

BUSINESS BRAND, CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND RESEARCH METHODS ON PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION SCHOLARS

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Abstract: The research aims to explore how business brand and corporate social responsibility (CSR) have been studied in communication studies. Since brand and CSR are the multidisciplinary studies, it is assumed that they have been studied by communication studies. The researchers conduct a content analysis on 165 articles published on communication journals and 395 public relations theses. The unit of analysis is thematic. The research reveals that business brand appears only on communication journals. The public relations theses have also brand image. However, public relations theses discuss brand regarding only brand image, not other brand's topics. CSR appears on both communication journals and thesis. However, the research find only 15 out of the 165 articles in communication journals and 6.8% of 395 theses discussing CSR and it is only limited on the utilization of CSR as a fulfilment of responsibility. Actually, there is a challenge in utilizing CSR which is not only as a corporate compliance towards the existing regulation or creating corporate brand image but also CSR may be used as a way to create corporate brand image through poverty alleviation. The quantitative research method are the most dominant approach in communication journals. Theses have been dominated by qualitative method.

Keywords: Business Brand, Content Analysis, Communication Studies, Public Relations, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

INTRODUCTION

Brand had been developing as a study focus of business studies (Davis, 2005) and communication studies (Kriyantono, 2017a). It has been studied by business scholars since 1931 (Davis, 2005). The development of the study of brand in business studies can be divided into two main paradigms, namely positivist and interpretative (Heding, Knudtzen and, Bjerre, 2009). However, the positivist paradigm has a great influence and dominates the research on the brands. Based on business studies' point of view, the positivist explains that the brand as "a combination between the design and the implementation of marketing activities in order to build, measure, and adjust the brand in maximizing its value" (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Similar to describing brand as a study focus, CSR has also developed gradually as an important concept in practical business as well as in scientific study over several decades (Kriyantono, 2015a), which has been a research area covering a large amounts of literature (Seth, 2006). CSR has evolved along with the development of democracy (Kriyantono, 2015b) because democracy offers transparency and public participation and stimulates communication activities with the public who is getting more critical (Kriyantono, Destrity, Amrullah, & Rakhmawati, 2017; Kriyantono, Ramadlan & Setiawan, 2015). The critical nature of this public encourages public claims for business organizations to have a sense of responsibility for their community since they use raw materials from the surrounding environment (Kriyantono, 2015a).

In addition, CSR can be used to create brand and corporate image (Regester & Larkin, 2008; Vanhamme & Grobbsen, 2009; Jeong, 2009; Kriyantono, 2015a; Kriyantono, 2012). Therefore, CSR becomes one of hot topic concentrations of company, especially the issue about how to communicate CSR to public (Cho, Furey, and Mohr, 2016). On the other hand, however, the problem that has not answered yet is how to communicate about the potential of existing CSR and how extent the potential of CSR that can make a brand image of corporate. So, this study also tries to map the CSR's practices that have been done in the context of corporate branding and brand image.

On the other hand, the brand and CSR can be analyzed in various contexts of multidisciplinary studies, including communication studies. The study of brand and CSR are closely associated with the formal object of communication studies. It can be inferred through the definition of brand in classical and contemporary contexts with the formal objects and the core of communication studies. Classically, American Marketing Association (2007) defines a brand as "name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination that is used to identify products or services of a company or its competitors". Contemporarily, the definition of brand is "the perception of consumer of the goods, services, or the companies" (Wheeler 2009, p. 2) and CSR is a program enable a company participate in social matters by giving contribution and valuable benefit toward economic and social welfare development within the company's daily operations (Kriyantono, 2015a), which are closely related to the core of communication studies, that is, a message and perception on the message (Griffin, 2012). The formal object of communication studies is "all the process, the production, and the effect of a sign system" (Kriyantono, 2014, p.11).

