

Conference Paper

The Vocational Education Branding: Lessons Learned from Indonesian Academic-Industry Relationship

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Abstract

Vocational Education Program is still considered as the second choice when high school graduates enter higher education in Indonesia. Parents prefer to send their children to take bachelor than diploma level (one, two or three years diploma). The vocational education program is seen less prestigious and only for those who have financial difficulties. Usually, after graduating from diploma/vocational program, students continue to extend their study to get bachelor degree. There is a common misperception saying diploma is similar to bachelor minus one year period of study. In fact, the curriculum and teaching system of both studies are not the same. This assumption is not just believed by parents but unfortunately among users in the industry which often requires bachelor level for vocational graduates although they are satisfied with vocational students who work as in internship program and want to hire them. This phenomenon shows a gap that graduates of vocational program are ready, and competent enough, to enter job world, however, the industry world is not. Therefore, a strategic, sustainable plans is required to make industry to have a good knowledge about vocational graduates.

Keywords: vocational program, higher education, University of Indonesia, internship program, competency, practitioner as lecturer

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1. Introduction

1.1. Profile of UI vocational program

Vocational Program of University of Indonesia (later called as UI Vocational Program) is a higher vocational education of diploma three (D3) which aims to produce professional medium expert graduates in certain areas of expertise. The Law no. 20/ 2003 on National Education System (Sisdiknas) explains that vocational education is a higher education that prepares students to have a job with a particular applied expertise,

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a maximum equivalent to a bachelor degree (Source: http://riaupos.co/2251-opini-pendidikan-vokasi-di-atas-angin*html#.Vyd2wdL*LIU. accessed on 02/05/2016, at 11:10 pm).

Initially, the UI Vocational Program was Diploma 3 level managed by several faculties in the University of Indonesia back in 1990. The faculties which have D3 program were Medical School, Math and Natural Sciences, Public Health, Economics, Cultural Sciences, and Social and Political Sciences.

In 2008, the administration of D3 program was merged into UI Vocational Program. The merger is based on the Rector Decree Number 429/SK/R/UI/2008. UI Vocational Program manages three areas of expertise in which there are studies of D3 level. The purpose of merger is for efficiency which is in line with University of Indonesia's vision of becoming a world class research university in facing global challenges. On the other hand, there are opportunities due to the need of society to vocational programs whose graduates are more quickly absorbed by industry or works.

The vocational program prepares workforce who study for three years so they are competent to apply their skills and expertise in the work place and are able to compete globally. Graduates of the Vocational Program are directed to be able to enter work market in industry or private sector, government institutions and non-government institutions, or self-employed. They are prepared to be Human Resources (HR) in job market because the education given in the vocational program emphasizes more on practice in order to drill the skills than theory.

2. Methods

2.1. Vision and mission

The Vision of UI Vocational Program is to become the best vocational program in Southeast Asia by increasing the knowledge and applied technology for the benefit of the nation.

The Mission of UI Vocational Program is:

- a. Creating curriculum based on competence, professional and character.
- b. Providing a qualified vocational education which is relevant to the current development in order to improve the competitiveness of Indonesian workers.
- c. Achieving collaboration with the industry and the Associations of Professionals at the national and international levels.

- d. Preparing and creating graduates who have competence professionally in national and international level.

2.2. Lecturer

Lecturers at the UI Vocational Program are categorized into three, namely: Permanent Lecturer, Non-permanent Lecturer (professionals/practitioners in industry), Visiting Lecturer.

For example, the lecturers of Communication Studies (consisting of public relations, advertising, and broadcasting) are permanent lecturers and figures from Public Relations agencies/PR Consultants (Makki Makki, Burson Mastellar, Ogilvy, Lotus, Dentsu, OMD), Government agencies and NGOs, Holcim, Ooredoo (formerly Indosat), Chevron, PT MRT, Tripatra, Kompas, Metro TV, TVRI, Trans, Indosiar, Net TV, CNN Indonesia, Fortune Indonesia, McD Indonesia and Sarihusada.

