
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND DIGITAL INTEGRATION IN VALUE-BASED INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AT POLITEKNIK CALTEX RIAU

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ABSTRACT

In the era of higher education transformation, institutions are required not only to excel academically but also to build a strong and value-driven organizational culture. This article explores internal communication strategies in the process of internalizing IDEAL values (Integrity, Dignity, Excellence, Agility, Loyalty) at Politeknik Caltex Riau as part of efforts to establish a value-based academic culture. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and a case study method, this research examines how the IDEAL values are socialized through discussion forums, institutional meetings, and both internal and external communication channels. The process of value internalization is designed to be participatory and continuous, ensuring that the values are not only understood but also embedded in the daily practices of the entire academic community, including lecturers, students, and administrative staff. These efforts are reinforced using institutional information systems and digital platforms, such as social media, websites, and promotional materials as consistent and adaptive channels for communicating values in the digital era. The article highlights that the success of cultivating an institutional culture is rooted in strategic communication processes that are consciously designed with value awareness and supported by the integration of information systems as key enablers for disseminating institutional messages. The findings contribute to the advancement of organizational communication theory and the practical implementation of value-based culture within higher education institutions

Keywords: Organizational Culture, IDEAL, Strategic Communication, Institutional Values, Higher Education, Information Systems

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has significantly influenced various sectors, including higher education. Today, universities are expected not only to focus on academic achievement but also to build a strong, adaptive, and value-based organizational culture to remain competitive in the era of disruption. In this disruptive era, higher education institutions face the challenge of excelling academically while also actively instilling institutional values among all members of the academic community (Castro Benavides et al., 2020; Hasibuan & Hadijaya, 2024).

According to the Global Higher Education Digital Transformation Trends report released by Educause (2023), more than 78% of higher education institutions in Southeast Asia have implemented various forms of digital transformation, particularly in supporting internal

communication, learning processes, and strengthening organizational culture (Pelletier et al., 2023).

Amidst this dynamic landscape, internal communication plays a crucial role in sustaining organizational culture. Internal communication refers to the process of conveying information, values, and messages from management to all members of the academic community, including faculty, students, and administrative staff. Wijaya et al. (2022) emphasize that effective internal communication not only ensures smooth operations but also serves as a key medium for instilling institutional cultural values.

In the context of organizational culture implementation, the changing communication patterns present both challenges and opportunities. Traditional face-to-face communication, which has long been the primary method for transmitting cultural values, is no longer sufficient to reach younger generations who are more accustomed to digital media. Digital platforms significantly influence the success of communication strategies by optimizing the use of tools such as social media, websites, information systems, and mobile applications (Parinussa & Sadono, 2025).

Politeknik Caltex Riau (PCR), as one of the leading vocational higher education institutions in Indonesia, is strongly committed to building a value-based institutional culture. In 2023, PCR formalized five core values under the acronym IDEAL: Integrity, Dignity, Excellence, Agility, and Loyalty. These values were established through the Statute of Politeknik Caltex Riau to serve as the foundation for attitudes and behaviors among all members of the academic community, including students, faculty, and staff. The cultivation of values within the context of higher education organizations is not an instant process. It requires a structured, participative, and adaptive internal communication strategy that aligns with technological developments (Politeknik Caltex Riau, 2023).

In implementing this, PCR faces significant challenges, not only in conventional internal communication but also in digital communication. The student body, which is predominantly part of the digital-native generation, often relies on social media as their primary source of campus-related information (Nurly, 2018). PCR's internal data show that content incorporating the IDEAL branding published on social media platforms generates higher engagement rates compared to general content (Politeknik Caltex Riau, 2024). This indicates that transforming internal communication into the digital realm can effectively reach internal audiences.

Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of internal communication as an integral part of institutional strategy. Zaumane (2021) highlights that systematically designed internal communication fosters alignment with institutional vision and values. Hendrawan et al. (2021) underline the significance of internal communication literacy within vocational education to support the process of cultivating cultural values. In the digital context, research by Milas & Milas (2021) and Wuersch et al. (2024) notes that digital media has become the backbone for disseminating organizational values, especially amidst the demand for efficiency and broader reach. Furthermore, internal communication has been proven to play a mediating role in organizational transformation, as noted by Saharudin et al. (2024) and Erlyani et al. (2024), who link communication climate with organizational culture change readiness.

Nevertheless, academic studies specifically addressing how strategic internal communication processes are utilized to realize institutional values, particularly within vocational institutions in Indonesia, remain limited. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by examining the strategic communication process for internalizing the IDEAL values within Politeknik Caltex Riau.

The research problem formulated for this study is: How is internal communication strategy designed and implemented in the realization of IDEAL values as an organizational culture at Politeknik Caltex Riau? In addressing this problem, the study aims to describe the internal communication strategy for realizing IDEAL values, analyze the use of media and information systems in value dissemination, and illustrate the forms of academic community participation in the value internalization process.

Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on organizational communication and institutional culture development in higher education. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as an implementable reference for other institutions striving to instill institutional values through structured communication approaches that are relevant to the current digital era.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with an interdisciplinary character, grounded primarily in the field of Communication Studies, while being supported by perspectives from Information Systems. The main objective of this research is to provide an in-depth description of the strategic internal communication efforts in the process of realizing the IDEAL values (Integrity, Dignity, Excellence, Agility, Loyalty) within Politeknik Caltex Riau.

The secondary data sources for this study include institutional documents such as academic guidelines, internal forum records, value socialization materials, as well as digital communication content from the institution, including social media, the official website, and promotional brochures.

This research is conducted as a single-site study at Politeknik Caltex Riau and is scheduled to take place from February to May 2025. The study is exploratory-descriptive in nature, focusing on the strategic processes of value communication rather than evaluating the outcomes of its implementation.

The data collection techniques consist of (1) Semi-structured interviews with key informants, including university leaders, faculty members, administrative staff, and students; (2) Participant observation in various internal campus forums; and (3) Document analysis of institutional communication media and artifacts.

The data is analyzed using a thematic analysis technique, involving processes of data reduction, categorization, thematic interpretation, and the development of an analytical narrative. The analytical framework is based on an internal strategic communication model comprising three key elements: the design of value-driven messages, the media or communication channels utilized, and the context of interactions among actors within the organization.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings obtained through a descriptive case study approach regarding Politeknik Caltex Riau's (PCR) efforts to internalize the IDEAL values as the foundation of its organizational culture. These findings are the result of processing data from semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and the analysis of official institutional documents.

The discussion focuses on the internal communication strategies employed by PCR to socialize, instill, and integrate the IDEAL values into institutional practices and the daily activities of the academic community. The explanation is structured thematically to illustrate the process

of value internalization from various perspectives, ranging from strategic planning to the emotional engagement of campus members.

All findings are discussed within the theoretical framework of organizational communication and institutional culture, drawing upon the latest academic literature as the basis for analysis. The following sub-sections provide a structured explanation of how the process of internalizing the IDEAL values is designed and implemented by the institution.

Designing Value-Driven Communication: The Institutionalization Strategy of IDEAL

The initial step in internalizing the IDEAL values began with a conceptualization process at the managerial level. The establishment of these values did not emerge as a mere top-down directive but was formulated as part of the broader restructuring of the institution's identity. This highlights the critical role of organizational communication strategies: how management not only delivers information but orchestrates meaning and engagement.

PCR adopted an initial approach based on dialogue-driven forums, where the leadership conveyed the philosophical foundation of the IDEAL values while providing space for open discussions with all members of the academic community. These forums demonstrate that value internalization is not merely a top-down dissemination process but involves horizontal participation, allowing the values to be contextualized and interpreted collectively by all campus stakeholders.



Figure 1. Board of Trustees Meeting Discussion Forum of Politeknik Chevron Riau
Source: Public Relations Documentation, 2023

This analysis reflects the practice of two-way symmetrical communication, as emphasized by Tkalc Verčič et al. (2024), who state that both emotional and rational engagement of participants is a key success factor in building a value-based culture that is collectively embraced.

Internal Communication as Culture-Making: Medium, Content, and Repetition

Following the forum as an initial awareness platform, PCR proceeded to the systematic embedding of values. This is reflected in the incorporation of the IDEAL values into key institutional documents, such as the Academic Handbook, followed by the integration of these values into the structure of official campus communications.

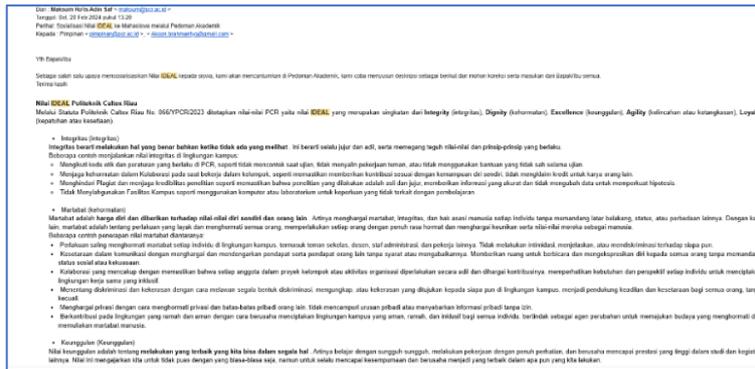


Figure 2. Socialization of IDEAL Values through the Academic Handbook
 Source: Researcher's Documentation

This action underscores the significance of symbolic media in shaping organizational culture. As highlighted by Tadesse Bogale & Debela (2024) and reinforced by Zaumane (2021), organizational culture is constructed not merely through words but through a system of symbols, routines, and repeated practices.