Based on the explanation above, the author believe that the communication studies also discuss the brand and CSR. Kriyantono (2017a) used communication theory to study complementary co-brand product and proved that co-brands have different meaning from the consumers, however, the consumers would express more positive meaning –evaluation, activity, potency- toward a parent brand. Kriyantono (2015a) studied CSR from

communication approach and found that referring to mandatory approach on CSR, CSR is primarily aims to gain social welfare and confirmed that most Indonesia companies assumes public relations officer as a person in charge to deal with CSR.

Another study about brand using communication approach is done by Mennai and Rached (2012) which concerns on the analysis of brand value source from a brand by using semiotics and marketing analysis. This study explains that brand value depends on product appearance physically and symbolically (brand) and it depends on the consumer's perception through symbol (brand) which is to be transmitted by the company via brand identity and it is being evaluated as brand image by the consumers. Therefore, it is very important for the brand managers to understand the brand value source in developing the marketing strategies specifically and establish a new communication program.

Anggraini (2017) indicated from some literature that the business studies focus on brand processing for consumers' acceptance, so that the brand equity will establish in the consumers' minds, meanwhile the communication studies focus on the purpose and perception of consumers about the brand. Therefore, the research that can map the communication studies focusing on brand.

LITERATUR REVIEW

CSR refers to corporate policies that lead companies to assume responsibility for some interests of society (Chernov & Tsetsura, 2010). Kriyantono (2015a) found that CSR study has been conducted gradually in Asian companies and has been studied by many scholars. CSR has been well developed in Western countries like USA and Europe in the early of the 20 century and it became scientific study in 1950s-1960s (Hai-yan *et al.*, 2012; Seth, 2006), then it was transferred to Asia (Wong, 2009). Yet, most research have been conducted more in developed countries rather than in developing countries, such as Asian, Latin America, and Middle Eastern, the academic publication therefore is constructed in more Western centric (Khan, Al-Maimani, & Al-Yafi, 2013). In globalization and tight competition era, the companies decide to embracing the idea of greater corporate

responsibility and its proponents are keen to demonstrate that business has responsibilities beyond the production of goods, services and profits and that socially responsible business can help to solve important social and environmental problems (Wong, 2008).

Anggraini (2017) found that in 19th century or the industrial revolution period, the concept of brand was introduced for the first time. It was the first wave of brand which introduced the social value on business and brought brands, in which it was conducted by Cadbury and Rowntree (Davis, 2009). Afterward, the research and development of the concept of brand management and marketing system was initiated in 1920. The first research was conducted to compare the way how automobile companies, General Motors and Ford developed their own target market (Davis, 2009). Some consumers of goods companies were also aggressively developed the research concerning the audiences' preferences in order to create the consumer brand.

From Fetscherin and Heinrich's (2014) research and Anggraini (2017), business studies has developed the brand in six focuses namely brand community, brand culture, brand loyalty, brand personality, brand equity, and co-branding. Here, the researchers elaborate six concepts as follows: First, brand community puts the brand as the vocal on social interaction which occurs between the consumers (Heding, Knudtzen and, Jerre, 2009). The reason why the brand community concerns the consumers is because the consumers will share their experiences and stories of the brand to their communities. So, the brand community is regarded has a power in influencing the value of a brand. For the first time, however, the concept of brand community is recognized by the brand management in 2001 through the research conducted by Muniz and O'Guinn. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) define "brand communities as communities that are not formed based on geographical similarity but based on the similarity of admiration for a certain brand" (cited in Schroeder, 2006, p.138).

Second, brand culture is about anything that can be done by culture in order to form a brand value (Heding, Knudtzen and, Jerre, 2009). Bringing culture in the process of forming brand is a right step because culture contains various meanings and offers in-depth

understanding on the individuals or in this case consumers. Culture explains the various meanings which are believed by the individuals. Therefore, the depicted beliefs in the meanings will be adopted in *brand* so that it can create value and dialogue with the consumers. The adoption of the concept of culture in business is regarded by the technology to answer any social problem. In addition, the main reason in adopting the concept of culture and brand in the business is because the brand is considered has a power to control the consumer's subconscious and culture has hidden meaning in creating the subconscious. Therefore, the adoption is intended to create the brand become a tool in accessing and managing a meaning.

