



The Role of Public Relations In Disseminating Information In The City of Cirebon (Case Study: Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus System)

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the role of public relations in disseminating information about public transportation, using the Trans Cirebon Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as a case study. The background of this study is based on the still-limited dissemination of information regarding BRT routes, schedules, and services, which has resulted in low public interest in using public transportation. This study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and a literature review, with informants selected using purposive sampling. The theoretical framework consists of Dozier and Broom's Theory of the Role of Public Relations and Cutlip and Center's Communication Planning Strategy. The results indicate that public relations plays a crucial role in disseminating information through four primary functions: as an expert prescriber, a communication facilitator, a problem-solving process facilitator, and a communication technician. However, the implementation of these roles has not been optimal, particularly regarding the equitable distribution of information to the public. In addition, obstacles were identified, including limited route coverage, limited access to bus stops, and a lack of effective communication strategies. The limited dissemination of information is one of the factors contributing to low public interest, which has led to the suspension of Trans Cirebon BRT operations. Therefore, a more integrated and effective communication strategy is needed to raise awareness and encourage the use of public transportation among the public.

Keywords: Public Transportation, Role, Public Relations, Dissemination of Information, Community.

Introduction

Transportation is one of the key aspects of modern life. Transportation users need accurate information to travel effectively and efficiently. However, information about transportation is often inaccurate or even unavailable, causing difficulties for transportation users (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

In the city of Cirebon, public transportation plays a significant role in the community's mobility, with various modes of transportation available, such as angkot, BRT (Bus Rapid Transit), online motorcycle taxis, and private vehicles (Atmaja, 2023). However, the public still lacks access to information about public transportation in Cirebon, which hinders accessibility and the efficient use of public transportation. Unclear angkot and BRT routes, as well as a lack of information on schedules and fares, make it difficult for the public to plan their trips (Putra, 2023). In contrast, online ride-hailing services provide more transparent and easily accessible information, thereby enhancing user convenience and

satisfaction. Therefore, efforts are needed to improve the availability of information about public transportation in Cirebon, so as to enhance the community's mobility.

In addition to issues with access to information in Cirebon City, public transportation in Indonesia still faces many challenges. Studies show that not only the quality of service provided, but also the ease of obtaining information, public perception of the service, and the effectiveness of communication by service providers and the government influence the public's decision to use public transportation. Conversely, advances in information technology indicate that digital information is becoming increasingly accessible to the Indonesian public. Digital media holds great potential as a government public communication tool to improve understanding of transportation services, given that data from the Central Statistics Agency shows that by 2024, 72.78% of Indonesia's population will have internet access. This situation underscores that the operation of public transportation depends on effective operational and communication strategies capable of reaching a broad audience.

Public Relations (PR) plays a vital role in disseminating information to transportation users, but there is still much that is unknown about how PR can disseminate information to transportation users ([Fadhilah et al., 2025](#)). Improving service effectiveness requires good governance, adequate information, and public participation. Information remains one of the obstacles affecting public interest in transportation, because without clear and accurate information, the public cannot make informed choices.

This study seeks to answer several important questions regarding this issue. These include the role of the media in disseminating information about the Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), the communication strategies used to improve public understanding and awareness of this public transportation service, and the various obstacles encountered in the process of providing information to the public.

This study aims to understand the role of public relations in disseminating information to public transportation users, as well as to identify effective strategies for raising public awareness of transportation information. The urgency of this study lies in the importance of public awareness regarding public transportation and the fact that this information has not yet been widely disseminated to the public.

This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of public communication. Theoretically, it extends the application of Dozier and Broom's Public Relations Role Theory and Cutlip and Center's Communication Planning Strategy within the context of public transportation communication managed by local government institutions. Practically, the findings are expected to provide recommendations for the Cirebon City Transportation Agency and government Public Relations practitioners in developing more effective communication strategies to improve public awareness, information dissemination, and the utilization of public transportation services.

The theory used in this study is The Role of Public Relations by Dozier & Broom (1995) As a fundamental foundation. According to this theory, public relations has evolved beyond the role of a technical communications specialist to become more complex and strategic. Public relations now serves as a problem-solver, a communications process expert,

and a communications facilitator. These four variables serve as a measure of the extent to which the role of public relations can be implemented in practice.

