

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN DIPONEGORO NATIONAL HOSPITAL FROM THE EXCELLENCE THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. Public relations plays a vital role in health organizations (hospitals). This study aimed to find out to what extent is the excellent public relations practiced within Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), by analyzing the reality of public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital according to the principles of excellence theory. This study belongs to qualitative research, by relying on an in-depth interview with the public relations practitioner at Diponegoro National Hospital. Data were analyzed through some steps namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results of this study showed that the excellent PR is not practiced at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). In addition, the public relations practitioner does not participate in strategic decision-making, there is no independent PR department, and tiered communication dominates the communication process within Diponegoro National Hospital instead of a two-way symmetrical model of communication.

Keywords: public relations; teaching hospitals; excellence theory; Indonesia.

I. INTRODUCTION

Public relations is the dynamo in the work of modern organizations [1]. Without public relations, the organization lacks the bridge that connects it with the external public, because public relations is the link between administration, employees, external masses, investors, consumers, and all parties [2]. Public relations is responsible to create a friendly relationship between the organization and the public [3]. Public relations tasks extend to include; Fact-finding, advancing the organization, planning, highlighting the image of the organization [4], providing the press with news of the organization, developing communication strategies, coordinating all departments within the organization, managing the organization's activities on social media [5], promoting the services of the organization, in addition to supervising the administrative process within the organization [6]. The term "public relations" first appeared in the United States in 1906. When Ivy Lee recommended the need for a public relations department to solve problems. The reason for the emergence of this term, there was a strike by coal workers to demand an increase in their monthly salary, which paralyzed the industry. Ivy Lee was called "the father of public relations", as a result of his effort to put the first brick for public relations [7].

PR in Indonesia went through 5 different periods. The first period (1900-1942), was the emergence of the Republic of Indonesia. At that time many leaders, important figures, and nationalist movements were discussing the creation of the state's identity. The second period (1942-1945), was represented in Japan's use of public relations strategies, with the aim of partnering with Indonesia in support of its economic and political goals, in addition to gaining the trust of the Indonesian people. Third period (1945-1966), Sukarno

opened Indonesia as an independent country. He has relied on propaganda to legitimize his tenure by both Indonesians and the international community. Fourth period (1966-1998) Suharto led Indonesia for a long time before finally stepping down due to his system of government. When Suharto was in charge, it was difficult for the Indonesian people to have a good connection because newspapers and media were banned. Journalists and public relations practitioners were unable to cover and transmit the news, which made people at the time only dependent on information provided by the government. The fifth period is the period of the era of reform and openness. The era of reform requires openness to everyone, and the Indonesian state has guaranteed it for everyone in society. We can see that in (Law No. 14 of 2008 regarding the freedom of public information). Public relations at this time can be considered to have started to flourish through two-way communication [8]. While others argue that public relations in Indonesia emerged in 1950, through all the activities undertaken by the government to declare Indonesia's independence. Public relations in Indonesia is known as HUMAS or Public Relations.

Public relations penetrated the work of all organizations, whether they are economic, sports, cultural, or even health organizations [9]. Advanced hospitals have become dependent on public relations in order to achieve the hospital's goals [10], here the importance and roles of public relations in hospitals emerge, especially after the Corona pandemic, Covid-19 [11]. Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND) is a teaching hospital affiliated to the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia, under the guidance of the Directorate General of Higher Education, which is used as an educational area for the Faculty of Medicine, Diponegoro University, through the

practice of health services such as other public hospitals [12]. Diponegoro National Hospital is located on the campus of Diponegoro University in Tembalang area, adjacent to the Faculty of Medicine, Semarang city, Central Java. Organizationally, the position of the main director of the Diponegoro National Hospital is directly under the rector of Diponegoro University. The vision of Diponegoro National Hospital aims to carry out the process of education, research, and service as well as community service by realizing the Tridharma of higher education [13].



Figure 1. Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND)

Michel Desbord mentioned in his book (Marketing du sport) that: in order for the organization to achieve its external and internal stability, it should take care of public relations, not only because it is an administrative function, but also we can see the gains that the organization can achieve when it is employ PR professionally within the organization. Thus, modern organizations seek to use all appropriate methods in order to activate the activities of public relations and move away from the dependency of the public relations department to any of the executive departments in the organizations, because the dependency of the PR department will lead to failure of public relations and failure to fully perform its duties [14]. Therefore, the need for this research arose to know the extent of excellent public relations practice at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). The researchers crystallized the problem of this research in the following main question: To what extent is the excellent public relations practiced within Diponegoro National Hospital?

Researchers seek through this study to find out to what extent is the excellent public relations practiced within Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), by analyzing the reality of public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital according to the principles of excellence theory. Excellence theory is a general theory of public relations that “defines how public relations make organizations more effective, and how to organize and manage public relations in order to contribute significantly to organizational effectiveness and achieving the goals of the organization, and what is the ideal state of public relations within the organization and how it should be, and what are the characteristics of excellent public relations” [15].