Third is *brand loyalty*. Loyalty becomes a crucial factor because it is very possible that other brands will create similar products because they (impersonator) will never have their own brand concept (Gobe, 2002). "Brand loyalty is an important target to be achieved by the process of branding" (Heding, Knudtzen and, Jerre, 2009, p.13). Customers' loyalty has the higher value than recruiting new customers. Consumer loyalty becomes the main points to be achieved by the concept of brand loyalty because brand is regarded as a machine that provides relationships and experiences directly to the consumers. Brand loyalty itself is the concept of consumer loyalty to a brand even the culting of brand by consumers (Swystun, 2010). Heding, Knudtzen, and Jerre (2009) explain that to build *brand loyalty* means to manage the entire transaction from the consumer to the brand both in the short and long terms. Kotler (2006) adds that a brand loyalty is formed when a business consistently delivers the promise made by the brand to the consumers.

Fourth, *brand personality* is one of the ways to make brand can be survived by using emotional value (Chernatony, 2010). Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) specifically define brand personality as "a number of relevant human personalities to be applied to the brand" (cited in Heding, Knudtzen and, Jerre, 2009). The best way to communicate the emotional values of a brand to the consumer is by experiencing the brand directly to the consumers. Chernatony (2010) adds that *brand personality* is a way to think, act, and talk to the customers. Chernatony (2010, p. 283) adds that the brand personality

is used as symbol or self-expression. For example, people buy Mercedes not only for the performance of its brand rather than to the meaning of a status in gaining an award of a higher social level and lifestyle that could be represented by the Mercedes brand. It can also be understood that there is a connotative meaning which lies within the symbols of brand personality.

Fifth is *brand equity*. Keller (1993) defines brand equity is a portion of result of the marketing marketers that are attributable only to the brand. Keller (1993) adds that a set of consumer associations to the brand is an important component for creating *brand equity*. McInnis (2009) adds that to create *brand equity* as means as brand attitude and all consumer evaluation should be recalled and used as a guide to predict consumption behaviour of consumers. *Brand equity* is defined by Davis (2009) as a way to shape the values that exist in a brand. *Brand equity* can be affected by a change of name or details of a brand. Building and managing the brand equity become the main focus of both large and small companies (Blech & Blech, 2003). Blech and blech (2003) also define the definition of *brand equity* as a set of visible asset such as the favourite image, the different impression, and the power of the consumer in completing the company names, brand names and trademarks.

The last is co-branding. Co-branding “represents a longterm brand alliance strategy in which one product is branded and identified simultaneously by two brands” (Helmig, Huber, & LeeFlang, 2008, p. 360). In other words, co-branding can be understood as collaboration between two brands in order to create a unique product. Wheeler (2009) also states that co-branding is a teamwork done by some *brands* to make one product success together. Moreover, co-branding is an understandable way to introduce a new famous product of *brand*. One of the advantages by doing co-branding is that it can expand the target marketing both brand and positive perception of the consumers. “It is an instrument used by marketers on a wide spectrum, including creating initial awareness, familiarity, and customer loyalty” (Gullet & Tasci, 2010, p. 143).

After understanding the development and focus on the sub-study brand in business Studies, it will be easy to find the differences and focus on sub-study brand in

Communication Studies. Therefore, the researchers formulate the problem as follows: How do the trend of brand study in Communication studies based on the theme of the business brand, corporate social responsibility, and research methods in communication journals and theses?

