

Public Relations Management in Building the Image of Schools in Senior High School

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the planning, implementation and evaluation of community relations to improve the image of schools. This case study research was conducted at a high school in one of the provinces in Indonesia with a qualitative method. This study findings reveal schools' patterns of understanding of planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating to improve their collaborative relations with the surrounding community to improve schools' quality through good internal and external cooperation. This study documents several key contributions made to establish a two-way, comprehensive communication in ensuring mutual cooperation on maintaining outstanding school quality assurance.

Keywords: Communication, Cooperation, Management Strategy, Public Relations Management, School Image

INTRODUCTION

Definition of Public Relations Management

Public Relations (PR) is an art of communicating with the public to build mutual understanding, avoid misunderstanding and misperceptions while building a positive image of the institution. Public relations or PR is the art of creating a better public understanding for deeper public trust in an individual or institution, Rahmat (2016). Furthermore, according to Suryosubroto (2004), it is interpreting community relations as an activity to instill and gain understanding, support, trust, and appreciation for and from the public as an entity in particular and society in general. The important points of public relations are to provide valuable school information to the surrounding communities and convince them. To promote the institutions, it is necessary to adopt their activities toward the school environment. According to Çoruk (2018), the adoption of the social environment and providing community support for ensured by forming a relationship with the public, or public relations, is a means of approach to the surrounding communities, to support any policy decided by an organization, to their obtain support or a good response. Skandari (2004) argued that community relations are used to build and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding of an organization and society.

Herbst (2015) suggested that as management of relationships between a company and its publics, public relations is posited on the level of a strategic management function for it can influence the way stakeholders support the company's goals. Making public relations (PR) as the main communication channel is a big challenge since it is related to the media's perception of community work relations. Additionally, parents of students

and prospective students are influential to manage communication for the benefits of schools. Furthermore, the independence of public relations as a management tool, status and position determines their performance as a communication tool. Their position within a company can be a means of identifying job objectives and may also reflect communication policies that are management objectives.

The function of public relations in schools is in line with Law of the Republic of Indonesia number 20 of 2003 saying that "The national education system must ensure equal distribution of educational opportunities, quality improvement as well as the relevance and efficiency of education management to face challenges following the demands of changing local, national and global life so it is necessary to plan education in a planned, directed and continuous way." The public relations function above is in compliance with Nasution (2012) explaining that the role of Public Relations in educational institutions, including: 1) Fostering a harmonious relationship to the internal public; 2) Fostering a two-way communication with the internal public and external public; 3) Identifying and analyzing an opinion or various problems, both those in educational institutions and those in the community; 4) Able to hear people's aspirations; 5) Skillful in translating the policies of the leadership well. Public relations management may function as a warning signal whose role is to support or assist the management. The importance of education makes school collaboration with the community a basic need. The collaboration is intended for the well-going of education in schools in general and to improve student achievement in particular. Lerner (1964) mentioned the function of public relations as information provision, a place of promotion, and establishing cooperation.

To sum up, public relations (PR) is a continuous process, in which management seeks to obtain goodwill and understanding from employees, customers, and the wider communities, inward through analysis, and out through statements. Thus, the implementation of community relations is a continual and planned process to obtain good faith from all parties, both to internal parties (principals, teachers, staff) and to external parties (parents, communities).

The Importance of Community Relationships to Education

Schools as a center of community education are impossible to uncouple themselves and stand-alone, doing their planning to improve the quality of schools without involving the community. Community aspirations and requests are needed as inputs for improvements. The community needs are the responsibility of the school as a medium for moral improvement, which in turn their students will go back into the community. Besides, the community also wants to be recognized for its existence by either directly or indirectly providing a positive influence on the development. For this reason, the community should support schools in their area Vidarta (1988).

The relationship between schools and the community is a mutual relationship. Schools are a means to foster and develop students' abilities in school. Schools are trusted by the community to educate, train, foster and develop the abilities of their children education. They, both, play a role in achieving school goals effectively and efficiently. The community occupies a role in the school activities and programs, while schools knows the community's needs, hopes, and demands. The relationship must be harmoniously developed for the success of school programs. Therefore, community relations are an important matter in an educational institution. (Christian & Basil, 2018) conveys that customer relationship management known as student relationship

management has developed an approach based on maintaining positive relationship, with customers. Increasing customer loyalty and expanding customer lifetime value.

Public relations management in schools is continuously implemented, rather than inconsistently. In other words, it should not be demonstrated merely once a year, once in a semester/quarterly, or when asking for financial assistance from parents/community. This leads the community to consider every call to school meeting as a call for financial assistance. As a result, they tend not to come or just represent others to attend the school invitations. It is foreseeable that parents often represent their presence to others, so that their attendance only ranges from 60% - 70% or even less than 30%. This inflicts that the school will find it difficult to get total supports from parents of students and the community Rahmad (2016).

Another definition of community relation, according to Effendy (2002), is a two-way communication between the organization and the public reciprocally to support the functions and objectives of management by enhancing co-operation fostering mutual interests. Schools and communities need interaction, communicating with each other so that people know about school activities. The school strives for the community to continue to co-operate in school activities, this is done so that the school remains accepted during the community.

Public Relations Management Strategy in Schools

The public relations management strategy in schools is identifying a target unit, emerging problems, and the power structure of the target units, as well as evaluating a pattern and level of unit attitudes, selecting elements or tactical options for public relations strategies, evaluating, and identifying changes in government regulations or policies, etc. The final step is to describe a public relations strategy, and tactics to implement the steps of a well-prepared program, communicate, and evaluate the results of work.

