



COMMUNICATION AUDIT OF THE BINJAI CITY NATIONAL NARCOTICS AGENCY (BNN) IN SOCIALIZING THE DANGERS OF DRUGS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the communication audit of the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) of Binjai City in implementing socialization of the dangers of drug abuse, with a focus on the message planning process, the use of communication media, audience response, and obstacles to program evaluation. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews with three informants from the BNN Binjai City public relations department, observation of socialization activities, and documentation. The results showed that the socialization activities were carried out informatively and persuasively through direct counseling, interactive discussions, visual media, and the use of social media. The socialization messages were also tailored to the characteristics of the audience, thus encouraging participation and a positive response from the community. However, the communication audit showed that the evaluation aspect remains a major weakness. Program evaluation is still general, focusing on the number of participants and activity participation, and is not supported by measurable indicators, standardized evaluation instruments, or systematic management of community feedback. This finding confirms that the effectiveness of socialization of the dangers of drugs is determined not only by the success of message delivery, but also by the organization's ability to evaluate the impact of communication on an ongoing basis. This study recommends strengthening data-driven evaluation systems, developing measurable success indicators, and optimizing communication technology to increase the effectiveness of the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) outreach program.

Keywords: communication audit, Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN), drug outreach, communication evaluation, public communication

1. INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is a social problem that has a broad impact on the quality of life of individuals, families, communities, and the social resilience of society. This issue is not only related to health aspects but also touches on dimensions of education, the economy, security, and social stability. In the context of urban communities, including Binjai City, the threat of drug abuse requires a prevention strategy that is not only repressive, but also educational and persuasive through planned public communication activities. Therefore, public awareness campaigns about the dangers of drugs are a crucial instrument in building public awareness, fostering a rejection of drugs, and encouraging public participation in drug abuse prevention efforts. As an institution mandated to prevent and eradicate drug abuse, the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) is required to manage public communication effectively so that prevention messages are received, understood, and acted upon by the public (BNN, 2022).

In practice, drug awareness campaigns cannot be understood simply as a one-way communication activity. Socialization is a strategic communication process that involves message planning, media selection, audience adaptation, communicator skills, and evaluation of public response. Effective public communication must be able to convey messages clearly, credibly, relevantly, and in accordance with the needs of the target audience. In this context, messages about the dangers of drugs must not only contain information about the types and effects of drugs; they must also be delivered using a communicative approach to reach the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of society. This aligns with the view that successful communication is determined by the message's ability to build understanding, influence attitudes, and encourage behavioral change in the audience (Effendy, 2015; Cangara, 2017).

Changes in information and communication technology have also influenced the socialization patterns carried out by public institutions. Today, the public not only obtains information through face-to-face activities but also through digital media, social media, and various online communication channels. This situation requires government institutions, including the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN), to develop communication strategies that adapt to changes in public information behavior. Utilizing social media to raise awareness about the dangers of drugs can broaden the reach of messages, accelerate information distribution, and open up opportunities for interaction with the public. However, the use of diverse communication media does not automatically guarantee effective socialization. The effectiveness of communication still needs to be tested through systematic evaluation, particularly to determine whether the message is truly understood, whether the media used is appropriate, and whether outreach activities are able to generate changes in public awareness (Rogers, 2003; Littlejohn & Foss, 2011).

One relevant approach to assessing the effectiveness of public organization communication is a communication audit. A communication audit is a systematic assessment of communication practices within an organization, including communication flow, message quality, media used, audience response, and any obstacles encountered during the communication process. Through a communication audit, an organization can identify the strengths and weaknesses of its communication strategy, allowing for more targeted improvements. In the context of the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN), a communication audit is crucial to assess the extent to which drug awareness activities

have been effectively designed, implemented, and evaluated. A communication audit also enables an organization to understand whether outreach activities are merely administrative routines or have become a truly impactful communication strategy for the community (Goldhaber, 1993; Pace & Faules, 2013).

