

Business Communication Ethics: A Moral Guideline and Critical Reflection

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Abstract

A business activity needs communication for getting profits and making the business work well. Business communication tends to manipulate even to lie the business stakeholders to make the profit. A business communication ethics discourse needs to minimize these tendencies. In this term, business communication ethics should be understood as moral rules. These moral rules manage the business actor's behavior in business activities. It has been formed in deontology, utilitarian, justice, rights and virtuosity ethics. As science and moral philosophy, business communication ethics critically reflects the business communication practice. In practice, profit oriented business communication produces domination structure in the form of monological business communication. Business communication ethics deconstructs the domination structure by establishing the new rules and strengthening the civil society. It means that business communication ethics clarifies that business communication ethics deals not only with moral rules but also with social structure that supports and hampers the ethical business communication practice as dialogal business communicative action.

Keywords: business communication, ethics, domination structure, deconstruction

Introduction

Communication in business is important and principal. If the business is understood as the activity of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services, then the activity requires communication between the parties involved, either directly or indirectly, either verbally or non-verbally. The production process, for example, requires the communication between company leaders and employees who implement and realize the company's goals. If the product can be received and consumed by customers well, the communication through advertising in order to introduce the product to the consumer is a major requirement. Thus, communication with stakeholders, both public around companies, NGOs, suppliers, governments and the international community, is an important requirement for reciprocation of the activities of a company.

The case of Prita Mulyasari who was facing lawsuits because her complaint spreading in social media is one concrete example of the importance of communication in business activities. Prita Mulyasari, with her lawsuit, found not guilty and is free of the charges by the Supreme Court. Therefore, the legal accusation by the hospital treating her that she defamed the hospital through social media, is considered incorrect and unacceptable. An important note from this case is that the legal issues that arises between the patient and the hospital actually happened because there was no good communication, a situation that would lead to a material and moral loss for both sides.

Employees' strike and demonstration in to a company for low wages and inadequate social security are other forms of improper and unsmooth communication between the employees and the company. Public demonstration to a manganese mining company in several places in East Nusa Tenggara is also a form of inharmonious communication between the owners of the company and the surrounding community. Not only limited to strikes and demonstrations, the separatist movements in Aceh and Papua can be seen as a form of clogged and jammed communication between companies and communities around the company. In short, both verbal and non-verbal communications among parties involved in business activities are very important.

Communication in business is important. But the more important thing is how the content of the messages is conveyed in business communications that can bring enlightenment for the communicants. The contents of the message in business communications should contain a truth that the communicant who receives the message can take the appropriate consideration in making a decision (Haryatmoko, 2007: 19). The message that does not contain the truth is not only fooling but also incurs losses for the communicant, because the communicant can make the wrong decision. Here, the message content which fools and causes harm to the communicant considers the use of ethics in business communications. Considering the use of ethics in business communications brings about the discourse of business communication ethics. Then, what is meant by business communication ethics?

Some people argue that the ethics of business communication is related to the procedures for the courtesy and respect to the parties involved in business activities. Therefore, the messages delivered to the parties involved in business activities should be formulated with the polite and unoffending words. Messages are formulated and formed verbally and non-verbally. The use of words and the specific words in business communication among community members of different cultures should be properly addressed. Similarly, posture and grooming in business communication are very important to be considered. Mistakes in the use of

words, gestures and manner of dress would be fatal in business communications. Business communication in globalization era requires an understanding of business communication among cultures. In marketing management classes, clothing forms and color to wear, posture, and diction and gestures are taught and even they must be shown to foreign prospective business partners.

This viewpoint, according to the author, is not quite right because the perspective thus leads to the notion of communication etiquette. The author's view is reinforced by the opinions of Courtland L. Bovee and John V. Thill in their book *Komunikasi Bisnis* (Courtland et.al, 2008: 23) which said that the etiquette of communication that is based on three principles namely respect, courtesy and common sense can be used as principles to deal with different and complex situations in business communication. In other words, communication etiquette is related to the procedures and manners that are relatively different from one culture to another.

