

## Environmental Communication Strategy of Food Bank Aksata Pangan in Organizational Image Development to Reduce the Food Waste in Medan

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the Environmental Communication Strategy of Aksata Pangan Food Bank Managers in Developing Organizational Image to Reduce Food Waste in Medan City, Obstacles experienced and how to overcome the obstacles experienced. The theory used in this study is the theory of Environmental Communication Strategy Flor & Cangara (2018). The paradigm used in this study is constructivism with the object of research being Aksata Pangan Food Bank Managers and the subject of the study is environmental communication strategy. Five (5) research informants produced saturated data and three (3) triangulation informants. Data collection techniques through in-depth interviews and observations. The results of this study found that Aksata Pangan Food Bank succeeded in identifying the main problems related to environmental communication needs through social media monitoring and news analysis. Aksata Pangan focuses on using Instagram as the main platform to reach generation Z and millennials with educational messages about environmental issues such as food waste. This effort has helped increase public understanding of environmental issues and the importance of reducing food waste, which has a positive impact on the image of the organization

## **INTRODUCTION**

Food banks are non-profit organizations that distribute surplus food from various food sources or partners. This food supply is then distributed to communities, social, underprivileged communities or individuals. Food banks not only help underprivileged communities, but also offer alternative solutions for business actors and food suppliers to manage excess food production sustainably.

Based on data from The Global Foodbanking Network (GFN, 2022), there are 943 food banks operating in 42 countries. In Indonesia, the existence of food banks is still relatively new and not widely known by the public or companies. Currently, there are seven food banks operating in Indonesia, including in Jakarta City called Foodbank of Indonesia, in Bandung namely FoodBank Bandung, in Surabaya City namely Garda Pangan, in Denpasar City namely BaliFoodBank, in Lampung City namely Ruang Pangan and in Medan City itself a food bank called Aksata Pangan (Pramuwidyatama et al., 2022: 1).

The presence of food banks as a solution to reduce food waste and at the same time provide assistance to people in need. Food waste is also a serious problem in modern society. Food waste is a global phenomenon that is likely to increase if not controlled by policies and preventive measures. When edible food is thrown away, all the resources used to grow, produce, operate, and deliver that food to consumers are wasted. This can have potentially devastating environmental impacts (Cederberg, 2021).

Food waste refers to food that is no longer edible or is no longer desired by an individual, business, or institution. It includes spoiled, expired, contaminated food, as well as uneaten food that has become organic waste. Food waste can come from a variety of sources, including households, restaurants, markets, supermarkets, and the food industry. Food waste management includes handling, collecting, processing, and disposing of it safely and responsibly.

Food waste refers to food that is still edible but not finished by an individual or group. It includes food parts that are left on plates or food containers after a meal has been completed, but can still be used for further consumption. Food waste can also be leftovers from cooking or food preparation processes that have not been fully used. Management of leftover food typically involves proper storage for future consumption, reuse in other dishes, or donation to those in need through food redistribution programs or FoodBanks.

Waste management for the government is related to the principles stated in Article 2 of Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management (PPLH). This law establishes principles such as state responsibility, community participation, good governance, and regional autonomy. In addition, the implementation of Law Number 18 of 2008 concerning Waste Management is important, because Indonesia has a large population with high growth, which results in a significant increase in waste volume. From the results of research conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), there is a tendency for an increase in the amount of food waste from year to year.

Data shows that Indonesia is ranked second as the largest producer of food waste in the world after Saudi Arabia. Estimates show that each individual in

Indonesia produces around 300 kg of food waste each year, according to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia in 2019. In addition, in the context of Southeast Asia, Indonesia also recorded the highest level of food waste production among countries in the region.

In the Southeast Asian region, Indonesia ranks at the top in terms of food waste production. According to information from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Indonesia produces around 20.93 million tons of food waste every year. The Philippines is in second place with a production of 9.33 million tons of food waste per year, followed by Vietnam which produces around 7.35 million tons of food waste every year.

Thailand and Myanmar produce 5.48 million tons and 4.67 million tons of food waste every year respectively. Malaysia, on the other hand, records a production of 2.92 million tons of food waste every year. Meanwhile, Singapore and Timor Leste produce around 465,385 tons and 111,643 tons of food waste every year, respectively. Brunei Darussalam, in the end, ranks at the bottom with a production of only 34,742 tons per year.