2.3. Public relations of the UI vocational program

As a higher educational program, the UI Vocational Program needs more fresh students to study and gain applied science. The students are significant element in the management of higher education. They are expected to become human resources who can adapt with the curriculum and educational system in the UI

Public Relations (PR) is basically a communication activity that aims to maintain good relations between the institutions and its public. In 1988 International Public Relations Society of America, adopted a definition of public relations which is widely used: *“Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other”*. (Morris, 2012, p. 4).

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) makes particular use of the word reputation:

Public relations is about reputation –the result of what you do, what you say, and what other say about you. Public relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. (Morris, 2012, p.4).

The purpose of public relations activities of Vocational Education Program UI, are as follows:

Improve the image of Vocational Education Program UI as the best vocational education program in Southeast Asia through positive publication in online media and print media. In order to comply with the Law on Public Information Disclosure of RI Number 14 of 2008, Vocation provides information to the public, as a means of monitoring the implementation of Vocational as an institution. (Source: Vocational Education Program Annual Report 2015)

2.4. Analysis

2.4.1. Internal analysis

University of Indonesia, is one of the state universities that organizes vocational educational program. Vocational Education Program UI is preparing for professional certification to improve the quality of graduates. The Professional Certification is a form of cooperation of Vocational Institution of Universitas Indonesia (LVUI) with Professional Association.

To increase the brand awareness of Vocational Education Program, Vocational Education Program Public Relations UI continues to conduct promotional activities. Promotion is done through several activities, among others:

Routine Activities:

1. Documentation of photos and videos

A documentation activity routinely conducted every month in the form of photos and videos to meet the information needs and become promotional materials of Vocational Education Program UI. Documentation is done for all activities that have been held by Vocational Education Program UI.

2. Banner and poster installation

One of internal publication media used by public relations to provide information related to activities, job/apprenticeship vacancy and student achievement.

3. Award certificate, plaque, and souvenir printings

Supporting activities for each student activity and formal activities held by the UI Vocational Program.

4. Facilitating the protocol of the official events held by the UI Vocational Program

TABLE 1: Certification of Vocational Education Program UI.

No	Nama Asosiasi/Insitut/Lembaga	Program Studi (prodi)
1	Indonesian Administrative Professional Association (IAPA)	Administrasi Perkantoran dan Sekretari
2	Institut Akuntan Publik Indonesia (IAPI)	Akuntansi
3	Masyarakat Profesi Penilai Indonesia (MAPPI) atau Indonesian Society of Appraisers (ISA)	
4	Lembaga Sertifikasi Teknisi Akuntansi (LSPTA)	
5	Cipta Piranti Sejahtera (CPS Soft)	Administrasi Keuangan dan Perbankan
6	Lembaga Sertifikasi Profesi Administrasi Profesional Sekretaris Indonesia (LSPAPSI)	Administrasi Perkantoran dan Sekretari
6	Lembaga Sertifikasi Kompetensi Perpajakan (LSKP)	Administrasi Perpajakan
4	Ikatan Fisioterapi Indonesia (IFI)	Fisioterapi
5	Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA)	Pariwisata
6	Asosiasi Perusahaan Pameran Indonesia (ASPERAPI)	
7	Asosiasi Ahli Manajemen Indonesia (AAMAI)	Administrasi Asuransi dan Aktuaria
8	Asosiasi Arsiparis Indonesia (AAI)	Manajemen Informasi dan Dokumen
9	Perhimpunan Manajer Pelayanan Kesehatan Indonesia (PERMAPKIN)	Perumahsakitan
10	Lembaga Sertifikasi Profesi Public Relations Indonesia (LSPRI)	Komunikasi

Other situational public relation activities (routine and non-routine), protocols on the layout, ceremonial rules, ordinance of honor for State Officials, Government Officials, representatives of foreign countries or international organizations, and Community Leaders, in the official events held by UI Vocational Program.

Integrated

1. Vocation Open Days

Education exhibition organized by public relation of UI Vocational Program in the course Dies Natalis program. The event held at UI campus invites students from

high school / vocational school, and consists of program such as tour lab, entertainment, and exhibition of each vocational study.

