

PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY TO INCREASE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract :

This research focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of Public Relations management strategies implemented in Islamic-based junior high schools in increasing community participation. The main aim of this research is to examine how various communication techniques, including oral, written, and concrete action communication (Uswa Hasana), as well as the use of social media, can influence the engagement of people from heterogeneous backgrounds. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, which allows the identification of key themes relevant to the research objectives. The research results show that the combination of communication techniques applied was successful in increasing community participation. Oral communication through meetings and discussions, written communication through pamphlets and social media, as well as concrete actions through social and religious activities, all play an important role in reaching and involving the community. The use of social media has proven effective in disseminating information quickly and efficiently. In addition, a strong leadership role in coordinating and motivating the PR team is very influential in the success of the communications program. The implications of this research indicate that PR management strategies that integrate various effective communication and leadership techniques can significantly increase community participation in school activities.

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini fokus pada evaluasi efektivitas strategi manajemen Public Relations yang diterapkan di sekolah menengah pertama berbasis islam dalam meningkatkan partisipasi masyarakat. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimana berbagai teknik komunikasi, termasuk komunikasi lisan, tertulis, dan tindakan nyata (Uswa Hasana), serta penggunaan media sosial, dapat mempengaruhi keterlibatan orang-orang dengan latar belakang heterogen. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam,

observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah analisis tematik, yang memungkinkan teridentifikasinya tema-tema kunci yang relevan dengan tujuan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kombinasi teknik komunikasi yang diterapkan berhasil meningkatkan partisipasi masyarakat. Komunikasi lisan melalui pertemuan dan diskusi, komunikasi tertulis melalui pamflet dan media sosial, serta tindakan nyata melalui kegiatan sosial dan keagamaan, semuanya berperan penting dalam menjangkau dan melibatkan masyarakat. Penggunaan media sosial terbukti efektif dalam menyebarkan informasi secara cepat dan efisien. Selain itu, peran kepemimpinan yang kuat dalam mengkoordinasikan dan memotivasi tim PR sangat berpengaruh dalam keberhasilan program komunikasi. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi manajemen PR yang mengintegrasikan berbagai teknik komunikasi dan kepemimpinan yang efektif dapat meningkatkan partisipasi masyarakat dalam kegiatan sekolah secara signifikan.

INTRODUCTION

Community participation in school activities is one of the important factors that can support educational success (Boru et al., 2020; Bowden et al., 2021; Rusdi et al., 2022). In the current era of globalization, interactions between educational institutions and communities need to be strengthened to ensure optimal support and engagement (ElMassah & Mohieldin, 2020; Singh et al., 2021; Norman et al., 2024; Faiz et al., 2023). SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso realizes the importance of the role of Public Relations management in building harmonious and constructive relationships with the community. Through various communication techniques, such as oral, written, and concrete action communication (Uswa Hasana), the school seeks to reach out to communities with diverse backgrounds.

In the context of communication theory, it is proposed that effective communication requires encoding messages that correspond to the receiver (Moffett et al., 2021; Aririguzoh, 2022; Wijaya et al., 2022; Purwanto et al., 2023). This theory is relevant in the Public Relations strategy applied by SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso, where various communication techniques are used to ensure messages are well received by heterogeneous communities. In addition, stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of managing relationships with various interested parties, including society, to achieve organizational goals (Dmytriiev et al., 2021; Susilawati & Astuti, 2022; Mu et al., 2024; Maulidia & Sanjani, 2023). This is reflected in the school's efforts to involve the community in the planning and implementation of educational programs (Chiu & Chai, 2020; Mahoney et al., 2021; Demchenko et al., 2021).

Despite efforts to increase community participation, there are still challenges in achieving optimal engagement (Anthony Jr, 2024; Purwanto et al., 2023). One of the problems faced is the effectiveness of the various communication techniques used. Not all communication techniques are able to reach all levels of society well, given differences in educational background, economic level, and social strata. In addition, the use of social media as a communication tool also requires further evaluation regarding its effectiveness

and efficiency in disseminating information and building relationships with the community.

Based on these problems, this study will evaluate the effectiveness of communication techniques applied by SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso in increasing community participation. This research will also examine how the role of leaders in PR management can affect the success of programs run. Several previous studies have been conducted on similar topics where among the research from Hyland-Wood et al. (2021) evaluated various communication strategies used by schools in the UK to increase community engagement. The results show that oral and written communication has a significant impact on community participation, especially when adjusted to audience characteristics. Hruska & Maresova, (2020) examined the use of social media by schools in the United States to interact with the community. It was found that social media can reach a wider audience and support the rapid dissemination of information, but its effectiveness depends largely on the content delivered and the interactions that occur on the platform. Pollock. (2020) in their research entitled *Leadership and Communication in Educational Institutions* published in the *Educational Leadership Journal* examines the role of school leaders in managing communication with the community. The results show that effective leadership, which involves team coordination and motivation, is highly influential in successful communication and community participation in school programs.

