

Empirical Review Of Migration Policies In Malaysian Public Relations Sector

¹ Eugene Chan, ² Paul Siew Chuan Ang

Abstract:

It goes without saying that at the core, all firms seek to generate goodwill, foster sustainable relationships with major stakeholders as well as preserve their reputations. The aim of this review is to delineate the novel trends that are coming to the fore in the field of public relations management. The review delves into this domain and highlights the new developments concerning the approaches utilized by organizations to manage their relationships. This review offers some generalized information regarding public relations management, along with a wider meaning regarding this, followed by a description of the current, relevant trends. Public Relations can be seen as an administrative field which structures as well as maintains common, gainful links amongst organizations and society in general. In the modern scenario wherein the maintenance of relationships is achieved by means of social media, emails, etc., rather than telephones or newspapers, it is of a vital importance to understand the ways by which firms make attempts to adapt to such changes. This review also lists the various different challenges that are faced by organizations in maintaining their relationships with other business entities or partners as well as the general public. This paper goes on to describe and elaborate on the novel methods that are being adopted in the field of public relations and the approaches involved in implementing them. The paper concludes by discussing what the future holds for Public Relations practitioners.

Key Words: *Public relations management, PR Management, Novel Approaches, Reputation, Goodwill.*

1. Introduction

The field of Public Relations (PR) has seen a great amount of developments over the past decade or so¹. Technological innovations, speedy interchanges, along with the decline of the print media sector, among others has led to disruptions within the traditional PR approaches. Today PR has become an avenue, or a sort of ombudsman or correspondence tool which synchronizes reconnoitering, characterizes pressing issues, and advances communications between various social entities that are found within the public realm. The practice of PR is related to a number of hierarchical conditions, whether in relation to internal management or the open undertaking of tasks, to interchanges within tasks among NGOs, as well as SMEs. By arranging and sorting out comments, advertisers generate and strengthen their firms' reputations and facilitate the maintenance of vital links which are imperative for the firm.²

¹ Jesselton University College, Malaysia, ² Twintech International University College of Technology, Malaysia

The responsibilities of the PR officers stretch from being aware of and addressing the shifts seen within their present work settings regarding expectations, interconnectivity as well as reputations, while simultaneously being committed to maintaining a productive jobsite via representative correspondences. A firm's hierarchical requirements could be characterized by sufficient representative correspondences, which provide the information regarding the status of the goals that are being sought after. PR officers recognize the necessity for changes and focus their thought processes and efforts toward facilitating their firms in attaining their strategic goals. Some organizations refer to their PR department as the corporate communication department. Corporate communications offer a systematic and structured element to the synchronization of all communicatory approaches. The main aim here is the generation and maintenance of positive reputations in the eyes of other businesses or partners, which is crucial for the firm.

1.1 This Review's Objectives

- To describe the newest trends seen in PR management.
- To describe how PR management is adjusting to the shifts that are being seen within today's social and technological settings.

1.2 Background

Society as a whole in the 21st century is being besieged with fleeting and frenzied technological advancements, environmental shifts, cutthroat industrial competitions as well as exceptional pressures to get ahead. This has forced today's society to adopt as well as assimilate with novelties on a daily basis. Included here are the novel communication practices as well as the information consumption activities which individuals are seeking to embrace. This in turn sets in motion the discussions regarding the way by which all of this impacts strategic communication processes within PR management.

1.3 PR and CSR Practices

Today, we are overwhelmed with advertisements and promotions- whereby everything from political to cultural issues gets trademarked, consumerism becomes trivialized and ingrained within day to day relationships. It has become requisite for businesses to embrace novel practices toward remaining visible, as well as maintaining and expanding their audiences. Toward attaining these objectives, PR campaigns across the globe have assumed a social slant and hence are transforming socio-political, cultural, as well as civic practices into assets that are tangible (Polas & Raju, 2021) This trend which can be seen to be tightly associated with the corporate social responsibility (CSR) notion of the 60's, has in the past decade or so, become a common phenomenon (Farooq & Raju, 2019a) This pertains to the pressing need for firms to step up and be accountable for how their activities affect the entire society. According to (Chetty & Phung, 2018) it has become a necessity for today's companies to adhere to practices that are socially responsible in order to legitimize their social presence as well as continued existence.