Others argue that the ethics of business communication is related to the ethical principles that are able to distinguish what is good and what is bad in business communications. They are not just limited to the manner and style of communication expressed, but also the impact and consequences of the messages conveyed in communication. They deal with honesty, fairness and responsibility in business communications. Citing the opinion of former US Supreme Court Potter Stewart, Courtland L. Bovee and John L. Thill in *Komunikasi Bisnis* (Courtland et.al, 2008: 30) say that business communicators, in making the choice, have a responsibility to think deeply not only what he says but also the consequences of what he was saying. In other words, the ethics of business communication questions the communicator's responsibility for what is said and the impact of the words and the message they convey.

Prita Mulyasari's complaints via social media, demonstrations of workers and the people's resistance around the area of manganese mining in NTT (East Nusa Tenggara) explain an adverse and unhealthy business communication from an ethical standpoint of business communications. Ethical business communications are expected to address poor and healthy communication. The question are (1) What is the meaning of ethics in business communication ethics? (2) What is the purpose of development of business communication ethics in business activity? This paper is directed to answer these two questions.

Methodology

This study was methodologically conducted through the study of literature from books, journals and ethical news relating to business communication issues. Business communication ethics studies posed a question and argument on the use of the word *ethics* in business communication ethics of either ethics as etiquette or ethics as a moral norm. This study criticized the use of the word ethics in the business communication ethics. Ethics is not just a business communication etiquette regulating manners and procedure in business communication, but also as a norm and moral teachings as well as a critical reflection on norms and moral teachings in business communications. Thus, this study epistemologically based itself on the critical epistemology which questions the meaning of the word ethics in business communications and simultaneously deconstructed and reconstructed a new meaning of the word ethics in business communication ethics (Sudarminta, 2002: 22).

Theoretical Review and Discussion

The Meaning of Ethics in Business Communication Ethics

In everyday speech we often hear the word ethics. A teacher is angry at her student for not greeting her when the teacher is angry at her student because gave a pen to the teacher with his left hand. Such a student is branded as unethical. In business activities, the virtually similar words are often heard. Employees do not greet superiors. Or, employees do not give thanks for the wage increase provided by the company. Such attitudes are also branded as unethical. Students' attitude and actions to their teacher, employees' attitudes and actions toward their superiors in the company are seen as part of non-verbal communications that are contrary to ethics. The question is whether the use of the word ethics in non-verbal communication is appropriate or not?

The use of the word ethics in non-verbal communication, according Bertens, is less precise. The correct word is etiquette. Etiquette is one of the norms that regulate behavior and human behavior in society. The word norm itself is taken from the Greek word meaning the bracket builders used to determine the straightness and erectness of a building corner (Bertens, 2005: 35). Etiquette as norms of courtesy usually varies from one culture to another governing the behavior or conduct of a person in daily life. Because etiquette is only one of the norms, of course there are other norms that regulate behavior and human behavior in society. Other norms are customs norms, religious norms, legal norms, and moral norms. These norms regulate human behaviors in society.

Tradition, religious norms, and legal norms seem to be easily understood. Customs or traditions are norms that apply in accordance with the customs prevailing in a society, such as traditional wedding in Javanese community which is different from that of Minangkabau society. Religious norms refer to norms arising from certain religious teachings, such as Buddhism different from the teachings of Moslem. Legal norms are norms based on the rule of law from one country to another.

The above norms may easily be understood. However, it is rather difficult to distinguish between courtesy and moral norms. This difficulty arises because society finds it difficult to distinguish courtesy norms on the one hand and moral norms on the other. The relationship between teachers and students, the relationship between employees and superiors like the above cited examples, especially with regard to courtesy norms, not moral norms. Manners refer to etiquette, related to the appropriate procedures in association with others, a procedure that is different from one culture to another. Meanwhile, moral norms are called ethics relating to the good and the bad from a moral standpoint.