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a content analysis. Content analysis is a method which describes about summarizing procedure statistically from some quantitative researches on the same topic” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Moreover, this content-analysis method allows the researcher to understand a phenomenon based on multi perspectives because meta-analysis is the result of the analysis of multi knowledge (Card, 2012). It means that this research could see the multidisciplinary nature of communication studies in studying brand. The researchers need the information which describes the development of researches of brand in the field of communication studies in the terms of issues, methods, and approaches and enrich the renewal values which may be conducted in the next researches.

Moreover, the populations on this research were journal articles which were published in high qualified international journals in the field of communication studies in 2010 to 2015. The author accessed six scopus indexed journals which were Communication Research, Written Communication, International Communication Gazette, Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, European Journal of Communication, and Management Communication Quarterly. The author collected the article journals from those six domain journals by using search keyword “brand” and “CSR”. Based on the keyword, the author managed 165 article journals from six determined journals. The author also collected 395 theses of communication study from school of communications in three universities in Indonesia during 2010-2015. The author collected the theses by using search keyword “brand” and “CSR”.

The research of content analysis using quantitative content analysis has some categories (analysis unit) in collecting the data or known as analysis thematic unit. Analysis thematic unit was chosen. The researchers made four categories, which are: first, a sub brand study in

research in Communication Studies (brand community, brand culture, brand personality, brand loyalty, brand equity, co-branding, etc). Category one made by the variety of literatures and sources as a journal that have been mapped the sub brand studies in business study (Anggraini, 2017).

On the category one, the researchers listed the sub brand study as benchmark. Second, research methods (quantitative, qualitative and mix method). Third is data Collection method. The researchers divided the data collection method into two sub categories, namely quantitative data collection technique (survey, quantitative content analysis, survey, etc) and qualitative (interview, observation, focus group discussion, ethnography, case study, etc). Fourth, the researchers used sub category

which is research approach (positivistic, interpretive, and critical). The category two until four is obtained from all sources with research design: Qualitative research method in public relations and marketing communication (Daymon& Holloway, 2011), Routledge handbook of communication research (Frey & Cisna, 2009), and some other sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research found that brand image has dominated the study of brand in both communication journals and public relations theses. There are 14% of 165 articles in communication journals study brand image and 17.50% of 395 theses in communication studies (Figure 1).