Studies on public communication and drug awareness campaigns generally focus more on message delivery strategies, media use, or the effectiveness of outreach activities. Meanwhile, the evaluation aspect of communication audits has received relatively little attention, particularly for local government agencies. Evaluation is crucial for ensuring that communication programs are not only implemented but also produce measurable impacts. According to this research paper, the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN)'s outreach activities have been conducted through direct outreach, interactive discussions, visual media, and social media. However, the evaluation process still faces several obstacles, such as limited human resources, the lack of measurable evaluation indicators, and the suboptimal utilization of public feedback. This situation indicates a gap between the implementation of outreach activities and the need for more systematic, data-driven communication evaluation.

Based on this description, this research is crucial to analyze the Binjai City BNN's communication audit in outreach to the public about the dangers of drugs, particularly by highlighting the message planning process, communication implementation, media utilization, audience response, and obstacles during the evaluation stage. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the evaluation aspect of communication audits, which has tended to receive less attention than the planning and implementation aspects of outreach. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research is expected to contribute academically to the development of public and organizational communication studies, particularly in the context of government agency communication audits. Practically, this research is also expected to provide input for the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in strengthening a more measurable, participatory, and data-driven communication evaluation system so that outreach on the dangers of drugs can be more effective and sustainable.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of in-depth understanding of the communication audit practices of the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in its drug awareness campaign. A qualitative approach was chosen because the focus of the study was not on statistically measuring communication effectiveness, but rather on interpreting the communication process, informant experiences, message delivery strategies, media use, audience responses, and evaluation constraints that emerged during the campaign. In this context, qualitative research allows researchers to explore the meaning, patterns, and dynamics of organizational communication naturally based on the experiences of actors directly involved in public communication activities (Creswell, 2016). The object of this study was the Binjai City BNN's communication activities in drug awareness campaigns. The subjects were three informants from the BNN's public relations department, selected for their direct involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the campaign.

Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which selects subjects based on specific considerations relevant to the research data needs. Informant criteria included: active involvement in drug awareness campaigns, understanding the communication strategies used by the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN), experience in delivering or managing campaign messages, and willingness to provide in-depth information. This technique was used to ensure that the data obtained truly came from sources with knowledge and experience relevant to the research focus (Sugiyono, 2018). Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were used to gather information regarding message planning, communication media selection, audience response, communication barriers, and the form of evaluation conducted. Observations were conducted to directly observe the campaign process and communication interactions between communicators and audiences, while documentation was used to review activity archives, campaign materials, activity photos, and other supporting data related to the drug awareness program.

Data validity in this study was maintained through source and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from several informants, while method triangulation was conducted by matching the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the data obtained were more valid and reliable. Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model that includes three stages: condensation or data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2014). In the data reduction stage, researchers sorted data relevant to aspects of the communication audit, such as message clarity, media suitability, communication flow, audience response, evaluation constraints, and feedback utilization. Next, the data was presented in the form of narrative descriptions and thematic matrices to facilitate the identification of patterns of findings. In the final stage, researchers drew interpretive conclusions by linking field findings with the concept of communication audit, so that this study can provide a comprehensive picture of the quality of communication of the Binjai City BNN in socializing the dangers of drugs.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

No	Informant	Position	Communication Aspects	Indicator	Interview Results	Analysis
1.	Eva Sumarni	Humas	Communication Media Message Planning	Socialization Objectives	Informants explained that the outreach aimed to increase public awareness.	Demonstrates targeted communication.
2	Annisa Zafira Mudmaina	Humas	Evaluation	Media Used	Using direct outreach and social media.	Media is varied, but effectiveness evaluation is needed.

3.	M. Aldiansyah Nasution	Humas	Communication Media Message Planning	How to Measure Success	Judging from community participation,	Evaluation is still general and has not been systematically measured.
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Based on the research results, data were obtained through observations of outreach activities conducted by the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) and interviews with informants who were part of the public relations department and directly involved in the communication process. Observations indicate that outreach activities on the dangers of drugs are conducted in various forms, such as direct outreach to schools, government agencies, and the general public. The material presented generally covers the types of drugs, the impacts of abuse, and prevention efforts. Furthermore, some activities utilize supporting media such as visual presentations, leaflets, and educational content on social media to reinforce the message delivered to the audience.

In terms of message delivery, observations indicate that the communication tends to be informative and persuasive. Messages are delivered using language tailored to the characteristics of the audience, such as using simpler language when outreach to students and a more formal approach when conducted at government agencies. This indicates efforts to adapt communication strategies to ensure messages are more effectively received by various target groups.