Bartens defines ethics in his book title *Etika* (Bertens, 2005: 6) as follows: (1) as the moral values and norms people or a group of people hold in regulating their behavior, such as religious ethics and way of life embraced by a community group ; (2) as a set of moral principles or values espoused a group of people according to their field of work. It means codes of conduct, for example, a code of ethics, or codes of medical ethics; (3) as a science of good and bad things. Ethics as science is concerned with its effort to reflect critically and methodically and systematically about the good things to do and bad things to be avoided. Ethics as a science that performs a critical reflection on moral norms put ethics as a moral philosophy.

Understanding ethics as moral values and norms and ethical code of conduct makes it difficult to distinguish from etiquette or manners. Etiquette and norms of decorum prohibit a person to behave and behave in certain ways, for example, giving should be with the right hand, giving with the left hand is prohibited. Such etiquettes and norms of courtesy are not completely related to moral values and norms. Stealing either with right hand or left hand and corruption, whether quietly and secretly, known or unknown to others, are still considered contrary to the moral values and norms. Advertising media used in business communication is considered contrary to the moral norms and values when it deceives the consumer. On the contrary, it does not conflict with the moral values and norms if the ad fairly explains functions and benefits, advantages and disadvantages of the goods or services advertised. Then, what are the characteristics of ethics as moral values and norms?

Ethics as moral values and norms have some of the following characteristics: (1) demand our responsibility as a moral agent. An act or acts must take into account the impacts and consequences of an action. Here, the actor is invited to take responsibility if his/her actions harm others or not. In the context of business communication, ethics as moral norms demands responsibility from the doer of business communication. He is responsible for what he has and the impact or consequences of business communication actions. He is even able to predict the impact of his business communication action. In short, the business communication actor should be able to give proper reasons, a result, the impact and consequences of the act of doing business communications.

As a moral norms, (2) ethics deals with conscience. Conscience is the inner voice that guides a person's behavior. Conscience admires and accuses every performed action. Praising if we do the good and correct action, in turn accusing if we do bad and wrong actions and harm others. A clean conscience causes people to make the right choice in doing actions. Instead, the dullness of conscience makes people not feel wrong in their actions, although they obviously commit crimes, such as killing, stealing, robbing, corrupting and other crimes. In business communication, the similar things can happen. Every action of business communicators is judged whether it is in accordance with their conscience or not.

As a moral norm, (3) ethics also relates to an act or action which are obliging, an unconditional order, the categorical imperative. Doing good, avoiding stealing, killing, robbing, corrupting, harming others are directives that are obliging, deontological. A business communication action also prohibits actions that harm and wound others, for any reasons. A business communication in the form of advertising that manipulates its communitiee is banned from a moral standpoint.

As a moral norm, (4) ethics is formal. Formal means the moral quality of an act or action is always attached to the act and the action itself. It means people are rich because of the efforts and hard work have a better moral quality than being because of corruption, theft, and exploitation of employees. A qualified business communication is determined by the truth of the message delivered to its communicatees. Business communication in the form of advertisements, for example, is rated quality when it communicates its message of truth, does not contain elements of fraud and deceit (Bertens, 2005: 143-147).

Guidance values and moral norms in business communication, in the form of do's and don'ts, are often violated by the businesses. Indonesian Advertisement Ethics (*Etika Pariwisata Indonesia*), for example, prohibits ads using the word "ter" (the most or the best...) that means superlatives product, a ban on use of children in advertising media, a ban on use of medical devices and paramedics, and other bans. In fact, this prohibition is rarely adhered to. Corporate codes of ethics in the form of a statement like value statement, corporate credo, code of ethical conduct are well-formulated by the company, also rarely applied. Ethics statement is merely window dressing in order to be considered great by those who see it. At this stage, the ethics of business communication is present not only to explain the values and moral norms and code of conduct that must be applied to business people in business activities, but also related to a critical reflection on the practices of business communication in the business activities. As moral values and norms and code of ethics, ethics of business communication leads businesses to communicate ethically in business activities. Meanwhile, as a

critical reflection, ethical business communication seeks to understand the social structure, economic structure, political structure and cultural structure that support and hinder the ethical business communications. Both of these will be described below.

