



Strategic Organizational Communication for Synergy: Post-Acquisition Integration of Parent and Subsidiary Companies

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the role of strategic organizational communication in fostering synergy between parent and subsidiary companies post-acquisition, using PT Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI) and PT Bank Hibank Indonesia (hibank) as a case study. As digital banking services for MSMEs expand, effective internal and external communication becomes crucial in mergers and acquisitions. While prior studies focus on structural integration, this research highlights the strategic role of communication by applying the ADKAR model for change management and Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) for branding strategies. Through a qualitative approach involving in-depth interviews and secondary data analysis, key communication challenges and strategies are identified. Findings indicate that both formal and informal communication are critical for integration, yet internal communication gaps create uncertainty among employees. The ADKAR model reveals the need for stronger awareness, desire, and reinforcement efforts to enhance adaptation. Externally, IMC strategies support brand identity, but inconsistencies in hibank's affiliation with BNI weaken public perception. Transparent and participatory internal communication improves employee engagement, while refined external communication ensures brand consistency. Future research should quantify communication effectiveness in M&A contexts to strengthen corporate synergy.

Keywords: Organizational Communication, Post-Acquisition Integration, Change Management, Integrated Marketing Communication



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INTRODUCTION

As the technology and digitalization has grown, it has drastically changed the state of most of the industries, banks and the finance sector is one among them. The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a critical catalyst for technological transformation on a global scale, pushing the upward trend of digital banking transactions increasing a staggering 158% from January 2018 to April 2023 (Ahdiat, 2023). According to Bank Indonesia, national digital transactions continue to experience growth, reaching IDR 5.1 trillion in August 2023, an increase of 11.9% year-on-year. This trend indicates the change in by the public in the use of banking services are increasingly relying on digitally based such as internet banking and mobile banking (Ahdiat, 2023).

Indonesia has huge potential in the digital economy in three pillars of digital: digital opportunity, digital behavior, and digital transactions. These include favorable demographics, the growth of the

digital economy, and rising internet penetration. On the other hand, mobile device subscription and digital applications consumption is high, while e-commerce, digital banking, and electronic money transaction are expanding quickly ([OJK, 2022](#)). This has impacted many sectors, but one of the most affected has been Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

As stated in Limanseto (2022), MSMEs have a strategic role in the Indonesian economy, creating jobs by employing 96.9% of the total national workforce, and covering 60.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The government also incentivizes growth of MSME sector through several policies such as subsidies and business development programs. The most significant constraints for MSMEs are access to financial services, specifically with regards to investment and credit ([Amani, 2023](#)). Similarly, low financial literacy continues to be a barrier to the adoption of the technology of the digital sector ([Safitri & Sukmana, 2023](#)).

PT Bank Negara Indonesia (Persero), Tbk. On May 12, 2022, Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI) made a move by acquiring Bank Mayora. Through this acquisition, BNI became the controlling shareholder with a 63.92% ownership and marked the beginning of struggling to rebrand Bank Mayora to PT Bank Hibank Indonesia (hibank), to encourage the growth of MSMEs through more accessible digital services ([BNI Annual Report, 2022; Octaviano, 2023](#)). By aligning with BNI Group, hibank adheres to BNI's vision as an "MSME Orchestrator", which is to develop a better financial ecosystem for micro, small, and medium enterprises ([Simamora, 2023](#)).

While this transformation's objective is to improve digital services for MSMEs, there have been a number of challenges, especially in terms of communication within the organization as part of the acquisition and rebranding process. Organizational communication has a vital role to play in establishing a favorable atmosphere in a workplace which, in addition, helps corporate change ([Hargie, 2016](#)). In the scope of organizational communication, internal communication has a strategic role in building organizational identification and engagement of employees ([Santiago, 2020](#)). However, during the organizational changes there is a communication that is not optimal so that employees refuse over concerns of uncertainty and lack of transparency ([Romadona & Setiawan, 2020](#)).

During the analysis phase of our research, early findings suggested shreds of internal communication gaps that lead to employees feeling poorly informed about the strategic evolution underway. Employees expressed that when change communication is sent down the long organizational chain, information often trickles down slowly and is frequently half-complete. While town halls and other email communications have been tried, there are still gaps in employee understanding of changes in policies, operational strategies, and other areas ([X, personal communication, January 13, 2025](#)).

Even in such situations, difficulties in the changes in organizational communication are not limited to the internal; they also affect the merger's collective effectiveness. Angwin et al. (2016) highlight the importance of proper communication throughout a M&A, to make sure that employees are able to adapt to change; If communication within an organization is ineffective, uncertainty may develop into speculation and even anxiety among employees

([Zagelmeyer et al., 2018](#)). At hibank, this becomes evident as employees often rely on informal conversations or mass media to gather critical information, leading to speculation and uncertainty within the workplace (Z, personal communication, 2025/01/23).

