

Masyarakat, Kebudayaan dan Politik

Daftar Isi

Coping with Physical Environment: The Case Studies of Low-Income Housing in Jakarta Sri Astuti Indriyati.....	257–268
Membuka Diri Setengah Hati: Ruang Keterlibatan Warga dalam Penyusunan APBD Bowo Sugiarto	269–276
Pemanfaatan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi dalam Diplomasi Indonesia dengan Tiga Negara ASEAN Peni Hanggarini & Retno Hendrowati	277–285
Konflik Etnis Samawa dengan Etnis Bali: Tinjauan Sosial Politik dan Upaya Resolusi Konflik Syarifuddin Iskandar Ardiansyah	286–292
Penanganan Keluhan Publik pada Birokrasi Dinas Perijinan Suryadi	293–303
Cerita Rakyat di Pulau Mandangin: Kajian Struktural Antropologi Claude Lévi Strauss Suhartono, Bambang Yulianto & Anas Ahmadi	304–311
Isu Ras dan Warna Kulit dalam Konstruksi Kecantikan Ideal Perempuan Ratih Puspa	312–323
Employees as the ‘Actor’ in Communicating the New Corporate Identity Nurul Ratna Sari	324–329
Karakter Maskulin Pemerintahan Bush Edi Dwi Riyanto	330–335

Employees as the ‘Actor’ in Communicating the New Corporate Identity

Nurul Ratna Sari¹

Departemen Komunikasi, FISIP, Universitas Airlangga

ABSTRACT

Airlangga University (locally known as UNAIR) had undergone privatisation, a process that resulted in a significant change in terms of management system and corporate identity. As corporate identity was the fundamental of organisation, communicating the new corporate identity was a necessity. This research aimed to outline the role of employee in communicating the new corporate identity during privatisation. The social identity, symbolic interactions, and drama theory would be collaborated into the organisational identity dynamics Model from Hatch & Schultz to analyse the case study. The analysis found that UnAir presented the corporate identity through visual identity. On the other hand, corporate identity was more than a visual identity; it rooted from corporate culture that engaged employees as the ‘actors’ in the organisation.

Key words: *privatisation, corporate culture, organisational behaviour, management system, social identity*

Airlangga University (locally known as UNAIR) had undergone privatisation, a process that resulted in a significant change in terms of management system and corporate identity. As corporate identity was the fundamental of organisation, communicating the new corporate identity was a necessity. This research aimed to outline the role of employee in communicating the new corporate identity during privatisation. Organisation changes have been part of its dynamic existence. Many organisations experience privatisation, merger, and acquisition during its operations. Whether planned or unplanned, the changes demand an adjustment in the new management system and new corporate identity. As these are the fundamental of organisation, communicating the change to the stakeholder is a necessity.

Methods

This paper details in the role of employee in communicating the new corporate identity. Firstly, the paper analyses the social identity theory [SIT] to explain how social identity influence individual behaviour. Furthermore, the symbolic interactionism discourse theory is used to explain how organisational member construct the organisation in the social reality based on the organisation performance and

symbols. The social identity, symbolic interactions, and drama theory would be collaborated into the organisational identity dynamics Model from Hatch & Schultz to analyse the case study. To sum up, this paper presents the implication of the theories to the case study of Unair.

Results and Discussion

Unair: A Changing Organisation

Privatisation has been applied to higher educational institutions in Indonesia. In 2006, Unair was transitioned from a state university to the government owned legal entity institution (a semi private institution). As a consequence, the corporate identity has changed from Unair to Unair BHMN, followed by the vision statement ‘become an independent, innovative, and leading university regionally and internationally, and the slogan ‘excellence with morality’. Additionally, the new management system has been implemented, such as the ‘9-5’ working hour, morning briefing, and a customer-based service. Thus, Unair develops a team which is responsible for communicating the new corporate identity and the changes to external stakeholders.