According to a report by Kompas.com, Indonesia ranks second highest in food waste production in the world. Based on Bappenas research in 2021, it was found that the percentage of Indonesian food waste reached 44 percent of the total waste produced. The amount is estimated to range from 23 to 48 million tons per year. If calculated, on average each person produces 115 to 185 kilograms of food waste per year. North Sumatra, especially Medan City, is one of the third largest metropolitan cities in Indonesia, with a population of 2,279,894 people and a population density of around 9,413/km<sup>2</sup> in 2022. Medan City has a high level of food consumption and production. This population density has a significant impact on the volume of food waste produced in the city, which greatly contributes to the problem of food waste and environmental pollution.

Medan is also known as one of the developed areas that is expected to be an attraction for Indonesia in the international arena. At the end of 2019, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) stated that Medan was recorded as the city with the highest level of pollution in Indonesia. Based on a report from Kompas.id, Medan produces around 2,000 tons of waste every day, with around 800 tons of which are dumped in landfills. The rest, around 1,000-1,200 tons, is still a serious concern because it has not been managed properly. This problem is increasingly urgent because food waste not only causes economic losses, but also has a negative impact on the environment and public health.

Aksata Pangan is the only food bank located in Medan. The presence of Aksata Pangan has a significant impact in terms of participating in joint efforts to reduce the amount of food waste that is wasted and also in increasing food security in the city of Medan. Aksata Pangan was established as a non-profit organization that sharply focuses on solving food problems that arise in society, especially in the Medan City area. By adopting an integrated food system approach, Aksata Pangan seeks to bridge the gap and produce sustainable solutions in providing food for people who need it.

As a Food Bank, Aksata Pangan functions as a coordinating center for food collected from various sources, including the process of collection, processing,

storage, and distribution to the community around the city of Medan. Established since mid-2018, Aksata Pangan, formerly known as Food Truck Sedekah, began its activities by providing ready-to-eat food to the underprivileged. Over time, Aksata Pangan continues to improve the efficiency of its operations. On June 25, 2021, based on the decision of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia Number AHU-001545.AH.01.04.2021, the Aksata Pangan Indonesia Foundation was officially legalized as a legal entity. This transformation allows Aksata Pangan to become a foundation that has a legal basis to regulate its activities and regulations.

Aksata Pangan as a food bank has the first working principle, namely Food distribution, helping and reducing the gap in access to food. Second, food redistribution, helping to maintain the potential for food waste by redistributing it. Third, food storage, helping to collect and store excess food from various sectors. Aksata Pangan has several partners and donors, namely: YSEALI (Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative), Seeds For The Future, Cultural Vistas, Nestle, Nutrifood, Supride, Pod Junglegold, Gourmand Baked Goods Ingredients, Hera Bakery, Roti Romi, Grand.Co, Louise Boulangerie & Patisserie, Enesis, Inaco, JW MARRIOTT, All Day Bread, Bumi Treats, Alifa Hydroponics.

An effective environmental communication strategy will strengthen relationships with business partners. By communicating the organization's values and goals clearly and convincingly, Aksata Pangan Food Bank can attract business partners who want to collaborate in supporting food waste reduction programs. Through social media and close collaboration with partners, Aksata Pangan Food Bank can expand its distribution network and gain greater access to excess food, thereby increasing the effectiveness of its operations in reducing food waste. Support from the community and partners can facilitate organizations in obtaining the funds, human resources, and infrastructure needed to implement food waste reduction programs efficiently.

An environmental communication strategy integrates communication planning and management to achieve the desired common goals. This plan must be prepared so that the approach can be adjusted to changing situations and conditions. In developing a communication strategy, understanding the characteristics of the audience, the message, and the expected impact is very important in choosing the appropriate media for communication. Communication strategy has a very significant role for various types of organizations, both profit-oriented and non-profit.

An environmental communication strategy acts as a liaison that ensures that messages are delivered consistently to the desired target. Through effective communication, information about environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, and natural resource management can be widely conveyed to the public, government, and other stakeholders. Good communication can raise awareness of the importance of protecting the environment and encourage real action to protect our earth.

Effective environmental communication is key to building awareness, inspiring real action, and shaping policies that support environmental sustainability. That is why it is important for all parties to engage in ongoing and

open communication on environmental issues. The limited information about the importance of food waste issues for partners or the community highlights the need to develop effective environmental communication strategies. Amid growing concerns about food issues in the country, especially in Medan City, individual awareness efforts to reduce food waste and adopt more conscious food purchasing habits are becoming increasingly important. Aksata Pangan identifies that food degradation and waste are major threats to the environment, society, and economy of Indonesia, especially in Medan City.