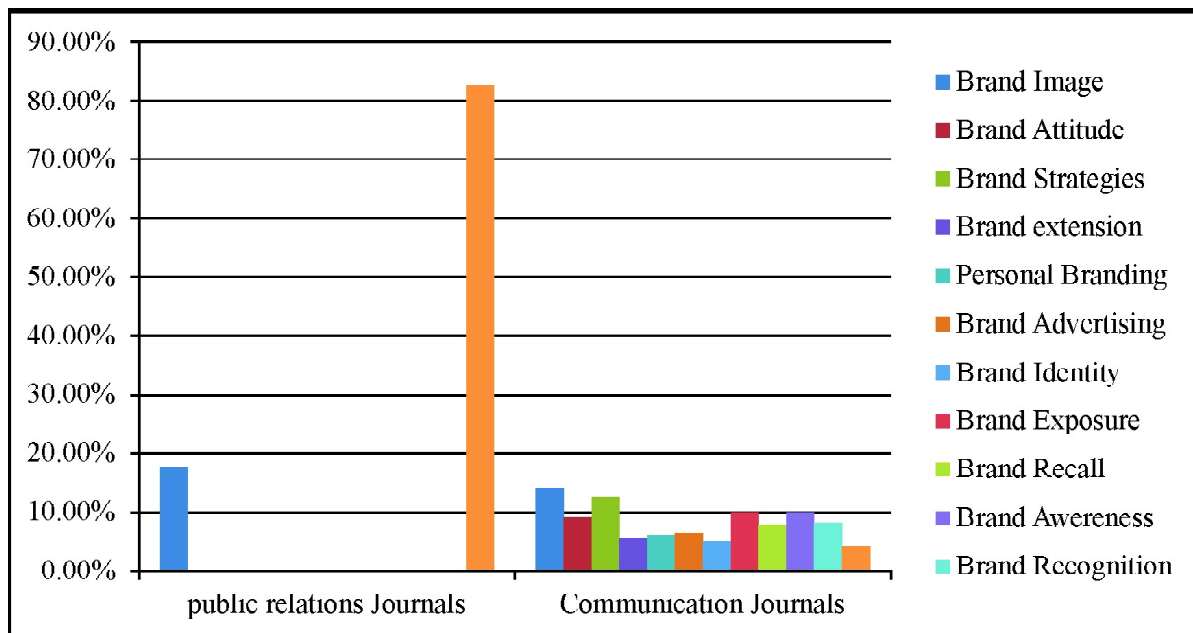


Figure 1: Brand Business in the Communication Subject

It is interesting that Indonesian students have explored brand business in brand image only for public relations study. The brand is only defined as referring in image of the business corporation. It should be noted that public relations is likely to study others topics regarding the business brand such as brand attitude, brand strategies, brand recall, brand exposure, brand recognition, brand identity, brand advertising, brand extension or personal branding. Those topics are not only limited as

business or marketing topics. It is also the domains of public relations study. Public relations as management function of the business company has a duty to support marketing by maintaining some nonmarketing factors such as politics, suppliers, distributors, consumers, financial institutions, mass media, competitors, social-cultural institutions, including religions, community) in order to having a positive attitudes to the organization. Finally, positive image toward the products and the

company will support product selling (Kriyantono, 2016; White, 1991).

From figure 1, it is described that there are 82.50% of 395 theses portrays other topics excluded brand image. The topics are presented in Table 1 as follow:

Table 1
The Topics of Public Relations Theses

<i>Topics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Management of public relations rereations	43
Organizational communication	72
Business Image	69
Issue Management	8
Crisis Management	20
Public relations research	4
Public relations ethics	3
Public Relations on Media	54
Marketing public relations	35
Public relation profession	13
Corporate Social Responsibility	27
Public Service Communications	43
Others	5
Total	165

Table 1 reinforces that image becomes the main lexicon in public relations study (Heath, 2005) because it is on the second position in this current research. The highest level of the topic of organizational communication can be interpreted that students understand public relations as the activities which occur in the organizational context as one of the management functions. Figure 1 also tells that that the brand image is on the top of being researched. In addition to the brand image, brand strategies are also sub brand study which is the most published in communication journals.

In addition, the author makes three sub categories about trend in using of research methods, namely quantitative method, qualitative, and mix methods. Generally, the quantitative method dominates the brand research, but in has not dominated yet in Communication Studies. 52, 22% out of total 165 articles in communication journals are using quantitative method, meanwhile 41% or 42 articles use the qualitative method.

Moreover, the use of mix method is still rarely that is 5, 38%.

On the third category, the author made two sub categories which are collecting the data method in quantitative and qualitative methods. The result of frequency distribution shows that collect data technique is often used in quantitative method through survey (36, 813%). The second of collect data technique is often used is experimental (36,263%) and continued with the quantitative content analysis (24, 175%).

Afterward, the author also found some data collection methods which do not exist in the category. The author concerns on the other categories. Some those categories are statically analysis, readership studies, and time series analysis. Moreover, frequency distribution of data collection methods in qualitative method, case study (50, 89%) is data collection methods that often used, then followed by Interview (22, 155%), Observation (8, 982%), and Ethnography (5, 389%). But the researchers also found the data collection methods. Some data collection methods are framing analysis, interview analysis, qualitative content analysis, rhetorical, and semiotic visual.

The fourth category, the researchers made three sub categories of research approach i.e. positivistic, interpretative, and critic approaches. Based on the result of frequency distribution is obtained the results of 52, 215% out of total sample that is by using positivistic approach and followed by interpretative approach (37, 974%), and critics approach (9, 81%).

