Title: When Controversial Businesses Embrace Dialogic Communication: Insights from Public Relations Practitioners in the Oil and Gas Industry

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Abstract: This study focuses on the Canadian oil and gas (O&G) industry, a highly controversial industry, to examine how dialogic communication is understood, valued, and implemented by public relations practitioners. By comparing the convergence and divergence between dialogic scholarship and practice, this study offers suggestions for contextualized dialogic strategies. This study provides rich practical implications. First, a contingent approach to dialogic communication is recommended. Practitioners should be aware of the challenges faced by the industry and consider fulfilling features of dialogic communication depending on specific situations/stakeholders. Second, because of the knowledge gap of dialogic communication existing between the industry and practitioners, practitioners need to work together to proactively educate the industry on the value of dialogic communication to facilitate the practice.

Keywords: dialogic communication, controversial industry, oil and gas, public relations practitioners
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Introduction

Dialogic public relations, which is highly relational-centred (Kent & Taylor, 2002), has developed to one of the main paradigms in public relations research (Ao & Huang, 2020; Chen et al., 2020) and has been studied in various public relations contexts. However, the majority of the studies in this area focuses on developing theoretical grounds and explaining how dialogue can be incorporated into public relations practices, but less is known about how the concepts of dialogic public relations are embraced by practitioners (Paquette, Sommerfeldt, & Kent, 2015). The dialogic theory of public relations (Kent & Taylor, 2002) was criticized for being too ideal to be incorporated into daily practices due to imbalanced unpredicted results, internal power dynamics, lack of supportive policies, and shortage in resources and time (Ihlen & Levenshus, 2017). In addition, dialogue is context relevant (Ao & Huang, 2020) and is under the influence of systematic constraints at a macro level (Ihlen & Levenshus, 2017). However, how the tensions arising from these constraints shape the process of dialogic communication has not been sufficiently acknowledged in the current literature, especially from practitioners’ perspective.

To fill these gaps, this study focuses on the Canadian oil and gas (O&G) industry, a controversial industry, as a unique context to understand how dialogic communication is understood and practiced by practitioners working in this industry. The O&G industry in Canada serves as a unique context to revisit and develop the theory and practice of dialogic communication for two reasons. First, Canadian society is highly community-based, and a significant focus of public relations efforts in Canada is on community relationships (Likely, 2009). Thus, it provides the ideal environment for developing dialogical communication between organizations and the public, compares to those marketing-orientated environments such as PR in the U.S. (Kelleher & Males, 2020). Secondly, although the O&G industry is a pillar industry
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in Canada, contributing a large number of job opportunities and economic income (Statistics Canada, 2020), it faces much controversy and contention due to the complexity of the business, the large profit margin and most importantly, the environmental risks and impacts (Rand, 2014). All of these endanger the relationships between companies and their public. As dialogue has been used to mediate interactions among conflicting groups in different contexts such as city councils (Pearce & Pearce, 2003) and warring nations (Toledano, 2017), it can be expected that through a dialogical approach to public relations, the relationship between these companies and their publics can be improved.

Through interviews with 21 public relations practitioners in Canadian O&G companies, the goal of this research is two-fold. First, this study wants to explicate how communicators in the oil and gas industry understand and practice dialogic communication to cultivate relationships with the key publics. In doing so, the convergence and divergence between theory and practice in a Canadian controversial business context can be revealed to contribute to the development of a dialogic theory of public relations (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Second, this study aims to identify the factors preventing practitioners’ dialogic efforts and provide effective dialogic strategies to this controversial industry in terms of what worked, what did not work and what can be done in the future. Thus, facilitates the application of dialogic public relations into practice.

Literature Review

Oil and Gas Industry and Public Relations

Controversial businesses refer to “products, services, or concepts that for reasons of delicacy, decency, morality, or even fear elicit reactions of distaste, disgust, offense, or outrage when mentioned or when openly presented” (Wilson & West, 1981, p.92). An industry is
controversial because it is either morally corrupt, with its products, concepts or services are inherently “morally corrupt,” “unethical,” or “offensive” (De Colle & York, 2009), or it is issue-riddled, with the controversy lying in the negative social and environmental impact during the process of operation (Jo & Na, 2012). Oil and gas industry is considered as the latter one due to the social and environmental consequences resulted from its products or daily operation, such as global warming caused by using oil, ocean pollution due to oil spill, and deterioration of air and water quality around petroleum refineries (Rand, 2014). This study specifically focuses on the O&G industry in Canada

Very few studies explored public relations theory and practice in the O&G industry and most of them focused on corporate social responsibilities (CSR) practices (e.g., Chowdhury et al., 2019; Du, Edward, & Vieira, 2012; Kirat, 2015;) Collectively, these studies suggested that O&G companies need to be more strategic and active in communicating with their stakeholders and called for more research into this industry. To extend this line of research and answer the call, the current study explores public relations in O&G industry through dialogic theory of public relations.