The success of the Food Bank in reducing food waste depends on the use of environmental communication strategies that can influence the community to understand the importance of the food waste problem. Therefore, effective environmental communication strategies are key to raising awareness and changing behaviors needed to address this obstacle in a sustainable manner. Through the use of digital platforms, public awareness campaigns, collaboration with government and educational institutions, and participation in community events, Aksata Pangan Food Bank seeks to create a positive influence in changing consumption patterns and community behaviors related to food waste. By involving the community as volunteers and gaining community support, Aksata Pangan Food Bank strengthens its position as an agent of social change committed to reducing food waste and building food security and environmental sustainability.

These steps not only seek to reduce the amount of food waste produced, but also have broader goals. In addition, these efforts aim to maintain the sustainability of natural resources by minimizing environmental damage caused by the accumulation of food waste. In addition, by reducing food waste, it also contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which play an important role in mitigating global climate change. These efforts also help maintain the balance of the ecosystem by reducing the pressure on the environment caused by the accumulation of food waste. Thus, these steps not only have a direct impact on managing food waste, but also have broader positive implications in maintaining environmental sustainability and human well-being.

The researcher is one of the volunteers at Aksata Pangan who joined on July 14, 2023. When the researcher joined as an Aksata Pangan volunteer, the first thing the researcher did was sort vegetables which would later be distributed to underprivileged communities. The researcher found out about Aksata Pangan Food Bank through social media Instagram. Currently there are 195 volunteers in Aksata Pangan. Judging from the problems that occur, researchers are interested in conducting this research. because food issues are a serious matter to discuss. There are many food problems that occur around us, such as the difficulty of underprivileged people to access nutritious food, the large amount of food that is wasted, and poorly controlled food waste.

This food waste has a negative impact on our environment and the social conditions of underprivileged people. If food waste management is not efficient, it can cause air pollution and degradation of river water quality. The food problem itself is a global challenge that must be addressed together, because the environmental impact of food waste not only affects local ecosystems, but also

global health and welfare. By understanding and addressing the problem of food waste, we can protect the environment and create better social conditions for underprivileged people.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Research Paradigm**

According to the view (Moleong, 2019), the paradigm is considered to have a normative nature, which includes patterns or models about the structure of something and how its parts operate. From here, it can be concluded that the research paradigm is the foundation or guideline for researchers to direct their framework of thought when conducting research on the topic being investigated.

This study uses the constructivism paradigm, which is a perspective to capture social reality as it is, comprehensively, and naturally. This paradigm guides researchers to see reality as something relative and is the result of the construction of the research subject (Eriyanto, 2018). The constructivism paradigm views a problem based on the principle that existing reality cannot be generalized. The purpose of research in the constructivism paradigm is to understand and reshape the constructions that are currently held.

### **Communication Strategy**

A communication planning expert, Middleton, defines communication strategy as the best combination of all communication elements, from communicators, messages, channels (media), message recipients, to influences that are arranged to achieve optimal communication goals. In dealing with communication challenges, planners are often faced with various problems, especially related to optimal strategies in utilizing available communication resources to achieve the desired goals (Cangara, 2017: 64).

Communication strategies must be flexible so that communicators as implementers can quickly adjust if changes occur that affect the communication process. Disturbances or interference can occur at any time, especially when communication uses mass media. Various factors that influence the communication process can be found in each of its components, which can hinder the achievement of the desired effect. Although basically strategy is planning and management to achieve certain goals, the strategy does not only act as a roadmap that provides direction, but must also show how to implement its tactics. Likewise, media strategy is the result of a combination of media planning and management to achieve a goal.

### **Environmental Communication**

Environmental communication is a process that involves conveying information and messages related to complex and diverse environmental issues, both local and global. This process is aimed at various parties involved in environmental issues as well as the general public. The goal is to increase public awareness, understanding, and participation in environmental conservation efforts and encourage the adoption of sustainable behavior in everyday life.

In practice, environmental communication utilizes various media and communication strategies that are appropriate to the context and target audience. This is done by considering the characteristics of the community, social context, and developments in digital technology. Through the use of appropriate media

and communication strategies, it is hoped that environmental communication goals, such as increasing public awareness and participation, can be achieved effectively (Anindya, et al: 2023).

In compiling and conveying messages related to the environment, it is also necessary to consider various factors that can influence the effectiveness of communication, such as individual perceptions, the influence of technology, and social dynamics. Thus, environmental communication is one of the key elements in efforts to protect and preserve the environment for current and future generations.

### **Organizational Communication**

Organization, in the concept outlined by Mulyana in 2020, is an entity consisting of individuals or groups united in achieving common goals. In the framework of organizational communication, there are two main types of communication that play a role in internal interactions, namely formal and informal communication, each of which has different characteristics and functions.

