



The Necessity of Public Relations for Sustainable Mining Activities

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This paper reports research about the necessity of image making for sustainable mine developments in the Republic of Korea. One of the big risks in mining activities is mining area residents opposing mine developments and operations. Analysis of the media reports on disputes between mining companies and residents can determine causes of opposing mine developments, dispute process, and influences of disputes on processes of mining projects. To do this, civil complaints from 2009 to 2012 and 24 media reports since 2000 on opposing mining activities are analyzed. And, to analyze difficulties of mining companies, the survey is conducted to target to mining companies. 57 representatives of mining companies are participated in the survey.

The result of analysis cited that the major reasons of anti-mining activities are environmental degradation and reduced agricultural productivity. And specifically because of water pollution (50%), crop damages (33%), and mining dust pollution (21%), communities of mining area are against mine developments and operations.

However, 25% of residents have experience of the damage caused by mining activities and the remaining 75% of residents opposing mining activities simply have anxiety about mining pollution. In the past, construction-oriented, environment-unfriendly mining projects had lasted. And while mine reclamation had been postponed in abandoned mines, mining area residents had suffered from mining pollution. So, mining area residents are highly influenced by the prejudice that mining activities are harmful to mining area communities.

Current mining projects in South Korea, unlike the past mining activity, focus on minimizing environmental damage and contributing to mining area communities financially. But, in many case of disputes between mining companies and mining area residents, the both cannot reach an agreements because of the negative prejudice. Moreover, some communities categorically refuse any mining activity.

On the other hand, in the survey to determine what the greatest difficulties of the current mining activities, 54% of mining companies chose environmental regulations, 26% of mining companies chose conflicts between mine area residents and mining companies. Environmental regulations are may defined as the greatest difficulty of current mining activities. But most of environmental regulation's problems are caused by frictions with residents, because all of South Korean mines are very close to villages. So, the biggest difficulty of mining activities can be defined conflicts between residents and mining companies. Moreover, general people in South Korea including some mining engineers recognize the mining industry as a declined and pollution industry.

Without clear understanding of mining activities, any mine developments and policies related to mining activities cannot be made by rational discussions. And, if their recognition is not formed in a rational way, it will be turned to extreme fear or blind hatred. Therefore, to understand mining activities correctly, the effective public relations strategy is necessary such as corporate advertisements or public advertisements.