Although previous research has addressed various aspects of communication and community participation in educational contexts, there are gaps in research related to the combination of various communication techniques and leadership roles in PR management. Previous studies have tended to focus on just one aspect, such as oral communication or social media, without integrating various communication techniques and thorough evaluation of the leader's role. This study aims to fill the gap by comprehensively examining how the combination of communication techniques used by SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso, as well as the role of leaders in public relations management, can increase community participation.

This research offers novelty with a holistic approach that integrates various communication techniques and leadership roles in PR management. The uniqueness of this study lies in the comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of a combination of oral, written, and concrete action communication techniques (Uswa Hasana) in reaching heterogeneous communities. This approach provides a new perspective on understanding and managing the relationship between educational institutions and society. The main objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of communication techniques applied by SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso in increasing community participation. In particular, this study aims to analyze how oral, written, and tangible communication techniques (Uswa Hasana) can reach and influence heterogeneous societies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative descriptive method with case study approach to evaluate the effectiveness of communication techniques applied by

SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso in increasing community participation. The location of this research is SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso which is located at Jl. Imam Bonjol No. 12, Bondowoso, East Java (Priya, 2021). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in-depth information about the experiences, views, and perceptions of various parties involved in PR management at the school. This case study provides a comprehensive and contextual overview of PR management practices at SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso.

Data collection techniques used in this study included in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with principals, PR staff, teachers, and community representatives to gain diverse views on the effectiveness of the communication techniques used (Alam, 2021). Participatory observation is carried out by participating in school activities that involve interaction with the community to observe firsthand how communication techniques are applied. Document analysis involves examining various related documents, such as pamphlets, letters, and social media content used by schools, to understand more about the written communication strategies applied.

The data analysis technique used in this study is thematic analysis (Siedlecki, 2020). Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents were analyzed to identify key themes relevant to the research objectives. The analysis process involves several stages, namely data collection, transcription, coding, and theme identification. Encoding is done manually to capture the nuances and context of the data obtained. The emerging themes are then further analyzed to identify deep patterns, relationships, and meanings. Thematic analysis allows researchers to organize and understand data systematically, so as to produce in-depth and comprehensive findings on the effectiveness of communication techniques in increasing community participation in SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Public Relations Management plays an important role in increasing community participation by fostering strong and positive relationships between educational institutions and the community. Effective public relations strategies involve transparent communication, active engagement, and promotion of an institution's values and achievements (Dmytiryev et al., 2021; Susilawati & Astuti, 2022). By regularly providing the public with up-to-date information on events, successes, and developments, institutions can build trust and encourage engagement. This can be achieved through various channels such as social media, newsletters, community meetings, and open houses. Additionally, involving community members in the decision-making process and inviting their input regarding programs and policies can increase their sense of ownership and commitment. Well-managed public relations efforts not only improve an institution's image but also mobilize community support and participation, ultimately contributing to the institution's growth and success.

Analysis of Public Relations Management in an Effort to Increase Community Participation Based on the results of research conducted at SMP

Islam As Salam Bondowoso, several main findings were found regarding the Public Relations management strategy applied to increase community participation. The headmaster, Tarmidzi, mentioned that various communication techniques are used to convey messages to diverse communities, both in terms of education, economy, and social. Such communication techniques include oral, written, and concrete action. Where, specifically related to the results of this study can be explained through the following Figure 1.

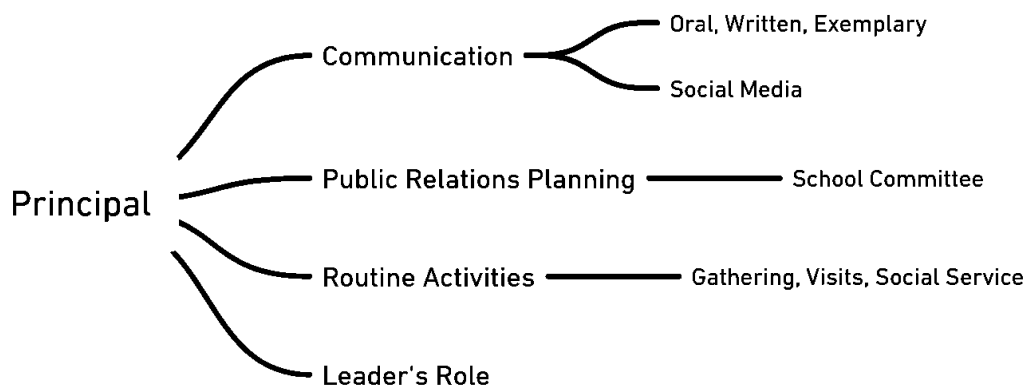


Figure 1. Public Relations Management in an Effort to Increase Community Participation