Since January 2007, the team has implemented a corporate communication program to socialise

¹ Korespondensi: N.R. Sari. Departemen Komunikasi, FISIP, Universitas Airlangga. Jl. Airlangga 4-6 Surabaya, 60286, Indonesia. Telp. (031) 5011744. E-mail: nsari_fisip@unair.ac.id

the changes. Internally, the socialisation has been done through the internal document text, employee meeting, and internal newsletter. Externally, the team implemented corporate branding program and built Unair BHMN website. However, based on the recent public opinion survey, the new corporate identity has not successfully established in public. Moreover, public opinion concerned to the three significant issues: higher tuition fee, service quality, and education quality.

Having undergone privatisation, Unair has been strategically and financially independent. The higher tuition fee has been implemented in order to support its operations. This demands a customer-based service for external stakeholder. Rather than changing the organisation status, privatisation has changed the organisational behaviour which reflects its new identity. Organisational behaviour is rooted from the internal member of organisation. As the 'people' of an organisation, employees implement the behaviour through their interactions within organisation and with the external stakeholders. In further, this will build a perception of organisation in the external stakeholders. Therefore, employees are the 'actor' in communicating the new corporate identity to external stakeholders.

Social Identity Theory

In the work place, individual is a member of organisation who is involved in a group interaction. In this interaction, individual performs not only personal identity, but also social identity. Abram and Hogg (1990) stated the social identity Theory which explains that individual behaviour is built based on personal identity and social identity. While personal identity is individual's unique character, social identity is a self-concept of a group. Particularly, social identity appears to be more salient than personal identity, since individual shares ideologies, values, resources through intergroup communication. Furthermore, in the intergroup communication, individuals define themselves as the group membership. This process leads to a self-categorisation, which results in a decision to be in-group or out-group. Turner (Abram & Hogg 1990) found that individuals stereotype themselves into a group behaviour. When they find the prototype self behaviour in the group behaviour, individuals tend to be in-group. In this situation, individuals see themselves not personally different but collectively similar, which represent the group behaviour. Individuals transform their personal behaviour into

group behaviour. Thus, social identity becomes more salient than personal identity. In this context, individuals encounter a depersonalisation process in which their unique personality fit into the social categorisation based on the in-group prototype. This results in a normative behaviour, cooperation and collaboration, emotional and collective behaviour in a mutual relationship (Hogg & Terry 2000). Similarly, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (1999) found that in a group behaviour, individuals become depersonalised and see themselves as the representative of the group. Individuals perform their collectivity by saying 'we' rather than 'I'.

However, in-group interaction is a dynamic process. As evidence of this, Abrams & Hogg (1990) stated that in an in-group interaction, individual is motivated to achieve positive self-esteem. To support this, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (1999) generated that the need of positive self-esteem occurs while individual shares his values, ideologies, beliefs, and relationships that leads to a sense of belonging. This explanation refers to the importance of commitment in in-group interaction that facilitated by the positive self-esteem. Therefore, in order to maintain in-group cohesiveness, positive self esteem should be built through an interaction. This process leads to the collectively perception of seeing 'who we are' as a group, rather than personally perception of 'who I am' as an individual.

Symbolic Interactions Theory and Drama Theory

Furthermore, individuals perform the 'who we are' through the interaction that creates a narrative in organisation. This narrative appears in the organisational performance through a symbol, event, and story. Weber (Heracleous 2006) generated interpretive approach to organisational discourse that focus on a 'meaningful understanding' in the social reality. Organisational phenomenon is a social reality that represented by the symbol, not only textual symbol, but more importantly, a particular situation presented by the organisational member through the totally activity based on its beliefs and values. This interpretative approach views that social reality comprises a situation, a symbolic interaction, and the actor. This is the way how a symbolic interactionism discourse theory interprets the social reality (Heracleous 2006).