Formal communication refers to the communication process regulated by the organizational structure, including the flow of information from top to bottom management levels, vice versa, and laterally between departments. In contrast, informal communication occurs without following a formal hierarchy, but is a spontaneous interaction and often involves face-to-face conversations, gossip, and various forms of communication between individuals that are not bound by formal rules.

In the context of group communication, in addition to formal and informal interactions, there are also communication dynamics that involve interpersonal and public aspects. Communication in groups often involves discussion, collaboration, and joint decision-making. Meanwhile, interpersonal communication forms a more personal network of interactions between group members. On the other hand, there is also an aspect of public communication that includes various forms of messages conveyed to a wider audience, such as in presentations, speeches, or official statements of the organization.

### **Communication Patterns**

Communication patterns are systems that connect members in an organizational group into one unit, forming patterns of interaction between members in the organization (Hardjana Andre, 2019). Communication network patterns can be divided into five types, namely: wheel, circle, chain, Y, and star communication patterns.

### **Food Bank**

A food bank is a non-profit organization or charity that aims to collect, store, and distribute food to individuals or families experiencing economic hardship or food insecurity. Food banks act as intermediaries between sources of excess food, such as food producers, distributors, and retailers, and community groups in need of food assistance.

### **Food Waste**

The term "food waste" refers to any type of food that has reached a stage where it is no longer suitable for human consumption and is often discarded. This can encompass a number of different situations. For example, it can include

food scraps that are contaminated or tainted, perhaps because they have been exposed to bacteria or fungi that have altered their quality or safety.

Van Bommel & Parizeau (2020) define food waste as food that is actually edible for humans, but is not eaten for a variety of reasons, such as standards of appearance, public ignorance of “best before” dates, and oversupply. Every year, around one-third of the total global food production (around 1.3 billion tonnes) that enters the food chain ends up as waste.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Research methods refer to a series of steps or approaches applied to collect data and gain an understanding of a particular phenomenon or question. Its function is as a tool to ensure the accuracy and validity of data in a study. Qualitative research, which is descriptive and tends to use analysis, emphasizes subjective perspectives, processes, and meanings in dealing with the phenomenon. In the process, qualitative research refers to theories as a basis for understanding and explaining the facts observed in the field. In addition, the theoretical basis also acts as a general guide and support in formulating the background and supporting the discussion in the study.

Qualitative research is a research process that aims to gain an in-depth understanding of human or social phenomena by creating a comprehensive and complex picture that can be explained verbally. In this study, researchers collect detailed views from informant sources and analyze words, opinions, and information obtained from research subjects in the context of the natural environment. The results of the analysis are then presented in a report that describes a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied.

### **Study Aspect**

This study examines the environmental communication strategy of Aksata Pangan food bank in developing the organization's image to reduce food waste in Medan City. Therefore, the aspects of the study in this study are:

1. The researcher examines the management of the Aksata Pangan Food Bank using environmental communication strategies in developing the organization's image to reduce food waste in Medan City.
2. The researcher also examines the obstacles experienced by the Aksata Pangan Food Bank management.
3. The last aspect, the researcher examines how the Aksata Pangan Food Bank management overcomes obstacles.

### **Research Location**

Food Bank Aksata Pangan, as a food coordination center, plays a role as a central point in managing food supplies obtained from various sources, including collection, processing, storage, and distribution to the community around Medan City. This research was conducted at the following address: Jl. Karya Wisata Ruko Johor Summerville No.25, Medan Johor District, Medan (Food Bank Aksata Pangan, 2023).

### **Research Object**

The object of research is an entity that is analyzed and investigated during the research process. The object of research can be an organization, individual, or object. According to Sugiyono (2021), the object of research is a characteristic,



value, attribute, or activity that has certain variations determined by the researcher to be studied and analyzed to obtain conclusions. The subject of this research is the environmental communication strategy implemented by the Aksata Pangan Food Bank management. To increase public awareness, build the image of the organization, identify various obstacles faced in implementing the strategy, and how to overcome obstacles.

