

The Public Relations Role of DISKOMINFO SUMUT to Building a Positive Image of North Sumatra Governor in The Digital Era

Chairunnisa Nasution^{1*}, Rahmanita Ginting²

^{1,2}Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

*¹Koresponden: icachairun@gmail.com

Abstract

A large amount of public opinion and negative issues about The Governor of North Sumatra Edy Rahmayadi in various conventional media and digital media has resulted in the rise of media crisis issues around him which are controversial in society. To mitigate this, The North Sumatra Province Communication and Information Service (Diskominfo Sumut) The institution that oversees regional public relations is trying to continue to build and maintain a positive image of The Governor of North Sumatra. This study aims to explain The role of digital public relations, reveal The obstacles faced, and examine how content management is carried out by human practitioners of The North Sumatra Diskominfo. This study used a qualitative descriptive method with four informants from The North Sumatra Diskominfo. Data collection techniques were obtained through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis was obtained from data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The results of this study prove that there is a digital public relations role for North Sumatra Diskominfo through media monitoring activities, podcast broadcasts, and live streaming on YouTube and Instagram accounts @infosumutku, as well as buzzers to fight haters. The obstacles experienced were in the form of The attitude and behavior of The Governor of North Sumatra who was firm and to The point so that they became targets for press bullying to be published as negative news. The use of digital media is also carried out on social media, Tiktok, to gain The support of The millennial generation and generation Z.

Keywords: Crisis Media Issues, The Public Relations Role, Building a Positive Image.

INTRODUCTION

With The start of The Industrial Revolution Era 4.0 or The Digital Era in The Republic of Indonesia in 2018, The Provincial Government of North Sumatra regularly follows regulations from The Central Government to switch from a conventional government system to a digital government system. This is evidenced by the release of e-government products owned by The North Sumatra Provincial Government (PemprovSU) in The form of The E-ASN application in 2020 and Karejo in 2022. These two products are clear evidence of The North Sumatra Provincial Government's seriousness in welcoming The digital era. In order to welcome The digital era that implements a digital government system in a transparent and accountable manner, The PemprovSU realizes The importance of implementing an effective and efficient public communication strategy for The community, especially The formation of a positive image of The local government in The public eye.

The Governor of North Sumatra, Edy Rahmayadi, as The main leader of PemprovSU, maintains his electability and positive image. Image is a public self-image of an institution that is created from an object, subject, or institution and is formed by knowledge and information (Soemirat & Ardianto, 2011). This is proven by the ratification of North Sumatra Governor Regulation Number 12 of 2020 concerning regional public relations which is The responsibility of the North Sumatra Province Communication and Information Service.

Diskominfo North Sumatra through The Public Information Management Sector becomes a cyber public relations actor by implementing a two-way communication model which is believed to be The most ideal communication pattern for each OPD in order to achieve The Pemprovsu digital public relations function, namely forming an understanding between The government and The community through published communication and public information. Cyber public relations is a form of operating virtual world functions in public relations work practices (Doherty et al., 1995). In achieving this public relations function, The North Sumatra Diskominfo public information management sector does three things namely: media monitoring, publications, and press conferences. Media monitoring is carried out by monitoring The news on various media platforms, local newspapers, and online media, which are then recapitulated into a table and graphic data and classified into four types of news issues, namely; positive, neutral, negative, and release issues.

Sadly, media monitoring carried out by The North Sumatra Diskominfo is still manual-based in contrast to e-government systems in The digital era which should already be application-based so that data calculations are possible in real-time, fast, easy to access, and valid.

