

The Role of Public Relations in Maintaining Good Relations Between Campus Internal Organizations at UIN SU Medan

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Article Information	Abstract
Article History: Received : - Accepted : - Published: -	The role of Public Relations in maintaining good relations between internal campus organizations is an important aspect in creating synergy and harmonization within the North Sumatra State Islamic University (UINSU). This research aims to explore the strategic role of Public Relations in maintaining effective communication, identifying obstacles faced, and proposing strategies for managing relations between internal campus organizations. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this research reveals that Public Relations plays a role as a liaison and mediator in managing communication between the Student Executive Board (BEM), Department Student Association (HMJ), and Student Activity Unit (UKM). The main obstacles faced include a lack of involvement from related parties, miscommunication, and differences in interests between organizations. To overcome these obstacles, effective strategies include strengthening communication systems, implementing a participatory approach, and optimizing internal campus media. It is hoped that these findings can become a reference for higher education institutions in developing the role of Public Relations to strengthen synergy between internal organizations.
Keywords: Public relations, communication, internal organization, synergy, relationship strategy	

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INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, the existence of Public Relations is not only limited to the delivery of information, but also includes the management of good relationships and collaboration between organizations. Public relations has a responsibility to build a positive image of the institution and create effective communication channels.

Every organization is built and developed based on the goals to be achieved. In an effort to achieve goals, an organization always develops a system that will guide and direct organizational behavior in accordance with the goals that have been set. The nature of interdependence and the need to create balance in a system, presents another very important need, namely building and developing an organizational communication system. A good communication system between departments and between actors will determine the success of achieving organizational goals. In an organization that regulates and controls the communication function is Public Relations.

Thus, the role of Public Relations is the key in creating synergy between internal campus organizations. Public Relations (Public Relations) has a very important role in maintaining the image, reputation, and harmonious relationship in an institution, including in a campus environment such as the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU). In the campus environment, there are various internal organizations such as the Student Executive Board (BEM), the Student Association

Department (HMJ), and Student Activity Unit (UKM). Each of these organizations has different goals and functions but is interrelated in achieving the vision and mission of the campus.

In the midst of differences in interests and existing organizational dynamics, the potential for misunderstandings or conflicts between organizations can increase if not managed properly. Therefore, Public Relations plays the role of a liaison and mediator who maintains effective communication, avoids misinformation, and builds productive cooperation between organizations. However, the role of Public Relations is often not optimally optimized in supporting good relations between these organizations. Through the right communication approach and strategy, Public Relations can strengthen synergy among campus organizations to support the achievement of common goals.

With the understanding that Public Relations is a management function, this means that Public Relations is an inherent function and cannot be separated from the management of an institution. The goal is to form good will, tolerance, mutual cooperation, mutual trust, mutual understanding, and mutual respect, as well as to obtain favorable public opinion, as well as the right image based on the principles of harmonious relationships, both internal and external relations.

Previous research by Surbakti (2019) explained that Public Relations has an important role in building the image of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra through various communication and publication activities. The research shows that the support from superiors and the involvement of all elements of the university greatly affect the effectiveness of the Public Relations function. In addition, other research also revealed that good information management by Public Relations can improve the university's image in the eyes of the public.

This research aims to explore the role of Public Relations in maintaining good relations between internal organizations at UINSU. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide

insight into effective communication strategies and create recommendations for the development of the Public Relations function in the campus environment. To analyze the role of UINSU Public Relations in maintaining good relations between internal campus organizations. To identify communication strategies used by Public Relations in building relationships between organizations. To explore the challenges and obstacles faced by Public Relations in carrying out its functions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Public Relations

Public relations is an activity that intends to achieve goodwill, hope, mutual understanding, and image about society. The object of Public Relations is to produce good public opinions that benefit all groups (Rachmadi, 1996).

According to Jefkins, public relations is the process of conveying to the public internally and externally about an institution and its entire public in the form of obtaining the intended object based on a common understanding (Umam, 2012).

The definition of Public Relations according to Frank Jefkins translated by Daniel Yadin in a book entitled Public Relations (2003: 10) is "all forms of scheduled communication, both inside and out, interrupted by one institution and its society in achieving the purpose of characteristics based on mutual understanding". Inward relationships are relationships between components in an institution. External relationships are networks that are fostered with individuals outside the institution".

Public relations is an effort to form a balanced network with the public through a 2-way communication method. A balanced network emerges with mutual understanding, mutual trust, and a good image. Public relations is an activity carried out for a group of individuals in an institution to raise, know, create a Good Image, and accommodate all public expectations. Public Relations in the term often referred to in English is "Public Relations". Therefore, public relations has the exact same interpretation as Public Relations, only the task of Public Relations is in a Government Agency whose scope is smaller than public relations.

