
IMAGE BUILDING THROUGH PUBLIC RELATION MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY ON PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BANTUL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to 1) explore the process of developing public relation management (PR) implemented by the school to build school image 2) find out the implications of the image built by the school for the school progress, 3) provide the solution for the public relation management to build the image. This study applies a qualitative method with a case study approach at SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul, an Indonesian private elementary school. Data collection techniques are done by interviewing and collecting digital documents from the Facebook account and Instagram account. Purposive sampling done in selecting participant and triangulation is used to check the validity of the data. The results illustrate that the school applies public relation management through planned steps, those are: setting goals, organizing teamwork, skill-based task force division, planning strategies, and maximizing the use of social media. A school's image has some implications for increasing the number of students, increasing school performance, improving the quality of school staff, expanding the school network, saving promotion costs, and school competitiveness. This study offers a solution in applying public relation by optimizing digital platforms to implement public relation management to build school image.

1. INTRODUCTION

The competition among schools in Indonesia in terms of new student enrolment regularly occurs twice in an academic year, that is, at the time of graduation and registration. Schools that have already established image in society as favourite/excellent schools always get many registrants. Attracting public interest requires hard work from all parties to build a positive image in the community's hearth (Kowalski, 2011). According to Dudding (1974) and Neuman (2012), image is the life of an institution and students' decisions to choose an educational institution strongly influenced by the educational institution's image.

According to Simamora (2004), the image of the institution is an accumulated association that consumers perceive towards a promotion. The institution's image should be positively built in the public's perspective, whether real consumers and potential customers who want to target. Thus, it dramatically affects consumers; in this case, are potential students to make a decision. In building an image, it takes synergy of various things in an excellent public relations management strategy. It is closely related to several points, including (a) community understanding of the goals of education in schools, (b) community trust in schools,

(c) school accountability for the expectations imposed by the community on schools, (d) community support in obtaining resources needed to continue and improve school programs, and (e) public awareness about the importance of their participation in advancing education in schools (Hermawati & Mas, 2017).

Therefore, the school requires having a positive image so that positive perceptions arise in the community, which ultimately impacts the community's increasing trust and interest in the implementation of education in the school. The institution's image is essential and must be maintained in the eyes of the public, both internal and external (Ruslan, 2006). A positive image can be built through quality education services oriented to customer satisfaction. Besides, one of the primary points to build a positive image in society is to improve public relations management that can present the quality of education in a school. The better the community's perception of a school's image, the higher the participation of the community in the school.

However, many schools are not aware of the benefits of the image building, such as utilizing mass media, to promote the schools. Most new schools make use of it to promote annual activities closing their years. Even though there is much positive information from internal schools that can be published in mass media, image building can be done by the public relations department in school management. Again, not many schools have and take advantage of this part of public relations. Generally, this role is taken by the principal and /or his representative.

One example of the schools considered to have a community's right image is SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul, an Indonesian Private Primary School. The school was proven to organize an excellent public relations performance in building the school's image. At the beginning of the establishment, the school did not have adequate buildings and facilities and infrastructure. The school was assisted by many stakeholders who oversee the school, namely Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah (Islamic organization). The school borrowed a building owned by PDM Muhammadiyah Bantul. At the same time, school achievement was not a concern. When participating in competitions, students had not been too encouraged to excel. The use of media was also not massive. Promotion is only limited to word of mouth information system among members of 'Aisyiyah. The message was "each member of Aisyiyah has to send their children to the school. So that information before this school was limited only to a small group of people - the cadre 'Aisyiyah. Data shows that in 2006, the number of school students was only 36 students.

However, in 2014 according to data from the school, there was a significant increase in students from 283 students in 2013 to 598 students in 2014. It can say that the school was successful in building an image. It is indeed inseparable from disseminating information that is well systemized by public relations from the school to the community. The number of students

registering increased significantly. Therefore, it is interesting to see how the school changes in public relations management that have originated from word of mouth to what it is today.

From this point, it can highlight that there is undoubtedly a development of public relations management that has been run by this school to build their current image. Therefore, this research will look at how management changes made at the beginning of the school's founding and how innovation and development will occur in the next future. It is crucial to maintain greater public trust and the number of students. Thus, this study is interested in investigating the development process of public relations management applied by the school in building the present image and the implications of the school's image formed by the school's progress. This research then seeks to answer both of these questions.

