



## Media Relations Strategy for Tin Mining Companies and Agenda Setting Media in Bangka Belitung

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### ABSTRACT

This paper describes the media relations strategy used by tin mining companies in Bangka Belitung province in developing the media setting agenda. On the one hand, tin mining companies have an agenda so they can carry out mining according to regulations. On the other hand, the local government as a party outside the mass media institutions and mining companies also has its own agenda. So that the issue of tin mining in Bangka Belitung has the potential for conflict of interest, not only between companies and the government, but also with community members. This study aims to find out how the media relations strategy of tin mining companies is in compiling the agenda setting of the mass media in Bangka Belitung. This is a qualitative research with data collection techniques through participatory observation. The research data was obtained through semi-closed observation and participation as well as interviews with a number of informants who have competence and relevance to the research problem. The findings of this study indicate that the mass media as an economic institution is driven by transactional principles. On the other hand, tin mining companies and local governments have a common agenda setting. The relationship between these various sides is an internal factor that occurs in a very dynamic new media climate. While the very dynamic activity in the new media era is an external factor. The relationship between internal and external factors is described as something that can set the media setting agenda. Agenda setting is a theory that explains the media shape the audience's agenda.

**Keywords:** *setting agendamedia; Belitung Islands; media relations*

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## INTRODUCTION

Along with the rapid progress of technology-based communication devices or electronic devices, the need for raw materials for electronic communication devices has also increased (Yanuar dkk., 2022). One of the raw materials needed to assemble communication devices such as computers and gadgets is tin (Zarnuji, 2022). Tin raw material is useful as a channel that will deliver power in a communication device assembly system. According to the records of Mongabay Indonesia (2013), a number of large companies assemble communication devices in the world such as Nokia, Sony, Motorola, LG and Blackberry (Syah dkk., 2022). need tin as one of the main raw materials in assembling the communication devices they produce (Mongabay, 2013, August 5).

Tin is an economical choice because it is cheaper than other metals such as silver or gold. The world's largest electronics company claims to use tin raw materials from Indonesia. In the world, Indonesia is known as one of the largest tin producing countries after China (Oktri Permata Lani dkk., 2022). According to a report by the Center for Data and Information Technology of the Ministry of Energy and Human Resources (in Pamudji, 2016) around 99% of the potential for tin in Indonesia is in the Bangka Belitung Islands, and the remainder is scattered in the Riau, Riau Islands and West Kalimantan regions. Indonesia's total tin resources in the form of ore amounted to 3,483,785,508 tons and 1,062,903 tons of metal.

Until now, the process of tin mining in Bangka Belitung Province is still ongoing. Mining is carried out by a number of private companies and state-owned companies (Zulfa & Yasin, 2022). A number of tin mining companies in Bangka Belitung Province are very strategic as one of the revenue sectors and increasing state revenue (Ramadhani dkk., 2022). However, at the same time, the various mining companies are the parties that have the most direct contact with various potential conflicts with ordinary people who also depend a lot on Conventional Mining (IT) (Rahman dkk., 2023). This potential becomes more open in the current media era. The media (both mass media and social media) is a special sector that plays an important role in every social dynamic related to mining.

As one of the activities within the scope of public relations, media relations is part of external public relations which fosters and develops good relations with the mass media as a means of communication between organizations and the public to achieve organizational goals (Fajar G dkk., 2022). Media relations is the key to optimizing company messages with parties outside the company (external) such as the public, users to the international community as well as parties within the company (internal) such as the Government and other related parties (Vivian, 2017). Optimizing the company's messages as an agenda to be conveyed to external and internal audiences is a fundamental thing that will determine the strategy to be used in relations with the mass media.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative approach. Research was conducted in Bangka and Belitung in August and September 2023. The object of this research is media relations strategy. While the research subject is the Public Relations of tin mining companies in the province of Bangka Belitung. The data for this research were collected by semi-closed observation and participation as well as interviews. Referring to Bodgan and Steven (1998) based on the level of involvement of researchers in the observations made, observations can be categorized into two groups: non-participant observation, involved observation (participant observation) (Indriani dkk., 2022); and based on the level of confidentiality of its implementation, the observations are divided into two other groups, namely obtrusive observation and unobtrusive observation.

In particular, research data was obtained by conducting informal and unstructured interviews with 4 mining company public relations staff (Razali dkk., 2022). The criteria for becoming an informant in this study were having worked as a public relations staff for at least one year, having basic public relations skills (such as writing press releases), and having interacted with the mass media (journalists).