### **Research Subjects**

Research subjects are individuals who have a relevant understanding of the research subject. Participant selection uses a purposive procedure which is carried out by selecting participants based on certain criteria, such as relevant expertise or knowledge, so that it can help researchers gain in-depth insight into the research object (Sugiyono, 2020). Research participants are individuals selected based on qualifications that match the research needs. According to Spradley in Sugiyono & Lestari (2021). Considering the objectives to be achieved in this study, the person who becomes the source of information (informant) is a person involved in determining the Environmental Communication Strategy and Image Development of the Aksata Pangan Food Bank who has the following criteria:

1. Active Aksata Pangan managers who are involved in communication planning.
2. Aksata Pangan managers who routinely participate in going to the field

The researcher chose these criteria to ensure that the selected informants have direct knowledge and experience that is relevant to this study. Aksata Pangan managers who are active in communication planning were chosen because they understand the communication strategies and objectives implemented by the organization, which is important for knowing how the strategy is developed and evaluated. In addition, managers who routinely go to the field were chosen because they have practical experience and can provide insight into the effectiveness of communication strategies and the obstacles faced in the field.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

- **Interview**

The purpose of this type of interview is to gain a deeper understanding of the issues, views, and ideas of the informants openly. This allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the participants and interpret the information through other techniques, such as observation. In this study, the researcher conducted interviews with related informants to obtain relevant and important information for the study, in accordance with the approach recommended by Sugiyono & Lestari (2021).

- **Observation**

In this study, the type of observation applied was non-participant observation. Krisyantono (2012) explained that through the observation process, researchers can observe real events and communication dynamics that occur directly. In this study, the researcher conducted direct observations to find out

how the environmental communication strategy implemented by Aksata Pangan in developing an image to reduce food waste in Medan City.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis is a stage in which data collected from interviews, field notes, and documentation is structured. This process involves organizing data into categories, breaking data into smaller units, synthesizing information, grouping in certain patterns, selecting relevant information, and making conclusions so that it is easily understood by researchers and other parties (Sugiyono, 2020). In this study, researchers used data collection techniques explained by Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman, which outline several steps in the data analysis process, namely:

1. **Data Collection** In this study, data will be collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, with the hope of obtaining a variety of sufficient data to facilitate analysis.
2. **Data condensation**, Data condensation refers to the process of filtering, narrowing focus, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data contained in field notes or research transcripts. This process includes selection, focus, and summary.
3. **Data Presentation (Data Display)**, Data is presented in the form of summaries, relationships between categories, diagrams, flows, and other formats. Data presentation aims to gain an understanding of the existing situation and assist researchers in planning the next steps based on the understanding that has been obtained.
4. **Drawing Conclusions/Verification**, The conclusions presented must be supported by evidence from valid and consistent research results so that credible conclusions will be obtained (Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021).

### **Data Validity Technique**

Data validity can be verified through credibility testing, one method of which is using data triangulation. In this study, source triangulation will be carried out where data will be obtained from different sources, but using the same technique. Triangulation will be carried out by contacting individuals who have a deep understanding of the problem to be studied, from reliable sources of information.

## **RESULT**

The researcher's findings were determined after collecting data through interviews and observations of the subjects and objects of research, accompanied by documentation to strengthen the factual basis and truth. The research findings through interviews that the researcher obtained were that Aksata Pangan had implemented an environmental communication strategy in its efforts to reduce food waste and increase public awareness. Through a structured and focused communication approach, such as the use of social media for campaigns on Instagram, Aksata succeeded in conveying a message about the importance of utilizing food that is still edible. In the process, Aksata not only disseminated information, but also involved in direct education to the community through direct visits and educational content.

Aksata also faced obstacles in the form of a lack of public understanding of the issue of food waste and technical obstacles such as a lack of donors. To overcome this, Aksata actively collaborated with related agencies and utilized volunteers and technology such as geotag applications to improve the food distribution process. The researcher obtained research findings from observations to gain a deeper understanding of the environmental communication strategy of the Aksata Pangan Food Bank management in developing the organization's image to reduce food waste in Medan City.

In 2022, Aksata Pangan received a grant from the Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Seeds for the Future provided by the US Department of State, the US Mission to ASEAN, and Cultural Vistas. We managed to save more than 858.78 pounds of surplus bread from 5 bakeries in Medan, which was distributed to Frontline Organization (FLO) and local maggot farmers saved 1,976 tons of leftover bread, thereby reducing CO2 emissions. Aksata Pangan uses several social media platforms in implementing its strategy, including Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Aksata Pangan is more focused and consistent in spreading information through Instagram. Joined in June 2018, the Aksata Pangan Instagram account has posted 696 times and managed to get 4,512 followers, while following 243 other accounts. TikTok is the second active platform, TikTok Aksata Pangan has 1,374 followers and 18.5 thousand likes, with an account that has been active since March 2021. Meanwhile, on LinkedIn, Aksata Pangan has 67 followers and two posts, the first of which received 18 likes, and the second 19 likes. Facebook, Aksata Pangan was only created on April 20, 2021 with one post. Meanwhile, on YouTube, the Aksata Pangan channel was created on June 27, 2021 with four posts, which have been watched 236 times, received 5 likes, and have 3 subscribers.