The ADKAR model would help understand how to address and manage organizational change against these challenges. It involves five specific stages that employees will experience when adapting (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement), this is important because, awareness is realizing the need for change, desire is supporting the change, knowledge is knowing how to implement the change, ability is being able to apply the change, and finally reinforcement getting employees to stick with required changes ([Maderazo, 2016](#)). Hence this model is relevant to hibank since it is aiding in management of the change process as well as creating identifiable communication with the employees.

External communication is equally through the success of hibank's transformation, apart from internal communication challenges ([Putra et al., 2024](#)). Now, in this digital era, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has emerged as one of the biggest strategies for building brand image and customer trust ([Keikha et al., 2020](#)). IMC ensures that the messages conveyed to the public are consistent and coordinated. Customers have come to prioritize convenience and efficiency in service delivery in digital banking, even as there are fears that the technology behind such communication will erode the human factor in bank-client interaction ([Yani et al., 2021](#)). With that in mind, for a crisis communication strategy to be effective it shall rely on communication pillars such as transparency, willingness to share and systematic messaging so that customers can receive accurate and reliable insights ([Naumovska & Blazeska, 2016](#)).

In the course of its transformation journey, BNI has built the Subsidiaries Management Division to connect the communication bridge between the holding and its subsidiaries. But there are still gaps in information, and employees in both companies are worried about the new organizational structure and long-term career paths (Y, personal communication, January 14, 2025). Good organizational communication singlehandedly assists employees to adjust in the acquisition and enables long-term synergy between the parent organization and the acquired organization ([Ali et al., 2021](#)).

On the whole, the concerning preliminary research results show that employees are not yet prepared for change, which is not encouraging vis-a-vis an organizational-wide communication plan. Thus, this study will analyze the organizational communication process that has been carried out and also continues to be implemented BNI and hibank after acquisition in relation to internal and external change communication. In addition, this research will look at challenges and solutions to facilitate greater synergy between the acquiring firm and its target firm post acquisition.

METHOD

This investigation embraces a social constructivist viewpoint, as elucidated by Denzin and Lincoln (2017), declaring that an analytical paradigm mirrors the valuations,

convictions, and assumptions analysts use to comprehend social actuality. This paradigm was decided upon on the grounds that the investigation zeroes in on the implications constructed by people and amassed within the procedure of authoritative correspondence and change administration taking after a securing. As portrayed by Creswell and Creswell (2017), the constructivist methodology spotlights on how societal truth is assembled through conducts, musings, and activities passed on by people inside an association. Meanwhile, the flow of meanings is uneven, with bursts of complexity emerging from longer statements that interweave diverse threads of thought, only to give way once more to plainer expressions as the shared reality takes form through iterated expressions between members.

This study employs a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of how organizational communication influences post-acquisition synergy, addressing the research objective of identifying the challenges and strategies in communication between PT Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI) and PT Bank Hibank Indonesia (hibank). The use of in-depth interviews is directly linked to the research objective of exploring employees' and leaders' subjective experiences in navigating organizational change. Meanwhile, secondary data analysis provides additional context to validate findings, ensuring a comprehensive examination of internal and external communication strategies.

Specifically, this study examines how internal communication fosters employee adaptation (aligned with the ADKAR model) and how external communication strengthens corporate branding and public relations (aligned with the Integrated Marketing Communication framework). Public relations plays a crucial role in message dissemination, ensuring that both internal and external stakeholders receive clear and consistent information regarding post-acquisition developments. To achieve a holistic understanding, this study conducted interviews with eight informants, divided into a pre-research phase and a main research phase.

The pre-research phase included three hibank employees—Narasumber X and Narasumber Y from the Compliance Division and Narasumber Z from the Operations Division—who provided preliminary insights into internal communication challenges. The main research phase involved five key informants: Pratama Prabawa Putra, Division Head of Corporate Development & Transformation at BNI; Hilma Ilfiyanti, Department Head of Subsidiaries Management at BNI; Likia, Chief Finance Officer at hibank; Slamet Riyadi, Head of Financial Planning & Investor at hibank; and Eko B. Supriyanto, Editor-in-Chief of Infobank Magazine. These informants provided strategic perspectives on organizational synergy post-acquisition, contributing to a deeper understanding of both internal and external communication effectiveness in ensuring a successful transition (Figure 1).