This study also employs a communication planning strategy that is divided into four variables by Cutlip & Center (1952), namely Fact-Finding, Planning, Communication, and Evaluation, which serve as the analytical foundation for identifying effective strategies to ensure that information is disseminated and well-received by the public.

Methodology

The method used was a qualitative case study. It utilized primary data obtained through in-depth interviews with Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) staff, Trans Cirebon BRT users, and public relations practitioners. In addition, the researcher conducted direct field observations to assess the service quality and interactions between BRT drivers and customers.

A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the extent to which information about the Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus System has been received by the public. According to Creswell (2016), Qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning of individual and group experiences of social phenomena. Descriptive research, on the other hand, is used to provide a systematic and factual description of an object or ongoing event (Sugiyono, 2019). Through this approach, researchers seek to describe how the role and strategies of public relations can be developed to disseminate information to the public.

The research was conducted at the Cirebon City Transportation Agency office, as it is one of the most reliable sources capable of providing detailed information about the Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus System. The Cirebon City Transportation Agency was selected as the primary institution because it has the authority to manage and oversee the Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus System. This research was conducted from September through November 2025, covering the stages of preparation, data collection, analysis, and reporting of the research results. The research focused on four aspects: the role of public relations, public relations strategies, and the obstacles and challenges faced in disseminating information about public transportation.

The types of data selected were primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through direct interviews with practitioners (Public Relations staff at the Department of Transportation, customers, and drivers of the Trans Cirebon integrated bus system). Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from mass media reports, social media platforms, and relevant previous research. The data collection techniques used included in-depth interviews, field observations, and a literature review. According to Moleong (2018), These three techniques are essential for obtaining comprehensive and in-depth data on the phenomenon under study.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique for selecting informants based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2019). The informants in this study consisted of public relations practitioners from the Cirebon City Transportation Agency, passengers of the Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus System, and several members of the public who use public transportation. This approach was used to ensure that the data collected was truly relevant to the research problem and could provide

a realistic picture of the information circulating about the Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus System.

Before the interviews began, each informant was given an explanation of the research objectives, benefits, and participation procedures. Before beginning the data collection process, the researcher obtained voluntary consent from each informant. All data collected were used solely for academic purposes, and the informants' identities were kept confidential by not disclosing any personal information that could identify them. This study was conducted in accordance with social research ethics, which includes respecting participants' rights to participate in the research process and allowing them to do so.

Data analysis was conducted interactively by following the analytical model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing verification conclusions. Data reduction is carried out by selecting and filtering data relevant to the research focus. Next, the reduced data is presented in narrative form to help the researcher understand the emerging patterns of relationships. The final stage involves drawing conclusions, a process carried out repeatedly to ensure the accuracy of the data obtained (Fadli, 2021). To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed a triangulation technique, which involves comparing and cross-checking data obtained from various sources, methods, and time periods (Moleong, 2018)

Result and Discussion

This study aims to analyze the importance of the role of public relations in disseminating information about public transportation, the findings of this study are consistent with the research by Anggraini and Setyanto (2019), which states that public relations plays a strategic role in building relationships between organizations and the public through the effective dissemination of information. Similarly, Firdaus (2025) explains that the communication strategies implemented by the Department of Transportation contribute to improving public understanding of public transportation services. However, this study presents different findings, as it shows that in the context of the Trans Cirebon BRT, the effectiveness of Public Relations is influenced not only by communication strategies but also by limitations in service infrastructure, such as route coverage and the number of available stops. Using the Trans Cirebon BRT as a case study, based on the theoretical framework of the role of public relations by Dozier & Broom (1995) and Communication Planning Strategies by Cutlip & Center (1952) which have been implemented and have proven that the role of public relations in disseminating information is crucial for attracting public interest and ensuring the sustainability of an agency or company ([Anggraini & Setyanto, 2019](#); [Maureen & Astuti, 2022](#)).

The Role of Public Relations in Disseminating Information on Public Transportation

Public Relations plays a vital role in disseminating information for an agency or company ([Maria, 2019](#)). Public Relations plays a role in building and maintaining good relationships between an organization and the public, as well as fostering awareness and understanding of the organization and its products ([Hidayat, 2016](#)). Public Relations plays a crucial role in disseminating information about public transportation, such as the Trans

Cirebon Integrated Bus System (Firdaus, 2025). Public Relations is responsible for building and maintaining good relations with the public and raising awareness and understanding of transportation services (Tolapa, 2018).