Based on interviews, informants stated that the outreach activities aim to raise public awareness of the dangers of drugs and prevent abuse early on. Informants also mentioned that the communication methods used varied, ranging from face-to-face counseling and interactive discussions to the use of social media as a means of disseminating information. One informant stated that the outreach program used an "educational and communicative" approach to ensure that the audience did not feel patronized but rather understood the message.

In terms of perception, the informant assessed that the message conveyed during the outreach program was clear and easily understood by the public. This was evident in the audience's active response, which included questions and comments throughout the event. Furthermore, the informant stated that the audience generally displayed a positive attitude toward the outreach program, such as increased awareness of the dangers of drugs and the importance of protecting themselves from negative environmental influences.

In terms of response, interview results indicated that the outreach program was able to encourage changes in audience attitudes and behavior, although this could not yet be measured quantitatively. The informant mentioned that several outreach participants expressed interest in learning more about the dangers of drugs, and some even took the initiative to disseminate the information to their surrounding communities. This indicates that communication is not limited to simply conveying information but also stimulates further responses from the audience.

However, the research also identified several challenges in communication implementation, particularly in the areas of evaluation and in-depth information delivery. Informants stated that activity evaluations were still conducted in simplistic ways, such

as by assessing the number of participants and participation rates, without systematically measurable indicators. Furthermore, there were limitations in the delivery of follow-up information, such as a lack of detail regarding rehabilitation services, reporting mechanisms, and access to assistance for those in need.

Thus, the results of this study indicate that the communication conducted by the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in raising awareness about the dangers of drugs has been quite effective in terms of message delivery and audience response. However, strengthening communication evaluation and information completeness is still needed to ensure more effective outreach activities and maximize their impact on the community.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN)'s communication practices in raising awareness of the dangers of drugs have been conducted through a relatively focused communication process, particularly in terms of message delivery, selection of outreach methods, and adaptation of communication to audience characteristics. Outreach is conducted through direct counseling, interactive discussions, the use of visual media, and the use of social media as a supporting channel. These findings demonstrate that the Binjai City BNN conducts communication not only as an informative activity but also as a persuasive strategy to raise public awareness of the dangers of drugs. From a public communication perspective, the success of a message is determined not only by the content of the information but also by the institution's ability to craft clear, relevant, and responsive messages to the audience's needs. Cangara (2017) emphasized that an effective communication strategy must consider the communicator, message, media, audience, and desired effect. Therefore, the Binjai City BNN's outreach practices can be understood as public communication efforts aimed at shaping public understanding, attitudes, and preventive awareness.

From a message perspective, the research findings indicate that outreach messages are delivered in an informative and persuasive manner, particularly regarding the types of drugs, the impacts of abuse, and prevention efforts. The messages delivered are also tailored to the characteristics of the audience, for example, using simpler language when outreach is conducted for students and a more formal approach when activities are aimed at agencies or the general public. This adjustment demonstrates the communicator's awareness of the importance of audience context in the communication process. Theoretically, Effendy (2015) explains that effective communication must address the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of the audience. This means that messages are not enough to simply inform the audience of the dangers of drugs; they must also foster emotional awareness and encourage behavioral tendencies to stay away from drugs. In this context, the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) outreach messages have shifted toward persuasive communication, although their effectiveness still needs to be measured more systematically.

In terms of communication media, the Binjai City BNN has utilized a combination of face-to-face communication and digital media. Face-to-face outreach has the advantage of enabling direct interaction between the communicator and the audience, including dialogue, questions and answers, and clarification of any information that is not yet understood. Meanwhile, social media plays a role in expanding the reach of messages and

strengthening the continuity of information beyond formal activities. This finding aligns with Rogers' (2003) view that information diffusion will be more effective if the message is delivered through communication channels that are appropriate to the recipient's characteristics. However, the use of multiple communication channels does not necessarily guarantee effectiveness without an evaluation of the message's reach, level of engagement, and impact. Therefore, the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency's (BNN) use of media needs to be understood not only as a technical variation in message delivery, but also as part of a communication system that must be periodically evaluated.