**Dialogic Theory of Public Relations**

Pearson (1989) was recognized as the pioneer scholar that introduced the concept of dialogue into public relations discipline and he understood dialogue as ethically superior to other forms of communication in public relations as it uses respectful and truthful two-way communication between organizations and stakeholders. Due to its ethical superiority and relational orientation, the research topic of dialogue has attracted considerable attention from public relations scholars (Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2011). Among all the relevant studies, Kent and Taylor (2002)’s work provides a relatively clear framework to further the research
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agenda of dialogic communication in public relations. Drawing on literature from different disciplines such as philosophy and psychology, they developed five features/principles of a dialogic approach of public relations: mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk, and commitment.

*Mutuality* means an acknowledgement of the inextricably intertwined nature of organization and publics that manifested as organization-public relationship. *Propinquity* refers to the process of rhetorical exchange that is temporal and spontaneous. *Empathy* means the supportive and trustworthy atmosphere of dialogue. *Risks* refers to the willingness to communicate with publics on their own terms. The last feature is *commitment*, the degree to which organizations give themselves to the dialogic communication.

Kent and Taylor (2002) argued that dialogue is both a concept and a practical strategy, thus, dialogue should be incorporated into daily public relations activities, so they provided three practical strategies in addition. The first strategy is to build interpersonal relationships, which refers to that all organizational members are comfortable of engaging in dialogic communication leading to relationship building. The second strategy is to build mediated dialogic relationships, which means engaging and facilitating dialogic interactions through mass mediated channels. The last strategy imposes a procedural approach to realizing dialogical communication that emphasizes on the process.

Despite the growing research attention, the dialogic theory of public relations also receives criticism. The first focus of the criticism centres on the philosophical underpinnings of dialogic. The criticism pointed out the concept of dialogic is often uncritically equated to two-way symmetrical communication, which impeded the development of theory (Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2012). The second focus of the criticism was about the practicality of this approach. Although it is regarded ethical superior, some scholars (e.g., Chen, Hung-Baesecke, &
Chen, 2020) pointed out that Kent and Taylor (2002) held a very high standard of dialogic communication (i.e., abovementioned five features) that is almost impossible to implement in practice and suggested not all five features should be met in practice. The current study joins the scholarship that both develops and criticizes the dialogic theory of public relations by inviting the voice from the industry and asked the following research question:

**RQ1:** How do practitioners working in O&G companies define dialogic public relations?

Research also actively applied this theory into difference practical settings to explore how dialogue might be incorporated into practices. Recent scholarship predominantly focuses on the Internet and social media (Ao & Huang, 2020). It is worth noting that although perceived to be able to facilitate two-way communication and enhance the organizations’ adaptation of the dialogical communication, the internet or social media may only facilitate dialogues at face value (Gibbs, Rozaidi, & Eisenberg, 2013). Scholars (e.g., Chen et al., 2020; Dhanesh, 2017) argued that to further the scholarship of dialogic public relations theory, both offline and online dialogue should be studied. In addition, few studies have examined how the theory and principles are viewed and implemented from the industry’s perspective. Only two studied examined the practitioners’ perspective (Lane & Bartlett, 2016). Collectively, they concluded that it is challenging to implement dialogic approach in practice due to various practical constraints such as organizational culture, time, and pre-existing attitudes of dialogic parties, and they called for more research to further explore the implementation and challenges of dialogic public relations from practitioners’ perspective. To answer these calls from previous studies, the current study further asks:

**RQ2:** What strategies do practitioners use to practice dialogic public relations?

**RQ3:** What are the perceived challenges of practicing dialogic public relations?
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Method

To answer the research questions, this study employed semi-structured (Merriam, 2009) in-depth interviews to explore practitioners’ understanding and evaluation of dialogic public relations, as well as their day-to-day practice. Prior to formal interviews, two pilot interviews were conducted to ensure the clarity and completeness of the interview protocol. The research team together conducted 21 online interviews with communicators working in O&G companies in Canada. Interviews lasted from 40 to 60 minutes and were audio-recorded and transcribed using a professional automated transcription software.