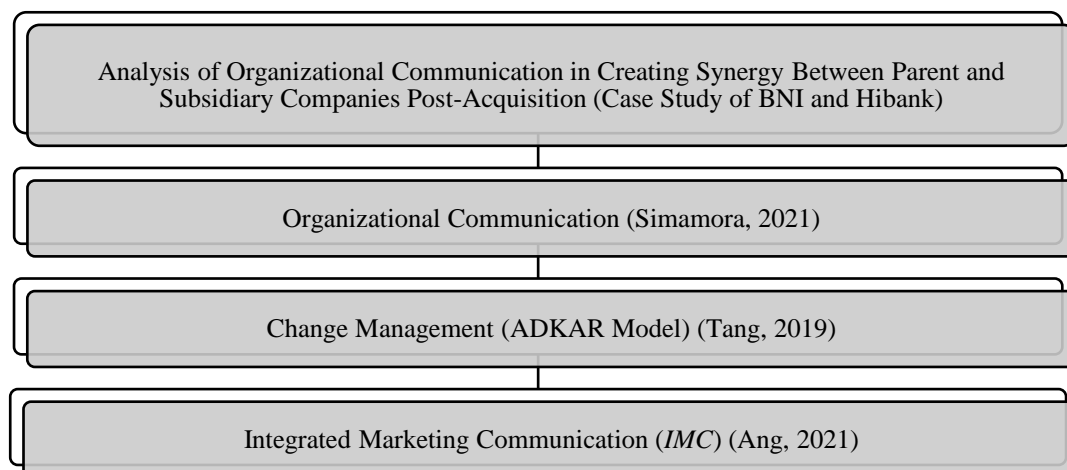


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Study; Source: Authors

To collect relevant data, this study utilizes in-depth interviews as the primary data source. Interviews are a data collection technique that allows researchers to obtain contextual understanding regarding the perceptions and experiences of informants (Yusuf, 2017). Structured interviews were conducted with employees from both companies, including those from management and operational levels, to understand the challenges of organizational communication that emerged during and after the acquisition process.

The interviewed respondents consisted of three hibank employees as part of the pre-research phase and five key informants from BNI and hibank's management, along with an expert in the banking industry. An interview with Respondent X from the Compliance Division revealed that change communication is often carried out through a long organizational hierarchy, causing information to be received slowly and lacking comprehensiveness. This aligns with organizational communication theory, which states that overly rigid communication structures can hinder communication effectiveness within organizations (Simamora, 2021).

Additionally, Respondent Z from the Operations Division stated that many employees receive important information through casual conversations or mass media, often leading to speculation and anxiety. This finding confirms the study by Mohanty and Mohanty (2018), which found that informal communication can influence internal communication effectiveness, especially in the banking industry.

In the context of change management based on the ADKAR model, an interview with Respondent Y from the Compliance Division indicated that awareness of the implemented changes is still uneven among employees, leading to ambiguity in the implementation of new policies. This reinforces Tang's (2019) theory, which states that effective communication in the awareness phase is crucial to ensuring that employees understand the objectives of organizational change. Pratama Prabawa Putra, as the Division Head of Corporate Development & Transformation at BNI, mentioned that leadership involvement in advocating for change significantly affects employee enthusiasm, consistent with Santiago's (2020) research, which emphasizes that perceived

organizational support can enhance employees' identification with change. Meanwhile, Hilma Ilfiyanti, as the Department Head of Subsidiaries Management at BNI, explained that BNI has conducted several training sessions to ensure employees understand the changes, yet challenges remain in applying this knowledge to daily tasks. This finding supports [Maderazo's \(2016\)](#) study, which highlights the importance of training and work support in change management.

Regarding ability, Likia, Chief Finance Officer at hibank, revealed that mentoring and coaching programs for employees remain limited, making it difficult for them to adapt to organizational changes. This strengthens [Ali et al.'s \(2021\)](#) theory, which states that organizational change must be executed with a well-planned strategy and supported by adequate competency development. Additionally, Slamet Riyadi, Head of Financial Planning & Investor at hibank, emphasized that reward and recognition systems for individual and team achievements need to be strengthened to maintain employee motivation in embracing change. This concept aligns with the reinforcement stage in the ADKAR model, which underscores the importance of providing feedback and appreciation to employees to ensure the sustainability of change ([Muharman et al., 2025; Tang, 2019](#)).

From an integrated marketing communication perspective, an interview with Eko B. Supriyanto, Editor-in-Chief of Infobank Magazine, revealed that transparency and consistency in BNI and hibank's external communication are essential in building public trust post-acquisition. This supports [Ang's \(2021\)](#) research, which emphasizes that integrated marketing communication plays a crucial role in shaping corporate reputation both internally and externally. In the digital era, customers increasingly prioritize service accessibility and efficiency, despite concerns about the loss of human interaction in digital banking ([Yani et al., 2021](#)). Therefore, the communication strategy implemented by hibank must be able to integrate internal and external communication to ensure message alignment with stakeholders.

Besides interviews, this study also utilizes secondary data obtained from various sources, such as company annual reports, academic journals, reference books, and official news portals. This secondary data serves to reinforce interview findings by providing a broader context on organizational communication practices and change management in the banking industry ([Christensen & Johnson, 2016](#)). In analyzing the data, this study adopts a qualitative data analysis approach developed by Miles and Huberman, as cited by [Allen \(2017\)](#). The analysis is conducted through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and verification and conclusion. Data reduction is performed by filtering and summarizing key information from interviews and literature studies. The data is then organized systematically to facilitate interpretation. Verification and conclusion are conducted through data triangulation to enhance the validity of research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are based on interviews conducted with five respondents, consisting of two leaders from both BNI and hibank, as well as a banking media expert. These findings refer to

the research questions outlined earlier, supported by pre-research and elements detailed in the research focus.