Field findings also indicate that audience response to outreach activities tended to be positive. This was evident in participant participation in the question-and-answer session, their attention to the material, and their interest in learning more about the dangers of drugs. These responses indicate that the outreach activities had produced an initial communication effect, particularly in terms of attention and message acceptance. In communication theory, audience response is a crucial indicator of whether a message has been successfully received and interpreted by the audience (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). However, analytically, spontaneous responses such as enthusiasm, active questioning, or the number of participants are not sufficient to conclude that the outreach has succeeded in profoundly changing attitudes and behaviors. These responses are more appropriately understood as early indicators of communication effectiveness, while long-term impacts still require more measurable evaluation instruments.

From a communication audit perspective, the main weakness identified in this study lies in the evaluation aspect. Evaluation of outreach activities is still conducted in a simplistic manner, for example, by assessing the number of participants, the level of participation, and the smoothness of the activity. This evaluation pattern suggests that measures of success are still oriented towards output, not outcome. In fact, a communication audit should systematically assess how communication occurs, how messages are received, which media are most effective, what obstacles arise, and what impact communication activities have. Goldhaber (1993) explains that a communication audit is a systematic process for examining the quality of an organization's communication, including message effectiveness, communication channels, relationships between actors, and communication barriers. Therefore, the unstructured evaluation indicates that the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) communication audit has not yet fully functioned as a comprehensive diagnostic tool.

The evaluation's limitations are also evident in the lack of systematically measurable success indicators. Research findings indicate that the evaluation did not use standardized instruments such as questionnaires, audience understanding surveys, attitude change measurement, or follow-up monitoring after outreach. This situation makes it difficult for the organization to determine whether messages about the dangers of drugs are truly understood, internalized, and implemented by the public. From an organizational communication perspective, Pace and Faules (2013) emphasize that organizational communication is not solely concerned with message delivery, but also with how the organization evaluates the flow of information, the effectiveness of relationships, and the message's ability to support organizational goals. Therefore, without clear evaluation indicators, outreach activities risk becoming merely a routine institutional agenda without robust data to assess success and refine subsequent communication strategies.

In addition to evaluation indicators, public feedback management is also a suboptimal aspect. Audience feedback is generally obtained directly during activities, such as through questions and answers or verbal responses, but it has not been managed as documented and systematically analyzed evaluative data. Yet, in modern public communication, feedback is a crucial component for ensuring two-way communication between institutions and the public. Feedback enables organizations to understand audience needs, identify message deficiencies, and adapt communication strategies to the community's social conditions. If feedback is not managed effectively, organizations lose a crucial source of data for program improvement. In this context, the communication audit of the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) needs to be directed toward a more participatory evaluation model, one that utilizes the public not only as message recipients but also as sources of information for developing outreach strategies.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN)'s communication efforts in raising awareness of the dangers of drugs have demonstrated strengths in message delivery, media utilization, and initial audience response, but remain weak in communication evaluation. These findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of public communication cannot be measured solely by the implementation of activities or the number of participants, but rather by the extent to which the message is able to shape public understanding, awareness, attitudes, and behavior in a sustainable manner. Therefore, the Binjai City BNN needs to develop a more structured communication audit system through the development of success indicators, the use of data-based evaluation instruments, audience characteristic analysis, media effectiveness mapping, and public feedback management. With these enhancements, raising awareness of the dangers of drugs will not only become an educational activity but also a more effective, measurable, and impactful public communication strategy in supporting drug abuse prevention efforts at the regional level.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the communication audit of the Binjai City National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in socializing the dangers of drugs shows that public communication activities have been running quite well in terms of message delivery, media selection, and efforts to adapt communication to audience characteristics. The socialization carried out not only serves as a means of disseminating information, but also serves as an educational space to build public awareness about the dangers of drug abuse. However, the main reflection of this study shows that communication success cannot be seen solely from the implementation of activities, the number of participants, or the positive response of the audience during the socialization process. Communication effectiveness should also be measured through a structured evaluation system, clear indicators of success, management of public feedback, and the institution's ability to assess the impact of messages on changes in public knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Therefore, this study confirms that strengthening communication audits is a crucial need for the Binjai City BNN so that the socialization program on the dangers of drugs is not only routine and administrative, but truly becomes a measurable, participatory, adaptive public communication strategy that has a real impact in building collective public awareness to reject drug abuse.

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