The data obtained is then analyzed in the form of a description through a process of meaning making and understanding. Technically the process can be started from searching for and finding events that are relevant to the research problem. Then elaborated in a number of conceptual categories. Then find the themes between categories and integrate them into ideas that are have structure

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Even though it is quite strategic as a party that works to form and maintain a positive image of the company, the function of Public Relations is currently still as a communication technician such as making press releases, holding press conferences (Farihanto, 2014; Ardoyo, 2013), communication facilitator (Astuty, et al, 2017; Idris, 2014; Lubis, 2012; Yuningsih, 2006), the function of organizational communication (Ishak, 2012) or mass media monitoring (Bernadeth, Paranoan, and Djumlani, 2014). Meanwhile, the condition of corporate public relations during the research on tin mining in Bangka Belitung which was studied described an organization within the corporation that carried out two functions (Nida dkk., 2023). Referring to research conducted by Glen Broom and David Dozier (in Theaker, 2012) Public Relations in a corporation performs two main functions, namely, as a communications technician and communications manager. As a communications technician, Public Relations works on technical matters in several public relations activities such as making press releases, holding press conferences, media briefings and so on. Meanwhile, as a communications manager, Public Relations is a management unit within a corporate structure.

In this perspective, Public Relations is a field within a corporate structure that carries out four main functions, namely (1) the expert prescriber, namely the party that is given (has) authority by corporate management to carry out corporate communication activities (Teguh dkk., 2023). These public relations activities can start from researching, formulating, implementing and developing various models of communication to the internal and external public of the corporation both in normal and crisis situations (Farid, 2023). (2) the problem-solving facilitator, namely parties involved in conducting analysis and formulating strategic solutions to various problems faced by corporations (Agus Triansyah dkk., 2023). (3) the communication facilitator, namely the party who interprets the vision and mission of the corporation and then communicates it to a wide

audience . Public Relations is a corporate representation that is actively involved as a mediator and facilitator of corporate and public communications (Sitinjak dkk., 2023). (4) the communication technician, namely those who have soft skills such as writing press releases and using these skills for the benefit of the corporation (Alberty dkk., 2023). In this context, Public Relations is not a party involved in the process of adopting corporate policies, but has the technical task of disseminating corporate policies.

In this context, referring to Cutlip, Center, and Broom, (2009) the Public Relations field is the party that carries out the management function (Abdi, 2023). This function works to support the process of harmonizing understanding in the form of mutual giving and receiving with full mutual understanding and a spirit of cooperation between fields within the corporation towards common corporate goals (Yuridhista dkk., 2023). However, in practice, most PR practitioners only carry out multiple roles at one time (Broom and Dozier in Theaker, 2012).

This perspective describes the current condition of public relations in the tin mining companies studied. On the one hand Public Relations is a field in the management structure. However, on the other hand, Public Relations staff perform multiple roles at the same time (Arifuddin dkk., 2023). This study found that every Public Relations staff has the basic ability to write press releases. Referring to informant 1, these abilities differ based on interest in the topic of the news to be produced. As a result, one type of work can be done by many PR staff.

“Each PR staff has the basic ability to write press releases. However, these abilities differ according to each person's interests and writing talents (Jacob dkk., 2023). There are Public Relations staff who have quite good skills in writing releases for news or events that have a human dimension. Staff with this expertise are used to make press releases for PR activities related to CSR (Hassan dkk., 2023). However, there are also PR staff who like to write on themes related to policy analysis. Staff with this interest usually write releases related to company policies or summarize the remarks of the President Director and the Board of Directors in the form of a press release. So press making

release can be submitted to the interest in the topic of each Public Relations staff or in accordance with the assignment ”

This condition not only explains that Public Relations performs many roles in a variety of different situations (Adema dkk., 2023). However, the basic skills possessed by the Public Relations staff in practice bring Public Relations activities in general to technical workers as the communication technicians. However, from cross-observations made on Public Relations officials who have a higher structure, the company realizes that Public Relations as a party that performs management functions works to support the alignment process of understanding in the form of mutual giving and receiving with full mutual understanding and a spirit of cooperation between fields within the corporation towards corporate goals.

Referring to informant 2, the Public Relations department was given the freedom to design their own communication strategy to support corporate policies.

