INTERNAL COMMUNICATION TOWARDS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT INSIDE SULTAN AGUNG ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY (UNISSULA)

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ABSTRAK

Karyawan merupakan bagian yang sangat penting bagi perusahaan untuk bertahan karena mereka memiliki hubungan fungsional dengan perusahaan. Karyawan memiliki fungsi karena mereka menyediakan tenaga kerja dan sumber daya untuk menciptakan produk atau jasa. Dengan adanya masalah pada karyawan, akan menyebabkan penurunan kinerja perusahaan, dan pada akhirnya akan berpengaruh terhadap image perusahaan. Universitas Islam Sultan Agung sebagai penyelenggara pendidikan tinggi sangat memperhatikan karyawan sebagai sumber daya insani yang sangat penting untuk mencapai visi dan misi universitas, namun seiring pertumbuhan universitas maka permasalahan keterlibatan karyawan dalam komunikasi internal menjadi persoalan yang perlu dianalisis. Berangkat dari pemikiran pentingnya keterlibatan karyawan, maka penelitian ini dilakukan pada bulan Desember 2009 di Universitas Islam Sultan Agung (UNISSULA) Semarang. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan tujuan untuk memberikan rekomendasi terhadap pemecahan masalah dalam keterlibatan karyawan di dalam komunikasi internal, dan memberikan pemahaman tentang kriteria keterlibatan karyawan yang efektif dalam komunikasi internal, agar dapat membantu memberikan solusi terhadap masalah keterlibatan karyawan di Universitas Islam Sultan Agung.

Key words : komunikasi internal, keterlibatan karyawan, image.

A.   INTRODUCTION

Employees are essential for the company to survive since they have functional linkages with the company. Functional linkages are those that are essential to the function of the organization. Employees have input functions, since they provide labor and resources to create products or services (Grunig and Hunt 1984). By having employee problems, it will lead to the derivation of university performance. This condition, in the end will thread university image and jeopardize it's existence.

In prioritizing stakeholder, the definitive stakeholder is the one who should get the highest priority who by definition will need to be communicated with (Cornellisen 2008). In his book, Cornellisen stated that definitive stakeholder both powerful and legitimate. Employees become definitive stakeholder since they have legal, moral or presumed claim that can influence the company's behavior. In this research, the decline of university performance.

For years, managers have focused on "customer care" More recently, they have begun to dedicate the same kind of attention to their own employees, recognizing that employees have more to do with the success of business than virtually any other constituency (Argenti 2009).

For that reasons, internal communication is becoming increasingly important for organization. By internal communication, it means, communication aimed at the groups of the public in the internal environment of the organization, in this research is the employee (Vos and Schoemaker 2005).

Universitas Islam Sultan Agung (Unissula) is an organization that works in education for higher degree, health, social and other charity fields. It is a private university. At this time, Unissula consists of 11 faculties and 27 study programs. They are spread from diploma program, undergraduate program and post graduate program. During it's development Unissula builds several partnerships with other international organizations such as Mesir embassy, Western Mindanao State University, UTM Malaysia, Korean University, Japan University, etc.

However, there is a problem within their internal public. From an initial interview with the informant, it emerges that they have a problem with their employee engagement. It is indicated from the delayed of the university program, a deficiency in annual meeting participation, a decreasing number in meeting attendance, reluctance on some university program. Some dean and lecturer do not come to teach, they like to come late, and they also break some university rules that they have to obey. These internal problems cause the university productivity to decline, but have never been explicitly discussed since the issue is very sensitive. Preliminary research shows that something must be done to solve this employee engagement problem.

B.   WHY THIS BECOME A PROBLEM ?

Furthermore, employees are essential for the company to survive since they have functional linkages with the company. Functional linkages are those that are essential to the function of the organization. Employees have input functions, since they provide labor and resources to create products or services (Grunig and Hunt 1984). By having employee problems, it will lead to the derivation of university performance. This condition, in the end will thread university image and jeopardize it's existence.

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As revealed in the interview with Unissula management, some programs only stop at conceptual level. There is no practical impact. There is also a failure in their program such as non smoking environment. Many employees violate smoking prohibition. From the interview, it also revealed that there is a deficiency in internal meeting. According to the interview, the troubled group of employees is the dean, head of study program and lecturer. Furthermore, 5 interviewee stated clearly that they have problems with their internal environment.