Among the 21 final interviewees, 10 of them were male and 11 of them were female. Participants held different levels of positions pertaining to public relations and communication in O&G companies, including three in entry-level positions, six in advisor-level positions, three in mid-management level positions, five in senior-management level positions, and four in executive-level positions. Over half of them (n = 11) worked in large-size companies (more than 500 employees), about a quarter of them (n = 6) were employed in small-size companies (under 100 employees), and the rest of the interviewees worked in medium-size companies (100-400 employees). On average, participants had 12 years of experience working in the O&G industry (ranging from half year to more than 30 years) and had held the current position for 2.5 years (ranging from half year to six years).

Before data analysis, the transcripts, totalling 341 single-spaced pages, were cross checked to ensure accuracy and readability. Data, then, were analyzed for themes around three research questions using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To begin, each researcher independently read through all the transcripts for multiple times to perform the manual coding, which was based on theoretical framework of dialogic public relations and what emerged
naturally from the data. Then, researchers discussed and compared their coding until consensus was reached. Based on the agreed upon coding results, two researchers worked together to generate themes around codes. After this round of the analysis, two researchers went back to the transcripts again, to compare the themes with data to ensure that no data was missed. The final themes were then produced.

Results

Defining Dialogic Public Relations

To answer RQ1, participants described their understandings of dialogic public relations in their own words. Three major themes emerged from their answers, which partially overlapped with the five features Kent and Taylor (2002) suggested.

Dialogue as a Two-Way Street

Majority of the interviewees acknowledged that dialogic public relations is a two-way process, which requires the inputs from their stakeholders, emphasizing the mutuality feature of dialogue. Many interviewees emphasized the importance of “feedback”, “engagement” and “listen and respond” in this process. One participant articulated that “listening and responding to your key stakeholders, and the listening part is, most important in terms of means not just listening but seeking to understand what the issues are and looking for ways to resolve them.” They firmly rejected the idea of one-way communication, as one of the participants indicated, “if you are the only one talking, you are lecturing, you are not in dialogue.”

Dialogue as a Multiway Street

Some participants believed that understanding “different viewpoints” is essential to dialogic relationships. Overlapping with the empathy feature of dialogue. Dialogic public relations was described as “a multi-way street”. Most importantly, interviewees pointed out the
importance of understanding “a variety of interests” especially “opinions of the other side”, which is rooted in controversial nature of the O&G industry. Another participant described:

People that are in this (O&G) industry aren't inherently against the environment or not environmentalists, and just like environmentalists, aren't necessarily people that are against industry. I think it's just important to engage in meaningful discussion and honest discussion and be open to the opinions of the other side.

**Transparency**

Several participants mentioned transparency, which means being open about what their companies and the industry are doing. This theme partially overlaps with commitment feature. One participant argued, “I think it's critical that we are communicating transparently and allowing people to see inside of an energy company and what it looks like and the kind of things that we're focused on.” But participants also acknowledged that not all companies wanted to be transparent as “some oil and gas companies are still the same, or they still don't want to, they would rather say nothing.”

**Dialogic Public Relations in Practice**

RQ2 asked about practicing dialogic public relations. Interviewees discussed various strategies they used to manage relationships with different stakeholder groups in a dialogic manner. Strategies were highly tailored towards each stakeholders group. Data reveal that all three strategies were incorporated into their public relations practices to manage four major stakeholder groups, although interpersonal approach was the predominate one.

“**Neighbours**”

Almost all the interviewees have mentioned individual landowners and communities as one of the most important stakeholder group, and some company referred this stakeholder group as “neighbours”. To manage relationships with this group, interpersonal approach was the main strategy used. Face-to-face site visit, townhall meetings, phone calls were tactics used to support
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this strategy. The goal of having face-to-face communications with neighbors is to build ongoing personal relationships, which helps public relations practitioners to detect neighbors’ needs at an early stage.