Figure 2. Indicators of Excellence Theory by Grunig

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is qualitative, by relying on an in-depth interview with a public relations practitioner at Diponegoro National Hospital, in order to obtain the primary data for this research, secondary data was represented in books and scientific articles related to public relations and the theory of excellence in public relations. In this research, the researchers used the data analysis technique by Huberman model [16]. According to Creswell, Miles and Huberman's model represents a systematic approach for qualitative research analysis [17], which consists of collecting data, data reduction, data display, in addition to conclusion drawing. The researchers analyzed the data of this study by focusing on the public relations indicators that mentioned in the excellence theory of public relations by Grunig.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

(1) Public relations department should be independent of other departments. The results of this study concluded that there is no independent public relations department in RSND, Public relations and marketing overlap under the name of the Public Relations and Marketing Department. So, this principle is not available at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). Grunig and his colleagues explain that excellent organizations which it has a PR department independent of other sections in the organization. Where public relations perform all the functions of communication, responding to the dynamic environment. Whereas, organizations that do not have a separate PR department do not fall within the framework of excellence, even if they support PR activities such as, Marketing Department, Finance Department, Communication Department, Public Affairs [18]. Thus, the first principle of Excellence theory does not apply to public relations at Diponegoro Hospital (RSND) due to there is no a separate and independent relations department.

(2) Separating public relations from marketing. The results of this study concluded that at Diponegoro National Hospital Public relations and marketing overlaps in one department, and the public relations practitioner tends to

marketing duties more than public relations duties. So, this principle is not available at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). Public relations and marketing both of them is very important to the organization. But recent trends in public relations separate public relations and marketing. In product promotion efforts, the two functions of marketing and public relations are complementary to each other. When one is subordinate to the other, the organization loses the actual value of its public relations and marketing practice activities. Marketing is concerned with consumers only, while public relations are concerned with; employees, suppliers, competitors, professional unions, local and financial community, research, media development, editing of the organization's newspaper. Therefore, public relations is more general and comprehensive. Thus, the second principle of Excellence theory does not apply to public relations at Diponegoro Hospital (RSND), because the work of Public relations and marketing overlaps in one department, this contradicts the modern trends of public relations from the point of view of the excellence theory.

(3) Public relations practitioners should have a direct functional link with top management. The results of this study concluded that the public relations practitioner does not have any direct functional relationship with the senior management. Also, the public relations practitioner has no authority in making decisions or even participating in decision-making within the hospital. Moreover, the public relations practitioner is marginalized and is not invited by the higher management to any meetings related to the higher management of the hospital. So, this principle is not available at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). The public relations manager must be an essential part of the decision-making process in the organization. Public relations must participate in decision-making, and its direct link with higher management. Organizations that were rated excellent according to Grunig, their public relations manager was a decision maker, and he was a member of top management. Thus, the third principle of Excellence theory does not apply to public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), because the public relations practitioner has no authority to participate in the decision-making process within Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND).

(4) Public relations must be involved in strategic management. The results of this study concluded that when there is a meeting to plan the strategic plan of RSND, the board of directors did not invite the public relations officer to participate in that plan, they did not even talk to her, they only spoke to Dr. Dimas and Dr. Peni, and for the PR employee, she just follows their decision. So, this principle is not available at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). Public relations participation in strategic management will enable it to manage crises effectively, and to develop solutions to any crisis facing the organization. Public relations programs should be managed strategically by the public relations department. Thus, the fourth principle of Excellence theory does not apply to public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), because the public relations practitioner does not participate in the strategic management inside the

hospital, and the higher management is the one who controls the hospital management and its crises, in addition to the solutions from the public relations practitioner do not have an echo from the side of the higher management, and the public relations programs are not managed or planned strategically, but rather randomly.

(5) Public relations practitioners must have the knowledge and competence that qualify them to practice balanced public relations. The results of this study concluded that the Public Relations practitioner at Diponegoro National Hospital holds a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Diponegoro University, she did not have any experience in public relations before, and this is her first experience, in addition to that she did not attend any public relations or communications courses, also, the hospital did not provide her with any training courses at all. So, this principle is not available at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). Excellent Public relations practitioners must have formally studied public relations at a university, or as training courses in a professional organization, or in a continuing education program. For public relations practitioners in the organization two roles, the first role: administrative, is to plan public relations and communication programs. The second role: technical role, is to arrange conferences and events for the organization, design publications and formulate news, writing and editing. A public relations practitioner will not be able to perform these duties to the fullest unless he has an academic background in public relations. Thus, the fifth principle of Excellence theory does not apply to public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), because the public relations practitioner at Diponegoro National Hospital does not have an academic degree in public relations, and she also does not have any previous experience in the field of public relations, therefore the term "excellent public relations practitioner" does not apply to her.