This study expected to provide a comprehensive picture for other schools about the development of sound public relations management in boosting the school's image. Thus, this can also implement by other schools. The research then focused on the development and the implementation of public relations management in SD Unggulan 'Aisyiyah Bantul, especially in utilizing digital information to build the school's image. This study also limits its scope to the implications of the image that has built on the school.

1.1. Public Relation

Public relations (PR) defined as managing the flow of information between an organization and its public. It provides organizations or individuals with exposure to their audience using public interest topics and news that do not require direct payment. Grunig and Hunt (1984) define public relations as a planned and ongoing effort to build and maintain good faith and mutual understanding between an organization and its public. Here, the public divided into six: Customers (in this case, parents), staff, investors, politicians, and regulators; neighbours and business partners. The purpose of public relations is primarily to persuade the public, investors, partners, employees, and other stakeholders to maintain specific perspectives about the company, its leadership, and its products. Typical activities include speaking at conferences, winning industry awards, working with the press, and employee communication.

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), PR helps an organization and its publics adapt to one another. Its main functions include research, planning, communication, dialogue and evaluation. Therefore, PR is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their public. Public Relations, which outlines public attitudes, defines policies, procedures, and organizational interests, is followed by implementing simple programs to gain public understanding and acceptance. Grunig and Hunt (1984) define public relations as "management of communication between organizations and their publics." Grunig and Grunig (1992) argues that public relations practitioners play the central role of organizations and carry out strategic management tasks.

The purpose of public relations is not only to disseminate information but also to facilitate mutual understanding and resolve conflicts between organizations and their publics. In this era, public relation is a complex profession practised by hundreds of thousands of people worldwide and various organizations such as business, government agencies, professional and trade associations, schools and universities, hospitals, hotels, and many more. From a company perspective, public relations can assist companies in developing a positive image for their business. According to Kent and Taylor (2005), public relations can foster goodwill among critical hearings, provide crisis management expertise, and coordinate programs and services for government and government agencies, as well as businesses that work with them. Corporate PR plays a vital role as part of a marketing strategy. PR Media is vital in any organization that generates profits (Kent & Taylor, 2005).

1.2. School Management

School management divided into two, namely administrative and operative. Administrative includes the management process, which includes management functions. On the other hand, the operative one includes activity units in organizations such as student management, teaching, personnel, finance, equipment and public relations (PR) (Budiwibowo & Sudarmiani, 2018).

The term PR has many connotations. In education disciplines, PR described as concepts, professions, processes, and even goals. Furthermore, the meaning intended by public relations is often associated with organizational contexts. For example, public relations programs in large manufacturing companies may have missions, processes, and goals that are far different from those associated with school public relations programs (Kowalski, 2011).

All teaching work contains several management elements, so a teacher is a manager. However, in the case of school management, managers here mean teachers who have the task of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling other teachers' work (Everard et al., 2004). In the educational field, management is an activity of integrating educational resources so that they centralized to achieve predetermined educational goals by directing people to carry out certain activities to achieve goals. In practice, managers or principals are obliged to assist their teachers, staff and students (Budiwibowo & Sudarmiani, 2018).

The old paradigm of education management is limited to that schools only carry out programs and do not formulate and carry out their schools' educational tasks. While in the new paradigm, schools are given greater authority in managing their institutions and the decision-making process, which jointly carried out with the community (Budiwibowo & Sudarmiani, 2018). Hence, the schools need to foster good relations with the community since their programs could run smoothly to support the community.

For this reason, schools expected to provide information to the community regarding the programs and problems they encounter. In terms of communication, those schools can utilize various media types, such as meetings, letters, bulletins, mass media, guest and parent visit logbooks, agenda books, expeditions, etc. (Budiwibowo & Sudarmiani, 2018). On the other hand, in its implementation, school-based management and community participation are like two sides of a coin, both of which must run synergistically with school members' participation/involvement, a sense of belonging to the school can be improved. This increased sense of ownership will encourage an increased sense of responsibility, and it will give implications for the school community's dedication and community towards the school (Tabrani, 2013).

