

Public Relations Management in Building School Image: A Case Study

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Abstract:

SDI Miftahul Huda, Kedungwaru, Tulungagung is strongly committed to developing the best educational institutions. Seeing the institution's purpose, it is understood that schools must be able to improve the quality of education and optimize the participation of the community who give good opinions for the school's image. This study aims to understand the management of public relations in building the school's image. The research method used is qualitative. The data collection technique is done by interview, observation, and documentation. Data analysis used is data reduction, data presentation, and concluding. The study results indicate that the implementation of public relations in building the school's image is carried out through internal and external work programs, where each work program has a role in building the image of SDI Miftahul Huda. Public relations strategy in building an image is carried out by evaluating public behavior, identifying policies and procedures of the organization with the public's wishes, and planning and establishing an action program so that the public can accept and understand the program held by the school.

Keywords: *Public Relations Management, School Image, Perception, Society*

Abstrak:

SDI Miftahul Huda, Kedungwaru, Tulungagung berkomitmen kuat mengembangkan lembaga pendidikan terbaik. Melihat tujuan lembaga tersebut, dapat dipahami bahwa sekolah harus dapat meningkatkan mutu pendidikan dan mengoptimalkan peran serta masyarakat yang memberi opini baik bagi citra sekolah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami tentang manajemen humas dalam membangun citra sekolah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan datanya dilakukan dengan wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Analisis data yang digunakan adalah reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan humas dalam membangun citra sekolah dilakukan melalui program kerja internal maupun eksternal, di mana masing-masing program kerja memiliki peran dalam membangun citra di SDI Miftahul Huda. Strategi humas dalam membangun citra dilakukan dengan mengevaluasi perilaku publik, mengidentifikasi kebijakan dan prosedur dari organisasi dengan keinginan publik, dan merencanakan serta menetapkan program aksi agar publik dapat menerima dan memahami program yang diadakan oleh sekolah.

Kata Kunci: *Manajemen Humas, Citra Sekolah, Persepsi, Masyarakat*

INTRODUCTION

An educational institution must make every effort to establish a positive image in the minds of students and faculty (Mulyadi, 2018; Sholikhah, 2021). People will take their children to school if they have a favorable opinion of the school and vice versa. It takes a long time to develop a favorable impression (Intania, 2020). Image development is influenced by various elements such as academic reputation, school appearance, fees, personal attention, location (including school choice), job placement, social activities, and educational programs (Wahyuni, 2018). The institution's image is formed by many aspects, starting from its history, the figure of the organization as its primary goal, excellent service quality, and success in those related to social responsibility (Khasanah et al., 2021).

Educational institutions, especially SDI Miftahul Huda, Kedungwaru, and Tulungagung, must instill a positive image of themselves in the minds of the general public. This is done so that community members can make an informed decision about whether or not to enroll their children in the appropriate educational institution. Beginning with the institution's identity, which is expressed through its leader, the institution's name, and other displays such as public media, visual, auditory, and audiovisual displays to promote the institution, the image of an educational institution are formed (Azlina, 2021). The institution's identity and image can also be found in non-physical manifestations, such as the values and philosophies that are developed, services, work styles, and internal and external communication channels, among other things (Sandyakala, 2020; Prahesti et al., 2021).

It is not possible to print images of objects, people, or institutions since images are formed by one's knowledge, understanding, and perception of something. One's knowledge can form images, understanding something and so cannot be printed like things (Mabkhot et al., 2017; Khasanah et al., 2021). The image is established due to the institution's efforts to carry out its operational activities, which are primarily based on the provision of services to the public (Karsono et al., 2021). The better a service, the better the institution's image (Tamindael & Ruslim, 2021). Image formation is also based on a person's experience of something that builds a mental attitude. This is supported by the research conducted by Dwiyama & Nurhasanah (2020), who found that there are three stages to developing a brand image: creating perceptions, maintaining perceptions, and modifying perceptions. Similarly, according to the findings of Alwi & Kitchen (2014) if educational services are unable to establish a positive image of themselves, consumers will be less confident in the services they are receiving, and the production of the services sold will not be purchased.