The Writer chooses internal communication perspective in seeing this problem since internal communication is vital if an organization is to function properly: cooperation assumes the exchange of information; motivation is an important factor to

achieve quality and can be improved by communication; process of change cannot do without communicative support (Vos and Schoenmaker 2005)

C.   RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To make recommendations towards solving the employee engagement problem by taking into account the views held within the organization about the background to the problems with the employee engagement and providing understanding about effective employee engagement criteria and internal communication in order to suggest solutions to these problems.

D.   EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Engagement means creating an energized "world series" environment for the organization, so that people won't want to miss any part of the game because the game is part of them (Haudan 2008). In this sense, it means that employee won't want to miss the organization activity in order to achieve organization goal. Keenan (2007) also explains that employee engagement is personified by the passion and energy has to give of their best to the organization. It is about the willingness and ability of employees to give sustained discretionary effort to help their organization succeed.

Therefore, with engagement, employees become loyal, highly productive and excited about their work. The opposite happens when employees are not engaged and not interested in their work and job. People who are disengaged are more likely to miss work, be careless, make mistakes and cause accidents because they are not involved and attentive in their work (Kerfoot 2007). When employees engage with their organization, they captivated. They have something in common that brought them together.

Fulfilling people's need is one way to motivate them. In his book, Colan (2009) said, when employee' needs are fulfilled, employees engaged and perform at their peak ability. When employee's needs are met, they will be motivated to help those who meet their needs. When their need are not met, they become frustrated, out of control, unfocused and disconnected – in a word, disengaged. 1st interviewee said, "There are a lot of things should be fix with internal public, especially in human resources improvement and empowerment in order to build sense of belonging to the university".

In conclusion, engagement is characterized by employees being committed to the organization, being motivated with their work and being involved with organization activity in order to deliver outstanding performance to the organization.

E.   INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication is communication, which is aimed at the groups of the public in the internal environment of organization. Internal communication dealt with how communication can support the process of production or the supply of services, how the involvement of the employees in the organization can be improved, and what role communication can play to help realize changes in the organization (Vos and Schoenmaker 2005). This report will focus in how internal communication can improve the involvement of the Unissula's employees.

Problems in internal communication cannot be seen separately from the internal organization itself. The quality of internal communication is related to the various dimensions of organizations (Vos and Schoenmaker 2005):

− Organizational structure

Internal communication can be hampered because responsibilities and powers are unclear.

− Organizational culture and leadership style

A corporate culture can be more or less open and offer more or less room for dialogue between staff and managers. As far as the leadership style is concerned, this may imply that listening to ideas of employees and keeping the staff informed about company objectives are important elements in improving internal communication.

− Communicative skills

In the organization, the communicative skills of the members of staff may be improved. Knowledge of procedures for meeting, how to make presentations and write reports is a precondition for successful communication within an organization.

− Information systems

Information systems in the organization also contribute to internal communication. Points of attention are accessibility, user friendliness and topicality.

− Organization strategy

The organization strategy may be translated for employees in an easily accessible form. The management has to be willing to communicate about this and should have a clear, carefully considered message to convey.

F. **HOW INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CAN SOLVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PROBLEM**

As it stated above, that internal communication can promote the involvement of employee in the organization that will result on engagement. To get people to adopt the desired working behavior, organization tries to respond to individual needs. This condition meets with engagement criteria, which are stated in Colon's book (2009). When employees' needs are fulfilled, they will engage and perform at their peak ability.

Employee satisfaction can be the first step to identify their needs. Employee satisfaction can be considered to be the result of motives important to the person, his behavior and the yield of such behavior. The extent of dis(satisfaction) can also be seen as the cause of certain behavior (Vos and Schoenmaker 2005), in this case, for example, deficiency in internal meeting, violation on smoking prohibition, absence or miss their work. Those conditions illustrated employee dis(satisfaction). In this sense, the outcome of employee satisfaction is the indicator for the willingness of employee to dedicate themselves to the organization (engage). "Because, if your staff was not engage, no matters how good the program is, they will reluctant to support it. Especially for those who disappointed with this university" said 1st interviewee.

Employee satisfaction is connected to individual characteristics such as personal interest, such as heaviness, diversity and challenges of the work, as well as organizational characteristics such as work conditions, labor conditions and policy. Employee

satisfaction is the personal experience of people in the same way as it is individually determined what motivates people (Vos and Schoenmaker 2005).

To that extent, internal communication can promote individual acceptance of activities and work conditions in order to improve employee involvement to the organization. This is done by using line communication and parallel communication.

