



The Role of School Administration Personnel in Building Public Image

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the importance of public image for schools in the era of globalization. A positive school image not only attracts the interest of prospective new students, but also increases community support and strengthens the school's existence in the midst of increasingly fierce competition. This study found that administrative and public relations personnel have a crucial role in shaping the school's image. Administrative personnel are the vanguard of interaction with the community, while public relations functions as a bridge between the school and the community. Both play an important role in building positive relationships and managing public perception of schools. A positive school image can be built through various strategies, such as improving the performance of all school components, establishing cooperation with various parties, improving services, and highlighting achievements. In addition, transparency in school management, as well as creating a conducive physical and learning environment are also important factors. This study concludes that public image is a long-term investment that provides significant benefits for schools.

Keywords: Role, School Administration Personnel, School Image

Introduction

In the era of globalization, the reputation of a school serves as an identity and a valuable asset that affects the attractiveness and continuity of an educational institution. The positive perception of schools makes them more attractive to prospective students and gets more public support. The function of school administration personnel becomes very important in this situation. Administrative staff have an important role in influencing the general public's view of the school because they are the first to come into contact with different community groups.

It is common for school administration personnel to help with teaching and learning activities. But their responsibilities are more than just simple administrative tasks. They take the lead in fostering good relationships between educational institutions and their diverse constituents, including parents, instructors, students, and local communities. The public's perception of the school is shaped by every encounter made by the administrative staff, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, building a strong school image depends on the professionalism and skills of the administrative staff.

Public Relations has a crucial role in advancing an institution. Many educational institutions underestimate the public relations part, considering public relations as a mere addition, the structure is only an exhibition and/or complementing it only at the government's suggestion. Even though this part is a bridge between the school and the community, public relations can also handle internal problems of the school, knowing the needs and demands of the community. In fact, public relations is the spirit of education. Public Relations is an intermediary between the management of an organization and its public. Both aim to foster internal and external public relations (Mulyadi, 2018).



The school's image and efforts to create a positive image cannot be separated from the efforts of the school, especially the public relations department. Public Relations in education has special duties, including assessing the attitudes and views of the public towards the organization, and developing and implementing organizational policies and procedures regarding the organization, communicating with the public (public), coordinating the organization's communication programs with the public, developing relationships through the communication process, developing positive attitudes and relationships between the organization and the public, as well as creating public awareness and a good image good for the organization.

In this modern era, the existence of schools is very determined by the quality aspect of educational services, because the form of success of educational services is the provision of quality educational services to students, customers of educational services (students). Oriented to the positive image of the school, an education leader or manager certainly expects a positive image, because it will determine the position of the school (Ma'sum, 2020).

Method

The research used is literature research so that the method used is literature study, literature research is a very effective method in data collection because it allows researchers to access extensive and relevant information through sources that have been available in the library. Literature research is a research activity based on the collection of information and data through books, references, similar previous research results, articles, notes, and journals as well as various other materials that are in the library, related to the problems that will be raised or solved (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). The data collection procedure is carried out by collecting, reading and recording literature or books, paying attention to the steps which include analysis, organization, and conclusion and continued with presentation (Mahanum, 2021)

Results and Discussion

Result

Public image for schools is an important aspect in the era of globalization, because a positive school image not only attracts the interest of prospective new students, but also increases community support and strengthens the existence of schools in the midst of increasingly fierce competition. This study found that administrative and public relations personnel have a crucial role in shaping the school's image. Administrative personnel function as the vanguard of interaction with the community, while public relations acts as a bridge between the school and the community. Both are important in building positive relationships and managing public perception of schools.

A positive school image can be built through various strategies. First, improving the performance of all components of the school, such as principals, educators, and education staff, is an important step. Second, establishing cooperation with various parties, such as parents of students and the community, can increase public support and trust. Third, improving services, both academic and non-academic, can improve public perception of the quality of education in schools. Fourth, highlighting school achievements, both academic and non-academic, can improve the school's image in the eyes of the public. In addition, transparency in school management, as well as creating a



conducive physical and learning environment, are also important factors in building a positive image.

Public image also involves principles that must be followed. First, it must be based on the vision and mission of the school. Second, mutual cooperation which is reflected in the commitment to togetherness that involves all elements in the school. Third, empowering all potentials in schools. Fourth, have sincerity and seriousness in efforts to build or maintain the school's image. Fifth, be open and honest in providing information based on facts in school. Sixth, the desire to change in line with the demands of existing changes.

