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## THE INFLUENCE OF THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN IMPROVING THE IMAGE OF INSTITUTIONS IN BPSDM WEST JAVA

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### Abstract

In the era of rapid digital transformation, public institutions are increasingly required to maintain a positive and credible image to gain public trust. Public relations (PR) plays a strategic role in this process by facilitating effective communication, fostering transparency, and enhancing institutional reputation. This study investigates the influence of public relations on institutional image, with a focus on the West Java Province Human Resources Development Agency (BPSDM). Utilizing a quantitative research method with a causal associative approach, data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed both online and offline to individuals who had interacted with BPSDM. The findings indicate a strong and statistically significant relationship between the role of public relations and the formation of a positive institutional image. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) reached 0.820, suggesting that 82% of the changes in public perception are influenced by PR efforts. BPSDM's use of digital platforms, especially Instagram, has proven effective in disseminating information, engaging with the public, and strengthening institutional visibility. Various content strategies – ranging from informative to interactive are employed to reach diverse audiences. Regular evaluation of engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and views supports continuous improvement in communication strategies. This study highlights the importance of positioning public relations as a core element in institutional management, not merely as a supportive function. Government institutions, therefore, are encouraged to invest in digital communication capabilities and strategic public relations planning to foster sustainable public trust and a resilient institutional image.

**Keywords:** Public relations, Institutional Image

### INTRODUCTION

Amidst the increasingly fierce currents of globalization and competition, building a positive image is an urgent need that must be taken seriously by both private and government institutions. This image is formed from the information each individual receives. If the information received is positive, the resulting impression will be positive. Conversely, if the information received is negative, the resulting perception will tend to be negative. Every company generally has a human resources (HR) or personnel department responsible for managing all employees. The goal of this management is to ensure all employees work synergistically and sustainably in carrying out their respective duties to achieve organizational goals. To provide a deeper understanding, it's also important to cite definitions of HR management from experts (Sudrartono & Aditiarno, 2024).

Public relations can be defined as a planned effort to build a relationship of mutual understanding between an organization and the public, through communication and the use of mass media, with the aim of achieving mutual benefits and agreements. According to HAW Widjaja, public relations encompasses all activities carried out by individuals as part of an effort to carry out the duties and functions of their respective institutions or organizations. Herimanto et al. (2007), public relations is an interaction process that aims to form mutually beneficial public opinion, build strong trust, and create a positive image in the eyes of the public. Public relations of government agencies plays a role in providing education to the public in order to improve the image and reputation of government institutions. Furthermore, public relations also serves as a bridge in the process of effective socialization, establishing mutually beneficial relationships between related parties (stakeholders), and building public trust.

This role also serves to maintain two-way communication and facilitate the communication process by eliminating barriers in the relationship, while ensuring that communication channels remain open. In addition, this role is a source of information and a liaison between the organization and the public. The goal is to provide the information needed by both management and the public to support decision-making that benefits both parties Cutlip et al. (2006). Meanwhile, the role of public relations according to Mukarom & Laksana (2015) is divided into 3 (three) roles, namely: 1) Expert or management advisor (expert prescriber) Public relations practitioners are seen as figures who have expertise and are able to provide solutions to various communication problems faced by organizations and management. 2) Communication facilitator (communication facilitator) In this role, public relations functions as a bridge between the organization and its public, acting as a liaison, translator, and mediator in order to maintain smooth two-way communication. 3) Facilitator in the problem-solving process (problem-solving process facilitator) Public relations is also involved in helping to resolve problems faced by the organization, although its involvement remains in the realm of communication. Meanwhile, according to Moore et al. (2018), the main role of public relations includes the following things:

1. Conducting analysis of public opinion and collecting data on public attitudes for management purposes.
2. Provide information to management regarding emerging trends in political, social and financial fields.
3. Helping management become aware of operational factors that have the potential to damage the relationship between the organization and the public.
4. Provide direction to management regarding strategies in building and maintaining relationships with the public.

Public relations is responsible for maintaining harmony between an organization and its public. Therefore, as a government agency responsible for education and training for civil servants, BPSDM must demonstrate optimal performance so that the people of West Java, especially participants and prospective participants, also have a positive view of BPSDM. The existence of the Public Relations and Government Protocol Division is crucial in conveying information to the public.