Collective ambition

Organization is continuously seeking ways of motivating their employee. Making collective ambition visible is one way to do so. Some organizations translate the mission into core values valid for all employees. To keep awareness alive, an annual linking theme may be emphasized. This theme can be used as a source of motivation in the discussion of progress and in numerous means of communication: internal meeting, annual report, suggestion box, a series interviews in the internal magazine and other means for parallel communication. 38% respondent agreed and 31% strongly agreed that effective internal communication is important to improve employee participation.

Parallel communication

Large groups of employees are reached simultaneously by using parallel communication and this can fulfill the following functions:
a. to increase familiarity with the organization
   basic knowledge about the organization helps employees to feel at home. This involves, among other   things, information about organizational policy.
b. to improve involvement with the organization and with processes of change
   that are taking place
   this will increase the interest in company news and can be a basis for pride
   in the company.
c. to strengthen the organizational culture
   certain aspects of organizational culture may be promoted, for example by stimulating employee to think actively about the quality policy.
d. to promote a correct internal image of the organization
   by informing employees about new activities one can assure that internal target groups have a more complete picture of the organization (internal branding).

Parallel communication is especially useful for policy information. Clarification of the organizational policy is a condition for understanding, loyalty and involvement of employees.

Line communication

Line communication is communication along the hierarchical lines in the organization. It forms as both top-down communication and bottom-up communication (Vos and Schoenmaker 2005).

G.   RESEARCH METODOLOGY
Research Material
People : Data and knowledge

Conduct written poll questionnaire to 50 respondents, which is the university employee. It is divided as:

- ➢ 11 questionnaires for the dean, since Unnisula consists of 11 faculties.
- ➢ 27 questionnaires for the head of study program, since Unnisula consists of 27 study programs
- ➢ 12 questionnaires for the lecturer

Conduct in-depth interviews with 3 respondents by email and telephone and in-depth interview with 2 informants by email and telephone.

Documents   : Data

This document is provided by the client to give understanding on the organization background such as the white papers, annual meeting document, and university portfolio. The writer accesses these document using content analysis and search method.

Literature   : Data

This is to discover the theory about employee engagement and internal communication strategy. The writer accesses this source using content analysis and search method.

Literatures that will be use in discover the theory:
- ➢ Managing change in organizations, Colin A.Carnall
- ➢ Integrated Communication (concern, internal and marketing communication: Marita Vos and Henny Schoemaker
- ➢ The essential guide to employee engagement: Sarah Cook.

Research Metodology

This research commenced with the desk research on the chosen topic: employee engagement and how to solve this problem using internal communication strategy. Desk research   is a continuous method that was occurring throughout the writing process.

Primary research began with in-depth interview with – one of Public relations staff and lecturer in Unissula. This initial attempt was to obtain information and knowledge about   background of the problem and the current condition relating with the problem. The writer   continued with 4 another interview with public relations manager, dean, curriculum coordinator and student coordinator about their opinion   and their perspective about university performance   recently in order to get general overview about the problem. The in-depth interview conducted via telephone call, email and chat room. The in-depth interview consists of 11 guide questions which   are developed based on respondent's answer.

After two in-depth interview sessions, the writer formulated a questionnaire which is spread   to 50 employees (with structural position; dean, the head of study program and other   structural position). The questionnaire was formulated based on the research question and previous in-depth interview. The questionnaire consists of 25 questions and is delivered through   Public Relations division. The other three in-depth interview conducted during the survey   (questionnaire) in other to gain deeper knowledge about the problem.