This is also supported by the findings of the Sudjiani et al., (2019) study, which found a substantial relationship between the image and quality of educational services and student happiness in educational institutions. Hasan (2017) says that public relations management is crucial in the development of the image and contestation of private Islamic religious universities to be able to compete successfully in the higher education market. The fundamental goal and the reputation and achievements to be attained in the public relations

sector are image and reputation (Abidin et al., 2019). Although the image itself is abstract (intangible) and cannot be measured statistically, the form of the image can be perceived as a result of excellent or terrible decisions made by others (Chen & Chen, 2014). Such as acceptance and positive and negative responses, especially from the public (target audience) and the broader community (Roziqin & Rozaq, 2018).

SDI Miftahul Huda, Kedungwaru, and Tulungagung, which have a good image, will be noticed by the community so that in the end, it will form an optimistic view communicated from one word of mouth to another (Plumeyer et al., 2019). Therefore, SDI Miftahul Huda must not forget the physical condition, skills, facilities, offices, and employees. Public services must always align with one goal: satisfying consumers (Amron, 2018).

Everyone's view of an organization is not the same because each person's experience is different. For this reason, SDI Miftahul Huda always provides information to the public related to the activities and activities of the institution in order to gain sympathy, empathy, and support from the community. This institution strives to create a good image in the people's hearts. People will take their children to school if they have a favorable opinion of the school and vice versa. It takes a long time to cultivate a positive image. Image development is influenced by various elements such as academic reputation, school appearance, fees, personal attention, location (including school choice), job placement, social activities, and educational programs (Soemira & Ardianto, 2017).

Quality schools need to inform the broader community with school public relations management (Rahman, 2019). So that good opinions and a positive image from the community appear and develop, SDI Miftahul Huda pays attention to the aspects of public relations management. SDI Miftahul Huda is strongly committed to developing educational institutions in the best direction and by the community's expectations, which aims to raise a generation of role models who are intellectual, faithful, and pious in their religious beliefs. It can be seen from the institution's objectives that a school that is worthy of being emulated must be able to improve all aspects of the quality of education while also paying close attention to the community's role in fostering positive attitudes toward the institution's reputation.

In light of the statistics, facts, and theories that support the relevance of public relations management in developing a school's image, the researchers concentrate their research on each stage of the public relations management process, starting with planning, starting with building a school image formed from activities and relationships patterns. Given the importance of public relations in schools and the information needed by the community about schools that have a quality image, public relations must be appropriately managed so that schools have a good image and get positive feedback from the community. Thus, it is essential to conduct research exploring information related to public relations management in building school image at SDI Miftahul Huda, Kedungwaru, Tulungagung, East Java.

RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative research is to find out where the events that become the object of research take place to get direct and up-to-date information about the problem in question and cross-check the existing materials (Sugiyono, 2018). As far as data quality goes, this study is classified as qualitative research, which is defined as research that seeks to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, and other phenomena, holistically and through the description in the form of words and language, in a unique natural context, and by employing a variety of natural methods (Creswell, 2015).

The data collection technique used in this research is observation, which involves the researcher in the field. In other words, researchers interact directly with the activities carried out by research subjects in their environment while also collecting data systematically in field notes. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore in-depth information according to the focus of the research on several informants, totaling nine people, who were selected by purposive sampling. Paperwork is utilized to find information on things or variables in notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, agendas, or other forms of documentation used as sources of supporting data to back up claims (Fitri & Haryanti, 2020).