Formal Organizational Communication

Formal communication is crucial for conveying information across all levels of the organization. However, challenges remain, particularly due to the large workforce and the complexity of maintaining internal communication among divisions, employees, branches, and subsidiaries. Effective reinforcement of vision and mission post-acquisition is necessary to ensure organizational alignment. Hilma Ilfiyanti, Department Head of Subsidiaries Management at BNI, emphasized that maintaining internal communication among divisions, employees, branches, and subsidiaries poses a challenge due to the extensive workforce coverage.

"Pentingnya menjaga hubungan komunikasi internal melalui pendekatan antar divisi, karyawan, juga cabang-cabang dan anak perusahaan lainnya yang terkait, meski menjadi tantangan dengan banyaknya karyawan secara luas."

"The importance of maintaining internal communication through approaches between divisions, employees, as well as branches and other related subsidiaries, despite the challenge posed by the vast number of employees." (H. Ilfiyanti, personal communication, February 7, 2025).

Additionally, communication regarding the company's vision and mission is a vital aspect of successful post-acquisition integration. Pratama Prabawa Putra, Division Head of Corporate Development & Transformation, stressed the need for consistent reinforcement of vision and mission among employees to enhance their understanding of organizational changes.

"Pentingnya penekanan visi dan misi yang jelas secara berkala kepada para karyawan, khususnya karyawan hibank pasca-akuisisi agar perubahan yang terjadi dapat dipahami dengan baik."

"The importance of periodically reinforcing a clear vision and mission to employees, especially hibank employees post-acquisition, to ensure that the changes occurring are well understood." (P. Putra, personal communication, January 9, 2025).

From the statements above, it is evident that while formal communication efforts have been implemented by management, challenges remain in execution, particularly concerning the broad scope of communication and the complexity of the organizational structure. Periodic delivery of vision and mission is a strategic step to ensure better comprehension; however, its effectiveness needs further evaluation, especially in relation to employees' acceptance of changes post-acquisition.

Informal Organizational Communication

Beyond formal communication, informal interactions play a crucial role in strengthening relationships among employees and leaders. To foster open dialogue, BNI and hibank introduced employee forums, discussion groups, and interactive events such as the Battle Royale sports event. While these efforts provide opportunities for collaboration, their effectiveness in fully bridging communication gaps remains under evaluation. Slamet Riyadi stated that BNI and hibank have provided informal communication forums, such as discussion groups, to encourage more open communication.

"Pihak perusahaan telah mempersiapkan berbagai media komunikasi informal seperti forum karyawan juga grup diskusi untuk mendorong para karyawan BNI juga hibank untuk dapat berkomunikasi secara lebih terbuka, tanpa perlu mengikuti alur struktur organisasi yang terbilang cukup kompleks dalam BNI Group secara keseluruhan."

"The company has prepared various informal communication media, such as employee forums and discussion groups, to encourage BNI and hibank employees to communicate more openly without having to follow the complex organizational structure of the overall BNI Group." (S. Riyadi, personal communication, February 6, 2025).

BNI and hibank also organized a Battle Royale sports event to strengthen relationships between directors and employees. However, Ilfiyanti noted that this initiative has not yet been highly effective in enhancing broad informal communication.

"Ajang olahraga Battle Royale, dimana tujuan dari acara tersebut bukan hanya untuk sekedar berolahraga, tetapi memberikan wadah bagi para direksi juga karyawan BNI Group untuk membaur dan bekerja sama. Namun, acara tersebut masih terbilang belum sangat membantu dalam hal komunikasi informal secara luas dikarenakan masih adanya jarak di antara para tim BNI Group, termasuk 'sense of belonging' yang masih belum terlihat selama proses akuisisi tersebut."

"The Battle Royale sports event was not just aimed at sports activities but also served as a platform for BNI Group directors and employees to interact and collaborate. However, the event has not significantly contributed to improving informal communication on a broader scale due to existing gaps among BNI Group teams, including a 'sense of belonging' that has not yet been fully established during the acquisition process." (H. Ilfiyanti, personal communication, February 7, 2025).

These findings indicate that while informal communication has been facilitated by the company, challenges remain in fostering a sense of unity and engagement among employees, particularly between BNI and hibank teams. This suggests that informal communication cannot solely rely on forums or social activities but also requires a more personal approach from management to encourage active employee participation in the new work environment.