H.   RESEARCH FINDINGS
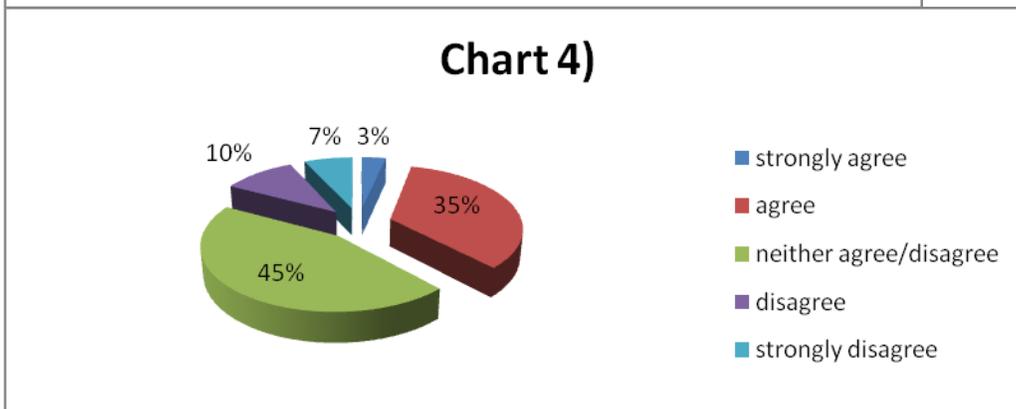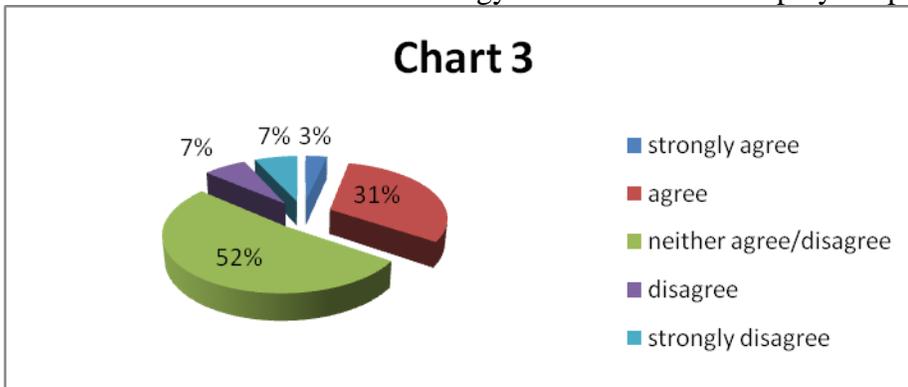**Employee's know on University's Goal**