Image is strongly linked to how the public responds, forms opinions, assesses, and trusts a service, company or institution name, or product or service. This image can appear in a positive or negative form, depending on the perception of the target

public. Image is a very important asset for an organization. Although abstract and difficult to measure mathematically, image can still be felt through positive or negative assessments given by the public or target audience (Gunawan & Dulwahab, 2023). Sutisna in Barahama et al. (2022) stated that image has four main roles in companies, institutions, and organizations: 1) a positive image can make it easier for companies to establish communication and achieve their goals more effectively. 2) image can act as a filter that shapes public perception of company activities. In this case, a positive image can act as a kind of shield when minor technical or functional errors occur so that the impact is not too damaging. 3) image reflects consumer expectations of the company's quality. If the service provided is of high quality, it will further strengthen the image that has been formed. 4) image also has an internal influence, especially on management and employees. An unclear or weak image can create doubts and influence employees' attitudes towards the organization.

Corporate image can influence customer decisions in choosing a company. A positive image is believed to be able to encourage consumer interest in making purchases (Suhartini & Pertiwi, 2021). According to Wasesa (2005), a company's image in the public eye is reflected in how people perceive or assess the reality they receive. This reality is usually formed through information from mass media or other communication channels that directly reach the public, and is often considered to represent the views of the majority or the entire community. A positive company image can foster consumer trust in the guaranteed services offered. The better the company's image, the higher the level of consumer confidence in the quality of the services provided" (Darna & Muhidin, 2020).

A positive organizational image is a valuable asset that every organization needs to maintain and manage properly. This is because a positive organizational image is the public's perception or positive impression of an organization, which is built from various important aspects such as the organization's history since its inception, the philosophy that guides its work, the mission and vision to achieve its goals, a work culture that supports productivity, consistent and high-quality performance, the products or services offered, and the company's social responsibility in contributing to the surrounding community and the environment.

Publication is one of the primary tasks of the public relations division. In this regard, public relations plays a role in conveying as much information as possible regarding leadership steps to the public. Currently, online media is the most developed publication medium. However, the existence of online media does not necessarily replace traditional mass media. Online media is actually considered a new form of journalism because it still contains many elements and characteristics of traditional journalism. Digital transformation is now a crucial element in the implementation of Intelligent Systems in everyday life. Various existing technologies have been able to support daily activities while contributing to improving the quality of life (Insani & Adjie, 2023). In the current digital era, the people of West Java rely heavily on social media and online channels to obtain public information. According to research by Fahira Izzatuljannah et al. (2024), the West Java Government Public Relations actively uses the Instagram account @Humas\_Jabar to publicize its programs and public services. This has proven effective in increasing public engagement and understanding of government duties. However, when looking at the

West Java Human Resources Development Agency (BPSDM), this institution's presence in the public sphere is less prominent. In fact, a visit by the West Java Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in September 2022 revealed that BPSDM, a center for various training programs, still requires public communication support, including budgetary support and public trust, to ensure optimal program implementation.

Based on the results of previous studies conducted by researchers, the image of the West Java Province BPSDM in the eyes of the public is already good. BPSDM Public Relations has a strategic role in supporting the dissemination of information and building a positive image of the institution through content management on Instagram social media @bpsdmjabar. With effective content distribution, namely by using Instagram features such as feeds, reels, stories, and highlights. Neat and directed management can ensure that the information conveyed is not only relevant, but also in accordance with what is needed by the community. BPSDM West Java Public Relations groups its content into several types, such as informative content, activities, and entertainment. The performance of each content is evaluated monthly by looking at indicators such as the number of likes, comments, and total views to assess effectiveness and audience engagement.

at the example above, BPSDM has the potential to implement a similar strategy, namely by building a narrative through digital platforms, encouraging interaction with the audience through interesting content, and collaborating with mass media or official government channels to increase public visibility and trust.