Business Communication Ethics as Moral Rules

In doing business communications, business people should be able to differentiate which business communication is good and what business communication is bad. Good and bad business communication is determined by the intent, intentionality or motivation, purpose and impact of business communications. Therefore, good and bad business communication is determined by the following business communication ethics theory.

First, deontology theory is known as deontological. The theory was introduced by the philosopher Immanuel Kant stating that an action is said to be good not because of the purpose of the action but because the action was already good in itself. Because it is good in itself, the action shall be carried out or implemented. This obligation is unconditional or categorically imperative. Prohibition not to lie in business communication is a moral imperative that must be unconditional. Prohibition not to manipulate information about the composition or content of a product is a demand that is deontological. Similarly, information about the negative impacts of mining exploration effort in the region is a deontological demand which is categorical-imperative in nature by a mining business.

Second, a utility theory is commonly known as utilitarian. This theory explains that an action is said to be good if it brings benefits to the actions of others. A business communication is said to be good if it brings benefits to the people, greatest happiness of the greatest number. A transparent business communication, which can be held accountable and trustworthy, will bring confidence and public trust in the generated business products. A business communication that satisfies and convinces consumers on the content of the product is a business communication that brings happiness to many people.

Here, the impact of business communications becomes a primary consideration in evaluating a good or bad business communication. Business communications that have a positive impact and give happiness for most people or for customers at large are rated as a good business communication. Anti-mining demonstrations as happened in many places in Indonesia are a result of poor business communication between the mining company and the communities around the mining area. Thus, the consequences and the effects of business communications are a major concern of whether business communication goes well or not.

In fact, often business communication of information on the product delivered to the consumer is not completely and solely to attract the sympathy of consumers. Ads about properties product or information about house prices in housing often trap consumers. In addition to sometimes containing elements of lies, such advertising is misleading and is not unethically and immorally good. In addition, these ads tend to show business communication simulacra, they looked as if they were available and real, although they in fact do not exist. Labor demonstration against the company is also born of business communications that are less healthy. There is a mismatch between what was promised by companies or government and what is perceived which triggers demonstrations.

Third, the right theory. Business Communications also consider the rights of consumers. Ethical business communication of course considers the rights of consumers to obtain precise, accurate and beneficial information to consumers. The accuracy of information about a company's products for consumers is an important factor in determining whether they buy or do not buy the product. A good and ethical communication is an important factor in establishing a harmonious relationship between employees and companies. The employees have the rights to know the entire company rules and regulations to make sure it is implemented properly. Communities around the company have the rights to obtain clear and precise information about the impact of the presence of the mining company. Companies do not have to sugarcoat the negative impact of the presence of the mining company and the rights of communities around the company to get compensation or guarantee from the company to minimize or eliminate the negative impacts of the presence of the company. It often occurs, the company tries to cover up the negative impact and simply accentuate a positive impact or benefit obtained by communities around the company. When the negative impacts are felt by the public, then a demonstration against the presence of the company becomes inevitable.

Fourth, the theory of virtue. A good and ethical business communication also comes from the goodwill of the business. Moral virtue is the disposition of the character of a person including business actors. It appears from doing business communications. A one-way business communication without expecting feedback from stakeholders or stakeholder is clearly contrary to ethical business communications. Such a business communication tends dominating and manipulative that often only benefits the owners of capital. Moral virtue in business communication just might be born of the courage of the capital owners out of the circle of egoistic interests and opens a transparently and accountably dialogical communication with all stakeholders.

The courage to open a dialogical business communication with stakeholders can only be implemented in an

atmosphere of honesty to reveal the various obstacles and possible solutions of the problems facing the company. Honesty in doing more transparent and accountable business communications is supported by the humble attitude of the capitalists. Why, because in fact the capitalists have already positioned themselves as holders of dominance in the business relationship. Ethical business communication deconstruct domination position this business relationship, so that it is able to bring an honest and egalitarian business communication and in turn produce a fair and reliable business communication by all stakeholders.