Environmental support can be provided through public relations and it becomes easier to effectively achieve school's goals. To enhance organizational effectiveness, community recognition, indirect involvement is required Herbst (2015).

Thus, schools/madrasahs must develop cooperation and partnerships with the communities, industries, businesses, alumni and other education units at home and overseas. Relationship management strategies are to build people for every business and its offerings, and increase brand loyalty Grunig (2011). Commonly, relationship building occurs at the customer level, but it is valuable between businesses as well.

Implementation of Public Relations Management in School in Improving School Image

The community considers schools as competent institutions in fostering and educating the development of their students. Therefore, schools must encourage the community participation. This is not only of their misconception of the existence of schools in the community. Particularly if their socioeconomic conditions are low, making their focus is on the basic needs of their daily lives and overlooking their participation. Team building, trust, and communication are critical in establishing authentic partnerships (Johnson, Annabel, & Johnson, 2014).

Gassing dan Suryanto (2016) said that the steps in creating a public relations work program were five elements, namely (1) data collection. Data and information for public relations programs can come from historical records, oral information about the magazine, print media, social media, and so on, (2) Analysis. The analysis begins by making a judgment about the strengths and weaknesses of the data collected, (3) the strategy and determination of the media. Problem strategy and media determination, the first step that needs to be done is to recognize the target public, (4) Implementation. After collecting data, make an analysis and determine the strategy. The next step is to carry out the work program, (5) Evaluation. Namely, the evaluation is not only thinking about the implementation of the work program. But it should be done every time completing the elements of the work program.

The more important thing to attract the community attention towards school education is through constant efforts. The community will be very enthusiastic in supporting school education institutions both morally and materially.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative case study approach. According to Sugiyono (2013), qualitative research is a research method based on the post-positivism philosophy used to examine the conditions of natural objects, qualitative data analysis and emphasize the results of research on generalizations. Yin (2009, p. 9) explains that the case study approach is more shown to research with the question of what, who, where, how and why. This question is used to get a picture of how public relations in schools able to create a good school image.

This research was conducted at the Senior High School in Yogyakarta. The reason for using this method is that this research is directly related to the object to be studied, namely humans (social). Anselm (1998, p.9), influenced by the opinion of Park, Thomas, Dewey, Meade, Hughes, and Blummer in the Basics of Qualitative Research, states that researchers who deal directly with humans (socially) must use a qualitative approach, activities carried out is to conduct interviews, study documentation, and draw conclusions from the information directly. The reasons researchers used qualitative research methods referring to Anselm's (1998) opinion were: (a) researchers went to the field to find out what was happening, (b) the relevance of data-based theory for the development of discipline and social action, (c) the complexity of phenomena and human actions , (d) the belief that humans are actors who play an active role in responding to problematic situations, (e) awareness that humans act based on meaning, (f) understanding that meaning is defined and redefined through interactions, (g) sensitivity to nature will reveal a events, (h) awareness of the relationship between conditions (structures), actions (processes) and consequences.

This research was conducted at Senior High School in Yogyakarta. The participants were the principal, the head of public relations department, the head of student division, the teachers, the school committee, students and their parents of students, as well as the surrounding community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the short review above, key findings emerge:

1. Public relations planning at Senior High School Yogyakarta comprises the necessary components, activities and evaluation tools.

Based on research findings in schools, it appears that: (1) the planning of PR work programs was firstly formulated internally before discussed with the principal and all coordinators, (2) second discussion was held at the work meetings of all teachers to provide inputs and advice, (3) the principle used in formulating work programs in the field of public relations is determining work programs based on the period and costs required, (4) planning community relations is aimed at improving school image through services and information provision to parents, guests and the community, (5) to improve the image of a good school, the school must establish cooperation and communication with other educational institutions and communities. The problem is that there are still many PR activities that are not listed on the agenda of the PR work program.

The implementation of public relations management in Yogyakarta Public High School is (1) the school forms an implementing committee that involves all elements of the school, comprising teachers, principals, and students, (2) the principal monthly monitored community relations, (3) the coordinator always makes improvements or directives to staff in its activities, (4) using public relations media as the delivery of information such as school magazines, meetings, websites, billboards, notice boards, newspapers, and media local television.

Evaluation of the management of public relations at Yogyakarta 8 Public High School was carried out in stages, including: 1) the evaluation of the preparatory stage to carry out the direction and objectives of the implementation; 2) the evaluation of the implementation phase, namely the agenda of periodic reports and monitoring of the development of community relations activities carried out by the school principal every month; and 3) the evaluation of impacts, which is the last activity at the year-end meeting which contains an agenda of prior activities, constraints and corrective measures for the coming year.

2. Improve management of school-community relation can be used through dialogue by holding continuous meetings to discuss school development and establish programs as a way engaged school community members, and create suggestion boxes for schools to easily find out what the community wants to get a program at school.

3. The school's effort to improve its image through community relations is to improve the delivery of information to the community, by updating information in school magazines, school sites, or media information or others ensuring the public know the school's agenda in carrying out the vision and mission of the school.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it would appear that: (1) holding a meeting in the new school year and making a program of public relations activities; (2) public relations management activities are carried out with two activities, firstly, by conducting social services with the community, and secondly, by making religious programs and involving community

participation; (3) schools utilizing social media existing to connect with the community, and (4) failure in public relations management in schools can be minimized by using dialogue and deliberation to establish good relationships with the community.

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