A clear cut instance of a PR project that successfully attained its social impact aims was Airbnb's #WeAccept campaign (Raju, 2018) With regard to US President Trump banning refugees and migrants in 2017, the focus of Airbnb's campaign was on the significance of welcoming and fostering ethnic, cultural and religious differences. In addition, the International Rescue Committee were given donations to the tune of \$4 million by Airbnb toward providing accommodation over the short-term for those affected by the ban (Polas, Raju, Muhibullah, et al., 2022) This PR campaign was in line with the official anti-discriminatory policies advocated by Airbnb (Airbnb, n.d.). On top of proving Airbnb's solid commitment to inclusivity and non-

discriminatory policies, this campaign served as a direct response and opposition to Trump's questionable political decision. (Phung & Chetty, 2018) highlights that this campaign led to a 2,400% rise in communications over social media platforms regarding Airbnb, with the reactions being overwhelmingly positive. The implication here is that PR campaigns involving political positions which are reasonable and justifiable, and which are in accordance with a consistent as well as genuine CSR result in various advantageous outcomes. Hence, in all probability, besides well-known brand names, such practices will be adopted by all firms as vital considerations within their overall PR activities.

According to (Anggoro et al., 2018) in time, PR's roles will extend outward from the confined interests of particular firms toward society's greatest interests. Based on this, it can be inferred that in time, it would not be possible to separate PR from social phenomena. It is anticipated that soon, PR practitioners would not hesitate in offering their compelling opinions and responses to political affairs with the genuine commitment of their brand names to social responsibility steering their successes. Nonetheless, within this context, genuineness as well as personalization demands ought to be considered as well. With the amount of information that can be assessed today, inconsistencies within the linkages amongst a firm's CSR projects and its other organizational behaviors are easily identifiable by its stakeholders, which would lead to a catastrophic hit for its reputation. Some large businesses have been accused of being untruthful about the environmental friendly practices that they advocate. Two examples are: Volkswagen fitting their supposedly "clean" diesel engines with devices that are able to circumvent pollution emissions tests, and the "sustainably sourced" cocoa beans by Nestlé found to originate from farms involving child labor (Mohd Adnan & Valliappan, 2019)

The number of firms that seek to introduce business goals that are more virtuous, responsible and accountable toward their workers, consumers, society as well as the natural environment is rising steadily. However, sincere social dialogues and a true alignment of these firms' PR campaigns with their goods or services appear to loom as a massive challenge in future. (Polas, Raju, Hossen, et al., 2022) states that a firm's capability of synchronizing its fiscal aims to social goals and ensuring its continual positive showings and overall trustworthiness are vital. This would allow consumers to positively perceive the authenticity of the firm's CSR practices and hence, its business prospects over the long run.

1.4 Personalization

The overall consensus is that in time, personalized messages will start to prevail with regard to communications, within the PR sector. The effectiveness of PR campaigns seeking to advocate for social changes is in direct proportion to how socially conscious the target population is. This was touched upon by (Polas, Raju, Hossen, et al., 2022), who stated that PR practitioners would find it difficult to engage the public in environmental issues because the latter had a tendency to transfer their environmental responsibilities to governments or particular industries. The theory of situational communication put forth by (Raju, 2021) implies that the active responses of an individual to environmental rallying calls is predominantly dependent on: "how connected the person feels to the issue". In line with this, a rising challenge associated with PR initiatives trying to promote the public's commendatory perceptions based on CSR activities, is the personalization of PR experiences efficiently, toward drawing a more extensive public attention.

It has to be borne in mind that these sorts of initiatives do not merely pertain to environmental matters (Raju & Phung, 2020) Recent study findings indicate that PR messages concerning politics are becoming more personalized with the focus of general political strategic

communications having shifted toward individual leaders as well as their professional and personal attributes, rather than the political institutions (Farooq & Raju, 2019b) Taking into consideration the backdrop of today's IR 4.0, social media has risen to become an extremely viable tool which offers PR practitioners the relevant opportunities for personalization. (Raju & Phung, 2018) states that besides facilitating brands in communicating storylines that are more personalized, social media also paves the way for them to hear their customers' voices and make the necessary adjustments to their service approaches. Hence, it can be anticipated that conventional PR practices will be additionally augmented by social media in the coming years, based on large scale distribution of content as well as unrestricted interactions with target audiences. However, utilizing digital media technologies for strategic aims also potentially lead to an increasingly cynical view of them as PR tools. This is due to disinformation becoming viral over the internet and the lines between facts and reason as well as lies and emotions becoming blurred (Saigopal & Raju, 2020a) Research findings indicate that slogans like: 'We Want Our Country Back' (UK's Brexit) and 'Make America Great Again' (U. S's Donald Trump) had been based on untruthful or deceptive narratives of the financial as well as social trends within these two nations (Kebah et al., 2019) This is in line (Raju & Phung, 2019) opinion of modern democratic practices being supervised spectacles wherein society plays a passive role in the puppet shows orchestrated by communication experts. This notion becomes further reinforced when the obscure sources of funding for PR materials which are difficult to track, come into focus.