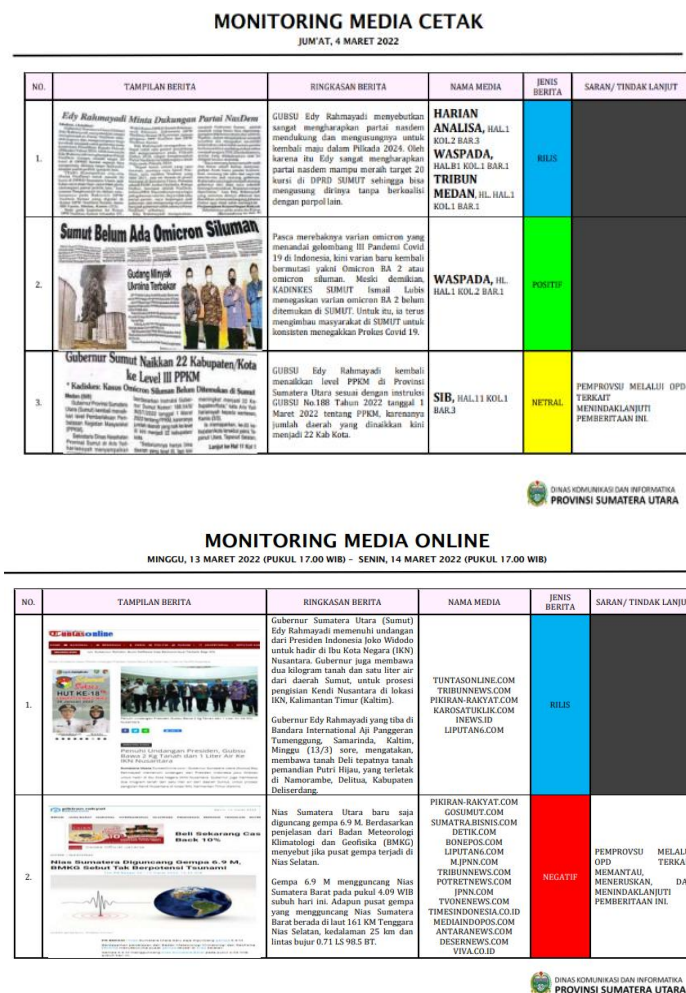


Figure 1. Print Media Monitoring and Online Media Monitoring.
 (Source: North Sumatra DISKOMINFO public opinion section, 2022).

REKAPITULASI DATA MONITORING MEDIA
 BIDANG PUSAT INFORMASI PUBLIK - DINAS KOMUNIKASI DAN INFORMATIKA PROVINSI SUMATERA UTARA
JANUARI - DESEMBER 2021

NO	BULAN	JUMLAH NILAI BERITA				JUMLAH PERSENTASE NILAI BERITA			
		POSITIF	NETRAL	NEGATIF	RILIS	POSITIF	NETRAL	NEGATIF	RILIS
1	JANUARI	457	70	53	366	79	12,1	9,3	63,1
2	FEBRUARI	390	53	48	290	79	10,8	9,9	59,3
3	MARET	372	42	39	390	84	9,5	6,8	47,6
4	APRIL	450	61	41	378	82	11,1	7,4	68,5
5	MAY	369	38	25	252	85	8,8	5,8	58,3
6	JUNI	353	49	49	233	78	10,9	10,9	51,7
7	JULI	446	81	37	340	79	14,4	6,6	60,3
8	AGUSTUS	397	56	63	329	77	10,9	12,2	49,8
9	SEPTEMBER	381	52	22	243	84	11,4	4,8	53,4
10	OKTOBER	333	46	13	265	85	11,7	3,3	47,6
11	NOVEMBER	483	73	47	378	80	12,3	7,9	42,7
12	DESEMBER	380	64	46	291	78	13,1	9,4	59,4
TOTAL :		4809	685	474	3665	81%	11%	0,08	61%

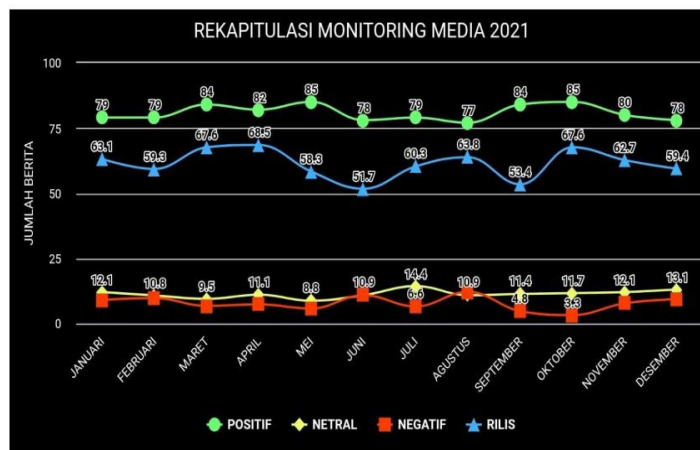


Figure 2. Media Monitoring Recapitulation.
 (Source: North Sumatra DISKOMINFO public opinion section, 2021).