Keep the employee informed and aware about organization goals is important to engage them with the organization itself. It makes them feel as part of the team. From the questionnaire, it is revealed not least than 75% respondents know about university vision and mission, since it i clearly stated (chart 1). However, 55% respondent stated that they are neither agree/disagree about university priority due to the lack of communication between university management and employees (chart 2). This fact also supported from the interview. 2nd interviewee of Literature faculty said that"there is no mutual understanding between university and employees, because there is no clear communication to communicate university's goal."
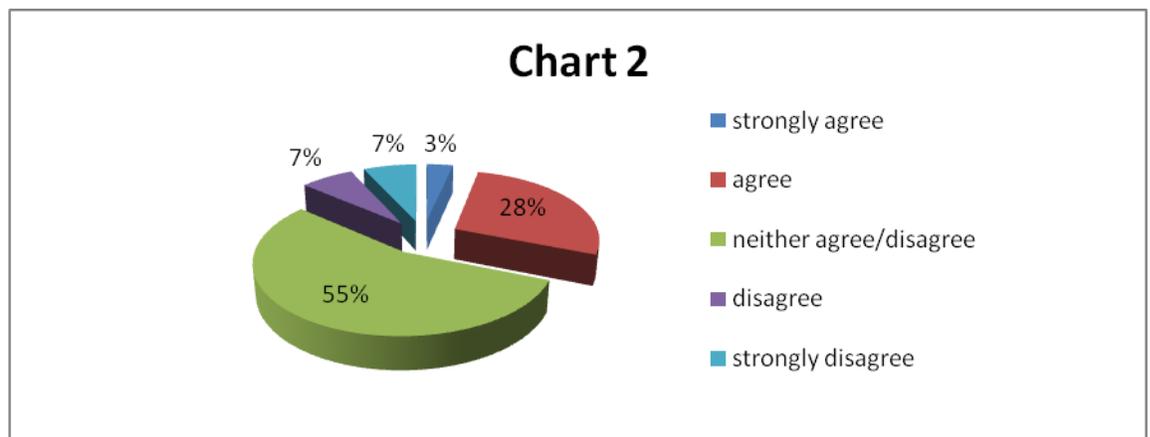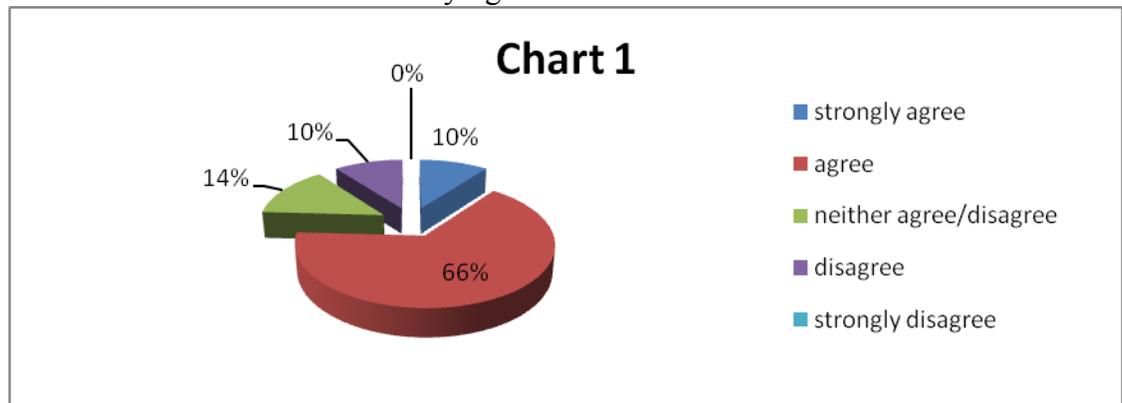
Furthermore, the lack of information about university goal created employee's dissatisfaction. This fact revealed from 4 interviewees. They mentioned that university concern is more to the external public than internal public. "University has done many things for external image building but not in the same way for internal image building." Said 3rd interviewee. In their evaluation, a lot of university programs only stop at a theoretical level, there is no practical implication on it. "Most of the internal public are apathy with the university program because of that reason" said 1st interviewee.
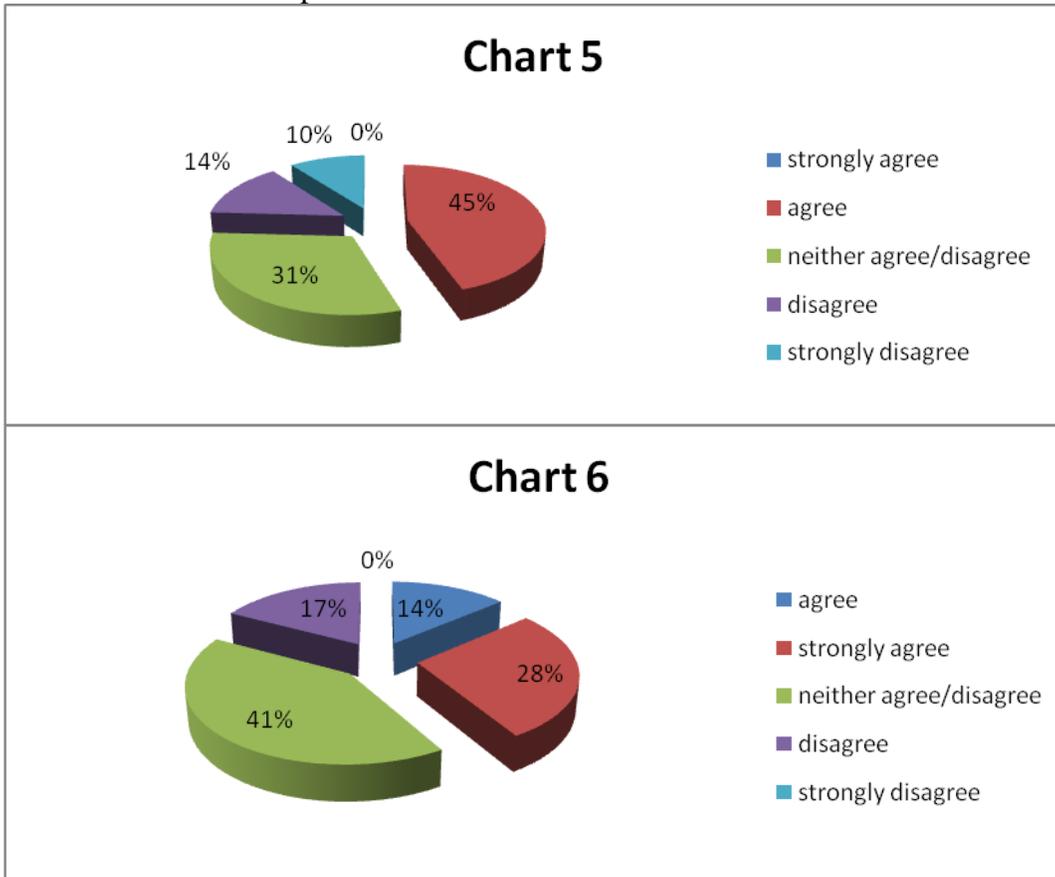
The current internal communication strategy

From the interview and desk research, it is found that university has conducted several internal communication strategies to socialize university's goal. However, it is found that 52% respondent neither agreed/disagreed about those programs effectiveness (chart 3). Clarifying this situation, one of the curriculum coordinator stated that some socialization programs are aimed only for the new lecturers. Related with this fact, 2 interviewees stated that there is a lack of engagement from the employee in university communication programs. 45% respondent also neither agree/disagree that university provided internal communication activity that allows them to know and build an interpersonal vertically and horizontally (chart 4). From 2 interviewees, it is revealed that the current communication strategy did not stimulate employee's participation.