Post-Acquisition Change Management for hibank Employees: Awareness

Effective communication is fundamental in ensuring employees understand and accept organizational change. BNI and hibank have leveraged multiple channels—town halls, emails, and direct discussions—to reinforce their vision and mission. Beyond awareness, management also actively fosters engagement by positioning employees as key contributors to the transformation process, reducing resistance through transparent and participatory communication. Likia explained that BNI and hibank have utilized various communication channels to disseminate information about the company's vision, mission, and policies, such as town halls, emails, and direct inter-division conversations.

"Beberapa upaya telah dilakukan oleh BNI juga hibank dalam penyampaian informasi penting yang berkaitan dengan visi, misi, hingga kebijakan perusahaan melalui town hall, surat elektronik (email), hingga percakapan langsung dari kepada divisi kepada bawahannya."

"Several efforts have been made by BNI and hibank to communicate essential information regarding the company's vision, mission, and policies through town halls, electronic mail (email), and direct conversations from supervisors to their subordinates." (Likia, personal communication, February 10, 2025).

To support broader information dissemination, intranet is also used as an internal communication platform, as mentioned by Supriyanto.

"Intranet juga menjadi salah satu media yang digunakan untuk meningkatkan kesadaran informasi, dimana para karyawan dapat mengakses semua informasi mengenai proses akuisisi juga kebijakan-kebijakan yang diimplementasikan secara internal."

"The intranet is also one of the media used to enhance information awareness, where employees can access all information regarding the acquisition process and policies implemented internally." (E. Supriyanto, personal communication, February 10, 2025).

Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that information dissemination regarding changes has been widely carried out using various internal communication platforms. However, its effectiveness still depends on how employees utilize their access to this information. Awareness of change does not solely rely on the existence of information but also on how well the information is received and understood by employees.

To ensure that awareness translates into real understanding, BNI and hibank have implemented reinforcement mechanisms to track how employees engage with the provided information. Employee feedback surveys, periodic knowledge-sharing sessions, and department-level discussions are conducted to assess the level of comprehension and identify areas that require further clarification. Furthermore, training modules available on the intranet are supplemented with Q&A forums where employees can directly interact with management regarding post-acquisition concerns. By integrating these interactive elements, the company aims to bridge the

gap between information dissemination and actual employee awareness, ensuring a more effective communication strategy in the transition process.

Post-Acquisition Change Management for hibank Employees: Desire

The next stage in the ADKAR model is fostering desire among employees to accept change. Ilfiyanti highlighted the importance of personalized and action-based communication to ensure employees feel involved in the transformation process.

"Pertama, memang perlu komunikasi yang efektif yang menurutku dari manajemen untuk menginformasikan itu dulu visi-visi kita tuh apa, kita mau kemana, kita mau ngapain aja, kita mau bikin apa aja gitu, dan kita pun masih mengharapkan kalian berkontribusi. Kita itu bareng-bareng gitu. Kita tidak mau me-replace kalian kok. Mungkin itu dulu yang harus disampaikan."

"First, there needs to be effective communication from management to inform employees about the vision—where we are headed, what we are going to do, what we plan to create, and that we still expect their contributions. We are in this together. We do not intend to replace them. That is something that must be communicated first." (H. Ilfiyanti, personal communication, February 7, 2025).

This statement reinforces that employees' willingness to embrace change is significantly influenced by how management communicates. If communication is limited to information delivery without a more inclusive and participatory approach, resistance to change may persist. Therefore, transparent and personalized communication from management can be a key factor in encouraging employees to accept and support the company's transformation.

To reinforce the desire for change, BNI and hibank have adopted engagement-driven initiatives such as leadership town halls, informal team-building activities, and mentorship programs where senior leaders directly interact with employees to address concerns. Additionally, interactive digital platforms such as live Q&A sessions and anonymous feedback channels have been introduced to allow employees to express their apprehensions freely. By integrating these initiatives, management not only communicates change but also builds an emotional connection with employees, reinforcing their sense of belonging and reducing uncertainty. These efforts ensure that the transformation process is not seen as imposed but rather as a collective movement where employees feel valued and actively involved.

Post-Acquisition Change Management for hibank Employees: Knowledge

In terms of knowledge, BNI and hibank have taken several initiatives to enhance employees' understanding of ongoing changes. Putra explained that Human Capital plays a crucial role in fostering awareness of the new corporate culture.

"Pihak manajemen, termasuk Human Capital juga perlu bersama-sama menyampaikan juga mengimplementasikan budaya perusahaan yang baru dengan pemberian pelatihan juga pembagian ilmu sesuai dengan cara kerja yang diharapkan perusahaan."

"Management, including Human Capital, must work together to communicate and implement the new corporate culture by providing training and sharing knowledge that aligns with the company's expected way of working." (P. Putra, personal communication, February 9, 2025).

Additionally, Ilfiyanti outlined various strategies that have been applied to facilitate the learning process for employees.