Fifth, the theory of justice. Ethical business communications also expects a business communication that brings about a sense of justice. Respecting the business stakeholders' rights in business communications is a requirement for ethical business communications. The rights of business stakeholders to submit complaints, concerns and job issues that they face are the actualization of justice in ethical business communications. Labor Laws of Indonesia Republic number 13 of 2003, in particular Article 102, Article 103 and Article 104 on industrial relations, confirm the employees' opportunity to express their aspirations through the voluntarily established trade unions.

The consumers' right to express their felt-dissatisfaction with the service of manufacturers is a part of ethical business communications that ensure fairness. The rights of patients who complained about the dissatisfaction with the service provided by the hospital treating them, either directly or through social media are a part of the ethical and fair business communication. The public's right to express their opinions and even refuse a company's presence in the neighborhood is a part of the ethical and fair business communication.

The above-mentioned five theories can be used as guidances and basic considerations for a person to carry out a business communication action. In doing business communications, one is obliged not to lie and manipulate for his benefit and his group's. A business person is expected to perform communications that bring happiness to most people and always considers the implications and impact of doing business communications. A businessman is also expected to be a virtuous. In doing business communications he emphasizes fairness, honesty, and humility so that it generates more transparent, accountable and credible business communications. A businessman is also expected to always pay attention to the rights of all stakeholders in business activities. Paying attention to the interests of stakeholders is part of a form of a fair and ethical communication.

Upon the considerations, there are three principles of ethical business communications: First, the principle of autonomy. Autonomy is the attitude and ability of a person to act on his own consciousness. People who have autonomy are those able to pick and choose which business communication is good and bad. People who have autonomy, thus, are those responsible in business communications. They are responsible for themselves especially to hear their voices. They are responsible for the impacts and consequences of doing business communications. They are responsible for the actions and decisions that they made, that the actions and decisions brings certain messages to business stakeholders either directly or indirectly.

Second, the principles of not doing evil and doing good. A business communications that is born of good intentions and motivations and does not intend to commit a crime is a business communication that is ethical and moral. Such an ethical and moral business communication will in turn give birth to a fair, honest and responsible business communication. Fair means a business communication paying attention to the rights of business stakeholders. Honest means that a business communication promoting transparency and getting rid of lies. Responsible means that a business communication takes into account the impact and adverse consequences of the done business communication.

Thirdly, the principle of self-respect. This principle include the golden rule. Do something to others as you want others to do it to you. Ethical business communications should consider whether business communications raise concerns, worries, and fears to the business stakeholders or not. Or, whether the communication business done precisely insults the dignity and worth of business stakeholders or not? The measure lies back on the business actors themselves. Words of wisdom say: the measure you use for measuring will be measured to, or who sows he will reap (Keraf, 1998: 44-45).

If the above descriptions are related to the ethics of business communication as moral guidance or moral teaching, then the question is how to explain the ethics of business communication as a critical reflection.

Business Communication Ethics as a Critical Reflection

Business communication in business activities is a necessity. Business understood as an attempt to produce, distribute and consume goods and services are always geared for profit. It is a very strong business activity target perceiving that business profit is everything. As profit becomes everything in business, it is valid to justify any means to achieve the target. In such a context, business communication is seen as the most effective media for profit in business activities.

Business communications as the most potent media for profit instead pose ethical problems. Because, the practice of business communication is often conducted monologuesly, a business communication practice that is contrary to the meaning of the communication itself which substantially means that there are two or more parties or subjects that interact in conveying the message. Business communications in the form of advertising, for

example, are often conducted in the form of monologues communication. Advertisers have the same goal for profit. Ads buyers expect advertisers to create ads that bring big profits. Advertisers only make ads if the buyer pays a high price. Because both have the same goal, the ads audience's interest is sacrificed. Indonesia advertisement ethics prohibits using paramedics and medical devices in making ads. In fact, these ads often appear to greet the viewers and consumers, an advertising tricks viewers and consumers. Such ads do not enlighten and educate consumers but consumers are tempted and trapped in a deadly seduction of the published advertisements.