The technique for data analysis is carried out in the following ways: 1) data reduction refers to the selection process, emphasizing simplicity, abstraction, and transformation of "raw" data seen in written field notes.; 2) presentation of research data; 3) drawing conclusions/verification as a researcher's effort to find, test, re-check or understand the meaning or meaning, regularities, patterns, explanations, plots, causes, and effects, or prepositions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Public Relations Management at Miftahul Huda Kedungwaru

In order to manage public relations at SDI Miftahul Huda, the institution must first conduct an internal and external analysis to find out about the school's position in the eyes of the community. To find out the school's current position, the principal, together with the school development team, conducted a SWOT analysis whose data was taken from direct survey activities, interviews with the community, and the distribution of stakeholder satisfaction questionnaires. This is as conveyed by the DMA as the principal, who stated that to know the institution's position, we must involve all parties to go into the field, not fictitious data that endangers the dynamics of school development. In this case, the school formed a special team to determine the public's perception of this institution.

Furthermore, from the data obtained by the institution, SDI Miftahul Huda carried out mapping and planning to develop good relations between schools and the community through a work program handled by the vice-principal of the public relations department. From the data obtained, then the school's public relations party carried out strategic planning with all school components to create a public relations work program in order to meet the

expectations of the community and schools, especially in building a good image of the institution in the eyes of the community.

The application of public relations in building the school's image is accomplished by implementing internal and external work programs, with each work program playing a role in the development of the school's image. Public relations arise because of the school's desire to market the school to the broader community so that the institution has a place in the community's hearts (Hasanah, 2019). Public relations emerged, and its role was optimized considering that at the beginning, SDI Miftahul Huda did not receive a good and warm welcome from the surrounding community because the community did not know the advantages and disadvantages of the institution. Therefore, the school tries to optimize the role and function of school public relations so that its activities are more effective and efficient (Ali et al., 2019).

Public relations activities carried out at SDI Miftahul Huda vary widely, such as making visits to students' homes, holding parent meetings, creating class groups, liaison report cards between students, parents, and teachers, and various other programs at familiarizing and intensifying the relationship between guardians. Students with the school. In addition, the school also holds significant events, such as the commemoration of Islamic and national holidays, which these activities bring together parents, the community, and the government. The following program of public relations activities is to carry out promotions in various media, both print media and electronic media, which are routinely carried out by schools, such as promotions on the radio, conveying information on school success and achievements in print and online media, as well as information that is routinely submitted through the school website.

Public relations management carried out by schools is based on; 1) current and future school management is increasingly autonomous, so school principals often produce policies related to improving school quality which must be accompanied by good relations between schools and their communities. Therefore, it is necessary to have an active role in public relations to deliver various school programs and disseminate these policies to both internal and external communities; 2) Healthy and dynamic competition between educational institutions in seizing the interest of prospective students to study at the educational institution, so it is required that a work unit is needed that manages and provides information or news about educational institutions that are always good and positive. This spurs all school components to be more creative and innovative in building public trust in schools; 3) the development of increasingly rapid media platforms, both print, and electronic media, so schools must be able to adapt and take advantage of the existing media. This causes public relations at SDI Miftahul Huda to be carried out and developed (Trimanah & Wulandari, 2018; Rahman, 2019).

The school's public relations activities will then be evaluated in stages based on continuous improvement. This is as conveyed by the head of the PR section of SDI Miftahul Huda, who said that every time we carry out a public relations program, the leadership here constantly evaluates to determine the extent of the program's success impact on increasing public trust in schools.

Through this continuous evaluation, weaknesses and shortcomings will be found that must be corrected for the success of the following public relations program.

Communities with schools or educational institutions can be described as urban or rural, agricultural or non-agricultural, industrial or non-residential, middle class or lower class (Sugandi, 2011). So what is faced by educational institutions is not a community that has the same interests and problems, namely the education of children according to the needs of individuals and society. This painting of the nature of the school community may provide instruction to the administrator of an educational institution on how he or she wants to work with the community.