The Role of Public Relations:

1. Expert Prescriber

The Public Relations Department of BRT Trans Cirebon is educating the public to raise awareness about the use of public transportation (Putri, 2022).

2. Communication facilitator

The Public Relations Department of BRT Trans Cirebon is always identifying the needs of the community and improving the facilities on its buses to ensure passenger comfort.



Figure 1. Information about the Trans Cirebon BRT (Source: BRT Cirebon Instagram)

3. Problem-Solving Process Facilitator

The Public Relations department is working to resolve issues raised by users of the BRT Trans Cirebon service, one of which is the availability of information; as a result, it consistently posts all types of information about BRT Trans Cirebon on the BRT Trans Cirebon social media platforms.

4. Communication Technician

The BRT Trans Cirebon public relations department is disseminating technical information regarding several matters related to the operations of BRT Trans Cirebon.

Catur Wulan Anggraeni, Head of the Transportation and Multimodal Division at the Cirebon City Department of Transportation, stated in an interview with a researcher on January 27, 2026, that

“The Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system has been in operation for five years, but information about the Trans Cirebon BRT has not yet been widely disseminated to the public”

Information about the Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) was also obtained from one of the Trans Cirebon BRT passengers. This is consistent with the theory of Communication Planning Strategy by Cutlip & Center (1952) used by the researcher. In an interview conducted by the researcher on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, Informant 2, Bintang, who is from the Argasunya area, stated that,

“It is true that the Trans Cirebon BRT allows residents of Argasunya to get off at several stops in the Argasunya area, since it is considered remote. Therefore, they are not required to get off at the bus stop”.

This statement is strongly supported by remarks made by Catur Wulan Anggraeni, Head of the Transportation and Multimodal Division at the Cirebon City Transportation Agency, in an interview conducted by the researcher on January 27, 2026, in which she stated the following:

““Yes, that's right. For residents in remote areas like Argasunya, there are indeed such exemptions. However, this does not apply to urban areas because it might cause some problems for other transportation users, such as traffic jams,” he said.

The results of the researcher's interviews with several informants and the information gathered about the Trans Cirebon BRT from various articles demonstrate that the dissemination of information by public relations to the public is highly beneficial and crucial for the continued operation of public transportation. This is because, with the even distribution of information, the public can choose the most appropriate mode of transportation for their daily mobility.

Identifying Obstacles and Challenges in Disseminating Transportation Information

Based on the results of the study conducted by the researchers, the challenges identified include a limited number of bus stops, which are located only at certain points, and the limited coverage of bus routes—which focus only on urban areas—prevent residents in other regions from using buses as a daily mode of transportation, thereby hindering public accessibility and mobility. This is supported by a statement from Informant 2, Bintang, a user of the Trans Cirebon BRT service, during an interview conducted on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, in which he stated the following:

““Every time I go to campus, the walk from the bus stop to campus is pretty far and tiring, so I just take the bus unless someone gives me a ride to campus,” he said.

One challenge the researchers encountered in their study was the dissemination of information; based on the results of their research, information about the Trans Cirebon BRT has not yet been widely disseminated to the entire community in Cirebon City.

Discussion

This study aims to analyze the importance of the role of public relations in disseminating public transportation information, using the Trans Cirebon BRT as a case study, based on the theoretical framework of the role of public relations by Dozier & Broom (1995) and Communication Planning Strategies by Cutlip & Center (1952) which have been implemented and have proven that the role of public relations in disseminating information is crucial for attracting public interest and ensuring the sustainability of an institution or company. Based on the four variables in the theory used by the researcher, the role of PR, according to Dozier & Broom (1995): (Expert Prescriber), the Public Relations team at BRT Trans Cirebon educates the public to raise awareness about the use of public transportation. (Communication Facilitator), the Public Relations team at BRT Trans Cirebon consistently

identifies the public's needs and improves bus facilities to ensure passenger comfort. (Problem-Solving Process Facilitator): The Public Relations team works to resolve issues related to complaints from BRT Trans Cirebon service users, including ensuring the availability of information; they consistently share all relevant information about BRT Trans Cirebon on the company's social media platforms. (Communication Technician), the Public Relations team at BRT Trans Cirebon disseminates technical information regarding various matters related to the operations of BRT Trans Cirebon.