One participant explained their interpersonal strategies:

(We) had an environmental stakeholder person actually does kitchen table visits. We have, like, 23 neighbors that are close by. So she does kitchen table visits before COVID. We also do a town hall every year which was an open house. We weren't regulated by the government to do that we just choose to do our annual town hall every year because it allowed us to sit down, have a chat with people. We would actually serve like a buffet meal, so people would come they'd know around to those people that they wanted to see. We usually have about 20 representatives in the room as well as some of the key people. And so we would sit down, you know have a tab, have a meal.

Few interviewees also mentioned using mediated approach, such as through social media, newsletter, mailouts and local community newspaper. However, such mediated communication was considered as primarily one-way, serving the information dissemination purpose.

Investors and Shareholders

Investors and shareholders were the second often mentioned stakeholder group. Interpersonal strategy was also the main approach used to practice dialogic communication with them and some companies established an organizational system for dialogue. Many interviewees explained that communication team and the executives usually went to conferences and tradeshows to meet investors in person, “so that we can hear from them and answer their questions.” Another interviewee further explained, “we'll go to a bank conference, so we could present to the investment community, they can ask us, what are you doing with ESG? We can tell them, we can have that dialogue. And it's good.” For shareholders, interviewees mentioned establishment of various dialogic organization system such as conversation opportunity and quarterly or annual meeting. For example, one interview said executives of her company were “used to having people come and talk to them face to face, usually some of the stakeholders or
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shareholders would come directly to the office and ask to speak to our CEO.” Regular meetings were established in another small company, as one of the participants described her job, “I would also arrange all of our meetings and coordinate with all of our shareholders and our board members as well.”

Employees

All the interviewees agreed that employee was the most important internal stakeholder and interpersonal approach is critical to manage this relationship. One key theme in managing this relationship was to build confidence in employees so that they would be comfortable engaging in dialogue about their job and their company. Many interviewees mentioned town hall meeting as an effective tactic. One interviewee explained, “town hall meetings are on a regular basis and give employees an opportunity to ask questions and be heard and get answers in real time.” During these meetings, executives’ willingness to engage with employees and their interpersonal communication skills played a key role. One participant commented that the new CEO’s communication approach really resonated with the employees:

“It was just really refreshing to hear, where he came from, and that where his values stand and that he's also very vocal about his focus on his employees, mental health, and he was prior to becoming the CEO, he spoke out about advocating throughout COVID, about taking time off and the resources that we have for it so he's always performed a very real role in my opinion, my perspective of being authentic with who he is and what he values.”

Few interviewees mentioned the attempt of using social media platforms to engage employees, however, they did not regard these platforms effective because they inhibit the potential conversation to develop despite of the available commenting features. Interestingly, one interviewee pointed out that leadership’s role in promoting dialogue through these platforms,

“Being able to engage our executives and our directors to be more vocal on social platforms will also promote more engagement as well so we're trying to encourage them to actually engage on our employee base LinkedIn posts Facebook posts Instagram posts,
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whatever it is, we're seeing that there's a lot more engagement, when they know that their executives or their director are actually on their same platforms and they're watching too.

The General Public

The general public was another stakeholder group. Interviewees mentioned using mediated approach mainly relying on social media to reach out to the public. However, interviewees demonstrated two distinctive attitudes about social media’s effective as a dialogic platform. Most of the senior interviewees did not believe social media platform is an effective tool, “we’ll get some likes from employees, maybe we'll get a reshare, too. But I'm not super confident that anyone's going to actually engage and want to talk about that (on social media).” Another interviewee concurred, “people don't engage with oil and gas companies that effectively on Facebook.” They regarded social media as a tool to showcase the company or share information, a tool that is for one-way communication. One interviewee provided a nice analogy, “you build a website and you go on social media and your website is like the book and it has tons of information on it and then social media as well with snippets that point to chapters inside the book. And hopefully keep people's interest.”

However, two younger generation practitioners believed social media has potential for dialogic communication. The young practitioners indicated that in order for social media to be dialogic, active listening and responding are required. One of them commented, “Facebook is a platform where people really like to voice their opinion…you see a lot of dialogue and almost arguments happening.” The other interviewee shared a story of their personal experience with using social media for listening and interacting with publics, “Someone Facebook messaged us and said…one of the turbines isn’t spinning and I'm just wondering why. And so I flipped that note to our manager and just said hey, you know, just flagging this, what would you like me to respond and it was under maintenance so then I got to just respond to the person saying thank you so much for raising it to us management is aware it's under maintenance…but we'll be back up and
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running tomorrow and the person was like oh thank you so much for the response that's really interesting to learn”

Although interviewees mentioned mediated strategy was used to manage relationship with the public, some of them argued that the ideal strategy to manage this relationship in a dialogic way is through interpersonal approach, “face to face is probably the keyway to chat with these people and meet with them. And, and help manage relationships”. Two interviewees mentioned employees should be involved in this relationship management process “we've got hundreds of employees, whose jobs, is to communicate with people face to face, and one to one, you know, not doing mass communications which you know really doesn't put a face on the company.”