A public image strategy is also very important. According to public relations experts, strategy is an integrated part of a plan that is expected to be able to work on the perception of stakeholders about their attitudes and perceptions. Some of the efforts that can be used to build a public image within school institutions are to improve the performance of school principals, educators, and education staff, as well as establish cooperative relationships with students' parents and the community. Improving excellent services both in terms of academics and non-academics is also very effective in improving the school's image.

The forms of public image are also diverse. First, the image is related to the physical environment of the school. If the environmental conditions are good, it will also give a positive image to the school. This can be seen from the many kinds of plants that exist in the school environment and comfortable classrooms. Second, the image is related to excellent service. Schools that provide good academic and non-academic services will have a positive image in the eyes of the community. Third, imaging is related to achievements. Highlighting school achievements, both academic and non-academic, can improve the school's image in the eyes of the public. Public image is a long-term investment that provides significant benefits to schools. By building a positive image, the school will not only attract the interest of prospective students, but also get support from various parties which will ultimately have an impact on improving the quality of education. Therefore, efforts to maintain a positive image must be the main focus of all school components.

Discussion

The Urgency of Public Image

A school is an institutional organization engaged in education, providing services to the community in the field of education, and it is clear that the purpose of the school is students and the community in their environment. Therefore, schools cannot separate the role of the community and the position of the community for Ma'sum schools (2020). Partnership value creation assumes special interest for educational institutions as a factor in determining the quality of their image, gaining consensus, trust, and resources. Such behavior implies the implementation of policies that emphasize the principles of social responsibility, disseminate this culture of responsibility internally, and have a clear focus on economic performance and the social environment Salvioni et al., (2017). The existence of a school is influenced by the perception or view of the community/public towards the school. Trust built in the hearts of the community is not an easy thing to achieve. Educational institutions need to have communication skills, diplomacy, be able to cover the shortcomings of educational institutions and be able to express the advantages of the institution in its implementation. Therefore, to gain trust,



it must be done continuously for a long period of time until feedback from stakeholders can be formed, and public opinion can be formed that agrees with the educational institution. The strengths and advantages of an educational institution need to be developed and highlighted so that it is more valuable than others. The trust gained by the organization must be maintained (Pramungkas 2020).

Administrative and public relations personnel have an important role in shaping this image, with administrative personnel as the vanguard of interaction and public relations as a bridge between schools and the community. Various strategies to build a positive image were also identified, including improving the performance of all components of the school, establishing cooperation, improving services, highlighting achievements, and creating transparency and a conducive environment. In conclusion, public image is a long-term investment that provides significant benefits for schools in attracting prospective students and gaining support from various parties that have an impact on improving the quality of education.

Maintaining and improving the school's image is the obligation of all school residents who are also part of public relations, including school administration personnel who must provide excellent service to attract the interest of prospective students. This is in line with the opinion Indrioko, (2015) that the main guiding values include prioritizing excellent service, striving to be the best in every action, paying full attention to things that may seem small, not being distant from the community, working by paying attention to values and ethics (not just work or wages), encouraging innovation and work creation from all school residents, and show tolerance for all efforts made. Thus, we can create a positive and productive environment in schools.

Therefore, the discussion of the implementation of excellent service based on the concept will be more focused on service actions for internal customers that support the implementation of service provision to external customers and service actions from company employees to external customers, as the peak of service will be felt directly by customers when they make direct contact with the service provider (Simbolon & Sabri, 2022).

The work results that administrative staff can achieve in terms of serving the community and parents of students in accordance with their respective roles and authority in an effort to fulfill the school's vision, mission, and goals constitutes their performance, and the administrative staff's efforts are the only thing that make the school's administrative service goals possible. Enhancing the effectiveness of administrative workers is also essential to satisfy customer expectations and provide better administrative services. In the event that the service provider has established service criteria, a service is deemed to be excellent, superior, or very good if it meets the needs of the client.

Therefore, a really excellent service is one that fulfills the needs and goals of the client. Students, their parents, and the community are the clients of school administrators. Various requirements have led to varying degrees of pleasure for each of them. The gap between expected and perceived performance is the degree of satisfaction. Consequently, in relation to clients, clients may experience the following (Nuraini dkk., 2022):

- 1) Disappointed consumers will arise from performance that falls short of expectations.
- 2) Customers will be happy if the performance meets their expectations.
- 3) Customers will be extremely happy if performance meets or beyond expectations.



School residents who can play a role in building a public image include school principals, teachers, education staff (school administration personnel), students, principals, and school committees. The principal as a leader has the responsibility to set a clear vision and mission, and to be the main face in interaction with the community. Teachers, on the other hand, serve as teachers and mentors who are in direct contact with students, so they can provide a real picture of the quality of education in schools. Education personnel are also no less important, because they support the smooth operation of the school and ensure that all administrative processes run well.