From the above definition, it can be concluded that Public Relations is an activity that aims to build and maintain good relations between an institution and its public. Public relations focuses on creating goodwill, mutual understanding, and positive images through two-way and planned communication. This process involves interaction both internally and externally, with the aim of reaching a common understanding and meeting public expectations. Although the terms "public relations" and "public relations" have similar meanings, public relations is more often applied in the context of government agencies with a more limited scope. Overall, public relations plays an important role in improving the image and reputation of institutions and building trust with the public.

The Role of Public Relations

The role of public relations in an institution is to market, inform related to activities, work programs contained in the institution so that it is better known by the wider community. Public relations also plays a role in receiving and analyzing criticism and suggestions from the public related to the activities carried out by the institution. The criticism and suggestions received by public relations practitioners are analyzed and discussed with the leadership.

Discussions with leaders are important to be carried out so that there is an appropriate solution to the criticism and suggestions of the community.

According to Morisan, M.A. (2010:125) stated that the role and function of public relations can be realized in a pre-designed public relations activity program with the right strategy so that it can run well.

According to Dozier and Broom in Ruslan (2016:20), the role of public relations in an organization can be divided into four categories, as follows:

1. Expert Prescriber: An experienced public relations expert practitioner with high abilities can help find solutions in resolving public relations problems. The relationship between public relations practitioners and organizational management can be likened to the relationship between doctors and patients, where management is passive and relies on advice and recommendations from public relations experts to deal with the problems at hand. Thus, the expertise and experience of public relations practitioners are important in building effective communication strategies and managing good relationships with the public.
2. Communication Facilitator: In this case, the PR Practitioner acts as a communicator or mediator to help the management in terms of hearing the aspirations desired and expected by the public. On the other hand, practitioners are also required to be able to explain the desires, policies and expectations of the organization/institution to the public. So that mutual communication will produce a trust and understanding from both parties.
3. Problem Solving Process Facilitator: The role of PR practitioners in the process of solving public relations problems is part of the management team. This is intended to help the organization's leaders both as advisers to take an execution action (decision) in overcoming problems or crises that are being faced rationally and professionally.
4. Communication Technician: The role of this communication technician makes public relations practitioners as journalists in residence who only provide communication technical services or known as the method of communication in organization. The communication system in the organization depends on each section or level, that is, technically communication, both the flow and the communication media used from the leadership level with the subordinates will differ from the subordinate to the upper level.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to explore in depth the role of Public Relations in maintaining good relations between internal organizations at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU). This approach was chosen because it provides flexibility for researchers to comprehensively understand the dynamics of internal communication, public relations strategies, and practices carried out by the Public Relations department in building synergy between work units within the university. Descriptive qualitative allows this research not only to describe phenomena factually, but also to analyze the meaning contained in interactions between organizational actors, including in the context of coordination, information delivery, and internal conflict resolution.

Through this approach, data is collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, which allows researchers to capture various points of view from informants, such as public relations officials, faculty leaders, and administrative staff within UINSU. This technique allows researchers to gain a sharper understanding of perceptions, experiences, and communication strategies used by Public Relations in creating and maintaining harmonious relationships within organizations. Thus, the descriptive qualitative approach is considered the most appropriate to achieve the objectives of this research, which is to obtain a complete picture of the role and contribution of Public Relations as a strategic liaison between internal organizations at UINSU.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The definition of Public Relations according to The British Institute Of Public Relations in Morissan (2006) is an effort to build and maintain mutual understanding between the organization and the public. In its development, public relations has various definitions, there are very short definitions such as public relations is an effort to do good things so as to gain trust. According to Frank Jefkins (1992) there are so many definitions of public relations, but he himself provides the limitation of public relations, which is something that summarizes the entire planned communication, both in and out between an organization and all its audiences in order to achieve specific goals based on mutual understanding. According to him, public relations in essence is always related to the activity of creating understanding through knowledge, and through these activities, it is hoped that an impact will emerge, namely positive change. Cutlip, Center, and Broom in Keith Butterick (2012) who wrote one of the first books to summarize the theory and practice of Public Relations as follows: Public relations is a management function that identifies, builds, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and various publics that determine its success and failure.

The results of the study show that the role of Public Relations at UINSU is not only administrative, but also strategic. As a communication facilitator, Public Relations plays an important role in bridging the relationship between university leaders and internal organizations, as well as between internal organizations themselves. Through its role as a conflict mediator, Public Relations is able to create a collaborative climate that allows internal organizations to work together in various activities.

However, although Public Relations has a significant role, there are a number of obstacles that must be overcome. Miscommunication, limited human resources, and differences in organizational interests are the main obstacles in maintaining harmonious relationships. This obstacle can be overcome by implementing effective strategies, such as strengthening digital communication systems, managing internal media, and involving organizational representatives in the decision-making process.