In addition to these activities, there are other promotional activities, namely:

1. Providing information via website, www.vokasi.ui.ac.id
2. Put an advertisement about UI Vocational Education Program on Kompas daily.
3. Socialization activities to schools and invite stakeholders of high schools education to campus.
4. Activate social media (Facebook and Twitter) to promote agenda of student activities and job vacancy, every day.

A message to public that Public Relations of UI Vocational Program often to convey is that graduates of vocational program ready to work because the education system in the vocational program emphasize 70% on. Also, supporting facilities of study such as laboratories are designed to be similar with real facilities provided in industry, buildings, sport facility and infrastructure, worship places, medical clinics, transportation accommodation, information technology, insurance, and information of competence test certification for student, so the graduates are expected to be able to compete especially in the era of ASEAN Economy Community.

UI Vocational Program has implemented ISO 9001: 2008 in ensuring its academic quality (source: <http://upma.vokasi.ui.ac.id/?q=article/pobpvui-wajib>, accessed on May 13, 2016, pk.14.12) .

2.4.2. External analysis

Law No. 12 of 2012 article 1, on Higher Education, says,

“Higher education is the level of education after secondary education that includes diploma programs, undergraduate programs, master programs, doctoral programs, and professional programs, as well as specialist programs, organized by universities based on Indonesian culture.”

This law provides a strong legal foundation for the development of vocational education in Indonesia. Vocational education does not stop at Vocational High School. The vocational program is open to master (S-2) and applied doctorate (S-3). Previously, the level of vocational education

in Indonesia was limited to a community college (school or vocational education institution) and polytechnic (source: www.id.voi.co.id, March 8, 2016, at 20:19).

Thank to the government led by President Joko Widodo who promotes vocational education program. However, the important thing to do is to inform the public about the importance of vocational education. A focus group discussions involving public relations of firms of oil mining, telecommunications, land transportation, practitioners of local and multinational PR agencies held recently showed less knowledge about vocational education even among parts of industries. Almost all of the participant in the forum did not understand the difference between bachelor (S1) level and Diploma 3 (D3) degree. For them, the most important in hiring employees is candidate with minimally S1 degree background.

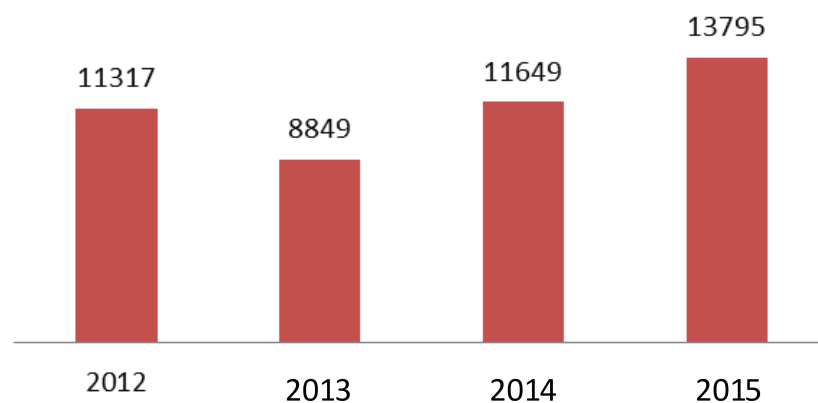


Figure 1: Participant the difference between bachelor (S1) level and Diploma 3 (D3) degree.

In addition, in several visits to industries we found out the fact that still many industries had a little knowledge about UI Vocational Education Program. The visit aims to establish cooperation with industries related to placement for vocational students in the internship program. The lack of knowledge about UI Vocational program could impact to the lack of job vacancy for vocational graduates. On the other hand there are encouraging facts because at the same time quite a lot of companies hired students who have worked in internship program (which shows they satisfied with the student's works). A Human Resources manager of a multinational company was shocked when they found out the employees they hired for S1 qualification was a Vocational graduate.

The industrial parties we have visited among others top television and radio stations, advertising agencies (local and multinational), pharmaceutical companies, online trading companies, and ministry offices.

University of Indonesia is one among other state universities in Indonesia that establish vocational education programs. It needs an effective and efficient public relations strategy to improve brand awareness of society towards the UI Vocational Education Program.