"Pengadaan e-booklet BNI Group agar setiap divisi dapat memahami produk-produk yang tersedia, sesi berbagi ilmu yang dinamakan 'Bulan Mutu' dimana para tim dapat belajar dari pemimpin dari divisi yang berbeda-beda dan membuka forum tanya-jawab yang lebih intensif, juga pengadaan 'HC Forum' yang dimana para HRD dari seluruh anak perusahaan BNI Group dapat bersatu, bersama dengan para karyawan, untuk dapat berdiskusi mengenai kebijakan-kebijakan juga masalah-masalah yang dialami."

"The creation of the BNI Group e-booklet allows each division to understand the available products, along with knowledge-sharing sessions called 'Quality Month,' where teams can learn from leaders of different divisions and engage in more intensive Q&A discussions. Additionally, the HC Forum unites HR personnel from all BNI Group subsidiaries, allowing them to discuss policies and challenges together with employees." (H. Ilfiyanti, personal communication, February 7, 2025).

Knowledge is a critical factor in the success of post-acquisition adaptation. The interviews show that BNI and hibank have established a structured learning system. However, the main challenge lies in how effectively employees utilize the resources provided by the company.

To reinforce the application of knowledge, BNI and hibank have introduced structured evaluation mechanisms to track employees' learning progress. Periodic assessments, interactive e-learning modules, and real-time feedback loops are integrated into training programs to measure the effectiveness of knowledge retention. Additionally, mentoring initiatives ensure that employees receive direct guidance on applying new work processes. The incorporation of gamification strategies—such as reward-based learning challenges—further enhances employee engagement in training programs. These initiatives aim to bridge the gap between knowledge dissemination and actual implementation, ensuring employees not only receive information but also internalize and apply it in their daily work.

Post-Acquisition Change Management for hibank Employees: Ability

The fourth stage in the ADKAR model is ensuring that leaders possess the ability to understand the conditions and challenges faced by employees. Likia emphasized that understanding employees' backgrounds and potential is crucial for facilitating smoother transitions during organizational changes.

"Para karyawan dapat menentang sebuah perubahan jika mereka tidak paham alasan dibalik hal tersebut juga tidak melihat bagaimana potensi mereka akan dipergunakan dengan baik."

"Employees may resist change if they do not understand the reasons behind it and do not see how their potential will be effectively utilized." (Likia, personal communication, February 10, 2025).

Slamet Riyadi added that resistance to change can be mitigated by ensuring that employees go through the adaptation phase successfully.

"Tahap penangkalan atau culture shock tidak boleh berkepanjangan dan pemimpin harus membantu timnya untuk sama-sama beradaptasi juga berkolaborasi sesuai visi dan misi baru yang diterapkan pasca-akuisisi, melalui pemberian informasi yang jelas juga terarah."

"The rejection phase or culture shock should not be prolonged, and leaders must assist their teams in adapting and collaborating in alignment with the newly implemented vision and mission post-acquisition by providing clear and structured information." (S. Riyadi, personal communication, February 6, 2025).

A leader's ability to identify potential barriers and develop solutions is a crucial aspect of the change process. Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that hibank's management still faces challenges in ensuring employees transition effectively. If resistance to change is not addressed immediately, it could impact both employee productivity and work commitment.

To reinforce employees' ability to adapt, BNI and hibank have implemented structured competency-building programs, including targeted skills training, leadership coaching, and real-time performance monitoring. Employees are given role-specific transition plans that outline expectations and milestones to facilitate a smoother adjustment. In addition, peer mentoring networks have been established to allow employees to learn from colleagues who have successfully navigated similar transitions. Continuous assessment mechanisms, such as feedback loops and post-training evaluations, ensure that the adaptation process remains effective and responsive to employees' needs. By integrating these structured initiatives, the company aims to reduce uncertainty, enhance collaboration, and empower employees to actively engage with the new organizational framework.

Post-Acquisition Change Management for hibank Employees: Reinforcement

Reinforcement (acknowledgment and feedback) is the final stage in the ADKAR model. Supriyanto emphasized that storytelling can be an effective method for reinforcing communication and employee motivation.

"Storytelling dapat menjadi cara yang efektif untuk membuat pesan lebih menarik dan mudah diingat, termasuk menginspirasi."

"Storytelling can be an effective way to make messages more engaging and memorable, including inspiring employees." (E. Supriyanto, personal communication, February 10, 2025).

Ifiyanti also mentioned that hibank has introduced an awards program as a form of employee appreciation.

"Acara penghargaan 'Synergy Awards' menjadi salah satu upaya besar yang dilakukan BNI Group dalam mendorong motivasi seluruh perusahaan, baik induk ataupun anak, juga divisi-divisi terkait yang berperan besar pasca akuisisi yang dilakukan. Hal ini dilakukan untuk mendorong adanya kerja sama yang kuat antar perusahaan, melebihi sekedar 'angka'."