The conception of the relationship between schools or educational institutions and the community is as follows: The concept of "waiting," i.e., educational institutions only wait and expect attention and assistance from the community; The preventive concept of educational institution activities is only to prevent things that are not desired by the community; The concept of danger signs for public relations activities occurs when there is a danger, for example, a fire, so that educational institutions need assistance with the community; The concept of the exhibition of an educational institution only exhibiting its activities to the public, of course, only certain things that have been selected; the concept of the prestige of educational institution activities only to highlight their career; The concept of partnership, this relationship can be interpreted as a reciprocal process relationship. Where the needs and desires of the community also become the needs and desires of educational institutions; The concept of social leadership, an educational institution as the leading educational institution for the community, should be expected to foster leadership with parties who are closely related to social problems (Ilmiati, 2016).

Public relations strategy in building an image at SDI Miftahul Huda by evaluating public behavior, identifying policies and procedures of individuals or organizations with public desires, and planning and establishing action programs so that the public can accept and understand. This is as conveyed by one of the teachers at the institution, who said that schools need to understand how the public perceives the institution so that from the initial data, the school can develop strategies and policies so that the community can accept them.

The results of this study are by the opinion of Anan (2016) who says that public relations are a management function that forms and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their public. The success or failure of public relations depends on how to form and maintain mutually beneficial relationships (Wiwitan & Yulianita, 2017). Every activity in the organization requires management and public relations activities in schools or educational institutions. Management is widely defined as the science and art of achieving goals through the activities of others. This means that the public relations management applied at SDI Miftahul Huda can only be implemented if the achievement of these goals is done not only by one person but also by more than one person. This means that the school involves many parties in its activities.

In order to reach defined goals, management must be carried out in the most efficient manner possible as a process of motivating others to achieve specific results. The process in management is a type of competence or skill that allows an organization to obtain results to achieve goals through the actions of the company (Siripipathanakul, 2021). In order to do so, management encompasses the concepts of leadership, human relations, decision-making, people, means, and cooperation. Management is a collection of concepts (Mohamed & Yusoff, 2021).

There are two strategies to improve the quality of education: improving the quality of education in schools and improving the quality of education outside of school or the quality of education in general (Kuswanto & Anderson, 2021). In general, all public relations activities must support programs to improve the quality of education. The roles and functions of public relations in schools include; 1) fostering a harmonious relationship with the internal public, as well as relations with the external public; 2) Fostering two-way communication to the internal public and external public by disseminating messages, information, and publication of research results, and various policies that the leadership has determined; 3) Identify and analyze an opinion or various problems, both in educational institutions and in the community; 4) Ability to hear the wishes or aspirations contained in the community; 5) Be skilled in translating leadership policies correctly (Soemira & Ardianto, 2017).

Public Relations in educational institutions or schools are to develop relations between educational institutions and society. In addition, it also creates a sense of participation and shared responsibility between household components, educational institutions, and the community in developing the educational mandate, namely educating the nation's life (Trimanah & Wulandari, 2018). The responsibilities of Public Relations in Schools in carrying out their activities are; 1) Delivering to the public to support the achievement of institutional understanding, especially in education, research, service to the community; 2) Must educate the public to understand, respect, tolerate and maintain the primary need for freedom for students to learn and seek the truth without any pressure (Hasan, 2017). Thus, public relations in schools play a role in providing information to the public about activities that have been running in their institutions, whether the results of research, educational processes, and community service, in order to meet the information needs of the community on the proper function of a school.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of public relations in the development of the school's image is accomplished through the implementation of internal and external work programs, each of which contributes to the development of the school's image of SDI Miftahul Huda. The PR strategy in image building is carried out by evaluating public behavior, identifying the policies and procedures of the organization with the public's wishes, and planning and establishing an action program so that the public can accept and understand the

program held by the school. This research implies that the school has a positive image, which is the school's hope to boost public trust and the competitiveness of the institution, which will have repercussions for increasing the number of students who enroll in the institution. Only the management of public relations in the development of the school's image and the consequences of the school's image for the institution are covered in this research. With a better and broader concept, this research can be developed in different backgrounds and research subjects and use various indicators to add to the scientific treasures in education management.

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