Analysis of Public Relations Management in an Effort to Increase Community Participation

Based on the results of research conducted at SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso, several main findings were found regarding the Public Relations management strategy applied to increase community participation. The headmaster, Tarmidzi, mentioned that various communication techniques are used to convey messages to diverse communities, both in terms of education, economy, and social. Such communication techniques include oral, written, and concrete action communication (Uswa Hasana). Tarmidzi explained, "In building relationships with the community, SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso uses various communication techniques both verbally, in writing, in mixture and in deeds. This needs to be done so that the message conveyed can be more spread and well received by a relatively diverse community in terms of educational background, economic level or social strata (I_KS_)."

Based on the results of an interview with the Principal of SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso, it was revealed that the institution adopts various communication techniques to build effective relationships with the community. Communication techniques applied include oral, written, and concrete action communication (Uswa Hasana). This strategy is used to ensure that the message to be conveyed can reach and be accepted by heterogeneous communities, both in terms of educational background, economic level, and social strata. By using oral communication, schools can interact directly with the community through meetings and discussions, allowing for a more personal and in-depth two-way dialogue (Marcellina et al., 2022; Ridlo & Yanti, 2023). Written communications, such as pamphlets, letters, and social media, are used to reach a wider audience

and provide structured and documented information. In addition, concrete actions shown through various social and religious activities provide direct examples that can be exemplified by society. This multifaceted approach ensures that the message conveyed is not only widespread but also well received and understood by various walks of life, thereby increasing their participation and support for school programs.

The use of these various communication techniques aims to ensure that messages can reach all walks of life effectively. Oral communication is done through face-to-face meetings and socialization, while written communication is done through pamphlets, letters, and social media. Real action (Uswa Hasana) includes real activities in the community that show positive examples and can be used as role models.

Social Media Use and Communication Efficiency

In the context of media use, SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso utilizes social media by taking into account aspects of effectiveness and efficiency. Social media was chosen because it is able to reach a wide audience at a lower cost than traditional communication methods. The effectiveness of using social media is proven to help in disseminating information quickly and on target. Tarmidzi added, "The use of social media at SMP Islam As Salam takes into account aspects of effectiveness and efficiency. We chose social media because it can reach the wider community quickly and at a lower cost."(I-gr)

Based on the results of an interview with the Principal of SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso, it was revealed that the institution adopts various communication techniques to build effective relationships with the community. Communication techniques applied include oral, written, and concrete action communication (Uswa Hasana). This strategy is used to ensure that the message to be conveyed can reach and be accepted by heterogeneous communities, both in terms of educational background, economic level, and social strata. By using oral communication, schools can interact directly with the community through meetings and discussions, allowing for a more personal and in-depth two-way dialogue. Written communications, such as pamphlets, letters, and social media, are used to reach a wider audience and provide structured and documented information. In addition, concrete actions shown through various social and religious activities provide direct examples that can be exemplified by society (Bleisch & Schwab, 2023; Sanjani, 2024). This multifaceted approach ensures that the message conveyed is not only widespread but also well received and understood by different walks of life, thereby increasing their participation and support for school programs. Social media is used to announce school activities, important information regarding enrollment, and various other programs. Thus, people can easily access the information they need.

Planning and Implementation of Public Relations Program

The Public Relations management function at SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso is carried out through program planning that involves active community participation. Amir Mustofa, the school's Public Relations Officer, explained that the routine PR program includes involving the School Committee

in planning educational programs and other activities. For example, planning coordination meetings to prepare School Budget Plans (RAPBS) and student zakat fitrah collection activities. Amir Mustofa explained, "Planning that becomes a routine public relations program related to community participation is to involve the School Committee in planning educational programs in schools. Planning a coordination meeting of the School Committee management in ratifying the School Budget Plan (RAPBS)." (I-ks)

Based on interviews with the school, the planning that became a routine program of Public Relations of SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso was related to community participation involving the School Committee actively in planning educational programs. One tangible form of this participation is through the coordination meeting of the School Committee board, where they participated in the process of preparing and ratifying the School Budget Plan (RAPBS). This approach ensures that the views and interests of the community can be accommodated in school planning, thus creating a sense of belonging and shared responsibility towards the implementation and achievement of educational goals (Sanjani et al., 2024). The involvement of the School Committee not only strengthens transparency and accountability, but also motivates the community to play a more active role in supporting and advancing existing educational programs. This shows that effective collaboration between schools and communities is key to achieving holistic and inclusive educational success.