Business communication practices that are monologues tend to be manipulative, seduce and tempt consumers so that they do not think clearly and critically in the selection of products they consume. Take, for example, food advertising that invites mothers not to have to bother to cook for their children and husbands at home, just take them to the restaurant, the food will be presented quickly. Alternatively, the bottled water ads often use complete paramedics with medical equipment who cling to his body as if the bottled water has been able to guarantee public health, free from all diseases. Ads that tempt and manipulate consumers are particularly vulnerable to the children and traditional communities that are less critical. They were not able to weigh both critically and well which ads are good or bad. Thus, the power of persuasive advertising is very tempting and at the same time manipulating the communicants so as to make them trapped in the selection of offered products. Such ads can not be justified ethically and even degrading human dignity.

In the relationship between producers and consumers, a full-manipulative business communication often happens, especially in ads providing the goods warranty, pricing and packaging. Warranty provision ads is often associated with quality products, but its guarantee is often manipulated by rogue manufacturers. In terms of pricing, especially the problem of annual discounting ads, an element of manipulation is very strong. It has become a common rumor in the community if it is done by raising the discount price in advance so that the actual price discounts the actual price of the goods. In terms of goods packaging, the packaging and the contents are often completely different. Products are often seen beautiful in packaging but low in quality. Business communications are so vulnerable to manipulation practices. Caveat emptor, buyers beware !!!

Almost all large companies have ethics statements known by its code of conduct. Small and medium scale enterprises in reality do have such ethics statements, whether written or unwritten especially in the spirit of the organizers of the company. The code of conduct also forms a business communication that wants to give a message to employees and the public at large that the company is doing business with a value that should be upheld. There are three types of corporate codes disclosed to the public: namely, values statement, corporate credo and code of conduct. Statement of values such as team work, credibility, transparency in communication, corporate social responsibility or CSR and others is a value statement aligned with ethical business communications.

Benefits of corporate code of ethics in business communication are as follows: (1) demonstrate to the public that the company is committed to improve the company's credibility. (2) demonstrate to the public that the company can self-regulate itself without the intervention of other parties, including the government. (3) demonstrate to the public that the company is very firmly taking a stand, especially dealing with the interests of third parties such as the elite political party or government officials. The corporate code of conduct tries to eliminate the gray areas of whether it is allowed to make contributions to a political party or not. If it is, what is the limit of the prescribed amount. Contributing to political parties in the framework of the general election, for example, can be done during the administration as long as it does not make the company caught in the narrow political interests. (4) Demonstrate to the public that the company has a commitment to manage the company in accordance with the applied ethical demands (Bertens, 2000: 381-382).

In practice, codes of corporate ethics only a mere window dressing. Beautiful does it look for the codes of the company ethics are posted on the walls of the enterprise so that outside parties are amazed although it was difficult to be effectively applied. The formulation of the code of conduct is too general, does not show a way out for concrete moral problems faced by the company. The code of corporate ethics can either not be effectively implemented because there are no sanctions in case of violations. Thus, the company's code of ethics as a form of business communication conveyed to the company stakeholders does not run properly. The question is how business communication ethics understands such a business communication phenomenon?

Answering this question, the notion of ethics as a science and moral philosophy would be widely used. On such case, it is interesting to cite Paul Ricoeur's opinion stating that ethics is the goal of good life within and for others in just institution, the purpose of life both with and for others in just institutions (Toscano, 2005). If examined in depth, the ethics in this sense is related to: first, the purpose of a good life; second, the good life is not for ourselves but for others; third, due to someone else, then there needs to be unity; and fourth, togetherness is built in a fair institution.

