



The Role of Public Relations in the Organization of Radio Republik Indonesia Padang

Laila Khairun Nisa^{1*}, Fikri Yusuf Muin², Fahri Ramlan Imanda³
^{1,2,3} Universitas Negeri Padang

Abstract

This research examines the role of public relations in the RRI Padang organization as a public broadcasting institution. Using a qualitative approach with in-depth interview methods and documentation studies, this research found that RRI Padang's public relations has the main function as a communication facilitator between the organization and the internal and external public, as well as providing information services to the community. Even though it does not have a specific division, public relations tasks are integrated into several sections under Business Development Services. RRI Padang public relations is required to follow technological developments and utilize new media, as well as build good relationships with mass media and other institutions. RRI Padang public relations practitioners face challenges in terms of coordination, achieving financial targets, and providing good information services. To optimize their role, they must have adequate skills and knowledge in the fields of communications management, strategic planning and communications research.

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INTRODUCTION

Public relations encompasses relationships with various parties, thus having a broad scope. Public relations is not just about spreading propaganda to achieve its own goals (Asdiani Nasution, 2019). However, public relations has specific tactics and strategies to be liked by the relevant parties (Asdiani Nasution, 2019). Overall, public relations aim to explain their existence within an organization to build good communication with both internal and external publics (Asdiani Nasution, 2019).

According to Dozier and Broom in Ruslan (2002), the role of public relations is divided into four categories within an organization: expert prescriber, communications facilitator, problem-solving process facilitator, and communicator technician. The expert prescriber acts as an experienced practitioner with high capabilities to help find solutions in resolving public relations issues (Ruslan, 2002). The communications facilitator acts as a communicator or mediator to help management listen to the public's desires and explain the organization's policies to the public (Ruslan, 2002).

The problem-solving process facilitator assists organizational leaders as advisors and in taking executive actions to address problems or crises (Ruslan, 2002). The communicator technician provides technical communication services or methods of communication in the organization (Ruslan, 2002). To promote the public relations function in companies, Charles H. Prout stated that communication services are the task of public relations, which involves communicating information about the company and its activities to interested publics through appropriate media (Effendy, 1992).

External communication services are not limited to sending news releases to the mass media but also include motives through advertising (Effendy, 1992). This activity is an effort to make the public

aware through various appropriate means in individual situations (Effendy, 1992). Based on the existence of two types of publics for an organization (internal and external publics), the goals of public relations are directed through two kinds of tasks, namely internal public relations and external public relations (Effendy, 2003).

Although public relations play a crucial role in an organization, there is often a gap between expectations and practice in the field. A study conducted by Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2006) found that many public relations practitioners are still stuck in the role of mere communication technicians, whereas they should act as communication managers involved in the organization's strategic decision-making process. Additionally, there is a gap between public relations practices in commercial and non-commercial organizations, where public relations practices in non-commercial organizations are often less developed (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006).

Another common gap is the lack of support from organizational leaders for the public relations function. Organizational leaders often do not understand the strategic role of public relations in achieving organizational goals (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). As a result, public relations are often viewed as a less important support function, acting only as communication technicians. This, of course, can hinder the role of public relations in building good relationships with the organization's internal and external publics.

Furthermore, there is a gap in knowledge and skills among public relations practitioners themselves. Many public relations practitioners lack adequate knowledge and skills in communication management, strategic planning, and communication research (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). This, of course, can hinder their role in providing appropriate advice and solutions for the organization in addressing communication problems.

The gaps in public relations practices in various organizations need to be addressed to optimize the role of public relations. If the role of public relations can function well, the relationship between the organization and its internal and external publics will be more harmonious, thus supporting the achievement of organizational goals effectively and efficiently. Therefore, this research aims to examine the role of public relations in RRI Padang in-depth. Through this research, it is expected to obtain a clear picture of public relations practices at RRI Padang, including the roles performed as well as the challenges and obstacles faced.

Additionally, this research aims to identify factors that can support or hinder the role of public relations at RRI Padang in building good relationships with its internal and external publics. Thus, appropriate solutions and recommendations can be formulated to optimize the role of public relations at RRI Padang. This research is expected to provide a positive contribution to the development of public relations practices in public broadcasting organizations such as RRI Padang. Moreover, this research is also expected to enrich the body of knowledge in the field of public relations and serve as a reference for future research related to this topic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public broadcasting organizations such as RRI (Radio Republik Indonesia) play a very important role in disseminating information to the public. As a public broadcasting institution, RRI is required to provide accurate, balanced information that meets the needs of the public (Morissan, 2008). Therefore, the role of public relations in public broadcasting organizations becomes crucial. Public relations must be able to build good relationships with both internal and external publics to achieve the organization's goals effectively (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006).

