must be carried out in a planned and systematically directed manner to widen society access to achieve better social, economic and quality of life conditions.

Through the implementation of participatory communication, it is found that one interesting thing in the findings of this study is that the beneficiaries are no longer consider the concept of CSR as a single charity, but they realize that the concept of corporate CSR is an activity that has a big impact on social development in achieving independence and prosperity. Representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also explained that thing as a third-party agency between the company and the beneficiary society. They agreed that the purpose of CSR is to create an independent society.

Understanding of the beneficiary society towards the concept of CSR is good news for both companies and governments because this perception will enable the implementation of CSR programs in the West Java CSR Forum. The collaboration between the three parties which already have a good understanding of the concept of CSR is the key success of the West Java Forum. It will accelerate the efforts in creating the vision and mission of the West Java CSR Forum towards the prosperity and independence of the people in West Java.

However, in the West Java CSR Forum, society development is a very essential thing, considering that CSR here is more society-welfare oriented. It is reflected in the programs arranged by the West Java CSR Forum which in line with social development programs in the field of social, educational and health.

Furthermore, (b) the theme of sustainable development perception in this study was put into focus because of the problem of knowledge gap about the true meaning of sustainable development concept. The results of the data analysis indicate that the companies that are members of the West Java CSR Forum have fully understood that the programs they arrange are sustainable development-oriented.

One of the main goals of sustainable development is to improve the standard of living of people so that poverty can be alleviated. Therefore, the SDGs have been set as the main standard agreed upon by the world about efforts to improve human welfare. This understanding is clearly in line with the objectives of the West Java CSR Forum set by the Governor of West Java, Ahmad Heryawan, through the West Java CSR official web page (www.csr-jawa-barat.com). In his statement, the governor stated that with the West Java CSR Forum, development in West Java was expected to be accelerated. Moreover, the Human Development Index (HDI) or the Human Development Index (HDI) can be increased.

Thus the concept of CSR in the activities of the West Java CSR Forum is a long-term commitment of the company to improve the quality of life and the environment, which includes economic, environmental and socio-cultural aspects. This clearly coincides with what is emphasized by Cambell (2012) that (c) a vision of sustainability consisting of concepts, dimensions, and programs of sustainable development has to explain the idea of human development based on the environment, not only on conventional economic criteria, moreover, it must be based on social agendas and wider concerns for the environment. This is very closely related to the understanding of sustainable development that must continue to be improved as an idea that is not only independent of the society in the sense of developing society.

This activity still requires a broader understanding of sustainable development for all parties. Heinrich (2011) states that increasing participatory communication requires a strategy that can explain how to improve understanding (d) about sustainable development issues and agree on the key issues. These things will evoke what forum members have to do and also create commitments and agreements about the roles and responsibilities.

Leadership that has a vision of sustainability is very important (Budimanta, 2014). The leaders at the Regional CSR Forum were very understanding of the concept of sustainable development. They are the leaders who become the highest directors of the company who joined as members of the West Java CSR Forum. This proves that if their understanding and awareness of sustainable development are good enough, they will optimize their action as well.

The respondents consist of the 10 largest companies that become the contributors and supporters of development programs in West Java. The research findings show that all of these companies uphold CSR and sustainable development. They also make the highest referral basis as the guideline for the company's operations and business ethics through a vision of sustainability.

The result of this study also signifies that the guideline of the vision of companies that are members of the West Java CSR Forum contains clear company visions about sustainable development and the goals that define that vision. This is what Bossel (1999) said referring to the Bellagio Principle Report which states that sustainable development must contain a clear vision and the goals that define that vision. This is one of the standards for evaluating sustainable development.

According to Noorhadi (2011), this awareness considers the company's vision as the direction of the company's management to determine the company's code of conduct. This vision ensures that company values are aligned with their environmental values. By this reason, it is very important to ensure that the company's vision is in line with the strategic vision in activities that prioritize the community and the environment if they intend to implement social responsibility.

The vision of sustainability is indeed reflected in the impact of its vision. For companies that are members of the West Java CSR Forum who have a good understanding of the sustainability vision, they will act towards sustainability issues and they will (e) build mutual trust by optimizing their role in resolving sustainable issues in West Java area.

The strength of the participatory communication component that will become the focus of this research is the activities of the West Java CSR Forum as a whole (f) through open and planned open discussions. As the stakeholders, the forum members interact each other continuously as Nair and White (2004) explain that an open discussion between the sources and recipients should interact continuously to think about the situation constructively also to identify development issues and take action to overcome the situation.