The excessive falsehood and deception over social media leads to confusion among the public, and unsurprisingly, this results in fatigue, frustration and distrust among the people concerning public figures (Younus & Raju, 2021) This is demonstrated by the Edelman Trust Barometer's special report in 2018 which showed that approximately two out of five global social media users distrusted social media information, with around 70% attributing these platforms for the pervasiveness of today's fake information (Rana & Raju, 2019) Honest political or PR communications of the future may be severely impacted by these sorts of public opinions. Based on this, it can be readily seen that in future, the application of PR tactics that are effective like storytelling over social media or the alignment of digital PR initiatives and SEO strategies will be inadequate for the engagement of the public in authentic and sustainable relationships. Hence, though these platforms would in all likelihood still be viable PR tools, the challenges impacting PR practitioners would be related to their capabilities of drawing and maintaining their target audiences based on honest content that is of high-quality, along with solid informational causes. The promotion and enhancement of media literacy among the public is also of much importance toward the development of congruent links amongst the creators and consumers of social media content. In other words, when the public has the relevant knowledge and tools which facilitate their identification of manipulative messages, authentic PR activities and propaganda campaigns could be easily differentiated. (Polas et al., 2019) highlight that when target audiences are capable of critical thought regarding PR practices, it will be beneficial for both, the PR practitioners and also the society in general. This in turn will result in PR practitioners becoming more accountable, fostering transparent, honest strategic communications, increasing public engagements as well as reestablishing trust within social media platforms.

1.5 PR and Crowdsourcing

With regard to public involvement, crowdsourcing's consistently growing popularity within the PR and media management sector has to be highlighted. The phenomenon pertains to target audiences' engagement with the development of content, underscoring the slow disappearance of firms involved in the top-down approach when consuming news. Crowdsourcing as a tool

holds much potential for PR practitioners, for instance: offering insights on relevant topics and public opinions, revealing “untold stories” that are missed or sidelined by the mainstream media, allowing for an examination of interests and concerns among different stakeholder groups, and enhancing innovative processes through collective wisdom (Hmedan et al., 2018)

With the rise in crowdsourcing techniques, there is also a concurrent rise in citizen journalism, otherwise known as participatory or “street” journalism. This is related to non-professionals uploading uncensored, and usually exclusive information by means of blogs, and social media as well as video sharing platforms, etc. (Adalety et al., 2018) On top of just offering raw material to news media outlets, street journalists are capable of acting separately from the official media and have the potential to spontaneously trigger a powerful early momentum involving social movements (Raju et al., 2021) In view of this, future PR practitioners should be wary of neglecting the importance of engaging with participatory citizens as well as content that is user generated. This is especially so, considering the amount grassroots campaigns mushrooming today, along with the rise of activist practices that are increasingly becoming mediatised. Also, a survey conducted by (Saigopal & Raju, 2020b) indicates that most users hold product or service reviews provided by other users as being more genuine and trustable in comparison with content that is brand-owned (Simeng et al., 2020) Hence, PR practitioners ought to leverage crowdsourcing along with the participatory journalists’ involvement toward obtaining public credibility, enhancing conventional PR practices and discovering solid narratives or unique issues that are newsworthy. Nonetheless, PR practitioners ought to heed the ethical considerations involved in the excessive utilization of crowdsourcing tools, i.e., intellectual property rights or non-incentivized labor (Yizhou et al., 2020) Also, sometimes attempting for public outreach by the delegation of content creation and distribution involving audience within digital media audience end up backfiring. Though it could be argued that such PR campaigns fail because of inadequate pre-launch research concerning public opinions, social media’s inherent characteristics like its highly dynamic and unpredictable nature could negatively affect HR activities. Thus, effectively engaging with online audiences and also the proper selection of communication avenues can be seen as a challenge for PR practitioners in future.

1.6 PR and Communication Avenues

When it comes to communication avenues, media convergence as well as cross channel communications need to be highlighted. Todorova & Oltarzhevskiy (2019) hold that today’s firms and brand names sometimes utilize communication avenues ranging between three and twelve toward targeting audiences, both, internally and also externally. PR practitioners have to be heedful of the cohesiveness of these channels and also their level of consistence with the central themes of their campaigns. As highlighted earlier, there is a rising shift of today’s strategic communications toward online platforms.