In public relations theses, the author finds that the theses apply various types of research methods (Tabel 2). It is described that qualitative method has been dominant method in public relations theses. Qualitative method provides the opportunity for researcher to explore data in more detail in natural contexts. Therefore, the phenomenon can be cultivated by focusing on the individuals' motives and constructions (Kriyantono, 2014; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). It links to the findings that depth interviews become the most data collecting techniques which are used in the theses. "Intensive interviewing provides more accurate responses on sensitive issues. The rapport between respondent and interviewer makes it easier to approach certain topics that

might be taboo in other approaches.” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 139).

Tabel 2
Research Methods applied in theses

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Quantitative	1. Experiment	0.3%
	2. Survey	18.9%
	3. Content analysis	2.3%
Qualitative	4. Content analysis	1.3%
	5. Depth Interview	66.08%
	6. FGD	0.7%
	7. Historical study	0%
	8. Ethnography	0.7%
	9. Case Study	5.1%
	10. Phenomenology	0.5%
	11. Narrative	0%
	12. Discourse analysis	0.7%
	13. Framing analysis	1.01%
	14. Semiotic	0.7%
	15. Grounded	0%
Others		1.52%

In addition, survey has become the most prominent method in quantitative method. It is reasonable, according to Wimmer and Dominic (2011, p. 185), “Audience and consumer surveys are commonplace in all areas of life, however, survey research, including online surveys, requires careful planning and execution, and the research must take into account a wide variety of decisions and problems.” Moreover, there are some methods that have never been applied in theses, such as narrative paradigm, historical study and grounded.

It is interesting that the data findings regarding the research methods in public relations theses differ with the research methods in communication journals. The latter is that experiment method is the most frequently used in the research (20.88%) and the quantitative method is the most prominent research methods.

Focus brand of the study in communication studies is the brand image. Brand research in communication science seeks the effects of a message in the form of imagery or brand image in the minds of the audience

through a study that describes the general imagery or image is formed. Therefore, the research method used is quantitative method with data collection and quantitative content analysis using a positivistic approach. Therefore, by using the taxonomic, the researchers enable to draw a conclusion that there are not significant developments in research brand in Communication. However, the brand researches in communication studies are in line with the formal objects and materiality of communication.

In this study the researchers find only 15 out of the 165 articles which discuss CSR and it is only limited on the utilization of CSR as a fulfilment of responsibility (Table 2). All the research used quantitative methods with surveys as data collecting method.

Table 3
CSR research in communication Journals

<i>categorization</i>	<i>Types</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Study Focus	Fulfilment of responsibility	100%
Research methods	Quantitative	60%
	Qualitative	40%
Data collection	Survey	13.3%
technique	Content analysis	40%
	Others	46.7%

In addition, CSR topic is also found in the theses. From 393 theses, there are only 27 theses (6.8%) discussing corporate social responsibility. The author suggests that this finding mirrors that the student should pay more attention to the topic. Kriyantono (2015a) found that, after reviewing literature, majority of research conducted has focused on CEOs, few studies have proven that public relations influence CSR, and the rest found that both CEO and public relations may influence CSR. Although it is possible that public relations and CSR are separate actions, L’Etang (1994) found that CSR is often managed and as a part of public relations activities to communicate with the public. In this current research, the author assumes that the majority of companies consider that CSR is public relations concern. Public relations is communication management between organization and its public to create goodwill, to serve public interest, and to maintain good morals and manners (Cutlip, Center, & Brown, 2011; Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Kriyantono’s (2016a) study, finally, confirms that most

Indonesia companies assumes public relations officer as a person in charge to deal with CSR. Therefore, CSR can be said as a communication tool to gain reputation.

It links to Elving *et al's* (2012) finding about the practice shows that public relations, communication management, and corporate communications are terms with the same function, namely to make the annual report, brand strategy, communication policy and strategy, community relations, corporate identity, philanthropy (citizenship), crisis and emergency, employee relations, executive speeches, Internet site, Intranet site, issues management, media relations, public relations, crisis communication and reputation management (Kriyantono, 2017b).