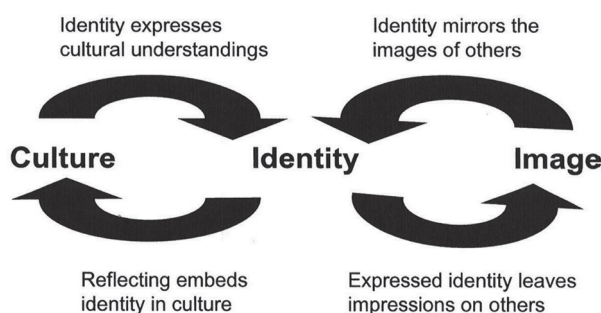
Interestingly, social reality involved the actor, in which the actor may create his situation to be presented. This is similarly stated in the drama theory that in engaging others, individual is an actor

who plays a particular character in a stage. The stage is a situation in which a behaviour is manipulated to create an expected perception from others. In most of situation in which individual participate, they decide a role and enact it (Goffman 1959).

Taken together, drama theory refers to the symbolic interactionism theory that rooted from the narrative created in symbolic interaction within organisation. The narrative reflects a 'drama' in which the member of organisation is the 'actor'. As organisation comprises individuals, they construct it through the way they interacted, the events held, and the symbol of organisation. Thus, individuals create narrative that represents the organisational identity (Currie & Brown 2003). As mentioned before about the collective perception of 'who we are', the narrative creates hegemony of meaning that reflects the identity.

Hatch & Schultz's Organizational Identity Dynamics Model

Hatch and Schultz (2000) generated the model of organisational identity dynamics that represents the relations among organisational behaviour, narrative, and organisational identity, in the internal and external member of organisation. This model explains how the corporate culture, corporate identity, and corporate image are interrelated. Internally, corporate identity refers to the corporate culture; while externally, it refers to the corporate image. This interrelated involves expressing, reflecting, mirroring, and impressing that show the interdependence among identity, culture, and image. Particularly, this model defines the role of each element, internally and externally.



Source: Hatch & Schultz 2002: 991

Figure 1.
The Organizational Identity Dynamics Model

This model clearly shows that identity is the central object between culture (internal) and image (external). Internally, organisational members understand and explain themselves as an organisation

(reflecting). The culture is expressed identity in which organisation makes themselves known by speaking out about organisation internally and externally (expressing). Externally, organisation projects image to external member and leaves an impression (impressing). Additionally, identity is mirrored in the image of others through what members see of its identity (mirroring).

Based on the four processes in the organisational identity dynamics, there are several elements involved in, which are the identity itself in representing organisation, the culture in shaping identity, the difference between identity and image, and communication in expressing identity.

Identity is the representation of organisation, as a whole. As a consequence, Argenti's (2007) definition of corporate identity as visual reality of a company which is represented by the visual symbol such as name, logo, building, uniform, stationery, product, and services, is considered irrelevant. According to the Hatch & Schultz's organisational identity dynamics model, corporate identity is represented not only through the tangible elements, but also the culture that rooted from the internal members' behaviour. Similarly, Olins (1978) generated that corporate identity is more than a graphic design of logo, uniform, building, product, and service, but how employees interpret themselves as the part of the organisation. This is the evidence that corporate identity is essentially initiated from inside.

Focusing on the expressing process in the Hatch and Schultz model, organisational culture, which comprises the history, philosophy, values, beliefs, and principles of organisation, is performed by the employee's behaviour which represents the corporate identity. Melewar and Karaosmanaglu (2006) generated that culture is implemented into individuals' behaviour that has a significant impact on other employees. This will lead to build hegemonies behaviour. As an evidence of this, in the research of identifying the dimension of corporate identity by interviewing managers, they found that all internal members influence each other through the culture and behaviour. If there is a hardworking culture in an organisation, it will be translated in the members' behaviour. As identity is rooted from culture, and culture is rooted from members' behaviour, internal member has a significant role in shaping identity.

Furthermore, when employees shape the corporate identity, they play a role based on the company culture. As the internal and external members interact, at the same time, employees communicate it to the external members. Through everyday behaviour and

conversation in the organisation, employees transmit the identity of the organisation that will impress the external members. This refers to the process of impressing in the organisational identity dynamics model.