1.7 Of PR & Information and Communications Technology

Today’s constantly advancing technologies and hyper-connected settings has paved the way for novel, erstwhile unseen digital communication modes like chatbots. According to Zumstein & Hundertmark (2017), by 2017, the number of chatbots related to Facebook Messenger crossed the 100,000 mark. Such innovations within the communication sector have facilitated businesses in sustaining perpetual interactions with their consumers while cutting down on costs and generating more earnings at the same time. Nevertheless, this constantly expanding amount of communication avenues also results in an excess of informational sources, sometimes referred to as an informational overload. Renjith (2017) states that this information overload is challenging to target audiences’ cognitive abilities and usually ends up confusing

and distressing them. This in turn, could potentially impede any tight and trusting relationships amongst firms and their clients. While in this instance, the issue's root cause could be seen as being technological, the latter could also become the solution. This becomes possible with the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) technology and tools toward optimizing control and sorting out communication systems (Renjith, 2017).

1.8 PR & Strategic Communication

In the case of strategic communicators, it is becoming increasingly vital for them to focus on expanding and substantially upgrading their professional skillsets which ought to among others, be inclusive of fundamental ICT and business competencies. In a nutshell, the PR sector's future hinges on phenomena which are becoming more and more ubiquitous within the contemporary social domains like digitalization and mediatization. Though these phenomena offer PR practitioners the relevant opportunities of using fresh platforms, avenues and content varieties, existing side by side are the threats of adverse events. For instance, the spread of false or rabble rousing news disguised as constructive criticisms or unconventional opinions. Another worrying issue is some extensive CSR campaigns involving PR seeming to be involved in "greenwashing" activities, which in numerous instances act as fronts for the pursuit of narrow business interests which are personally motivated. Such activities lead to the people negatively perceiving the PR sector and are among the main reasons why they are skeptical regarding strategic communications or do not trust the online media.

1.9 The Future of PR

In the future, among the challenges faced by PR practitioners would be the need to overcome and resolve issues such as those highlighted in the previous subsection. Keeping this in mind, it bears reiterating that PR communicators' roles are anticipated to noticeably expand over the near future. This is applicable to both, their organizational performances and beyond. In organizations, PR practitioners would in all likelihood take on activist roles, whose focus would be on questioning their own firms' unseemly activities while striving for improvements toward more fair practices (Ihlen, 2018). Hence, strategic communicators are anticipated to enhance CSR activities, offer the relevant guidelines concerning internal corporate communications as well as coordinate their firms' business goals with the demands of external communities locally and also society on the whole. Beyond their firms, PR practitioners are anticipated to be involved in the drive for societal participation and promotion of genuine and sincere mediatized activism practices. The most important requirement concerning this is the massive quantities of high-quality PR based materials which should be based on facts. This will go hand in hand with commonly utilized, conventional PR modes like press releases or statements, newsletters, etc. It is only possible to fulfil the rising demands for content that is of exceptional quality by competent PR practitioners whose skillsets are multi-layered and who are committed as well. Therefore, it is inevitable for multi-tasking capabilities to become both, a key attribute as well as an imminent challenge involving PR practitioners in future.

References

- Adalety, J. E., Raju, V., & Phung, S. P. (2018). Role of stakeholder in revenue mobilization to alleviate poverty in Ghana using E-governance mechanisms. *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering*, 8(2S), 129–133.
- Anggoro, B., Halimi, B., Siagian, P. H., Burhan, J., Tamjis, M. R., Abu Bakar, M., & Raju, V. (2018). Waste power generation analysis using landfill gas. *Eurasian Journal of Analytical Chemistry*, 13(6), 285–302.