"The 'Synergy Awards' recognition event is one of BNI Group's major efforts to boost motivation across all companies, both parent and subsidiary, as well as related divisions that played a crucial role post-acquisition. This initiative aims to foster strong intercompany collaboration beyond mere numbers." (H. Ifiyanti, personal communication, February 7, 2025).

Based on the interviews, it is evident that reinforcement strategies such as recognition programs and storytelling have been implemented to encourage employee engagement in organizational change. However, the effectiveness of these strategies needs to be further evaluated to ensure that they contribute to long-term employee motivation.

To strengthen reinforcement efforts, BNI and hibank have integrated continuous feedback mechanisms, such as quarterly performance discussions, peer-to-peer recognition programs, and leadership coaching initiatives. Employee engagement surveys and sentiment analysis are conducted regularly to assess the impact of reinforcement strategies on motivation and commitment. Additionally, mentorship programs ensure that employees receive ongoing support beyond the initial transition period. By embedding these reinforcement mechanisms into the organizational culture, the company aims to sustain employee motivation, enhance collaboration, and reinforce a shared vision for long-term success.

Integrated Marketing Communication in Public Relations-Based Marketing

In terms of external communication, integrated marketing communication (IMC) is critical in reinforcing hibank's identity as part of BNI while solidifying its positioning as a digital bank for MSMEs. However, inconsistencies in message delivery remain a challenge. To address this, hibank must implement a multi-channel communication strategy that aligns all branding efforts with BNI Group's corporate identity. Supriyanto explained that consistent communication is essential in establishing hibank's brand as a digital bank for MSMEs.

"Sudah saatnya melakukan komunikasi ke luar yang lebih masif, sebagai bank digital yang dimiliki bank BNI dan memastikan bank digital dikelola dengan baik dan kinerja sangat baik. Komunikasi dilakukan secara berkelanjutan, dan terus menerus secara konsisten. Tema komunikasinya sebagai 'bank digital terbaik'."

"It is time to carry out more extensive external communication, positioning hibank as a digital bank owned by BNI, ensuring that the digital bank is well-managed and performs excellently. Communication must be carried out continuously and consistently under the theme of being 'the best digital bank'." (E. Supriyanto, personal communication, February 10, 2025).

A well-integrated communication campaign is recommended, combining paid media (digital ads, influencer collaborations), owned media (official website, social media, mobile banking app), and earned media (press coverage, third-party reviews). The campaign should emphasize hibank's role as 'a member of BNI Group' in all external messaging to reinforce brand association.

"Sinergi antar divisi juga menjadi hal yang perlu diperhatikan dan diharapkan dijalani bersama-sama dengan tahapan pembuatan konsep. Hal ini meliputi kerja sama antar divisi yang terkait sebelum menyampaikan sebuah pesan, baik dengan informasi secara tertulis melalui email atau laporan mingguan, ataupun komunikasi tatap muka yang membuka forum diskusi secara langsung."

"Inter-division synergy is also something that needs to be prioritized and should be carried out collectively in the concept development stages. This includes collaboration between related divisions before delivering a message, whether in written form through emails or weekly reports, or through face-to-face communication that facilitates direct discussion forums." (H. Ilfiyanti, personal communication, February 7, 2025).

Additionally, internal coordination among PR, marketing, and corporate communication teams must be strengthened to ensure unified messaging across all touchpoints. Regular cross-divisional strategy meetings should be held to align key narratives before launching external campaigns. By maintaining message consistency and leveraging multiple platforms, hibank can enhance public trust, strengthen brand recall, and reinforce its affiliation with BNI as a major financial player in Indonesia.

Based on the findings of this study, several aspects require further elaboration. Effective organizational communication plays a critical role in post-acquisition integration, requiring a well-structured approach to both internal and external communication. Internally, BNI and hibank have implemented formal and informal communication strategies to enhance employee adaptation. Formal communication, such as town halls, newsletters, and email updates, ensures clarity in conveying strategic goals, while informal interactions—discussion forums, employee engagement events, and cross-division meetings—serve to foster collaboration and trust ([Simamora, 2021](#); [Agustina et al., 2022](#)). However, despite these initiatives, employees still face barriers in communication, particularly in aligning with BNI's corporate structure.

To address these gaps, the ADKAR model serves as a structured approach for effective change communication ([Lauer, 2021](#)). Findings indicate that awareness has been actively fostered through multi-channel communication platforms, but challenges remain in translating awareness into employee commitment and participation. A significant gap is found in reinforcement efforts, as employees often receive information but lack structured mechanisms to track understanding, provide feedback, and enhance engagement.

Interactive digital platforms, mentorship programs, and targeted leadership communications are recommended to strengthen the desire and ability stages of ADKAR. These initiatives will help ensure that communication is not merely informative but also engaging and action-driven, reducing uncertainty and fostering stronger employee commitment to the transformation. A key challenge post-acquisition is aligning hibank's existing corporate culture with BNI's organizational framework. Findings highlight that employees, particularly those transitioning from Bank Mayora, experience difficulties in adjusting to new corporate norms, leadership structures, and operational processes. Leadership plays a crucial role in easing this transition, but inconsistencies in cultural integration efforts have created uncertainty regarding career paths and long-term employee roles (Tang, 2019).