In some communities that are not yet aware of the Trans Cirebon Integrated Bus System, this theory serves as the primary foundation for the role of public relations in disseminating information to the public. In addition to the role of public relations, the Theory of Strategic Communication Planning by Cutlip & Center (1952) It also serves as one of the main foundations of this study. A communication planning strategy is a systematic process used to achieve an organization's communication objectives. According to Cutlip and Center, public relations strategies are divided into four variables, namely: (Fact Finding), the process of seeking and gathering relevant facts, data, and information about the Trans Cirebon BRT, such as operational departure schedules, routes traveled by the Trans Cirebon BRT, stops, service fares, and facilities used by the Trans Cirebon BRT service. (Planning): Conducting observations and direct interviews with relevant parties, such as passengers and officials from the Cirebon City Transportation Agency. (Communication): Identifying effective strategies for disseminating information about public transportation, specifically the BRT Trans Cirebon. (Evaluation): Evaluating the research results and providing recommendations for further research so that the problems faced can be resolved.

Cirebon has had several BRT buses since 2021; however, the public has not shown much Although Cirebon has had a number of BRT buses since 2021, the public's enthusiasm in utilizing public transit, including the Trans Cirebon BRT, has remained comparatively low. Numerous interrelated elements impact this disease. The restricted distribution of information on BRT routes, timetables, charges, and service facilities, which impacts public knowledge and comprehension of the service, is one of these problems, according to the study's results. But the results also show that there are other factors influencing the use of the Trans Cirebon BRT besides communication. Limited operational funding, limited route coverage, a lack of bus stops, and the public's ongoing preference for private vehicles all contributed to the decline in BRT usage and ultimately impacted the service's sustainability, according to informant interviews and data from the Cirebon City Transportation Agency. Therefore, in order to promote increased public use of public transportation, changes in service quality, operational support, and transportation infrastructure should go hand in hand with advances in public communication.

Conclusion

Based on the results of a study on the role of public relations in disseminating information about public transportation on the Trans Cirebon BRT, it can be concluded that public relations plays a very important role in raising public awareness and understanding of public transportation services. This role is reflected in four main functions: expert

prescriber, communication facilitator, problem-solving process facilitator, and communication technician, all of which contribute to the process of conveying information to the public.

However, the implementation of the Public Relations role in the case of the Trans Cirebon BRT has not yet been optimal. This is evident from the still-limited dissemination of information, which has resulted in some members of the public not having a clear understanding of the BRT's routes, schedules, fares, and service facilities. This lack of information has led to low public interest in using public transportation.

In addition, communication planning strategies, which include fact-finding, planning, communication, and evaluation—have not yet been fully implemented. The lack of evaluation and the uneven dissemination of information are the main obstacles to effective communication with the public.

This study also identified other challenges, such as limited route coverage and the number of stops, which also affect user accessibility. This further reinforces the finding that inadequate information is one of the factors hindering the optimal use of the Trans Cirebon BRT.

Therefore, Public Relations needs to implement a more structured and extensive communication strategy, particularly through the use of digital media and direct outreach to the public. These efforts are crucial for raising public awareness, interest, and trust in the use of public transportation, thereby supporting the sustainability and development of transportation services in the City of Cirebon. Based on the study's findings, Dinas Perhubungan Kota Cirebon is encouraged to develop a public communication strategy that is more integrated via the use of digital, social, and mainstream media as well as socialization activities that are accessible to the general public. Information on route, jadwal, tarif, facilities, and the benefits of using public transportation must be disseminated consistently, easily understood, and to various groups of people. In addition, assessment of the effectiveness of communication should be conducted by using community feedback as a basis for improving communication strategies. For public relations practitioners, this study recommends two-way communication that is more participatory, collaboration with local communities, educational institutions, and media, as well as the implementation of a communication program based on community needs so that information sharing can proceed more smoothly and increase public trust and awareness regarding public transportation.

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