One of the challenges faced by public relations in public broadcasting organizations is how to maintain objectivity and independence in presenting information to the public (Morissan, 2008). Public relations must be able to bridge the interests of the organization with the interests of the public in a balanced manner. Additionally, public relations must be able to build a positive image of the public

broadcasting organization in the eyes of the public without compromising the prevailing journalistic principles (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006).

In carrying out its role, public relations in public broadcasting organizations must be able to apply the basic principles of public relations, such as openness, transparency, and accountability (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Public relations must also be able to proactively manage issues developing in society and engage in effective two-way communication with the public. This way, public trust and support for the public broadcasting organization can be well-maintained (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002).

Moreover, public relations in public broadcasting organizations must also act as reliable communicators in conveying information to both internal and external publics. Public relations must be able to build good relationships with the mass media and optimize the use of new media in disseminating information to the public (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2009). With an optimal role, public relations in public broadcasting organizations can help the organization achieve its goals effectively and efficiently.

Public Relations Theories and Models

In examining the role of public relations in the RRI Padang organization, it is first necessary to understand the theories and models underlying public relations practice. One of the main theories in public relations is systems theory, which views an organization as an open system that must interact with its environment (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). This theory emphasizes the importance of two-way communication between the organization and its publics to achieve mutual understanding and create mutually beneficial relationships.

Besides systems theory, the excellence theory in public relations developed by Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002) also serves as an important foundation for effective public relations practice. This theory emphasizes the importance of the role of public relations as communication managers involved in the organization's strategic decision-making process. With this role, public relations can significantly contribute to achieving the organization's overall goals.

In practice, public relations can use several communication models, such as the public information model, the persuasive model, the two-way asymmetrical model, and the two-way symmetrical model (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The two-way symmetrical model is considered the most effective communication model, where there is a balanced exchange of information between the organization and its publics, and efforts are made to achieve mutual understanding and conflict resolution.

Besides communication models, public relations can also use various strategies and tactics in performing their role, such as publications, events, media relations, and community relations (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2009). The chosen strategies and tactics must align with the goals and objectives to be achieved, as well as the characteristics of the target publics. By understanding public relations theories, models, strategies, and tactics, public relations practitioners in RRI Padang can perform their role more effectively and optimally.

Crisis and Issue Management in Public Relations

One of the important roles of public relations in an organization is managing crises and issues that can affect the organization's reputation and image (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). In the context of public broadcasting organizations like RRI Padang, crises and issues can arise from various sources, such as inaccurate reporting, controversy in broadcast programs, or even scandals involving employees or organizational leaders.

To deal with emerging crises and issues, public relations must have good strategies and preparedness. According to Fearn-Banks (2011), the main steps in crisis management include crisis prevention, crisis preparedness, crisis response, and post-crisis evaluation and learning. Public relations must be able to anticipate potential crises and prepare an effective crisis communication plan.

Besides managing crises, public relations must also be able to manage issues developing in society proactively (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2009). Issue management involves identifying issues, monitoring issue developments, analyzing the impact of issues on the organization, and planning and implementing communication strategies to manage those issues. Public relations must bridge the interests of the organization with the interests of the public in managing sensitive issues.

In managing crises and issues, public relations at RRI Padang must work well with other divisions or departments within the organization, such as the programming division, technical division, and human resources division. Good coordination and communication between divisions are necessary to ensure effective and integrated crisis and issue management (Fearn-Banks, 2011). With good crisis and issue management, public relations can help maintain the reputation and positive image of RRI Padang in the eyes of the public.

Building a Positive Image through Information Services

One of the main roles of public relations in an organization is to build a positive image in the eyes of its publics. According to Jefkins (1995), an image is the impression, picture, or assessment of the public towards an organization. A good image will make the organization accepted and trusted by its publics. To build a positive image, public relations need to provide good information services to their publics (Asdiani Nasution, 2019).

Good information services require balanced two-way communication between the organization and its publics. As stated in excellence theory (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002), effective public relations practice is achieved by creating mutual understanding through reciprocal information exchange. Public relations must be able to convey accurate, relevant, and up-to-date information to their publics, and listen well to feedback or input from their publics.

In providing information services, public relations can utilize various media such as news releases, events, brochures, or other informational materials, as well as leveraging new media such as official websites and social media (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman & Toth, 2009). Selecting the appropriate media will help convey information effectively and relevantly to the needs of its publics.