The findings indicates that CSR research has not been much done by the communication scholars, especially in Indonesia. It links to the fact that there is still less companies in Indonesia have not been fully concerned about CSR and there are only three companies that have a good reputation in Indonesia, namely Unilever, Pertamina, and Telkom (Wulandari, 2016). There are three types of companies in implementing CSR, namely: (1) the companies that have committed to implement the CSR, (2) the companies that want to implement CSR but do not know how to distribute it, (3) the companies will contribute the CSR only if ask to do it (Thaha, 2016). This statement is further strengthened by the explanation given by Eugene Tan, Co-director of Center for Scholaris Development Singapore Management University that many companies in ASEAN have no regulation in the implementation of sustainable CSR (Suastha, 2016). It is noted that not only business companies but also government institutions need to create CSR programs. Kriyantono, Destrity, Amrullah, and Rakhmawati (2017) suggested that government public relations should create programs that concern to corruption issues because the issues influence the effort to increase social welfare.

Based on Kriyantono's research (2015a), the current CSR's orientation is for social welfare. However, this social welfare cannot be formed only with the CSR dimension of charity. Another potential dimension to achieve social welfare is empowerment through poverty alleviation programs. By using this empowerment concept, the corporations will not only be able to create a positive

brand image for the corporation but also able to fulfil the social responsibility to create the social welfare of society. Implementing the CSR will certainly help the Indonesian government. This refers to the condition of Indonesia facing one of the tough challenges in 2017 that is reducing poverty. The poverty level in Indonesia is still high, 27.76 million or 10.7% of the total population (Saputro, 2017).

It is hoped that this current study is able to enrich the development of public relations studies in Indonesian context. Public relations study in Indonesia need to expand the perspective into the Indonesian perspective (Kriyantono & McKenna, 2017).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Obviously, the results of this study indicate that study brand in communication journals and public relations theses are different. The business studies focus on how to use the brand to show the differentiation between similar products by using different concepts in order to achieve the brand equity. The communication studies focus of brand on how to communicate the brand for the audience to know the brand image and create brand attitude towards the brand itself. It can be seen from the results of the frequency distribution of the various categories found in this research. Moreover, based on the results of the frequency distribution, it can be concluded that the brand image and brand attitude are being created through brand advertising and brand exposure in communication journals. Furthermore, the top strategy to communicate the brand is through brand advertising. In this case television is still the main medium of brand advertising. In addition, the researchers also found that quantitative research methods still dominate research on the brand. Public relations theses focus only on brand image and lack of other topics regarding the topics.

In corporate social research (CSR) case, the researchers concluded that the practices of CSR that conducted by corporate is still in fulfilling the regulation only, even though in one side CSR enables to influence and create the brand image of the concerned corporate. Therefore, it needs an optimal way to utilize CSR in making brand image of company through CSR

empowerment dimensions or in poverty alleviation specifically. So that to follow up the findings of this research, the researchers will conduct longitudinal research to design a CSR implementation model through empowerment concept to create brand image of corporate. So, it will not only create brand image for corporate but also social welfare for society.

The researchers suggest some of the next researches that may be conducted: (1) conduct a content-analysis on the innovation adaption on the use of new media as the brand of communication media. It is due to researchers found that the electronic communication media like television is still one of media to communicate the brand most commonly used until 2015. However, some researches that have a shift in the use of communication media brand of conventional media to the new media. 2) Build a brand research in communication studies with a phenomenological viewpoint to understand the meaning of brands for each consumer. The study will help the brand agency to establish a specific brand according to customer needs. This research is usually known by consumer insight. (3) Examine the use of the concept of integrated marketing communication (IMC) in communication of brand. It is because in a meta-analysis conducted by researchers does not find the use of IMC in an integrated and significant for communicating a brand. Communicating a brand is mostly done using the concept of brand advertising.

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