Routine Activities and Friendship

Hasan Basri, vice principal, added that the PR program also involves gathering activities with parents, social visits, social services, and religious activities with the community. These activities are designed to ensure the active involvement of the community in every aspect of school development. In addition, this program also aims to build a harmonious relationship between the school and the community. Hasan Basri stated, "The planning of public relations programs that we always prepare regularly every year, namely friendship with parents of grade 7 students at the beginning of the school year and socialization of school programs, social visits to parents who have incidental disasters, visits to study groups at students' homes, social services for poor families carried out by grade 9 students ahead of the implementation of UAN (National Final Exam), Social service to the community is carried out during religious holidays or national holidays, halal bi halal with school families, commemoration of religious holidays with the community, and delivery of information on problematic students to parents of students according to the time conditions needed." (I-gr)

According to the interview, the planning of the Public Relations program at SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso is prepared regularly every year with various activities aimed at increasing community involvement and participation. These programs include friendship with parents of grade 7 students at the beginning of the school year as well as socialization of school programs, social visits to parents who have been injured, visits to study groups at students' homes, and social services to poor families carried out by grade 9 students ahead of the National Final Examination (UAN). In addition, social services to the community are

carried out during religious holidays or national holidays, halal bi halal with school families, and commemoration of religious holidays with the community (Mujtahid et al., 2023; Zuhdi et al., 2024). The program of delivering information about problematic students to parents is carried out in accordance with the conditions needed. All these activities demonstrate the commitment of SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso in building harmonious and constructive relationships with the community through various programs that are strategically designed and implemented consistently.

The Role of Leaders in Public Relations Management

Eka Aditya, Head of Administration, emphasized the importance of the role of leaders in the success of the PR program. According to him, school leaders must be able to coordinate each team member to work according to a predetermined schedule and synchronize other activities. The motivation given by the leader to its members is very influential on the achievement of the objectives of the Public Relations program. Eka Aditya stated, "The success of the implementation of the school public relations program cannot be separated from the ability of a leader to manage the work system of its members. Leaders must be able to coordinate each personnel in order to complete each job according to a predetermined schedule and always synchronize with other activities. A leader is able to instill enthusiasm in members to exert all their abilities, in order to achieve the goals of the public relations activity."(I-gr)

According to the results of the interview above, the success of the implementation of the Public Relations program in schools cannot be separated from the ability of a leader to manage the work system of its members. The leader must be able to coordinate each personnel in order to complete each job according to a predetermined schedule and always synchronize it with other activities. An effective leader is able to instill enthusiasm in members to exert all their abilities, in order to achieve the goals of the public relations activity. Good coordination, clear schedule setting, and strong motivation from the leader are the keys to ensuring that all PR activities run smoothly and achieve the expected results. This shows that effective leadership and good management are essential in the success of PR programs in schools.

The results of research conducted at SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso show that the use of various communication techniques, such as oral, written, and concrete action communication (Uswa Hasana), has a significant impact in increasing community participation. This finding is in line with research conducted by Hyland-Wood et al. (2021) which states that an effective communication strategy depends heavily on how the message is tailored to its audience. SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso uses a multifaceted approach to reach out to heterogeneous communities, which supports Smith and Taylor's findings on the importance of adjusting communication strategies.

In addition, a study by Hruska & Maresova, (2020) which found that social media is an effective tool to increase community engagement is also reflected in the results of this study, where the use of social media by schools proved effective in reaching a wide audience quickly and efficiently. However, the study also

identified several challenges, such as the need for further evaluation of communication effectiveness across all levels of society. These findings underscore the importance of leadership roles in PR management, as asserted by Pollock. (2020) where effective leadership in coordinating and motivating the PR team is very influential on the success of communication programs. The integration of various communication techniques with strong leadership roles, as implemented at SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso, provides a new perspective on how a holistic approach in PR management can increase community participation more effectively than an approach focused on one communication technique alone.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the Public Relations management strategy implemented by SMP Islam As Salam Bondowoso, which involves the use of various communication techniques such as oral, written, and concrete action communication (Uswa Hasana), is effective in increasing community participation. The use of social media has also been shown to be able to reach a wider audience quickly and efficiently, according to the findings of previous studies. In addition, the role of leadership in coordinating and motivating the PR team is critical in ensuring the success of communication programs. By combining a variety of effective communication and leadership techniques, the school manages to create a harmonious and constructive relationship with the community, which in turn increases support and participation in school activities.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the effectiveness of each communication technique in reaching different segments of society. In addition, research can be expanded by examining how newer and interactive communication technologies can be applied in PR management in educational institutions. Further research also needs to explore the role of leadership in a broader context, including how different leadership styles can influence the success of communication strategies and community participation. Thus, these findings can provide practical and theoretical guidance for the development of more effective communication strategies and PR management in other educational institutions.

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