If referring to the previous researches Aziz Firdaus (2011) and Rahmatullah and Apriwiyanto (2014), most of them discussed the form and the implementation of CSR partnerships in Indonesia in determining the impact by the partnership under study. Based on the whole results of this study, researchers can conclude the communication aspects, especially participatory communication as an important component that determines the sustainability (h) Joint action as a form of CSR partnership between companies, governments, and society.

The results study on participatory communication in the West Java CSR Forum have the same conclusions as the study on social partnership related to CSR Development in India (Sharma & Tyagi, 2010), Kazakhstan (Baisakalova, 2012) and CSR Forums in Europe (Macarie et.al, 2005) which revealed that sustainable communication and discussion will contribute to the success of cross-sector stakeholder partnerships. The research was conducted to meet the expectation of all stakeholders in developing a relationship of mutual trust and mutual understanding.

Open discussion is an effort to improve communication that was arranged by the West Java CSR Forum as one of the government's strategies to increase company understanding relating to social, health and environmental issues in West Java. This is what Heinrich (2011) explained as a participatory activity that requires a strategy that can explain how to increase understanding of sustainable development issues; improve communication and agreement on key issues, things they need to do; a series of individuals committed in the institution; agreement on new roles and responsibilities; while the bigger issue is the commitment itself. Frequently discussed topic in the study is about the long-term program, implementation issues and ideas to complete the West Java CSR forum program in the future. The agreement between the two stakeholders was made (i) as a form of commitment until it comes at the stage of signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The West Java CSR Forum believes that participatory communication is a strategic mean for identifying development needs and issues. Open discussion is a cross-sector partnership tool. Through open discussion, stakeholders can discuss a long-term program to improve the situation and take action if there is a concern in the West Java region. One of the principles of participatory communication of the West Java CSR Forum is low-level communication and high-level alignment.

This finding provides an overview of the significance of the open discussion function. According to Freire (1997), from the results of evaluations on several components of participatory communication built in the West Java CSR Forum, it is based on the understanding that in this discussion, the one who listens is as important as the one who talks. This is what is said as participatory communication which prioritizes people as its orientation in horizontal communication.

The important role of open discussion is very helpful in the achievement of the West Java CSR Forum in the process of involving stakeholders. The arrangement of CSR programs in the West Java CSR

Forum is clearly in line with the company's background in terms of its arrangement, implementation, evaluation, and actions. Gray (2006) said that stakeholder involvement in the implementation of stakeholder participation which has now become a major problem in the implementation of the business sector. It is used as a way to improve communication, get public support, and collect useful data. Besides, this is also used to improve ideas and reputation of the public sector and to provide more opportunities for making sustainable decisions.

The results of this study are in line with the results of Bowen's (2005) study which emphasizes the problem of collaboration between stakeholders as an effective way to overcome social issues in Jamaica. Bowen has emphasized the involvement of stakeholders who are the main parties in the development process that focuses on collaboration. The main hypothesis regarding stakeholders is that the higher the level of collaboration, the higher the productivity of the source and the higher the benefits of the society-based development program.

The results of this study indicate that the use of participatory communication is a focus among various stakeholders who have a mutual agreement. This process involves four stages: (1) identifying problems and advantages, (2) motivating and mobilizing, (3) collaborating and (4) creating a positive environment. These stages underlie the theory of stakeholder engagement, which believes that collaboration can increase productivity and create appropriate conditions for society-based development.

Conclusion

Based on the results of study that has been conducted, the conclusions can be drawn as follows;

1. The evaluation of participatory communication in CSR held in cross-sector partnership in the West Java CSR forum has successfully created joint activities between the company, the government, and the society through CSR. These activities are the process of social development to help solve the problem of poverty, limited education and human resources, health insurance financing, and environmental issues.
2. Through participatory communication, the relationship between the parties become more innovative and aims to achieve the goals of social welfare through the combined resources and abilities. Moreover, members of the West Java CSR Forum who have carried out CSR activities based on voluntary principles to support the concern of the government in the development process of the region.
3. The evaluation of participatory communication in CSR activities is a joint action that runs based on mutual understanding. This commitment is realized through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to create a spirit of cooperation between the company as a member of the forum with the government, and the society as the beneficiary. The managing director only attended the inauguration ceremony.

It means that the West Java CSR Forum uses participatory communication to align knowledge and goals in changing the attitudes of forum members that have been agreed by all stakeholders. In this case, participatory communication becomes a strategic means for the successful implementation of the West Java CSR Forum. It is arranged, established and understood by all stakeholders aimed at achieving mutual understanding to develop and share resources in a CSR Forum partnership to achieve sustainable development goals.

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