As social beings, humans have always lived together with others. Living together with the people wants a good life. It means that living together considers the interests of others, not self-interest. The good life as a common goal is not fully achieved due to selfish interests of community members. Selfish attitude should be

reduced or removed altogether for the sake of others in order to achieve the good life together. To achieve a good life together, then there needs to be a rule of social institutions and organizations that make the rules as well as supervise the implementation of the rules. Social institutions that regulate the common life must be organized and regulated fairly. Justice undoubtedly ensures the common good of society. This is the meaning of ethics proposed by Paul Ricoeur.

When understanding ethics as intended by Paul Ricoeur above, the business communication ethics is actually associated with individual ethics and social ethics. Individual ethics is prescribed by the individuals' goodwill. As long as an individual has the goodwill, then the person at the same time has ethics, and vice versa. Meanwhile, social ethics is largely determined by social structures. Social structures in this case constitute rule-forming, social institutions and organizations that generally determine the behavior and mannerisms of good individuals.

The good will of individuals in business communication ethics certainly has been seen from the effects and impact of the generated business communications. Say, the employer's goodwill of course always gives a good message in the business communications. The message in a good business communication is that which enlightens and gives a proper consideration to the communicants in making business decisions. Take, for example, a cigarette advertising as a business communication within the tobacco companies. Before there are rules requiring cigarette manufacturers to clearly provide the result and the adverse effects of smoking, cigarette advertising generally only delivers the advertisement showing greatness, courage and bravery of a smoker. For example, the advertisement of Marlboro shows a horseman rider grazing horses in a beautiful pasture. While smoking Marlboro, the horseman looked and stared at dashing landscapes with hundreds of herds of roaming horses. Behind the ad, as if there are an appeal and a message to smokers that when he smoked he would enjoy similar circumstances. There is no message stating that smoking is harmful to health. The goodwill of tobacco companies and cigarette advertisers is at stake here. However, once there are demands from various circles, especially the NGOs who are concerned with public health, tobacco companies finally are required to publicise the dangers caused by smoking such as heart disease, impotence, cancer, and other diseases, and even the effects of smoking are clearly shown in the image of heart disease, cancer and other diseases.

Business communication ethics as a social ethics explains social, economic, political and cultural structures supporting or impeding ethical business communication practices. The social structure produces normative rules and a code of significance or codes of meaning and resources, both allocative and authoritative resources. Business communications are always determined by the normative rules and codes of meaning. The relationship between the owners of capital and labor is determined by the normative rules in the form of orders and discipline and code of meaning. This code of meaning results in a discourse describing the domination structure where the capitalist's position is higher than the employee's position, because the capitalist has the authoritative resources (authority) and allocative resources (rationing value including wages). The strong domination position generates legitimacy structure defined by normative rules in the form of sanctions such as reward and punishment (Giddens, 1984: 29).

Business communication ethics as a social ethics highlights various legal rules and laws that hinder and support ethical business communications. Indonesia advertisement ethics governing how to create an ads in the business has been very good indeed. However, in practice this advertisement ethics does not run as desired. Freedom of expression as stipulated in Article 28 UUD 1945, Constitution of Indonesian Republic, is actually a lawful umbrella that allows employees to communicate freely despite regulated further in its derivatives. The problem is that these regulations and laws are often beneficial for those who are strong, so was it expressed by Tracymachos Ancient Greek philosopher. It means that regulations and laws have been made and approved by the politically democratic institution. However, the decision makers have never been neutral from the represented and struggled economic and political interests. Just imagine if the decision makers are dominated by economically powerful groups. The capital owners' interests determine the content of the legislation and the regulations. Thus, economic and political structures determine the content of the regulations and the law.

Business communication ethics a critical reflection highlights the processes and mechanisms of decision making and questions who is involved in the decision making and who benefits from the made decisions. Communities around the mining area are often powerless against the strength of the government's insistence to open a mining company with an argument to improve the welfare of local communities. This argument can not be rejected by society because welfare considerations have been recognized and accepted by the representatives in the legislature passed mining legislation. The strength of communication dominated by the capitalists who cooperate with the government makes communities around the mines unable to resist the mining company.