School management cannot be separating from public relations activities and vice versa (Nasution, 2010). PR is one of the most realized things in the organization's administration, yet, the least understood (Kowalski, 2011). PR is a critical element in an organization. In other words, PR is a "senses" for an organization, including educational organizations, public relations can interpret as a management function that is unique between organizations with the public (Isbianti, 2009). Recently, public relations management is required to build and maintain the image of educational institutions. It can be done by managing public relations to focus on creating a positive impression of the community (Nasution, 2010).

1.3. School and Image

School is a formal education organization system, a social institution that projected to achieve educational goals. School is a unique social system with various individual cultures integrated into one school system (Nurochim, 2016). Formal school is an example of an educational institution that focuses on academic intelligence even though it does not necessarily neglect spiritual or religious matters. However, the traditional schools' education system emphasizes students' achievement in intellectual intelligence, which ultimately leads to various academic measures (Nurochim, 2016). Traditionally, schools have programs, learning environments and activities that facilitate the freedom to think and act (Tan, 2014).

As institutions, schools and image are inseparable. Image is formed through an informal process to change according to the intensity and credibility of the source of information. The amount of object confidence in the source of information is one of the principles for receiving or rejecting information (Dardiri, 2015). Image is a view of an agency and produced from the community's objective evaluation of the institution's actions, behaviour, and ethics during society (Qibtiyah, 2018). The school's image covers five dimensions, namely the principal's leadership and quality of education, graduate competence and alumni success, school facilities and infrastructure, the involvement of parents and the community, and students or graduates (Dardiri, 2016).

The image of an educational institution starts from the institution's identity, reflected through the leadership and the name of the institution. Then also through non-physical forms, school images can also be formed through physical facilities such as equipment, teacher abilities, school financial abilities, location, access, media used such as sites and brochures as well as various events held by schools (Li & Hung, 2009; Qibtiyah, 2018). The physical image can see from the logo or picture of the institution, facilities and infrastructure, and buildings, non-physically able to provide services provided by the performance of educators and education staff and extracurricular activities developed (Qibtiyah, 2018).

A key factor of image building is promotion, aiming to persuade stakeholders to react to the products or services offered (Dardiri, 2015). The process of preparing a public relations strategy that is not right impacts the school's image, and this is the impact of the lack of work motivation of teachers and community interest in schools (Kusuma & Widiarti, 2018; Maamarah & Supramono, 2016). Therefore, it is essential to approach both internal and external stakeholders through promotion.

Image is the primary goal of public relations (Qibtiyah, 2018). Thus, there must be an exceptional staff as public relations, who can design information management strategies to build a school image, create information channels, pay attention to information management strategies designed to be right on target (Kusuma & Widiarti, 2018). The right strategy in marketing can shape a school's image, and promotion is the most effective strategy (Li & Hung, 2009).

The school's image is very influential on parents' decisions (Li & Hung, 2009; Skallerud, 2011). The school's image, which built through promotion, has an impact on the decision to choose schools (Bayu & Habibah, 2017; Sari & Totalia, 2016). From the previous explanations above, we can see the importance of the school's image and how it affects the school's quality. When a school puts its attention on quality, the image of this school is seen by itself. The school's image is also essential to capture the opportunity for qualified students to enter the school. Therefore, the school's competitiveness becomes even better.

2. METHODS

It is a qualitative case study research. According to Merriam (2009), this research is a study that tries to systematically investigate an event to explain a phenomenon (Lune & Berg, 2017). They simply explained the case study as an in-depth method, qualitatively one case (Lune & Berg, 2017). This research took place in SD Unggulan 'Aisyiyah Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia in February 2020. Data collection techniques were done by interviewing and also collecting digital documents taken from school Facebook and Instagram accounts. In the case of studies, interviews are more focused, and participants' selection adjusted to those related to the case (Merriam, 2009).

The instrument for conducting data collection is then an interview guide arranged rigidly before the interview process. In selecting informants, researchers used a purposive sample technique in which the researcher chose people who considered the problem under study. The Informants were the school principal, quality insurance, deputy headmaster of public relations, and the primary school teacher board 'Aisyiyah Bantul.