(6) The public relations department should be headed by a person of leadership and managerial nature. The results of this study concluded that the Public Relations practitioner at Diponegoro National Hospital does not have the characteristics of an administrative or leadership personality. The members of the senior management answered that the current public relations practitioner is nervous, reckless, unsocial and not wise in what she says. So, this principle is not available at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). The public relations practitioner should be distinguished by the ability to sense the extent of his compatibility with others, and to be careful, so that his words do not lead to problems that are difficult to solve. He must know the right time to speak and the right time to be silent. Public relations practitioners must have the ability to interact with people, influence them and persuade them, and then gain their affection. This means the personality should be stable, balanced and calm, in order to achieve understanding with individuals and groups. In addition to the human is a social being by nature, living within multiple groups that affect his behavior and way of thinking, so the public relations practitioner must understand the nature of group formation and the prevailing communication patterns. Thus, the sixth principle of Excellence theory does

not apply to public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), because the public relations practitioner does not have the administrative, leadership, or even organizational characteristics that qualify him to be an excellent public relations practitioner.

(7) The internal communication system in the organization should be balanced (two-way symmetrical model). The results of this study concluded that tiered communication is the type that dominates the communication process within Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). Also, the public relations practitioner cannot communicate directly with the senior management even in times of crisis. In addition to Public relations is trying to find out opinions of the hospital's external audiences through an electronic questionnaire, but these surveys were not taken advantage of, especially since the top management does not pay attention to what the public relations practitioner says. So, this principle is not available at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). The two-way symmetrical model aims to make senior management more familiar with the various audiences of the organization, whether they are internal or external audiences, shareholders, distributors or partners, with the aim of identifying their behaviors and opinions towards the organization and the services provided, thus there will be a mutual dialogue between the organization and its various audiences, This model is the best and optimal, where information exchange and sharing is available from all parties. This type of communication will help the organization to know the reactions of the audience, especially in times of crisis, in order to develop appropriate plans and strategies. This communication model serves as an early warning system for the organization with its strategic audiences. Thus, the seventh principle of Excellence theory does not apply to public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), because tiered communication is the type that dominates the communication process within Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND) not the two-way symmetrical model of communication.

(8) Senior management support for public relations. The results of this study concluded that there is no support from the top management for public relations in Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), and we can see this in the results of this study, as public relations in Diponegoro National Hospital suffer from marginalization and bureaucracy. So, this principle is not available at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). Public relations participation in decision-making is an important principle in practicing excellent public relations. It is reflected in the presence of a public relations manager in the decision-making process, and raises the level of senior management's expectations of what the PR department can do. Whenever there is support from the senior management of public relations and its activities, all of these will contribute to activating the role of public relations within Diponegoro National Hospital. Thus, the eighth principle of Excellence theory does not apply to public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), because there is no support from the senior management for Public Relations or its activities within Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND).

(9) The organization should rely on the method of effectiveness. The results of this study concluded that Diponegoro National Hospital doesn't depend on the method of effectiveness, as the opinion of the public relations practitioner is not listened to, in addition to the opinions of the external public of the hospital are not used in the development of the services provided. So, this principle is not available at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). The organization deals with a dynamic and complex environment that requires the practice of strategic public relations, by constantly knowing the opinions of the public towards the organization. The principle of effectiveness is to study the external environment and its most important issues, in order to design appropriate plans to deal with these issues. Active groups pose a threat to the stability of the organization. In addition to providing the opportunity to hear the opinions and point of view of the public relations practitioner from the side of the senior management. Thus, the ninth principle of Excellence theory does not apply to public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), because the opinions of the external public are not used in the development of hospital services, despite there are questionnaires to measure patients satisfaction, the answers of users are not used in the development of the service, the senior management does not pay attention to these opinions and does not evaluate them. Also, the top management does not listen to the opinion of the public relations practitioner about the work.

(10) The existence of a supportive organizational context for public relations in the organization. The results of this study concluded that there is no supportive organizational context for public relations within Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). So, this principle is not available at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). Organizations that are characterized by an authoritarian culture, in addition to the concentration of power in the hands of managers, are not distinguished by distinguished organizations, unlike organizations with participatory culture. We can say that the presence of an organizational context containing a management structure that enhances the independence of employees and depends on centralization, will contribute to the success of public relations. There are several ways in which we can know the extent of the practice of excellent public relations within the hospital, most notably the lack of authoritarianism and the distribution of roles, and the culture of the organization that supports effective participation. Thus, the tenth principle of Excellence theory does not apply to public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND), because Diponegoro National Hospital does not rely on a participatory culture but rather on an authoritarian culture, it does not support effective participation by public relations, and power is concentrated in the hands of managers only.

After analyzing the results of this study in the light of Excellence theory in public relations, we can say that the public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital don't apply to it the term "excellent public relations", especially since all the principles of this theory without exception don't apply to the practice of public relations at Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND).

IV. CONCLUSION

Modern organizations depend entirely on the work of public relations as an integral part of the organization. Hence, the senior management of Diponegoro National Hospital should give more importance to public relations within Diponegoro National Hospital (RSND). Since Diponegoro National Hospital is relatively new, they need to activate the role and activities of public relations more, in order to build an excellent brand in the minds of the public at Tembalang and other regions in Central Java.

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