On the Aksata Pangan Instagram social media account, researchers found that they carried out an environmental communication strategy through their uploads. At the production stage, Aksata Pangan collaborated in making processed Singali-ngali banana food in the Samosir Mallatam program with LKP Lylylly Tata Boga. Abundant local commodities often become environmental waste due to the lack of education in managing and marketing food ingredients. Singali-ngali banana is a typical banana from North Sumatra from Hariara Pohan Village, a small village on Samosir Island, with a banana harvest reaching 50-70 kg in one week. Seeing this condition, Aksata Pangan and Roda Hijau as a consortium of Catalyst Changemakers Ecosystem from Goto Impact Foundation initiated the Samosir Mallatam pilot project. This program empowers the people of Hariara Pohan Village to maximize the economic benefits of local food and create a waste-free tourist village.

During the month of Ramadan, Aksata Pangan has a Ramadhan Sharing Food program which aims to distribute 1,400 food/drink packages to break the fast to 50 underprivileged families for 14 days of Ramadan. Aksata Pangan also shares tips on how to break the fast together with minimal food waste, including: ensuring the number of attendees, buying or ordering enough food, being aware of the dangers of emotional eating, sharing food with each other, and not being ashamed to take home excess food. This food bank also educates the public about

terms related to expiration dates on food and beverage packaging. Aksata Pangan also provides information on how to turn food waste into compost. Food compost refers to the process of composting unused organic food waste into natural fertilizer that is useful for plants. Aksata Pangan educates on the benefits of composting food waste and provides simple tips for reducing food waste, as a small step in combating food insecurity.

Aksata Pangan provides information on the 10 main causes and drivers of food loss and waste in Indonesia, as well as four #antifoodwaste tips for eating without leftovers at warteg. They also share information on how to use leftover vegetables to make broth, tips for making food last longer, how to process fruit before throwing it away, and educate about zero food waste in Korea and in K-dramas. In addition, they inform that there is a website that can help to calculate food loss and waste. Aksata Pangan also shares how to store vegetables to keep them fresh, provides information on the facts about food waste during Ramadan, and provides six tricks to reduce food waste for boarding house children.

They explain the difference between food loss and food waste, and provide information that Indonesia is the largest producer of food waste in ASEAN and the second largest in the world. In addition, they also provide information on the storage time limit for meat in the refrigerator. Aksata Pangan often receives donations of white radish vegetables and through their social media accounts, provides information about the benefits of white radish vegetables. In 2019, they held a joint breakfast activity and a food rescue campaign. In addition, they hold a monthly routine activity called KUPAS, which is a visit to underprivileged communities.

In media distribution, Aksata Pangan has also been covered by various TV stations and media, including NET TV, Kiss 105.0 FM, Citraloka Daai TV, Metro TV Sumut, Tribun Medan Daily, Harian Analisa, IDN Times Sumut, Kover Magazine, Makan Halal Medan, Efarina Television, Bingkai Sumatera Daai TV, and Medan Bisnis Daily. In the Food Pantry program, Aksata once received a donation of excess chocolate that had passed its best-before period from one of the donors. Aksata Pangan utilized the chocolate by reprocessing it and distributing it to the community.

The researcher has obtained the data needed for this study in the form of information obtained through the interview process. There were five informants involved in this study, who were the administrators of the Aksata Pangan Food Bank in North Sumatra Province. In addition, the number of triangulation informants who were the core of this study was three people. The method used was direct face-to-face interviews between researchers and informants, as well as interviews via telephone or WhatsApp messages if necessary. Interviews were conducted by following a previously prepared guide as a predetermined procedure containing questions related to the focus of the researcher's research. The results of the interviews were then transcribed by the researcher to facilitate data analysis and presentation at the next stage.

### **Categorization of Research Findings**

Based on the research findings through observation and interviews, the researcher tried to categorize the existing research findings as follows: Aksata Pangan developed an environmental communication strategy to increase public awareness and participation. This strategy began with the assessment stage, where they identified environmental communication needs by observing relevant issues related to the Food Bank and determining target audiences. Data was collected from social media and news, then analyzed to understand public perception and current issues. Through surveys and observations, including Q&A on Instagram, they dug deeper into the information. The analysis of the parties involved included Food Rangers, volunteers, and agencies that had collaborated.