All data collected and analyzed by media monitoring recapitulation then becomes a reference for publication. Publications carried out by The North Sumatra Diskominfo were in The form of covering activities, interviews, and setting agendas for The figure of The North Sumatra Governor and The ranks of The Pemprovsum regional apparatus organizations. The press conference was also carried out by clarifying negative issues that were viral in society as a preventive and early protection measure to quell The issue of crisis media. The issue of media crisis is a viral issue that occurs due to The large amount of negative news in The mass media and digital media which is difficult for the bureaucracy to control and has The potential to tarnish the government's positive image. The impact of the failure to handle media crisis issues on a bureaucracy is mass demonstrations, criminalism, looting, and coups.



Figure 3. The Example of Crisis Media Issues Regarding Edy Rahmayadi.
(Source: detik.com, 2022).

Controlling crisis media issues is a challenge for The North Sumatra Diskominfo to continue to build and maintain a positive image of the Governor of North Sumatra in The public eye.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applies a qualitative research methodology so that The results and discussion can be studied in detail and accurately. The subjects in this study are:

1. Acting head of the North Sumatra Province Communication and Information Service Dr. Kaiman Turnip, M.Si. as The leader who authorizes all administration and regulations at Diskominfo North Sumatra.
2. Head of Public Information Management Harvina Zuhra, S.STP., M.Sc. as a determinant of digital public relations communication strategy.
3. Support staff in the Public Information Section in The field of public information management of The North Sumatra Diskominfo as the North Sumatra Provincial Government's digital public relations actors.

The objectives of this research are:

1. Image of The governor of North Sumatra throughout 2021.
2. Utilization of digital media YouTube and Instagram.
3. Obstacles experienced by North Sumatra Diskominfo digital public relations practitioners in building a positive image of the Governor of North Sumatra.

The informants of this study are the same as the research subjects. While the research

categorization will be described in the table below :

Table 1. Categorization

Theoretical Concept	Indicator (Categorization Concept)
The Role of Public Relations and Positive Image	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As an Expert Advisor : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Determine The restoration strategy based on The evaluation of The crisis situation. ✓ Evaluating The image restoration strategy flow that has been running. 2. As a Communication Facilitator : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Organization determines The target audience of communication messages. 3. As a Problem-Solving Facilitator : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Opinion identification. ✓ Identifying issues. 4. As a Communications Technician: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Organization doesn't take the cases lightly. ✓ Give attention to The case that occurred.

(Source : Cutlip et.al.,2006 & Kriyantono et.al., 2014).

Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis techniques were carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The data validity technique was carried out by technical triangulation in the form of data triangulation using in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation methods. This research was conducted at North Sumatra Diskominfo which located at H.M.Said St. number 27 Medan City on May 2022.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in May 2022 at The Office of Communication and Information of North Sumatra Province which is located on Jalan H.M. Said No. 27 Medan City. The research results were obtained from four informants namely; The Acting Head of The Communication and Informatics Office of North Sumatra Province Dr. Kaiman Turnip, M.Sc., Head of Public Information Management Division Harvina Zuhra, STP., M.Sc., along with two supporting staff namely; Muliani, S.I.Kom and Dedy Christian, S.I.Kom.

Researchers found that Public Relations practitioners of the North Sumatra Diskominfo continued to make maximum efforts in building and maintaining a positive image of the Governor of North Sumatra in the public eye. This is evidenced by the performance they have done, such as :

1) Loyalty as public relations Governor of North Sumatra

Serving as public relations for the Governor of North Sumatra makes the support staff work more than 12 hours per day with one day off which is tentative. They must take part in all the activities of the Governor of North Sumatra Edy Rahmayadi such as: recording a series of events, writing news scripts, editing news scripts, sending the scripts to the editors, making sound dubbing for news content, editing video coverage, and being creative and innovating in making uploaded content to digital media such as; Youtube, Instagram and Tik-Tok.

2) Adaptive Creative Team

As a loyal public relations team, North Sumatra Diskominfo support staff are also an adaptive team because they can adapt to the digital era and market segmentation for digital media which is controlled by generation Z and generation Alpha.

3) Trustful Media Monitoring Team

Even though Print Media Monitoring and Online Media Monitoring are done manually by the Public Relations Office of the North Sumatra Diskominfo, which is in contrast to e-government in the digital era. but the work is carried out consistently, coordinated, and with full responsibility without missing a single news from the monitored newspapers and online media.