Challenges to Dialogic Public Relations

Previous studies (Huang & Yang, 2015; Lane & Bartlett, 2016) indicated many challenges for implementing dialogic public relations in practice. In a similar vein, interviewees described various challenges for them, and three themes emerged from data. Interestingly, interviewees also offered several coping strategies

Environmental Challenges

The biggest challenge lies in the environment of dialogic communication as “there's a lot of suspicion and negativity around that industry”. Many interviewees complained that their communication especially online communication was always “attacked” by the public due to the controversial nature of the industry and it is hard to have “calm dialogue”. Interviewees further explained that because of this hostile environment, communication from them was easily to be “misunderstood.” One interviewee stated, “you can send out something and people will not interpret it well.” Another interviewee further explained, “People who are standing against the energy companies are very vocal…it's a huge challenge” As a result, this turbulent environment
“scared” away communication efforts, not only the dialogic communication efforts, even the simple engagement efforts. One interviewee described, “we were very rarely ever engaging on (social media) comments and that can be associated with risk.” Another one also stated, “energy industry is reluctant to engage, because there is the risk that the trolls will attack, then you'll post something, and they'll pounce on it”.

Despite the abovementioned challenges, interviewees also acknowledged that this should not be the reason that O&G companies do not engage in dialogic communication because “there's a risk in not being there (communicating)”. One interviewee stated,

There're people who are going to agree with you, there're people who are goanna misunderstand you, there's people who are goanna disagree with you. So, I think the risk cannot deter us from doing the thing. I think we cannot, because there's risk associated in communications and public relations activities that, that can't be the reason why we don't do it.

**Industrial Challenges**

The second challenge comes from the industry, embedded in the history of the industry and the operation of the industry. In the history, the O&G industry is used to be silent about everything, leaving transparency out of their practice, hence produced a negative image in public perception. One interviewee explained, “For many years the prevailing sentiment in oil and gas was if we don't say anything. People won't even know we're here. And so let's not communicate about this at all.” Nowadays, many O&G companies still follow this sentiment, contributing to the negative impression public hold for this industry. One interviewee commented, “I think so many oil and gas companies especially private ones…just do what they do and not have to report to anyone except for maybe their board. And, and they don't…they don't step up and use their voice.” Another participant concurred “some oil and gas companies just don't want to, you know,
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they don't want to do anything” Several participants suggested that speak up and “speak in a unified voice” would be a strategy to overcome the challenges.

Regarding the industry’s process of operation, crisis communication produces challenges. One interviewee explained, “the bad things that can happen in only a gas company… there has to be a part of safety there’s always prevention. But things are going to happen. And it's horrible to think about it, and that's the biggest risk.” Another interviewee further explained,

when you have to communicate something like a death or a workplace incident. It's always a risk because there's an expectation to communicate it, but then there's never an expectation how that's gonna go in the comments you don't know what risks you're putting your company at.

To overcome this challenge, proactive communication and transparency were recommended because “you want to try to be the first person to talk about what happened to your company. You don't want somebody else to tell your story. You don't want to want it to look as though you were asleep.” Another interviewee added “we are going to have challenges around crisis communication. But you temper that by being much more proactive in terms of getting the normal stuff out there as well.”

**Organizational Challenges**

Organizational challenges manifest in a lack of resources. Practitioners expressed frustration of not having enough people. This is especially salient in social media and online channel management. One interviewee explained, “especially when it comes to social media, and the website…I think that that's just a lack of resources…they didn't have someone to be updating things on the website…or were willing to put money towards that. So, very rudimentary”. This lack of resource may root in underestimate of the value of communication as one participant stated, “they looked at it from a traditional standpoint, and anything beyond that, they didn't see the value in adding”. Organizational challenges also associated with the bureaucracy within the
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organization’s decision-making chain, especially for large companies. “There's a lot of different approval levels as well. Anytime there's an external story. Anytime any announcement goes up on our social channels”. It seems, unfortunately, there was no solution to overcome this type of challenges, as it is faced by practitioner in various industries as well. However, one participant shared a story about how the evaluation of public relations activities can help. She stated that the annual reputation study of her company helped her prove the value of communication so “I don't have to fight very hard for my communication budget for, so that's good.”