"Management gives flexibility to Public Relations to design their own communication strategy (Louw dkk., 2023). However, because the company has a number of other fields or divisions related to PR work such as CSR, we also cannot formulate them autonomously (Arumi Sunarta dkk., 2023). We have to do internal communication first. For example, for CSR activities that are in direct contact with the

community, we collect the news in a special magazine that we produce ourselves. Meanwhile, for relations with the local mass media, we use the method that has been running before”

In the perspective of this structure level, Public Relations carries out the function of the expert prescriber, as a party that has the authority by corporate management to carry out corporate communication activities (Jelatu dkk., 2023). However, based on semi-closed observation and participation as well as interviews conducted, in terms of building relationships with the local mass media in the context of reporting on company activities, 2 patterns were found, namely:

First, Public Relations invites the mass media, especially print media and online mass media, to cover the activities of the selected companies. Every journalist who attends is rewarded with a transportation fee. This condition has been going on for a long time and has effectively increased the amount of coverage. Relations between Public Relations and the mass media to be transactional. However, the pattern of costs and news cannot fully go hand in hand as a cause-and-effect process. Because not all the media that attended were then given transportation costs to report on the company's activities. Or, not all the news that appears presents a positive value for the company.

Second, Public Relations compiles a press release in the form of a press release (press release script ready to be published as news) for an activity. The press release is then sent to the mass media which already has good relations formed based on the first pattern. Furthermore, the relevant mass media publish the news they receive.

Both of these patterns operate without the basis of an agenda setting design desired by the company. The company's activities only require mass media publications. In fact, as a company in the mining sector it is often associated with various potential conflicts, such as social conflicts, environmental conflicts or political (regulatory) conflicts. On the other hand, the liberalization of the mass media that has occurred as a result of democratization has formed a culture of conglomeration in the mass media industry. The growth of the mass media is so fast networking in large corporate groups (Syahputra, 2013). Not only that, advances in Internet-based communication technology have also encouraged the emergence of a number of news portals. These conditions trigger competition that encourages short-cut journalistic practices.

Furthermore, according to Pruitt and Rubin (1986) communication through the media can encourage various latent interests (in this research both hidden as media agendas, mining company agendas or as audience agendas) to surface as a common agenda. Whether we realize it or not, when people read or obtain information from the media (mass media, online media or social media) then talk about it to others, then its latent interest emerges as an awareness.

The end result can form a struggle group. This struggle group has the potential to act as a conflict initiator. They can be very impressive by deliberately seeking out different groups not to discuss but to provoke conflict. Conflict is chosen as a method of solving problems or fighting for group interests. Referring to Dahrendorf (in Pruitt and Rubin, 1986) there are three conditions that can give rise to a struggle group. First, there is intensive communication from people who feel the same boat. Second, there are group leaders who can formulate common interests and organize them in various forms of action. Third, there is recognition or legitimacy from the wider community

## **CONCLUSION**

Bangka Belitung has an agenda setting for the zoning regulations to be ratified. The corporate setting agenda is the same as the local government agenda. Zoning regulations are considered to be the main agenda because they are the legal basis for bringing together various sectors of interest related to mining. To strengthen the agenda setting, mass media coverage is needed. Mining companies are looking for a number of community leaders, academics or politicians to serve as news sources. At the same time, the mass media as an industry does not have an agenda setting related to mining issues. Conversely, as a mass media industry, it is more profit-oriented, so it tends to be transactional through various advertising and reporting collaborations.

Thus, the agenda setting of the media does not fully explain how the media arranges their agenda, then becomes the public agenda and then becomes a policy as a product of the state (government) agenda. This research finds that the media agenda can be influenced or determined by the agenda of other parties outside the mass media institutions who have certain interests. In this study, the agenda referred to is the mining corporate agenda and the government's agenda to draft Zoning Regulations by suppressing potential conflicts that arise. Two different institutions but have a common agenda influence the process of setting the media agenda.

This influence occurs through various transactional-based relationships between mining companies and the local mass media. The transaction model is carried out with an inter-institutional cooperation agreement in the form of advertising and news or personal collaboration in a climate of friendship, friendship and kinship. In this perspective, the mass media is a representation of economic institutions that have a profit orientation for the sustainability of media companies through various mutually beneficial collaborations. The mass media, which initially did not have a specific agenda setting in reporting on mining issues (especially the issue of Zoning Regulations), now has an agenda because it is tied to advertising and reporting collaborations.

The presence of social media or Internet-based online media as new media has placed anyone able to search, produce, manipulate, commodify and distribute the information they choose. The dynamic and hyperactive activity of netizens on social media is another external factor that also influences the flow of the agenda setting scheme of the media. These conditions undermine the gatekeeper's function as the mainstay of the operation of the media setting agenda. This situation is then described as the final portrait of the media setting agenda.

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