In addition, when several visits to industry in order to establish cooperation for student placement at the time of internship, almost all the industry parties visited had very little information about Vocational UI. This will have an impact on the labor market that is limited when the vocational graduates will enter. On the other hand there are encouraging facts because at the same time quite a lot of companies have employed ex students (which shows they are satisfied with the performance of the student). A HR manager from a multinational company was shocked when it was announced that one of the people they received to fill the S1 qualification was a Vocational graduate.

The industrial parties visited for audiences include TV and radio stations, advertising agencies (local and multinational), pharmaceutical companies, online trading companies, ministry offices, University of Indonesia is one among other state universities in Indonesia that establish vocational education programs. An effective and efficient public relations strategy is needed to increase brand awareness of Vocational Education Program UI

2.5. Communication issues statement

Diagram 1.1 The interested student in Vocational Education Program 2012 – 2015

Sources: Annual Report of Vocational Education Program 2015.

The evaluation of the success of public relations communication program is only measured by the number of tightness in Vocational Education Program. In the 2015 Vocational Annual Report, it is mentioned that the interest in Vocational Education Program UI is getting more dynamic, it is reflected from the enthusiasts in the period 2012-2015 below:

Justification, the result from visits to industry parties such as Edelman, Hakuodo, Havas, Office of Ministry of Tourism, showed the brand awareness towards UI Vocational Education Program UI is still low. All this time, the vocational students were hired by the companies in an internship program merely because they are UI students. The users were not aware of the difference between bachelor degree and vocational students.

Therefore, it takes efforts to increase brand awareness, "Brand awareness is the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category" (Aaker, 1991, p.61).

According to Jefkins (2000), every PR program planning activities should be done effectively and efficiently (low cost). One of them is by maximizing promotional efforts through various media close to the target public. In this digital age, public information

search is done on the Internet, Vocational UI Program must utilize the existence of multiplatform social media well. The right media used by Public Relations of UI Vocational Program now is online media (website, facebook, and Instagram) so that the dissemination of information can spread quickly and accurately.

Brand awareness has four levels to be able to form a value in the minds of potential customers. According to Aaker and Simamora in Haryanto (2009) the four levels of brand awareness are:

1. Unaware of a Brand: This is the lowest level, where someone does not know at all about the existence of a brand.
2. Brand Recognition: at this level someone knows a brand based on certain existing stimuli, such as color or shape. Brand awareness re-emerged after aided recall.
3. Brand Recall: In this third stage the consumers have been able to use their memory in recalling the brand name of a product category. Keller (1998) discloses, "Brand recall relates to consumers' ability to retrieve the brand from memory as the product category, or as a cue" (Keller, 1998, p.88). This brand recall stage is also called unaided awareness, because at this level, consumers are able to remember a brand name, although without going through the stimuli associated with the related brand. Through unaided awareness, the effectiveness of a campaign or advertising can be known.
4. Top of Mind: at this level, the brand name will be mentioned first and superior compared to other brands within the same scope of products.

3. Conclusion

PR strategy that has been done by Public Relations of UI Vocational program, among others is online media, ie websites and social media (Facebook and Twitter) is not equipped with features that can facilitate the audience in obtaining information. The unavailability of supporting features of online online communication channel and the lack of information about UI Vocational Program UI in social media cause the level of brand awareness in the society toward UI Vocational Program UI is slow, or remain on the scope of people who have already known.

Thus, it can be said that the public relations activities in raising brand awareness in the online media conducted by Public Relations Vocational Program UI needs to be improved.

Shel Holtz (2002) says "Next-generation online public relations, to my way of thinking, incorporates four overarching characteristics. They are:

1. Strategic: They are designed to affect business outcomes
2. Integrated: They use the Internet as an element of a broader communication plan.
3. Targeted: They use the Internet based on its advantages over other forms of communication to reach specific targeted audiences
4. Measurable: Plans include the means by which the effectiveness of the effort can be assessed "(Holtz, Shel, 2002, p.16)

Public Relations of UI Vocational Program UI should make the cyber PR (online) programming through media choosing and more informative and educative PR techniques. Messages that need to be promoted to the public are information about their study program, teaching methods, achievements, profiles of successful graduates.

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