To address structural complexity, targeted onboarding programs, leadership training, and continuous knowledge-sharing sessions are recommended. Additionally, a cross-functional mentoring system, where long-serving BNI employees guide new hibank team members, could facilitate smoother cultural integration and reduce resistance to change. Reinforcement is critical in sustaining long-term organizational synergy. Findings indicate that while storytelling, leadership-driven communication, and internal branding initiatives have been implemented, these efforts remain fragmented and lack a structured evaluation framework (Supriyanto, 2025).

To strengthen reinforcement efforts, BNI and hibank should introduce structured quarterly employee feedback mechanisms to measure engagement, expand leadership coaching initiatives to sustain motivation, and implement gamification-based learning platforms to make knowledge-sharing interactive. The Synergy Awards program is a promising initiative to enhance recognition, but its impact must be monitored through employee sentiment analysis and performance tracking. By embedding structured recognition programs, the organization can ensure long-term commitment to change.

Externally, hibank's branding strategy aligns with its positioning as a digital bank for MSMEs, yet its affiliation with BNI lacks visibility across digital and traditional media channels (Ang, 2021). While publications such as Kontan, Antara News, and The Asian Post Indonesia emphasize hibank's role as a digital banking leader, few sources explicitly reinforce its affiliation with BNI Group. The phrase "hibank, a member of BNI Group," which the company aims to promote, is mainly visible on BNI's official website and hibank's social media channels but remains underutilized in mainstream financial publications (Suhud, 2023; Sjarif et al., 2024).

To strengthen brand consistency, hibank should implement a multi-channel IMC strategy, including targeted media outreach programs to ensure key messages are standardized across press and online platforms, SEO-driven branding campaigns to reinforce BNI affiliation in digital searches, and strategic collaborations between PR, marketing, and corporate communication teams to synchronize brand messaging across all touchpoints. By addressing these gaps, hibank can improve public perception, strengthen brand recall, and reinforce its role within the BNI Group ecosystem. Findings suggest that structured communication and reinforcement strategies are essential to post-acquisition success. While internal communication efforts have been initiated, they require greater integration, employee participation, and long-term reinforcement mechanisms.

Externally, branding consistency must be improved to ensure public awareness of hibank's affiliation with BNI.

Enhancing internal communication by making it more interactive and participatory through real-time feedback channels and employee-driven discussions will strengthen engagement. Leadership-driven cultural adaptation strategies, such as peer mentoring, onboarding programs, and executive coaching, are essential to support employees in navigating change. Reinforcement initiatives should be expanded beyond storytelling to include structured performance tracking, engagement analytics, and interactive learning programs. Implementing an integrated marketing communication strategy will ensure message consistency and brand alignment across all platforms.

CONCLUSION

This study reaffirms that well-planned and structured organizational communication is a key factor in ensuring a successful post-acquisition integration. Synergy between the parent company and its subsidiary ensures that information regarding the vision, mission, and corporate policies is effectively communicated to all employees. Formal communication helps maintain message clarity, while informal communication strengthens internal relationships. Successful communication enhances employee trust and engagement within the organization.

Post-acquisition change management must be carried out strategically to ensure that all stakeholders understand the company's objectives and expectations. By applying the ADKAR model, this study found that the effectiveness of change communication depends on leaders' involvement in delivering empathetic and structured messages. Strong internal collaboration also contributes to reinforcing external communication, particularly in public relations-based marketing. Brand consistency, a clear communication structure, and alignment with the corporate vision and mission are crucial in establishing hibank's identity as part of BNI Group while strengthening its position as a Digital Bank focused on MSMEs.

This study contributes to the fields of organizational communication, change management, and integrated marketing, particularly in corporate acquisition contexts. Academic recommendations include further exploration of internal and external communication strategies that can enhance organizational synergy. Future research can also examine media strategies and alternative change management models to expand upon this study's findings.

From a practical perspective, this study recommends:

1. Strengthening internal communication to be more transparent, collaborative, and interactive, facilitating faster employee adaptation post-acquisition.
2. Making change management communication more empathetic, supported by cross-division forums and optimized internal media usage.
3. Enhancing external communication through public relations-based marketing strategies, structured message planning, storytelling approaches, and consistent corporate branding.

Future research could incorporate quantitative methods to measure the effectiveness of external communication in building public awareness that hibank is a subsidiary of BNI. Meanwhile, qualitative research could further explore message consistency, media effectiveness, and internal communication synergy in strengthening corporate identity post-acquisition. Thus, this study serves as a valuable reference for companies in developing more effective communication strategies and for academics seeking to deepen their understanding of organizational communication and change management.

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