Chart 3

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree/disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Chart 4)

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree/disagree
- disagree
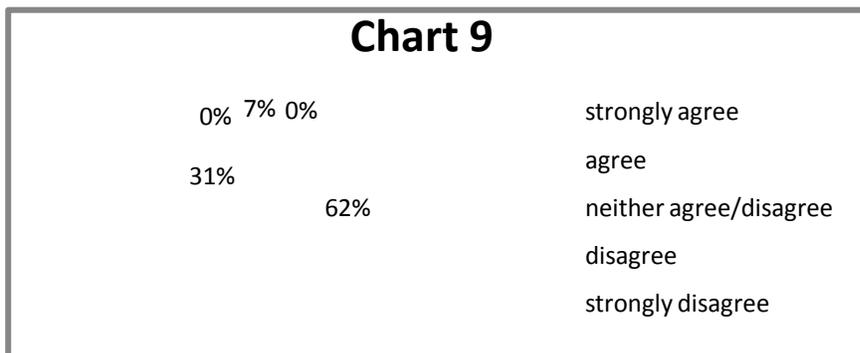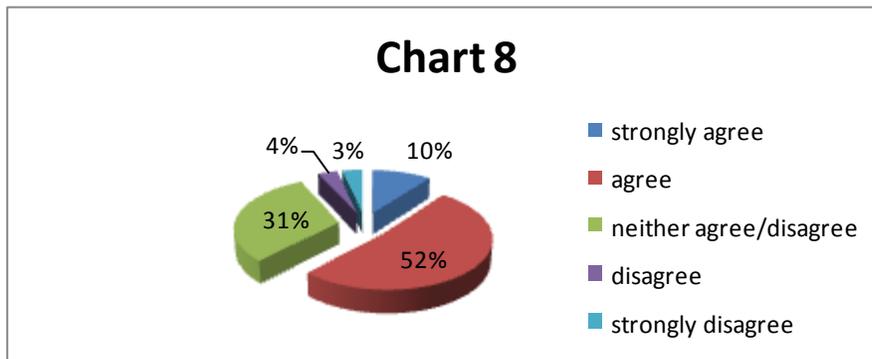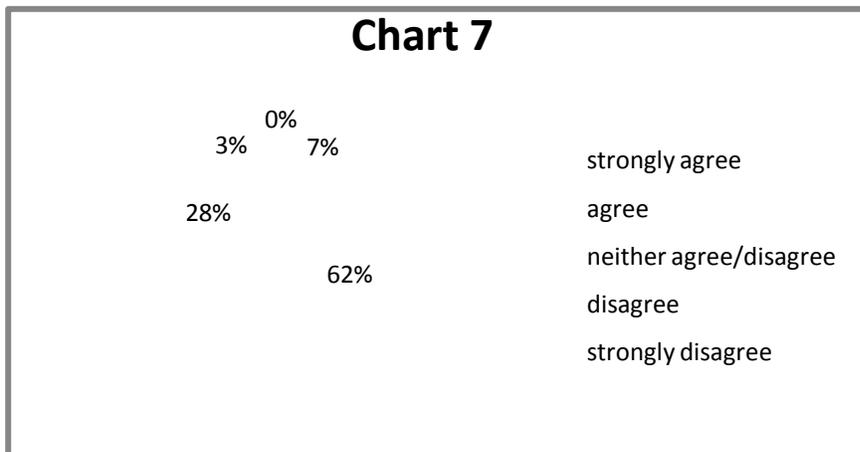- strongly disagree

Management-Employee relationship

In evaluating management communication style, 45% respondents agree that management always listens to the employee's ideas. However, 31% respondents neither agree/disagree and 14% disagree (Chart 5). It is also revealed from the survey that 41% respondent neither agree/disagree, 17% even disagree that they have the opportunity to communicate with management if they have work-related problems. However, 42% respondent stated that they have the opportunity to communicate their work-related problems (Chart 6). In describing this situation, from the interview, it is found that University management applied different treatment between one faculty to the other