Communication was also established with external institutions for research or other needs, such as the Ketapang Service and other government agencies. In the planning stage, Aksata Pangan developed a communication strategy with a focus on social media, especially Instagram, to improve the image of Aksata Pangan. This strategy involved direct visits to potential beneficiaries and requests for assistance through social media. Determining the right platform for the target audience, choosing relevant issues, and understanding audience preferences. To educate and direct the community, they provided education to volunteers when sorting vegetables and when going directly to the field. Events such as Stakeholder Gathering and Food Bank Talk were also held to convey information about activities and results that had been achieved.

In the production stage, Aksata Pangan delivered communication messages that emphasized the importance of awareness of food waste issues and how to manage food wisely. A campaign to not shame fruits and vegetables that looked unaesthetic but were still edible was also carried out. Media production included sharing reels on Instagram showing Food Bank activities, distributing healthy and nutritious food, and saving excess food from various events. Geotag and documentation applications were used to ensure the timeliness and quality of donations distributed.

The action and reflection stage involved disseminating information through Instagram and involving volunteers to share content on social media. The closest community was invited to participate and Food Bank activities were explained when directly distributing food. Evaluations were carried out routinely with documentation stored on Google Drive and uploaded to the Aksata account. The Jurnal ID website was used for monthly recording and monthly and annual reports were prepared with the help of research analysts. Aksata Pangan faced several obstacles in implementing the environmental communication strategy.

Technical obstacles included a lack of donors and resources, as well as obstacles in educating the public about foods they were not familiar with such as yogurt and oyster sauce. Psychological barriers arise from the lack of public awareness regarding the issue of food waste, which is considered less interesting than the issue of plastic waste. To overcome this obstacle, Aksata educates the public through direct explanations during food distribution and approaches to

related agencies, as well as sharing content on social media and explaining the activities and objectives of the Food Bank to the public and related parties.

It can be concluded that Aksata Pangan implements various effective environmental communication strategies, such as campaigns through social media, especially Instagram, to raise awareness of the importance of reducing food waste. Their approach is not only focused on raising donations and distributing food, but also on educating the public about the importance of utilizing food that is still good and preventing waste. The obstacles experienced, such as the lack of public understanding regarding food that is still suitable for consumption, are one of the main obstacles. To overcome this, Aksata Pangan actively educates and provides a better understanding to the public through various means, including sharing information directly and educational content on their social media. In addition, technical obstacles such as funding and limited access are also the focus of their attention.

However, Aksata's efforts in building collaboration with related agencies and utilizing a good volunteer network prove their dedication to finding sustainable solutions.

Environmental communication conducted by Aksata Pangan is not only about disseminating information, but also building awareness of the importance of sustainability in managing food resources. With the approach taken by Aksata, this Food Bank not only empowers the community in managing abundant food but also protects the environment by reducing carbon footprints and food waste.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Environmental Communication Strategy of Aksata Pangan Food Bank Management in Image Development**

Environmental communication is an effort that involves planning, strategy, communication process, and media utilization to support policy making and community participation, as well as its implementation in efforts to improve environmental conditions. Environmental communication plays an important role in efforts to maintain, protect, and improve environmental conditions. Effective communication, information about environmental issues can be conveyed to various stakeholders, such as the general public, government, and non-governmental organizations. Thus, awareness of the importance of protecting the environment can be increased, and greater support for the implementation of sustainable environmental policies can be created.

Environmental communication also plays a role in mobilizing collective action to overcome complex environmental barriers. Through outreach, advocacy, and education campaigns, environmental communicators can mobilize the community to take concrete action in environmental protection efforts. By using various media and appropriate communication strategies, environmental messages can be conveyed more effectively, thus motivating individuals and groups to contribute to maintaining environmental sustainability for future generations.

Through a scientifically based and structured approach, environmental communication strategies are able to become a link between scientific knowledge, public policy, and individual action, thus facilitating the

transformation towards a more sustainable mindset and action in maintaining environmental sustainability.

From the results of observations and interviews, it can be described that the environmental communication strategy that occurs includes a communication mix. In developing an effective environmental communication strategy, the Aksata Pangan Food Bank management uses an environmental communication mix consisting of the assessment, planning, production and action and production stages.

### **Assessment Stage**

#### 1 Situation Analysis and Problem Identification

- Collecting data from various sources to see relevant issues and identify effective solutions.
- Delivering messages about the existence of the Food Bank and raising public awareness of the issues of hunger and food inequality.

#### 2. Analysis of Involved Parties

- Involving food rangers, volunteers, underprivileged communities, beneficiaries, and related agencies such as the Medan Food Security Agency.

#### 3. Objective Communication

- Using Instagram as the main platform to deliver messages consistently and with quality, especially to generation Z and millennials.