The validity of this data, triangulation techniques. The checking validity data technique from various sources at various times (Sugiyono, 2008). Therefore, this triangulation was carried out with three techniques: triangulation of sources when obtaining information from various sources to check information. The following step was triangulation techniques, namely when the interview uses different question techniques to find answers' suitability—finally, triangulation of time, namely by changing the interview time to see the answers' consistency. Data analysis reduces data, data display, and concluding/ verification (Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Sugiyono, 2008).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the school's strategies in managing public relation unit to build a positive image of the school. This section also explains some implications that result in the image building towards the school advancement.

3.1 Goal Setting

The most crucial plan in carrying out a public relations team's activity is to set goals or objectives to achieved (Avenarius, 1993; Kent & Taylor, 2005). Decision making about setting goals is a direction for the public relations ranks to achieve the goal, namely the PR program's success (Neuman, 2012). The programs cannot carry out without clear objectives. In the results of this research interview, an obvious objective regarding the work program of the SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul presented by the principal.

"This school is branding itself as an" Islamic and multi-talented "school. So, any information conveyed in any form is narrated or branded with the Islamic and multi-talented impression that every SDU student 'Aisyiyah Bantul" (Principal of the Primary School' Aisyiyah Bantul). "

The statement explained that the PR program's objectives were to build a brand image in public perspective about the school as an Islamic school that teaches Islamic values to students and equip students with various skills needed in the future. It expected that every student of the school has an Islamic personality and several talents.

3.2 Planning the Strategies

Planning on public relations management functions in educational institutions is an agreement and understanding among educational institutions about what schools must achieve. Without a planned program, a public relations practitioner will force to take action instinctively so that he will quickly lose direction (Kowalski, 2011). In this research, the school's PR made a work plan by forming a task force team consisting of teachers and giving direction

to teaching staff to be creative and publicize the school community's work and achievements. Thus, the information well delivered to the wider community.

"Formed a PR team consists of teacher staffs. After that, the PR team assigned to map the school potential and create some agendas then it will be blown up to social media such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp group.... The initial step was to determine a school tagline by the vision & mission and formulate a work plan. Our strategy was to make an annual work plan. One of them is to invest all the good things in the school such as teacher achievement, student achievement, and school activities with social values that we will pack and create in the news so that the information will easily be understood and accepted by the community... After that, we make short, medium- and long-term work".

The excerpt shows that in building the school's image, all school agendas and information were well prepared to be published and packaged in such a way as to be attractive to the public. The in line with Gilpin's (2010) opinion stated that optimizing the media is crucial in shaping the public's view of an institution.

The PR team's initial strategy was to create an annual work plan by making a list of data/inventory of school achievements and activities. The data will later process into material for making publication content. In addition to the annual plan, the elementary school also made short and medium-term work plans.

3.3 Organizing PR

The PR unit is part of the vice principal's successor for Public Relations in carrying out the duties. In this case, the public relations unit has a significant role in building the school's image. The following are the results of an interview with the principal regarding the structure of public relations at the school:

"Structurally, the task of public relations is under the vice-principal for the public relations consisting of some teachers who have expertise in the IT field, including ICT teachers".

The work of the team expected to reach the community through IT broadly. In addition to information technology, there were several expert teams in other fields such as journalism, photography and videography teams to support the school images' development in the public's perspective. The following is an excerpt from the interview data with the principal regarding the PR team's division of work.

"We formed the public relations team with competent human resources who have passions in this field, for example like journalistic works, photography and videography as well as Corel Draw, Photoshop etc. After that, we make short, medium and long term work".

In terms of division of PR teamwork tasks, the head of public relations divided several divisions; experts handled each task. The following are the results of the researchers' interviews with the principal related to the PR team's division.

"Our public relations tasks are proportionally distributed by the competencies of members of the public relations team. For example, those who are experts in social media focused and controlled Instagram, Facebook content and making vlogs for YouTube. Moreover, those who are good at doing journalistic work in our form tasked with compiling a running school magazine".

From the data excerpt, public relations team was divided based on their skills and knowledge. Hence, teamwork expected to be more efficient. The organization of the School public relations team can illustrate in the figure 1.