faculty. Particular faculty got more attention from university management than the other faculty. Such as, gain more access in communicating with management. Furthermore, 55% respondents neither agree/disagree that university management always spare time to hear their work-related problems.
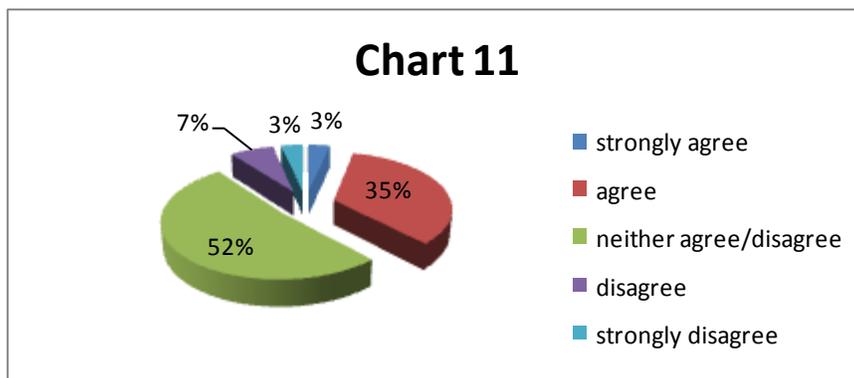

Chart 5

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree/disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

10% 0% 14% 45% 31%

Chart 6

- agree
- strongly agree
- neither agree/disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

0% 17% 14% 28% 41%

Employee motivation

Results from the questionnaire indicate that not less than 65% respondent stated that university has encouraged them to develop their full potential. However, 28% neither agree/disagree with that statement (Chart 7). 62% respondent stated that they are motivated with their work (Chart 8). 62% respondent also stated that university management is supportive in helping employees with their work (Chart 9). However, 31% respondent neither agreed/disagreed that they are motivated neither supported by university management (Chart 8 and 9).

Chart 7

- 0%
- 3%
- 7%
- 28%
- 62%

strongly agree

agree

neither agree/disagree

disagree

strongly disagree

Chart 8

- 4%
- 3%
- 10%
- 31%
- 52%

- ■ strongly agree
- ■ agree
- ■ neither agree/disagree
- ■ disagree
- ■ strongly disagree

Chart 9

- 0%
- 7%
- 0%
- 31%
- 62%

strongly agree

agree

neither agree/disagree

disagree

strongly disagree

Evaluation is one factor that contributes to motivation. From the interview, 5th interviewee said that evaluation towards employee's performance will motivate employees to perform their full potential. In contrast with that, 4 interviewees stated that there is a lack of evaluation from university management towards employee's performance. Relating with that, it is revealed from the questionnaire, 52% respondent neither agreed/disagreed and 17% disagreed that university has general standard in evaluating employee's performance (Chart 10). 52% respondent also neither agreed/disagreed that university management evaluates employee's performance.

Chart 10

17%   3% 0%   28%

52%

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree/disagree
- disagree

Chart 11

7%   3%   3%

35%

52%

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree/disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree
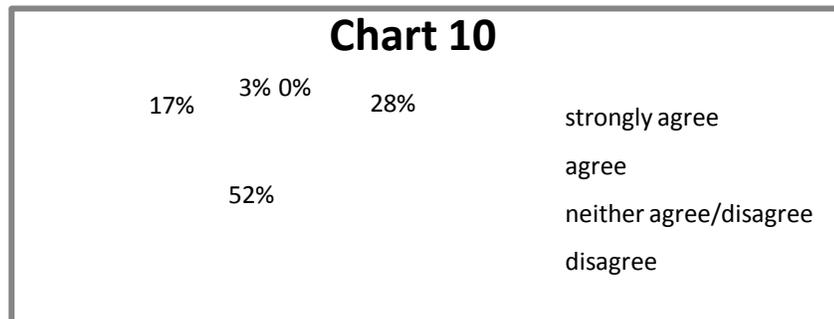
I.   CONCLUSION

These factors are the main reasons contributing to the employee's disengagement:

- ◦ There is no mutual understanding about university's goal between management and employee.
- ◦ The current internal communication strategy which is aimed to socialize university's goal was not effective.
- ◦ University applied different treatment in managing its faculties.
- ◦ University did not have general standard to evaluate employee's performance.

This research revealed that employees still have difficulty in understanding university's goal, although they have already motivated with their work. Although 75% respondents know what university's goal, they don't have mutual understanding with university management in how university can achieve its goal. It is happened because of the lack of communication between management and employees. This condition leads to employee disengagement. Due to the lack of information about university's goal, employees choose to achieve it in their own way.

Furthermore, employees know that university have already motivated them by creating various programs in order to develop their potential. However, employees didn't motivate to participate in those programs, since they didn't feel involve with those programs.