Ultimately, good information services from public relations will contribute to building a positive image of the organization in the eyes of its publics. This positive image becomes an important asset to support the achievement of the organization's overall goals. Therefore, public relations must always pay attention to the information needs of its publics and provide the best services to build the trust and positive reputation of the organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Lattimore et al., 2009).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach to examine in-depth the role of public relations in the RRI Padang organization. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a more comprehensive and profound understanding of the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2014). This approach enables researchers to explore the perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of participants regarding the role of public relations at RRI Padang more broadly and deeply.

The data collection methods used in this study are in-depth interviews and document studies. The researcher conducted interviews with public relations practitioners from RRI, namely Julizar, S.Sos, M.M. In addition to in-depth interviews, the researcher also conducted document studies on various related documents such as strategic plans, activity reports, news releases, publication materials, and others. Document studies help researchers obtain more complete supporting data that can be used for data source triangulation (Creswell, 2014).

The data obtained from in-depth interviews and document studies will be analyzed thematically using the thematic analysis approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach involves the process of coding, categorizing, and identifying the main themes that emerge from the data (Aura Fairana; Intan Ramadani; Relly Anjar Vinata Wisnu Saputra, 2024). Thematic analysis allows

researchers to identify important patterns and themes related to the role of public relations at RRI Padang.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Functions and Scope of Work of Public Relations at RRI Padang

Public relations at RRI Padang have broad functions and scope of work, covering various organizational activities. The primary function is to act as a communication facilitator between RRI Padang and its internal and external publics. They are responsible for conveying information, promoting RRI activities, and building good relationships with various related parties. Julizar, S.Sos, M.M., stated, "The tasks and functions of RRI public relations actually also provide information services to the community, so whatever forms of services like we provide are functions of public relations, providing needed information."

In carrying out their functions, public relations at RRI Padang must be able to cooperate with various divisions or sections within the organization, such as administration, broadcasting, news, technical, and LPU (Public Broadcasting Institution). Coordination and synchronization with all sections are crucial to ensure that RRI activities run well and are integrated.

Additionally, public relations at RRI Padang are responsible for providing information services to the public. They must be ready to serve any questions, requests, or information needs from the public related to RRI Padang's activities. This aligns with the concept of public relations as a two-way communication facilitator between the organization and its publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

In the context of public relations theory and models, the functions and scope of work of public relations at RRI Padang reflect the roles of communicator technician and communication facilitator as proposed by Dozier and Broom (Ruslan, 2002). They assist management in conveying information to the public and listening to public desires.

Structure and Division of Tasks of Public Relations at RRI Padang

Based on the interview results, it was found that there is no specific division or department for public relations at RRI Padang. Public relations tasks are integrated into several sections under the Business Development Service (LPU), namely Public Communication, Public Service, and Business Development.

The Public Communication section is responsible for promoting and branding RRI Padang and unifying perceptions among other fields within the organization. Julizar, S.Sos, M.M., explained, "For example, in the business development service field, there is public communication. The task is to promote and brand to unify perceptions among fields to support RRI activities, serve the public who come, respect and provide information, and business development, such as advertising, submitting proposals to agencies or institutions for live broadcasts, renting buildings, which are LPU tasks."

The Public Service section is responsible for providing the best service to the public who come to RRI Padang, such as providing information and meeting their needs. Meanwhile, the Business Development section focuses on managing advertisements and cooperation proposals with other agencies or institutions.

Even though there is no specific division, public relations practitioners at RRI Padang have diverse and interrelated tasks. They must be able to coordinate well and cooperate with various other fields within the organization to achieve RRI Padang's goals effectively. The structure and division of tasks of public relations at RRI Padang indicate that public relations practices in public broadcasting organizations are often underdeveloped and lack a strong position within the organizational structure (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). However, this does not diminish the importance of the role of public relations in building relationships with the organization's internal and external publics.

Role of Public Relations at RRI Padang in the Digital Era

In the current digital era, public relations at RRI Padang are required to keep up with technological developments and utilize new media in performing their functions. They must be able to adapt to multiplatform trends and use various digital channels, such as websites, social media, and video-sharing platforms (YouTube). Julizar, S.Sos, M.M., explained, "Media for public relations, radio, YouTube (after multiplatform was introduced, YouTube was included). Managing the magazine doesn't exist, managing the website has a team from LPU, broadcasting, and technical, not from public relations who provide the rundown and protocol, such as foreign visits, managed by the administration."