Based on this background, the author is interested in examining in more depth the role of Public Relations at BPSDM West Java in building and improving the institution's image in the eyes of the public, as well as what communication strategies are used to achieve this goal.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal associative research type. This approach is used to determine the cause-and-effect relationship between the independent variable (the role of Public Relations) and the dependent variable (the image of the institution). In other words, this study aims to examine the extent to which the role of Public Relations in BPSDM West Java influences the formation of the institution's image in the public eye. The population in this study is all members of the public or stakeholders who have interacted with or accessed information about BPSDM West Java, either through social media, the official website, or other public activities. Data collection techniques were carried out through the distribution of questionnaires online and offline. The questionnaire was compiled based on indicators from both variables and used a Likert scale. Data were collected using techniques that are by distributing questionnaires or questionnaires with a Likert scale. The analysis techniques used in this study are: validity and reliability tests, Multiple Linear Regression Tests, Hypothesis Tests in them (Partial Tests or T Tests and Simultaneous Tests or F Tests), Correlation and Determination Coefficients (R<sup>2</sup>) This study was also assisted by IBM SPSS software version 30.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Validity test****Table 3.1 Validity Test**

Statement	X1 rhitung	Y rhitung	rtable 5%	Information
1	0.819	0.848	0.196	Valid
2	0.855	0.895	0.196	Valid
3	0.805	0.859	0.196	Valid
4	0.861	0.886	0.196	Valid
5	0.814	0.866	0.196	Valid
6	0.848	0.835	0.196	Valid
7	0.878	0.782	0.196	Valid
8	0.865	0.816	0.196	Valid
9	0.725	0.781	0.196	Valid
10	0.806	0.850	0.196	Valid
11	0.855	0.895	0.196	Valid
12	0.805	0.859	0.196	Valid
13	0.861	0.886	0.196	Valid
14	0.814	0.866	0.196	Valid
15	0.848	0.835	0.196	Valid

Source: Data processed by SPSS Statistics version 30

Based on the table above, all variables, namely the role of public relations and the image of the institution, are declared valid because the calculated r value is greater than the table r, which is 0.196.

**Reliability Test****Table 3.2 Reability Test**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Alpha 0.60	Information
The Role of Public Relations	0.968	0.60	Reliable
Institutional Aspirations	0.973	0.60	Reliable

Source: Data processed by SPSS Statistics version 30

Based on the data in the table, the reliability value calculated using Cronbach's Alpha for variable (X) is 0.968 and variable (Y) is 0.973. This figure exceeds the minimum limit of 0.60, thus indicating that all items in the instrument are classified as reliable. This means that each statement in the questionnaire has strong internal consistency.

**Partial Hypothesis Test (T-Test)****Table 3.3 Partial Hypothesis Test coefficientsa**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	19,631	2,044		9,604	<,001

	Quality of Service	,675	0.032	0.906	21,137	<,001
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a. Dependent variable: Institutional image

Based on the table above, the results of the t-test (partial) show that the significance value for the influence of the Role of Public Relations (X) on Institutional Image (Y) is 0.001, which is smaller than 0.05, and the calculated t-value of 21.137 is greater than the t-table of 1.985. Thus, Ho1 is rejected and Ha1 is accepted. This means that there is a significant influence between Service Quality (X) on User Satisfaction (Y).

### Simultaneous Test (F Test)

**Table 3.4 Simultaneous Test ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8080,039	1	8080,039	446,753	<,001b
	Residual	1772,440	98	18,086		
	Total	9852,479	99			

- Dependent variable: Institutional Image
- Predictors: (constant), Role of Public Relations

From the table above, it can be seen that the significance value for the influence of (X) on (Y) is  $0.001 < 0.05$  and the calculated f value of  $446.753 >$  the table f value of 3.09. This proves that Ho3 is rejected and Ha3 is accepted. This means that there is a significant influence of (X) on (Y).

### Test of Determination Coefficient

**Table 3.5 Test of Determination Coefficient Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	,906a	0.820	0.818	4.25278

- Predictors: (constant), Role of Public Relations

Based on the table above, the R-Square value obtained is 0.820. This indicates that the influence of (X) on (Y) is 82%, while the remainder is explained by other variables outside this study. A high R-Square value indicates a strong relationship between variables.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the role of public relations at the West Java Human Resources Development Agency (BPSDM) has a strong and significant influence on the formation of the institution's image. Through implemented communication strategies, particularly the use of social media such as Instagram, public relations is able to convey information effectively to the public. This has a positive impact on the public's perception of BPSDM as a credible and high-quality civil servant training institution. These findings indicate that public relations

activities are not merely complementary, but rather a strategic part that determines the institution's success in building a reputation within the community. Therefore, strengthening the function and support for the public relations division needs to be continuously improved to maintain and improve the institution's image going forward.

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