Not only that, the communication strategy in the form of symbolic violence and factual violence, verbal and nonverbal communication, is often displayed by capital holders in order to seduce and even intimidate local communities to accept the mining company. In fact, the promise of improved welfare for communities around the mining area is merely one that they always charge in the form of demonstrations and protests and even through gun violence as occurred in several places in Indonesia. Gun violence that Papuans showed is an

exclusive example of business communications by Papuan community over the presence of the mining company Free Port in Timika Papua.

In such situations, business communication ethics offers business communication strategies as follows: first, ethical business communication is free of domination. Domination-free communication puts the communicant as an equal partner whose rights should be respected. The communicant's reactions in both verbal and non-verbal are the communicant's messages noteworthy by the communicator. Here, business communication is monologically reduced and whenever necessarily abolished.

Second, domination-free business communication presupposes a dialogical communication. A communicative-dialogical business communication requires a communication that enlightens, conveys the truth and is free from manipulation. The interests of the communicant becomes basic standards of ethical business communications. Introducing a variety of negative side effects of the products consumed by the consumer becomes absolutely necessary, can not be bargained. Compensation for the negative side effects of the products marketed becomes an act of justice. This must be communicated transparently to consumers or anyone directly affected by business communications.

Third, ethical business communications provide spaces open to anyone and any groups to freely voice their interests. Letters from readers in a newspaper, talk shows on television and radio are media of communication that can be used by the communicants in voicing their interests. The law on the mass media should be formulated in such a way that guarantees the freedom of individuals and groups in the community to voice their interests.

Fourth, ethical business communications should also be supported by the independent and autonomous civil society. The civil society are given the opportunity to organize themselves well and channel their interests through a polite and civilized communication. Polite and civilized business communications are determined by the brought and assigned spirit. Is the voice communicated completely purely for the interests of the represented community, or even for those of group who finance them? Here, the independence and autonomous attitude of civil society are at stake.

Those above four points are business communication strategies that build ethical business communications. Dialogic communication and strengthening the civil society are the main prerequisites of ethical business communications and bring benefits to all business stakeholders. Thus, if there are complaints from the communicant, such as the case of Prita Mulyasari above, the problem does not have to be brought into the realm of positive law, but are settled with the communicative-dialogical communication between the two sides, so that they are mutually beneficial.

Closing

Business communication is one important condition, for business activities bring advantages. The advantage is not only felt by the holders of the capital, also felt by all stakeholders involved directly or indirectly in business activities. A business communications create barriers when the business communication is only addressed to the interests of holders of capital and ignores the interests of the involved stakeholders. Business communication ethics is expected to reduce or eliminate that tendency through various moral guidance that are deontological, utilitarian, virtuous, and related to rights and justice issues.

As long as these moral guidelines have been disseminated to the holders of capital in various occasions both religious and profane fora. In practice, socialization process and internalization efforts have failed because internalization process of rules and moral guidelines has never been reached. Business communication ethics seeks to understand business communication practices in this perspective. However, the barriers of internalization and application of values and moral guidance does not only come from the concerned individual, but also comes from the social structures that exist in society. The social structure in business communications impede ethical business communication practices. The most important and dominant social structure is the domination structure in the relationship between the holders of capital and business stakeholders.

Business communication ethics, therefore, is not only limited to the guidance and moral rules that must be followed and executed by capital holders and stakeholders, but also is associated with a critical reflection on the practice of business communication. That is, an attempt to understand that unethical business communication is also caused by the capital holders-owned the domination structure. From an ethical standpoint, ethical business communications practices are also determined by the deconstruction effort of business communication practices that are monologues toward dialogical-communicative business communication practices. The practice of dialogical communicative business communication can be done through making the communicant as an aligned business partner, conveying the truth and bringing enlightenment to the communicant, providing an open space for anyone and any group to communicate openly and transparently, and providing an opportunity for civil society to freely voice their concerns in order to strengthen the civil society.

Biography

The author was born in Manggarai, Flores, NTT, 2nd September 1957. Educational background: graduate from

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