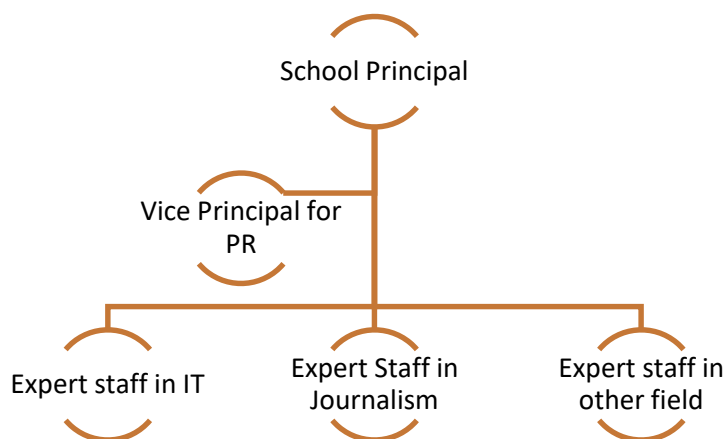


Figure 1. The Organization of the Public Relation

To conclude, the dissemination of information is first carried out by word of mouth system then through social media which much faster spread to the public. The reason for using social media is that most of the parents have social media accounts. In line with Ebrahim (2019), social media has significantly changed marketing practices, including promoting schools in building image. This rapidly growing marketing channel on social media, accessed by 2.77 billion internet users worldwide, has redefined new ways for companies to reach out, interact with, and engage with the public (Ebrahim, 2019). Social media must be at the heart of public relations activities because social media can improve organizational relationships by improving public relations (Valentini & Kruckeberg, 2012).

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3.4 Evaluation

It is necessary to evaluate the implemented activities. Hence, we can measure the accuracy and efficiency of these activities has been carried out. The following are the results of the interview with the principal before the PR evaluation:

"We made a program monitoring and evaluation sheet, to assess the implementation by the target or the objectives that announced".

From the results of the interview, it can see that the school evaluated the public relations program by using a monitoring sheet that serves to find an indication of the success of the work program. Remarks from the principal corroborate the data above through the researcher interview.

"The school principal, deputy headmaster of public relations, teacher representatives, Aisyiyah Foundation, always monitors and provides input if public relations programs are less attractive".

From this statement, it can be noticed that the evaluation of the public relations program works well and is well organized; almost all parties are involved in monitoring and providing feedback on the public relations program. The structural team of the institution, but the Aisyiyah Foundation was also involved in the evaluation of the public relations work program. It is an excellent teamwork.

3.5 Activities of the Management of Public Relations Management of SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul

According to the Directorate of Education Personnel in the School and Community Relations Education and Training Module cited by Isbianti (2009), suitable public relations activities must be guided by the principles of public relations consisting of integrity, continuity, coverage, simplicity, constructiveness, adaptability. The following explanation is an illustration of this activity. SDUA Bantul applies several principles of public relations management by implementing activities that are guided by the principles includes:

a) Integrity

The community's relations are integrated and transparent, in terms of what is explained, conveyed, and served to the community.

b) Continuity

The relationship between the school and the community must be carried out continuously, not only by accident or at any time, for example, only once a year. SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul also applies the principle of sustainability in establishing relations with the community. The publication is not only done within a certain period but carried out on an ongoing basis.

c) Coverage

Information transferring activities should be comprehensive and cover all aspects/factors or substances that the community needs to convey and know. The school applies the principle of coverage to preach all information related to the school.

d) Simplicity

The simplicity principle also implies that the information presented is expressed in words that are full of friendship and easy to understand. SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul applies the principle of simplicity in providing information to the public.

e) **Constructiveness**

This principle implies that all information reported must be constructive. SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul implements the principle of constructiveness.

f) **Adaptability**

SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul also applies the principle of adaptability in public relations management activities to disseminate information to the public by adjusting to the community's culture.

3.6 The Implication of the School Image for the School Advancement

This section discusses the implication of the build image for the betterment of the school.

a. Increasing Number of Students

Schools that are reputable and have the right image will automatically attract public interest to send their children to the school (Kowalski, 2011). This what happened to SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul which successfully built the positive image of the school.

"It is massive. The proof is with the school's image that we continue to build and maintain we can attract the interest of the community to send their children to school here. *Alhamdulillah*, from the beginning, keep going up... every year by increasing the number of students (can be seen in the table)".

From this statement, it can highlight that the school's image has an impact on increasing public trust of the school. It is proved by increasing the number of new student registrants at the school each year.