Competition between schools is getting tighter. The school's effort to win the competition is to be able to build the school's image in the eyes of the community (public). An image is very necessary so that the organization can be appreciated by the public as well as the reputation and achievements that are to be achieved in the world of public relations. The image must be managed properly through a harmonious relationship with the public or the public, considering the image of the institution as a reflection of the identity of the institution Annur & Audina (2020). Therefore, a positive image can be built by activating the role of public relations management in providing a good and positive image and image of the school. Improving the image of a school is very important because with the image of a school, the community can know whether a school is good or bad. This is supported by Maskur's opinion in Elyus & Sholeh (2021) that the strength of an organization lies in the image associated with the peak of success or the goal.

Public Image

The term "imaging" first appeared, it is widely used in the industrial sector, especially related to product quality. However, developments in the industrial sector are now expanding into the education sector. The rise of terms borrowed or used in every sector is due to globalization, so that the term image of industrial products is also used in the field of education. However, in the education industry, where the output or graduates are services, the products are different from products in the industrial world which are temporary (Fradito dkk., 2020)

Imaging is all activities carried out to create harmonious cooperation between educational institutions and the community through efforts to socialize educational institutions and all their activities to the community. Educational institutions seek to obtain a positive image from the resulting educational products, namely the introduction of educational institutions and the formation of public opinion about the existence of educational institutions. Meanwhile, public opinion is a collection of personal opinions about an issue that is being discussed openly and affects a group of people (Wahyuni, 2018). Public according to the Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language (KBBI) means public or public. So it can be concluded that public image is an activity to form a positive image through the socialization of all activities of educational institutions to the community or the public.

Public Image Objectives

Public image itself has the goal of creating a positive image of an educational institution so that from a good image will emerge such as public understanding, public trust (public trust in institutions or organizations), public support (the existence of public supporting elements) and public cooperation (public cooperation with organizations) and vice versa (Pramungkas, 2020).



According to Suhartono in Setiyadi et al., (2022) schools must continue to foster positive relationships with the community by educating the public about the programs that will be implemented. Therefore, the school public relations campaign aims to achieve the following goals:

- 1) Improving educational standards and learning outcomes.
- 2) Improve people's living standards and livelihoods, strengthen their goals, and promote good family relations with schools.

Building a positive school public image can help schools in marketing their services, in accordance with the opinion (Ma'sum, 2020) that the community or customers are actually the focus of broader marketing goals. Creating a competitive product for a company or organization that sets it apart from competitors is another marketing goal. Similar to this, the purpose of marketing educational services is to provide direction and objectives for the operation of educational institutions. In this case, the marketing goal of educational institutions is to maximize customer satisfaction.

Principles of Public Image

In an effort to build a good public image, it is necessary to have principles used in its implementation. In its implementation, there are also elements that must be built for success in building a public image. These elements include school principals, educators, education staff, and parents of students. Below will be explained about the principles used in building a public image, especially in educational institutions, according to the following:

- a) It must be based on the vision and mission of the school, of course, in an institution, especially an educational institution, there are goals that are included in the vision and mission of the school. In an effort to build a public image, of course, the parties concerned must also be in accordance with the vision and mission of the school and not contradict the vision and mission of an institution or school.
- b) Mutual cooperation is reflected in the commitment to togetherness that involves all elements in the school. This principle is important to do because it is part of an ecosystem in education.
- c) empowerment of all potentials in schools or commonly called em power man. It can be interpreted as an effort to move all components in an organization to get maximum results, and this is of course by empowering or utilizing the potential that exists in a school.
- d) Have sincerity and seriousness in efforts to build or maintain the image of the school. This seeks to encourage elements in an educational institution to be serious and solely to improve public image.
- e) Open and honest, the same as the principles in public relations management. In this principle of building a public image, it seeks to be open and honest in providing information based on facts in schools.
- f) The desire to change, the purpose of this principle is that efforts to develop a public image must be carried out in line with the demands of existing changes.