This research also found that the current internal communication strategy is not effective. From the research, it is found that the strategy was not aimed to all employees. The strategy also designed in more one-way style than interactive one. From the

interview, it is found that employees think interactive strategy will improve their participation.

There was different treatment from university management to faculties, which makes employees felt that management treated them differently not based on their performance. This condition creates different opinion about the management-employee relationship. A half respondent believed that they have the opportunity to communicate with university management. The other half believed that they don't have the opportunity to communicate with their management. This gap leads to employee dissatisfaction to the university management.

Moreover, it is found that employee did not perform at their peak ability, since there is no evaluation from university management. They expect the university have a regulation to evaluate employee's performance in order to motivate them.

Recommendation
Communication Objectives

The objective of this recommendation is to be able to create effective internal communication strategy in order to build mutual understanding between university management and employee.

Communicate your goal is important to make your employees aware with your priority. By having knowledge about university goal, it will build employee understanding that stimulates a sense of belonging to the university itself. Moreover, the power of an organization depends, among other things, on the degree to which employee feel involved in the mission and goals of the organization.

There are two channels that can be use to create Unnisula effective internal communication:

1. Using the parallel communication to keep employee's awareness and employee's understanding to university goals.

   Parallel communication can reach large number of employees simultaneously. For example, news release, periodic bulletin, etc. Keep the employee informed about university's activity will make your employee feel at home. They will feel involve with the university. Even though, university's goal already written clearly in your university manual, never assume that your employee had the mutual understanding with you about how the organization can achieve it. Therefore, continuous and periodic parallel communication is needed in order to create mutual understanding between management and its employee. This strategy will be aimed to all employees, both the new and the old employee. For the new employee, this strategy will improve their familiarity with the university. For the old employee, this strategy will strengthen their awareness in order to create collective ambition. By using the parallel that reach all employees, you will be able not only to strengthen organization culture but also promote the correct image. Furthermore, from employees' perspective, by having completed understanding about university's goal it will improve employee's sense of belonging to the university which in the end will increase their participation in university activity.

2. Improve line communication in order to create interpersonal and open communication between university management and its staff.

As it mentioned before, by line communication it means, communication along the hierarchical lines in an organization. For both top-down and bottom-up communication. Line communication is more personal than parallel communication, such as conversations between two people or group discussion in internal meeting. PR department can also be the bridge between employees and university management. They can distribute information from university's management to the employees and in the same time seeking employees' opinion in order to deliver it to university's management. By having line communication, university will provide more interpersonal communication in order to build employee's trust to management. Furthermore, knowing who you your employees are, will help you to understand your employee in order to create effective communication strategy for them. From the employee's perspective, knowing your management and have a chance to communicate with them, will increase 'we feeling' which stimulate loyalty.

By creating comprehensive parallel and line communication for all your employees will reduce the knowledge gap about university's goal between management and employee. Parallel communication cannot be seen as being separate from line communication. What your employee experience from its direct contact with management and colleagues has, in general, more influence than parallel communication; nevertheless, parallel communication can fulfill an important supporting role.

Instead of channel, how you communicate the message also other important factor that can improve the success of the internal communication program:

By creating an interactive communication program that required employee participation in order to give a sense of involvement to them.

Involve the employee more in the program itself will stimulate their sense of belonging. Being involved in the program will improve their participation. For example, create periodic internal evaluation to know what the employee thought about university's image, involve them in deciding programs about how the university can achieve its goal, ask employees' opinion about what kind of internal environment that can motivate them. Adapting from Athenian democracy in creating citizen engagement (Manville & Ober, 2003), the writer believed that those three recommendations are a way to improve employee engagement since it builds:

1. Practices of access

   The parallel communication ensured that every employee had the free and equal opportunity to participate in university activity. It involves giving them the same access in university management. Spare the same time to hear work-related problems for every faculty. For example, once per month meeting for each faculty. Sharing your knowledge will help employees to understand university's university's goal.

2. Practices of process

   Based on the research, university management tend to spend more time on distributing information to external public but less on seeking input and feedback from employees. The line communication ensured that deliberations, decision making and execution were carried out in ways that consistent, fair and timely. Gaining mutual understanding from the interpersonal way is more effective than the non personal way. In fact, by maintain a good relationship both top-bottom and bottom-up

communication will stimulate employee's loyalty. If the employee loyal to you than they will engage with the organization itself.

3. Practices of consequence
   Creating an interactive communication program ensured that employees did come to see the process as an end in itself, but rather maintained a focus on achieving practical and concrete results. Moreover, it is shown to the employee that their participation is important to the success of the program itself.

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