In this context, PCR consistently positions the IDEAL values as a living narrative, not only written but actively voiced across both formal and informal campus activities. This is evident in every leadership meeting, faculty briefing, and student orientation session, where messages reflecting the IDEAL values are continuously embedded. Furthermore, the institution has consistently integrated these values into its promotional materials, both through conventional channels and digital platforms.



Figure 3. (a) PCR Promotional Brochure, PCR Promotional Calendar
 Source: Researcher's Documentation

This strategy reflects an understanding that the internalization of values requires meaningful repetition within relevant contexts. The IDEAL values are not presented as rigid doctrines but as a shared language, cultivated through habits that are continuously practiced.

Digital Media as a Tool for Value Cultivation

PCR utilizes various digital platforms to expand the reach of IDEAL value dissemination. The institution’s official social media channels, such as Instagram and YouTube, feature creative content that is not only informative but also inspirational. Research findings reveal that IDEAL-related messages are embedded within infographics, campus activity videos, and visual designs that directly connect with the student experience, especially since 2024.

This approach demonstrates PCR’s awareness of the characteristics of the digital-native generation. Consistent with the findings of Milas & Milas (2021), conveying values through digital channels allows institutions to engage target audiences in a way that is more relevant, emotional, and accessible. Digital media thus serves as both a bridge for communication among institutional actors and a tool to strengthen the campus’s visual and symbolic identity.



Figure 4. Embedding of IDEAL Values on the Website *pcr.ac.id*
Source: *pcr.ac.id* Website



Figure 5. Embedding of IDEAL Values through Social Media @politeknikcaltexriau
Source: Social Media @politeknikcaltexriau

Moreover, the use of digital channels demonstrates that PCR does not merely convey the IDEAL values as abstract concepts but actively constructs value-based experiences that can be seen, shared, and connected to daily campus life.

Emotional Engagement: Fostering Collective Ownership of Values

One of the key strengths of PCR's value internalization strategy lies in building emotional connections between the values and individuals within the organization. Across various activities, members of the academic community are encouraged not only to understand but also to embody the IDEAL values through personal reflection and collective experiences.

Classroom discussions, reflective moments in faculty training, and even speeches during formal events are all utilized as opportunities to reflect on the IDEAL values. These values are not imposed but emerge organically from real-life narratives — such as practicing honesty in group work, promoting inclusivity in student organizations, or maintaining academic consistency.

This form of engagement aligns with the concept of internal branding as developed by Wuersch et al. (2024), which emphasizes that institutional values must be translated into emotions and meanings that resonate with individual experiences. When members of the academic community perceive IDEAL values as part of their identity, internalization is no longer a mandatory task, but a conscious and proud choice.

Challenges and Lessons Learned: The Dynamics of Building a Value-Based Culture

Although the process of internalizing the IDEAL values at PCR shows a strategic direction, several challenges persist. Differences in perception, limited participation from non-academic units, and administrative burdens often become obstacles to balancing value communication with daily operations.

However, these challenges have provided valuable lessons: internalizing values is a long-term process that cannot be simplified into a single activity. It requires an adaptive, continuous, and cross-functional approach, where all organizational members have opportunities to contribute to the evolving value narrative.

Saharudin et al. (2024) state that organizations with well-managed internal communication are more capable of navigating cultural change in a stable manner. In PCR's context, the value communication strategy reflects the institution's readiness to position culture as a space for growth, rather than merely as top-down instructions.

What PCR has implemented in the internalization of IDEAL values is not merely administrative transformation, but an engineered cultural shift, driven by strategic communication and supported by information technology. This article demonstrates that when values are approached with strategic awareness and conveyed through appropriate channels, they are not only socialized — they are lived.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the process of internalizing the IDEAL values (Integrity, Dignity, Excellence, Agility, Loyalty) at Politeknik Caltex Riau is a strategic effort that involves consciously designed, structured, and participatory internal communication. These values are not merely disseminated through forums and official documents but are reinforced through integration within the institution's digital media platforms, ensuring broad and continuous outreach to the entire academic community. The communication approach adopted is dialogical and fosters emotional engagement, making IDEAL values not only an institutional mandate but also a shared identity. This process highlights that effective internal communication can cultivate a value-based organizational culture by actively involving all organizational members.

Theoretically, these findings enrich the discourse on organizational communication within the context of higher education, particularly regarding value communication practices. Practically, the strategy implemented by PCR can serve as a model for similar institutions in designing contextual and relevant value internalization processes aligned with evolving technological and generational trends.

Suggestions and recommendations for future research include the need for studies that quantitatively measure the effectiveness of value internalization in driving organizational behaviour change, including the impact of IDEAL values on communication climate, work ethic, and academic community loyalty. Further research could also explore the lived experiences of students and administrative staff through ethnographic or narrative approaches to gain deeper insights into how these values are interpreted and embodied in everyday practices.

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