The use of digital media enables public relations at RRI Padang to disseminate information and promote RRI Padang's activities more effectively and reach a broader audience. Additionally, digital media can also be utilized to build relationships and interactions with the public more dynamically and interactively.

The role of public relations at RRI Padang in the digital era aligns with the modern concept of public relations, which must be able to leverage the latest communication technologies to achieve its goals (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2009). They must continuously follow technological developments and expand their knowledge and skills in effectively using new media.

Relationships with Media and Other Institutions

In carrying out their role, public relations at RRI Padang must also be able to build good relationships with mass media and other institutions outside RRI Padang. The Public Communication section has a specific task to establish cooperation with relevant agencies or institutions. Good relationships with mass media are crucial to ensure that information and activities of RRI Padang can be well disseminated to the public. Public relations must be able to establish effective communication with the media and provide attractive and relevant publication materials.

On the other hand, relationships with other institutions such as government, educational institutions, or community organizations must also be well maintained. Public relations at RRI Padang must be proactive in establishing cooperation and holding joint activities with these institutions, such as gatherings or special events. Julizar, S.Sos, M.M., stated, "Relationships with other media are the function of public communication, to establish cooperation with agencies or institutions. Maintaining relationships through gathering events, inviting agencies."

Building good relationships with media and other institutions is one of the keys to the success of public relations in building a positive organizational image and gaining public support (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). This aligns with the concept of public relations as a communication facilitator and a bridge between the organization and its publics.

Experiences and Challenges of Public Relations Practitioners at RRI Padang

Based on the experiences shared by the interviewee, public relations practitioners at RRI Padang often serve as the organization's representatives in attending invitations or events outside RRI Padang. They become official representatives of the head or leadership of RRI Padang in various external activities.

Additionally, public relations practitioners at RRI Padang are involved in managing corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs conducted by RRI Padang. They coordinate activities such as disaster relief, fundraising for orphanages, or other social activities involving the community. Julizar, S.Sos, M.M., shared, "Based on the experience, he used to be in the news for three years, then planning for three years, technical, then planning, then in the LPU field, dealing with advertisements for 6-7 years, then appointed as head of sub-section, sub-section of public services, serving everyone who comes to RRI. Public relations experience, usually representing the head of RRI for invitations. CSR activities include pro 1, background in community culture, all community activities, development, politics, law, economy. Pro 2 is about youth, any youth activities. Pro 4 is culture. Social programs provide disaster relief, collecting funds, then handing them over to social aid or orphanages."

In carrying out their roles, public relations practitioners at RRI Padang certainly face various challenges and obstacles. However, based on the interviews conducted, no major crises were found that had to be handled by public relations at RRI Padang. This may be due to RRI Padang being a government institution that tends to be more stable and less likely to experience crises like commercial organizations.

Nonetheless, challenges faced by public relations practitioners at RRI Padang still exist, such as ensuring good coordination with various divisions within the organization. Given that public relations functions are spread across several sections under the Business Development Service, efforts are needed to synchronize and communicate effectively so that public relations activities can run smoothly and integrate with the organization's overall plans.

Additionally, public relations practitioners at RRI Padang face challenges in achieving financial targets set by the organization. As part of the Business Development Service, public relations must contribute to achieving these targets, for example, through promotional activities and marketing RRI Padang's products or services to other agencies or institutions.

Another challenge is ensuring that information services to the public run well and meet the community's needs. Public relations practitioners must be sensitive to the development of issues and information needs from the public and be able to provide accurate, relevant, and timely information.

In facing these challenges, public relations practitioners at RRI Padang are required to have adequate skills and knowledge in communication management, strategic planning, and communication research (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). They must also be able to adapt to technological developments and new media trends, and build good relationships with media and other institutions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that public relations play a very important role in the organization of RRI Padang as a public broadcasting institution. Although there is no specific division, public relations tasks are integrated into several sections under the Business Development Service. The main role of public relations at RRI Padang is to act as a communication facilitator between the organization and its internal and external publics, as well as to provide information services to the community.

Public relations at RRI Padang are required to keep up with technological developments and utilize new media in performing their functions. Additionally, they must be able to build good relationships with mass media and other institutions outside of RRI Padang. Although they do not face major crises, public relations practitioners at RRI Padang still encounter challenges in terms of coordination with other divisions, achieving financial targets, and providing good information services to the public.

To optimize their role, public relations practitioners at RRI Padang must possess adequate skills and knowledge in communication management, strategic planning, and communication research. By doing so, public relations at RRI Padang can significantly contribute to building a positive organizational image and supporting the achievement of RRI Padang's goals as a public broadcasting institution serving the interests of the wider community.

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