### **Planning Stage**

#### 1. Communication Strategy Development

- Using social media to convey relevant issues and determine target audiences.

#### 2. Public Education and Guidance

- Campaigning and sharing content through routine programs and Instagram.

#### 3. Media Selection

- Focusing on Instagram due to its relevance to the target audience and limited resources.

### **Production Stage**

#### 1. Communication Message

- Educating about the problems of food waste, the environment, and food security through content on Instagram.

#### 2. Media Production

- Create and share Instagram content with a focus on consistency and quality.

### **Action and Reflection Stage**

#### 1. Dissemination and Implementation

- Use Instagram and the website to disseminate information and go directly to the community.

#### 2. Evaluation and Documentation

- Conduct regular evaluations and document activities for further development.

Environmental communication aims to increase public awareness and participation in environmental conservation. However, Aksata Pangan Food Bank faces various obstacles in its communication strategy, as expressed by Cangara (2017):

**Technical Obstacles:**

Lack of public understanding of the role and objectives of Aksata Pangan Food Bank makes it difficult to gain support and donations.

**Psychological Obstacles:**

Lack of public awareness regarding environmental issues and food waste management. Changing public attitudes requires time and the right approach.

**Human Obstacles:**

Lack of donors and support from related agencies interferes with the effectiveness of the program. Difficulty in explaining the identity of the organization after changing from Food Truck Sedekah to a broader entity.

According to the results of interviews with the Aksata Pangan team, the main obstacle is the change in public attitudes and mindsets towards food waste and its impact on the environment. Further education about the role of the Food Bank and the importance of managing surplus food is needed.

Research Findings Related to Environmental Communication Barriers: Waode Dea Astria et al. (2023) in the journal "Food Waste Prevention and Reduction Practices in the Retail Sector" The main obstacles are the lack of a waste monitoring and recording system, difficulty in predicting product demand, logistics problems, and lack of government support. Dyva Claretta et al. (2023) in the journal "The Role of the Food Rescue Program of the Garda Pangan Organization"

The main obstacles are changing awareness into real action in the field and managing volunteers. Hafiz Minhajuel and Tika Widiastuti (2021) in the journal "Management Model for Alms Donations at Food Banks" The main obstacles are limited capital and human resources, as well as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic".

Although communication efforts and real actions have been carried out by the Aksata Pangan Food Bank, the biggest obstacle remains changing people's mindsets and behaviors. Sustainable social transformation in managing food waste requires hard work and patience in changing the mindset of society as a whole.

**How Aksata Pangan Food Bank Managers Face Barriers**

**Effective Communication Strategies:**

- Increase routine programs to reach people in need.

Educate about the quality of food products to increase public understanding.

**Approach to Donors:**

- Strengthen efforts to gain donor support.

Enhance education and campaigns about food waste and the environment.

**Collaboration:**

- Work with related agencies and non-governmental organizations to expand the reach of the program.



### **Research Findings and Novelties**

- Identify Barriers  
Identify technical, psychological, and human barriers faced by Aksata Pangan Food Bank.
- Focused Communication Strategies  
Emphasize the use of social media, especially Instagram, to reach generation Z and millennials.
- Concrete Recommendations:  
Improve education and campaign approaches.

Use appropriate terminology to reduce stigma and increase understanding of distributed food. This research provides in-depth insights into operational barriers and public perceptions, offers new communication strategies, and provides practical guidance to reduce food waste and increase food security.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The conclusions of the findings and discussions in this study can be summarized as follows:

1. Aksata Pangan Food Bank has succeeded in developing an effective environmental communication strategy using various coordinated communication channels. They focus primarily on social media, especially Instagram, and have succeeded in building public awareness through educational content and regular campaigns. These efforts have helped increase understanding of environmental issues and the importance of reducing food waste, which has a positive impact on their organizational image.
2. Aksata Pangan Food Bank faces technical barriers such as a lack of public understanding of their role and goals, which hinders support and donations. Psychological barriers or barriers arise from public perceptions that associate the Food Bank with certain religious entities, preventing participation from various groups. Human barriers include a lack of support from the head of the neighborhood and the community's lack of understanding of the new types of food being distributed.
3. To overcome technical barriers, Aksata Pangan increases donation and education campaigns through social media with a focus on environmental issues. Psychological barriers are overcome with communication strategies that clarify the organization's identity and goals, emphasizing the importance of environmental sustainability. Human barriers are addressed through a more humane approach, strengthening educational campaigns on the importance of reducing food waste and engaging communities more actively in environmental sustainability efforts.

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