Discussion

Our study is among the early attempts to contextualize dialogic public relations in the O&G industry where the controversial nature of the business, public pressure, and communicators’ moral obligations jointly complicate dialogic strategies. Our findings add nuanced understandings of dialogic communication and offer insights into developing theory and practical strategies in the context of controversial businesses.

Theoretical Implications

This study extends the scope of dialogic theory of public relations into the controversial context and enriches its theoretical understanding, in which unique challenges such as industry stigma, public negative sentiment shape public relations practitioners’ dialogic communications with different key publics. Our results contribute to the dialogic public relations literature by recognizing the tensions and limitations inherent in the dialogic theory when applied to an uncommon communication context, hence impeding the thorough application of dialogic characteristics as stated before (Kent & Taylor, 2002). In general, practitioners valued the concept of dialogic public relations, indicating the appreciation this “ideal” public relations paradigm. Findings reveal that participants highlighted mutuality, two-way communication, and
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Transparency as critical characteristics of dialogic public relations in the O&G industry, which partially align with the dialogic features proposed by Kent and Taylor (2002).

Second, our study narrows the research gap between theoretical development and practice. Our findings confirm the value and practicality of dialogic public relations, advocating for this approach to public relations, even in the controversial industry. However, the findings suggest that unique challenges faced by the industry constrain the practice of dialogic communication in fulfilling all five features suggested by Kent and Taylor (2002) and most of the time, dialogic communication was practiced partially (i.e., fulfilling several features instead of all five at one time). This discovery testifies to the argument suggested by Chen et al., (2020) that not all five features of dialogue should be met in practice. Our findings provided empirical evidence and support Taylor and Kent’s (2014) recent suggestion of a continuum model of dialogue, with monologue at one end and dialogue at the other.

Practical Implications

The empirical evidence of our study also offers practical implications. First, a contingent approach of dialogic communication is recommended. This approach tailors dialogical practices based on different publics’ needs and preferences in order to maximize the opportunity of trust building. Practitioners should be aware of the challenges faced by the industry and consider fulfilling features of dialogic communication depending on specific situations/stakeholders. Although fully dialogic communication is ideal, it is unrealistic to fulfill all five features of the dialogic communication just for the sake of having dialogue. Unique challenges and opportunities should be taken into consideration to evaluate mutually beneficial relationships. Second, because of the knowledge gap of dialogic communication existing between the industry and practitioners, practitioners need to work together to proactively educate the industry of the
value of dialogic communication to facilitate the practice. Thirdly, practitioners and companies should be mentally prepared for the possible negative results (e.g., criticism) of their dialogic efforts due to the controversial nature of the industry. They should not be discouraged because of the undesirable outcomes but may want to learn from the past experiences to improve the next dialogic effort. Lastly, we argue that an industrial level strategy for controversial industry’s dialogic efforts should be considered in addition to the interpersonal, mediated, and organizational strategies (Kent & Taylor, 2002). As legitimacy theory argues, the formation of legitimacy of a company in a controversial industry is constituted by how other institutions in the same environment act (O’Connor et al., 2017; Yang & Ji, 2019). Following this logic, public relations practices of those companies in the same (controversial)industry can impact the overall communication environment and sentiment towards the industry, thus, facilitate or hinder other companies’ dialogical efforts and results. Hence, strategies within an organization are not sufficient, an industrial level approach to dialogue is recommended.

**Conclusion**

This study contributes to the current literature of dialogic public relations from practitioner’s perspective, revealing practitioners’ understanding, evaluation, and practice of this public relations approach. The research results support and advocate for a context-based model of dialogic communication model in the O&G industry with the controversies surrounding the industry and the internal and external challenges associated with public relations practitioners in mind. Also, our study illustrates the dialogic strategies used by the practitioners and raise issues of generational gaps in understandings of social media and ethical public relations practices. Future research could expand to other controversial industries to generate more generatable and
comparable insights about dialogic public relations and incorporate stakeholders’ evaluation of organizations’ dialogic efforts.

References


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