This discussion also revealed that the role of Public Relations as a reputation manager is not only limited to internal organizations, but also affects the image of the university as a whole. By publicizing positive activities carried out by BEM, HMJ, and UKM, the university's image in the eyes of students, lecturers, and the general public can be strengthened.

1. The Role of Public Relations in Maintaining Relationships Between Internal Organizations

UINSU Public Relations plays a central role in ensuring smooth communication and collaboration between the Student Executive Board (BEM), the Department Student Association (HMJ), and the Student Activity Unit (UKM). The main roles of Public Relations include:

1. **Communication Facilitator:** Public Relations acts as the main liaison in the delivery of information, policies, and decisions from university leadership to internal organizations.
2. **Conflict Mediator:** When there is a difference in interest between student organizations, Public Relations plays the role of a mediator who helps resolve conflicts by facilitating dialogue and understanding.

Reputation Manager: Public Relations plays a role in maintaining the positive image of the internal organization through managing issues and strengthening positive narratives in the internal media of the campus.

In addition, Public Relations also encourages the creation of a collaborative climate in the campus environment, thus enabling cross-unit cooperation that can strengthen the achievement of common goals.

2. Obstacles Faced by Public Relations in Maintaining Relationships

This research found several challenges that hinder the role of Public Relations in maintaining good relations between internal organizations. Some of these obstacles include:

1. **Miscommunication:** Misunderstandings often arise due to differences in the interpretation of information conveyed by PR to internal organizations, especially when there is a sudden change in policy.
2. **Limited Human Resources (HR):** The limited number of Public Relations staff is inversely proportional to the number of internal organizations that need to be served. This results in a high workload and limited time to meet communication needs.
3. **Lack of Internal Organizational Participation:** Not all internal organizations are proactive in establishing communication with Public Relations, especially when there are no major activities that require special coordination.
4. **Differences in Interests:** Each organization has different agendas and priorities, which sometimes conflict with each other. Public relations must play the role of a mediator to align these interests.

3. Public Relations Strategy in Strengthening Relationships Between Internal Organizations

To overcome these obstacles, UINSU Public Relations implements various effective strategies to strengthen relationships between internal organizations, including:

1. **Strengthening Digital Communication Systems:** Public Relations utilizes digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp groups, internal emails, and campus social media to accelerate the delivery of information to internal organizations.

2. Increasing the Frequency of Meetings and Discussion Forums: Public Relations routinely holds coordination meetings with BEM, HMJ, and SME management. This forum aims to equalize understanding and discuss solutions to problems that arise.
3. Campus Internal Media Management: Public Relations manages various internal media, such as campus newsletters, online news portals, and campus announcements. This media is used as a means of disseminating information in a more structured and organized manner.
4. Participatory Involvement: Public relations involves representatives from internal organizations in making communication policies. This approach encourages a sense of ownership among internal organizations, so they are more responsible for maintaining harmonious relationships.

4. The Impact of the Role of Public Relations on Internal Organizational Relations

The existence of Public Relations at UINSU has a significant influence on the quality of relations between internal organizations. Some of these positive impacts include:

1. Increased Synergy and Collaboration: With the facilitation of Public Relations, internal organizations are easier to collaborate in organizing joint activities, such as seminars, training, and community service.
2. Conflict and Misunderstanding Reduction: The mediation role carried out by Public Relations helps manage conflicts, especially in the division of roles and responsibilities when conducting collaborative activities.
3. Improving Reputation and Organizational Image: Publication of internal organizational activities through campus media contributes to increasing the positive image of the organization in the eyes of students and the university.

The results of this study show that the role of Public Relations is very important in creating harmonious relationships among internal organizations at UINSU. With an effective strategy, Public Relations is able to overcome existing obstacles and strengthen cross-organizational collaboration in the campus environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the role of Public Relations at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU) is very strategic in maintaining and building harmonious relationships between internal campus organizations such as BEM, HMJ, and UKM. Public relations not only functions as a conveyor of information, but also as a facilitator of communication, conflict mediator, and manager of institutional reputation. This role is crucial in creating synergy between organizations to support the achievement of the university's overall vision and mission.

However, in carrying out this role, Public Relations faces a number of obstacles such as miscommunication, limited human resources, lack of participation from internal organizations, and differences in interests between organizations. These obstacles can hinder the effectiveness of communication and collaboration if not managed properly. Therefore, a planned and structured strategy is needed to overcome these obstacles in order to maintain the harmony of internal relations of the campus.

The strategies that have been implemented by UINSU Public Relations—such as strengthening the digital communication system, improving coordination forums, managing internal media, and actively involving organizations in communication policies—have proven effective in increasing synergy and collaboration between organizations. The results of this study indicate that the optimization of the role of Public Relations contributes greatly to the creation of a conducive, transparent, and productive organizational climate, which ultimately has a positive impact on the overall image and reputation of the institution.

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