Figure 2. Number of Students of SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul

The figure illustrates that there is an uprising trend in the number of students registering at the school.

b. Improved School Achievement

The image built by the school also had a significant impact on improving the performance of the school's students, as evidenced by the results of the researchers' interviews with the principal.

"With the image of schools in the community, this has implications for students who register to our school as well as being more varied with each other's abilities. It causes our student performance to increase and more diverse achievement in science, arts and sports".

From the interview results, it is clear that the school's image has implications for improving the quality and quantity of achievement. Achievement types are increasingly diverse not only in science but also in other fields such as arts and sports, making the school have varied achievements based on each student's talents and interests. Kowalski (2011) also mentioned that the image impacts improving the quality of an institution.

c. Quality Improvement of School Staff

School staff, such as teachers and employees, were also positively affected by the school's image's construction. From the results of the interview with the principal, said that:

"With the school image that is increasingly "fragrant" automatically demands teachers and employees to improve their competence and abilities, challenges and innovations that we must answer to make teachers learn and do something new. Thus, their competence increases".

The impact of the image automatically carries a positive impact and builds a positive atmosphere as well. Teacher staff and employees challenged to continue to innovate, to improve their quality and competence. The impact of the image on staff quality is also made clear by Smith (2013), who states that the image enables the character building of employees in an institution (Smith, 2013).

d. Expanding School Network

The image does not only affect the internal institutions but also attract other institutions. Through an increasingly right image in the community's perspective, it will create an attraction for other agencies to establish a partnership with the school (Kowalski, 2011). Following are the interview results about increasing the number of institutions that have been a partner with SD Unggulan 'Aisyiyah Bantul.

"There are so many, besides schools, there are also universities that we collaborate with such as UAD, UNY and others in terms of student internships, PPG training, thesis research sites, theses and even dissertations.

This school is also frequently used as a comparative study, a place of research, teacher research. This school frequently invited to be involved by the government or the Foundation in social activities".

e. Cost-Effective Promotion

As the image has firmly built, it will then reduce the cost of promotion (Ebrahim, 2019). That is because other people outside the school also share information about the school. According to the Principal, the savings in promotion costs significantly reduced; banners no longer needed promotion.

"It saves a lot. With the current image, school publications run every day, not only when registration. As proof, in the last 2-3 years, we have never use banners as a conventional promotion, but prospective students already know the selection schedule etc."

It can see that the school conducts promotions every day with more efficient media, namely digital media. Waters et al. (2010) also argue that social media is a cost-effective publication tool.

f. School Competitiveness

SD Unggulan 'Aisyiyah Bantul is a relatively new school. However, this school can compete with other superior schools that have well established. The following is the principal's statement related to the competitiveness of the school with other schools.

"The better and more sustainable, this school is relatively new, but its segment has been formed and placed at the top of the segment with the number of students that continues to rise every year".

From the interview data, it is clear that the school's image built so far impacts school competitiveness and makes this school classified into a favourite and excellent school.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, the researcher draws several conclusions to answer each study's focus and purpose. This conclusion intended to reveal the phenomena were occurring SD Unggulan Aisyiyah Bantul before PR management in building the school's image. The first conclusion is about the implementation of PR management in building the school's image. Primary School 'Aisyiyah Bantul implements PR management through planned steps: (1) decision making to set goals and brand image of the school as an Islamic and multi-talented school, (2) coordinate a well-structured public relations team to manage strategy in building a school's image. (3) The division of taskforce based on the skills and qualifications of each member. (4) Making the timetable to achieve the goal (5) Utilizing digital media such as social media as a practical promotional tool. In carrying out the public relations management strategy, the PR team considers several aspects: information characteristics, relevance generated, speed of information flow, target economic value and costs, and target users of information/public.

The school has successfully built a positive image as an Islamic and multi-talented school. The image of a school built positively has implications for increasing the number of students, improved school achievement, improved quality of school staff, expanding school network, cost-effective promotion, and school competitiveness.

This research expected to contribute to school management discipline as a reference to the need to maximize management and public relations performance to achieve the image of an educational institution. This research is limited to the application of public relations management by the public relations team in building the school's image and its implications for the school's progress, especially SD Unggulan 'Aisyiyah Bantul. Therefore, further research

expected to have better and broader concepts, methodologies and research ideas that can cover all aspects of image building and the meaning for an institution.

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