Public Image Strategy

Ahmad S. Adnanputra, M.A., M.S., a public relations expert in the workshop entitled Public Relations Strategy (1990), said that the meaning of strategy is that it is an integrated part of a plan, while a plan is a product of planning, which in the end planning is one of the basic functions of the management process (Ruslan, 2017)



It is equally well known that public relations or ordinary public relations aims to uphold a favorable and positive public image towards an organization or institution concerned. In achieving this, there is a need for a strategy from public relations which is certainly expected to be able to work on the perception of stakeholders on their attitudes and perceptions (Ruslan, 2017)

There are several efforts that can be used to build a public image within school institutions according to (Sholikhah, 2021)

- a) Improving the performance of school principals, educators, and education staff
- b) There is the participation of educational institutions or schools in competition activities at schools and also students
- c) Establish a cooperative relationship (network) both with the parents of students and also the community.
- d) Improving excellent services both in terms of academics and non-academics.

The existence of the strategies mentioned can have a positive influence on the school. With this party, of course, it is also hoped that students will have a good perception of the school so that they can increase their motivation to learn. Meanwhile, the perception from the community is expected to be able to improve the performance of the school. In theory, a customer's perception of an institution or their level of knowledge about the institution affects the perception of the sector. Therefore, every organization needs to be an expert in the flow of information regarding its good reputation, which reaches its target market. To do this, a number of actions must be taken, such as (Wahid, 2023)

- a) Choose the type of imagery to release to the market;
- b) Taking the initiative to release images, for example through various information channels;
- c) Avoid excessive exposure to imagery;
- d) Make gradual efforts to cultivate a positive image; and
- e) Choose and figure out the most effective channels and ways to present the imagery.

According to (Elyus & Sholeh, 2021) management strategies can be used to develop efforts to improve the reputation of the chosen school by coordinating several interrelated and mutually influencing components that work simultaneously (collectively) to achieve goals. Strategic planning, which includes the organization's vision, mission, goals, and key strategies, is the first component. Operational planning, which includes implementation, operational goals and objectives, is the second component.

Forms of Public Image

In addition to the principles and strategies that have been explained, according to (Sholikhah, 2021) in public imagery there are also various forms, namely:

- 1) The image is related to the physical environment of the school, in this case if the environmental conditions are good, it will also give a positive image of the school. A good environment can be seen from the many kinds of plants in the school environment, classrooms that are comfortable to look at and others.
- 2) Imagery related to the services provided, in providing services to the community or people who need information, school residents must pay attention to several things so as to create a positive image. Things that need to be considered are such as attitude, attention, appearance, work ethic and others.



- 3) Imagery is related to learning, the learning provided to students must be in accordance with the needs of students. For example, by using media, knowing the style that suits the students. Although basically every student has a different learning style. In addition, teachers must also provide care and attention to students.
- 4) Imagery is related to the attitudes and behaviors of school residents, basically school residents are individuals who come from the external environment of the school. In this case, of course, school residents will bring habits that come from the external environment. For this reason, when interacting with internal residents, the school is always conducive and must behave well. And of course, this also requires daily habits.
- 5) Imagery is related to the transparency of school programs and budgets, in every activity it would be good if the school was honest with the public. This honest image can be realized or shown during the implementation of school programs. In terms of budget, especially the school is expected to be able to apply principles related to this, besides that it can also make reports to interested parties regarding the school budget.
- 6) Imagery related to academic and non-academic achievement of the school. Favorite schools are schools that are targeted by most of the public. Favorite schools are usually seen from the many academic and non-academic achievements owned or achieved by the school. In this case, to be able to foster a positive image in the community, the school can invite all levels of society to an achievement event.

Imagery related to the existence of alumni. The existence of graduates or alumni affects the image of the school in front of the public. The whereabouts of alumni will usually be traced by the public (tracer record). The better or higher the graduates/alumni (whether in junior high school, junior high school, high school, or even those who are already working), the image of the school will also be more advanced in front of the public. Therefore, in this case, the school can ask the alumni to speak to the public with the aim of conveying testimonials about the school that was once the place where they studied.

Conclusion

This article comprehensively examines the importance of public image for schools in an increasingly competitive era of globalization. A positive image of a school not only attracts the interest of prospective new students, but also strengthens the school's existence in the community and increases support from various stakeholders. Administrative and public relations personnel have a crucial role in shaping this image. Administrative personnel are the vanguard of interaction with the community, while public relations functions as a bridge between the school and the community. Both play an important role in building positive relationships and managing public perception of schools. This research identifies various strategies that can be applied to build a positive image, such as improving the performance of all components of the school, establishing cooperation with various parties, improving services, highlighting achievements, and creating transparency and a conducive environment. In conclusion, public image is a long-term investment that provides significant benefits to schools. By building a positive image, the school will not only attract the interest of prospective students, but also get support from various parties which will ultimately have an impact on improving



the quality of education. Therefore, efforts to build and maintain a positive image of the school must be the main concern for all components of the school.

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