Taken together, an organisation should acknowledge the role of internal member that enable to enhance the effectiveness of communicating the identity to the external members. Rather than relying on the advertising and corporate branding, communicating corporate identity is an integrated corporate communication that engaged the role of employees. The organisational culture motivates employees to perform the identity. Regarding the interactions with the external members, this will boost the implementation of promises within the corporate identity, as well as the corporate image. Neglecting this process may result in a failure in communicating the corporate identity (Gotsi & Andripoulous 2007).

Communicating the New Corporate Identity of Unair

Privatisation, as one of the environmental forces in organisation, causes a company to concern in its corporate identity and corporate communications (Balmer & Gray 1999). The corporate identity of Unair is represented by its visual identity, such as the logo of Unair, the new institution name of Unair BHMN, employees' uniforms, and new slogan of 'Excellence with morality.' However, identity is more than a visual identity, but it is an integration of visual, corporate culture, behaviour, and market situation (Melewar & Jenkins 2000). Unair representation has been ineffective to perform the new identity. The corporate communication program lacked the engagement of their employees.

The lessen government funding has brought an education commercialisation. Unair sees themselves in a different way, rather than developing education, they are developing business. Focusing on developing the courses and subjects as their products, Unair implements a customer-based service to satisfy the students as their customers. Unair new way of looking results brings into a consideration to establish a relationship between the employee as its representatives and the student as its customers. However, students are 'special' customers since they have many roles, such as a client who need assistance, an internal member who deserves to use the facilities, or an investor (Sharrock 2000). Furthermore, Pitman (2000) generated that when students 'purchase' the

product, they not only deserve to get the academic and administrative service, but also the 'campus life'. As employees have a direct contact with students, they are potentially present the needs of students. Every contact with customer is a moment of truth (Cheney & Christensen 2001:248).

The new vision, 'Become an independent, innovative, and leading university regionally and internationally, an initiator in developing science, technology, humanity, and art based on the religion morality', is reflected in the new slogan of 'Excellence with morality' (<http://www.unair.ac.id/>). These visions and slogan are the 'who we are' of Unair, which is translated into its normative behaviour and value in the organisational interactions. Since the vision and slogan will create an organisational discourse (Heracleous 2006), UnAir needs to build employees' understanding about how this message aims to project the organisation.

Furthermore, as the change will affect the way employees identify themselves with the new corporate identity (Balle 2008), involving them in the process of shaping the corporate identity may engage them in communicating it (Jones, Hobman, Bordia, Gallois, Callan 2008). Creating label of 'who we are' through the new slogan will encourage employees to adjust their attitude with the requirement of the new identity (Gotsi & Andripoulous 2007). Based on the new slogan, the 'who we are' refers to the specific characteristics, such as professional and value the morality. This will be expected to inspire and motivate employees to perform particular behaviour required by the new corporate identity.

Employees perform the 'who we are' through all symbols, conversations and interactions internally and externally. The professionalism and morality value are the foundation in all interactions: interpersonal, group, and organisational communication, and in the communication within their job responsibilities, such as morning briefings, weekly meetings, trainings, as well as in the decision making process. Externally, employees are involved in presenting the 'excellence with morality' services to the students through the innovative teaching methods, developed knowledge, and professional administrative service which will lead to the convenient campus life for the students.

In this context, an employee as individual presents behaviour as what Unair 'wants to be' and enacts it through the interactions and communications as the narrative of organisation. The narrative builds a 'unique character' of UnAir which differentiates themselves from other universities; and UnAir's unique personality is expressing the corporate

identity that will be seen by the external members (Melewar & Akel 2005). Employees narrate and enact the new organisational discourse based on the corporate culture. Through the interactions between employees and students, employees' excellence with morality behaviour will leave an impression in the external members who constructs the university identity in their perception. Taken together, this is the way employees communicate the new identity to the external members.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a collaboration of SIT, Symbolic Interactionism, the Hatch & Schultz model of the organisational identity dynamics, and drama theories in the case study of Unair. As the implication, the dynamic relationship between culture and identity has to be considered more entirely that UnAir has not concerned earlier. Corporate identity is represented not only through the new logo and slogan, but also the culture that rooted from the internal members' behaviour.