- Chetty, V. R. K., & Phung, S. P. (2018). Economics behind education: Elements of development outcomes through political involvement. *Eurasian Journal of Analytical Chemistry*, 13(6), 146–157.
- Farooq, M., & Raju, V. (2019a). Impact of Over-the-Top (OTT) Services on the Telecom Companies in the Era of Transformative Marketing. *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management*, 20(2), 177–188. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S40171-019-00209-6>
- Farooq, M., & Raju, V. (2019b). Want to Stay the Market Leader in the Era of Transformative Marketing? Keep the Customers Satisfied! *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management*, 20(3), 257–266. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S40171-019-00213-W>
- Hmedan, M., Chetty, V. R. K., & Phung, S. P. (2018). Malaysian tourism sector: Technical review on policies and regulations. *Eurasian Journal of Analytical Chemistry*, 13(6), 114–120.
- Kebah, M., Raju, V., & Osman, Z. (2019). Online purchasing trend in the retail industry in Saudi. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, 8(3), 865–868. <https://doi.org/10.35940/IJRTE.C4053.098319>
- Mohd Adnan, S. N. S., & Valliappan, R. (2019). Communicating shared vision and leadership styles towards enhancing performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 68(6), 1042–1056. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-05-2018-0183>
- Phung, S. P., & Chetty, V. R. K. (2018). Conceptualizing the application for ethereum blockchains: Front end application development. *Eurasian Journal of Analytical Chemistry*, 13(6), 105–113.
- Polas, M. R. H., Bhattacharjee, A., Raju, V., & Hossain, M. I. (2019). Demographic Factors Influence on the Tendency to Become Entrepreneur: Estimating the Antecedents and Consequences of Entrepreneurial Tendency. *International Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 8(1), 48–60. <https://doi.org/10.18488/JOURNAL.11.2019.81.48.60>
- Polas, M. R. H., & Raju, V. (2021). Technology and Entrepreneurial Marketing Decisions During COVID-19. *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management*, 22(2), 95–112. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S40171-021-00262-0>
- Polas, M. R. H., Raju, V., Hossen, S. M., Karim, A. M., & Tabash, M. I. (2022). Customer's revisit intention: Empirical evidence on Gen-Z from Bangladesh towards halal restaurants. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 22(3). <https://doi.org/10.1002/PA.2572>
- Polas, M. R. H., Raju, V., Muhibbullah, M., & Tabash, M. I. (2022). Rural women characteristics and sustainable entrepreneurial intention: a road to economic growth in Bangladesh. *Journal of Enterprising Communities*, 16(3), 421–449. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEC-10-2020-0183>
- Raju, V. (2018). Theory of Lim law: Leadership style. *Eurasian Journal of Analytical Chemistry*, 13(6), 125–136.
- Raju, V. (2021). Implementing Flexible Systems in Doctoral Viva Defense Through Virtual Mechanism. *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management*, 22(2), 127–139. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S40171-021-00264-Y>
- Raju, V., Juan, W., Shrestha, S., Kalathinathan, A., & Ramachandran, K. K. (2021). Role of big data analytics in belt and road initiative (BRI): Multivariate analysis with gaussian distribution of data. *Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence and Applications*, 341, 169–177. <https://doi.org/10.3233/FAIA210245>
- Raju, V., & Phung, S. P. (2018). Production of methane gas from cow's residue: Biogas as alternative energy in transportation and electricity. *Eurasian Journal of Analytical Chemistry*, 13(6), 121–124.
- Raju, V., & Phung, S. P. (2019). Sustainability in performance management through supply chain management. *International Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 8(2), 1085–1089.
- Raju, V., & Phung, S. P. (2020). Economic dimensions of blockchain technology: In the context of extension of cryptocurrencies. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24(2), 29–39. <https://doi.org/10.37200/IJPR/V24I2/PR200307>
- Rana, S. U. A., & Raju, V. (2019). Factors influencing glass ceiling focus on women administration in higher education in Malaysia. *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology*, 8(6 Special Issue 3), 461–468. <https://doi.org/10.35940/IJEAT.F1220.0986S319>
- Saigopal, V. V. R. G., & Raju, V. (2020a). IIoT Digital Forensics and Major Security issues. 2020 International Conference on Computational Intelligence, ICCI 2020, 233–236. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICCI51257.2020.9247685>

- Saigopal, V. V. R. G., & Raju, V. (2020b). IoT based Secure Digital Forensic Process according to Process Management. 2020 International Conference on Computational Intelligence, ICCI 2020, 229–232. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICCI51257.2020.9247710>
- Simeng, Z., Yizhou, Z., & Raj, V. (2020). Explore the Improvement of the Management of China's International Film Festivals Based on Artificial Intelligence. ACM International Conference Proceeding Series, 63–67. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3407703.3407716>
- Yizhou, Z., Simeng, Z., & Raj, V. (2020). A Discussion of the Application of Artificial Intelligence in the Management of Mass Media Censorship in Mainland China. ACM International Conference Proceeding Series, 79–84. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3407703.3407719>
- Younus, A. M., & Raju, V. (2021). Resilient Features of Organizational Culture in Implementation of Smart Contract Technology Blockchain in Iraqi Gas and Oil Companies. International Journal for Quality Research, 15(2), 435–450. <https://doi.org/10.24874/IJQR15.02-05>