As the member of organisation, individuals have built up their social identity with Unair in which their personal identity linked to the social identity of the Unair. Through the interaction, employees engage in a relationship, create narratives and a history of the organisation. This reflects individual roles in an organisation and leads to 'who we are' as an organisation. Identity is about how individual perceives himself in relations to the organisation. Therefore, this relationship involves trust and understanding. When the change occurs, organisation needs to bring the member along with them, help the member to understand the change and their relationship would be in the new organisation.

Furthermore, organisational slogan, as part of the corporate identity, needs to be reflected in organisational behaviour consistently. 'Walk the talk' is crucial in establishing the new corporate identity. When organisational behaviour contradicts its words, slogan will be meaningless that may deteriorate the identity. To sum up, corporate identity is rooted from the corporate culture that engages employee as 'the actor' of organisation.

References

Abrams, D & Hogg, MA (1990) Social identity theory: Constructive and critical advances. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

- Argenti, PA (2007) Corporate communication. New York: Irwin/Mc Graw-Hill.
- Balle, N (2008) Hearts at stake: A theoretical and practical look at communication in connection with mergers and acquisitions. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 13(1): 56–67.
- Balmer, JMT & Gray, ER (1999) Corporate identity and corporate communications: creating a competitive advantage. Dalam: JMT Balmer & SA Greyser (eds). *Revealing corporation: Perspectives on identity, image, reputation, corporate branding, and corporate-level marketing*. London: Routledge. 124–135.
- Currie, G & Brown, AD (2003) A narratological approach to understanding process of organizing in a UK hospital. *Human Relations* 56(5): 563–586.
- Cheney, G & Christensen, LT (2001) Organisational identity: Linkages between internal and external communication. Dalam: LL. Putnam & FM Jablin (eds). *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Pp. 231–269.
- Ellemer, N, Spears, R, & Doosje, B (1999) *Social Identity*. USA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Goffman, E (1959) *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York : Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Gotsi, M & Andriopoulos, C (2007) Understanding the pitfalls in the corporate rebranding process. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 12(4): 341–355.
- Hatch, MJ & Schultz, M (2000) The dynamics of organizational identity. *Human Relations* 55(8), [Accessed 2nd October 2009]. 989–1018.
- Heracleous, L (2006) *Discourse, interpretation, organization*. USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Hogg, MA & Terry, DJ (2000) Social identity and self-categorization processes in organizational contexts. *The Academy of Management Review* 25(1): 121–140.
- Jones, L, Watson, B, Hobman, E, Bordia, P, Gallois, C, & Callan, VJ (2008) Employee perceptions of organizational change: impact of hierarchical level. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 29(4): 294–316.
- Melewar, TC & Jenkins, E (2000) Defining the corporate identity construct. *Corporate Reputation Review* 5(1): 76–90.
- Melewar, TC & Akel, S (2005) The role of corporate identity in the higher education sector. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 10(1), [Accessed 6th October 2009]. 41–57.
- Melewar, TC & Karaosmanaglu, E (2006) Seven dimensions of corporate identity: A categorisation from the practitioners' Perspectives. *European Journal of Marketing* 40(7/8): 846–869.
- Olins, W (1978) Corporate identity: The myth and the reality. Dalam: JMT Balmer & S Greyser (eds).

- A. Revealing corporation: Perspectives on identity, image, reputation, corporate branding, and corporate-level marketing. London: Routledge. Pp. 53–65.
- Pitman, T (2000) Perceptions of academics and students as customers: a survey of administrative staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22(2): 165–175.
- Sharrock, G (2000) Why students are not just customers (and other reflections on Life After George). *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22(2): 149–165.
- Visi, misi, dan tujuan (2008) <http://www.unair.ac.id/>. [Diakses: 2 Oktober 2009].