4) Collaborative Public Relations Team

Public Relations of the North Sumatra Diskominfo consists of hundreds of supporting staff who have different educational qualifications and expertise and are also divided into different divisions. However, these differences are not a problem because they come together to form a solid team and collaborate to jointly achieve the Provincial Government's digital public relations function. They form and maintain this collaboration consistently in order to form public opinion that is pro-local government and fights and dampens the issue of media crises which, if they occur, have the potential to harm the bureaucracy.

The discussion in this study also reviewed based on the research categorization which includes theoretical concepts and indicators which are described as follows :

1. Expert Advisor

1.1 Determine The Restoration Strategy Based on The Evaluation of The Crisis Situation

The North Sumatra Diskominfo PIP field in each of its jobs plays a role not only as a public relations practitioner but also as an expert advisor to the Governor of North Sumatra Edy Rahmayadi. Before or after carrying out the agenda, North Sumatra Diskominfo public relations practitioners always coordinate with the Governor of North Sumatra or the protocol regarding what is desired and how the flow of content will be created and uploaded. Likewise, if there is a crisis media issue that attacks and tarnishes the positive image of the Governor of North Sumatra, of course, public relations practitioners through the Plt Kadiskominfo of North Sumatra will advise directly to the Governor of North Sumatra regarding appropriate bureaucratic steps to reduce the media spotlight which continues to target due to a large amount of negative news. In addition, Public Relations practitioners of the North Sumatra Diskominfo also implemented solutions to media crisis issues that occurred by using buzzers, media publications, press releases, and also media monitoring.

These various solutions are included in the positive image restoration strategy implemented by Public Relations practitioners of the North Sumatra Diskominfo which aims to dampen negative news that has an impact on the emergence of crisis media issues that have fatal consequences in disrupting the Pemprovsa bureaucracy.

The restoration strategy implemented was to collect data and facts in the form of

photos or videos that were uploaded or played back in front of the press. Apart from that, in some cases, public relations practitioners also rely on buzzers as a form of counterattack on the media or certain parties who attack the government, especially the Governor of North Sumatra, Edy Rahmayadi. But usually, the thing that is most often done is to hold a press conference that aims to clarify viral news in the community in front of the press crew.

1.2 Evaluate The Image Restoration Strategy Flow that has been Running

The North Sumatra Diskominfo Public Relations Office considers that the image restoration that they have done is effective in reducing the issue of crisis media. This is evidenced by the many negative reports surrounding Edy Rahmayadi in 2021 to 2022 which have been suppressed without hampering the wheels of bureaucracy.

2. Communication Facilitator

2.1 The Organization Determines The Target Audience for Its Communication Messages

Public Relations Practitioners at Diskominfo North Sumatra in accordance with the digital public relations function apply a two-way communication pattern to act as a communication facilitator. In every public relations activity including coverage of local government agendas, media publications, press conferences, podcasts, and press releases, Public Relations practitioners of the North Sumatra Diskominfo carry out this two-way communication with the target of communication including the public, netizens, or certain figures directly or virtually. Direct two-way communication is carried out through interactive dialogue broadcasts, podcasts, and interviews. Meanwhile, two-way communication is carried out virtually through social media on the Instagram and YouTube account pages @infosumutku. In both of these accounts, North Sumatra Diskominfo public relations practitioners will respond directly to various responses and comments from netizens through the comments column or direct messages.

Semenatra, in determining communication targets, public relations practitioners of the North Sumatra Diskominfo agreed that they target the public according to the content they will publish. For example, the North Sumatra Diskominfo PIP Division publishes news about Hardiknas (National Education Day) which is published on the digital media pages Youtube and Instagram @infosumutku as well as to various mass media and online media that are partners of PemprovSU journalists. So of course the news publication targets students, youth, to practitioners, and parents of students as the target audience for communication.

3. Problem-Solving Facilitator

3.1 Identifying Opinions

As a public relations practitioner for the North Sumatra Diskominfo, the PIP Division acts as a problem-solving facilitator, namely the party that determines crucial steps and decisions to dampen media attacks on PemprovSU, especially Gubsu Edy Rahmayadi. These crucial steps or decisions are obtained by examining the issues or reports that occur, then it is decided whether the issue deserves a response or not, if not then the issue will be left alone, and if so then the issue will be clarified to the public in the form of a press conference. press releases and publications. While the eligibility requirements for the issue to be responded to are the validity of the news which is in accordance with facts and reality. Hoax news is usually not responded to. The reason why hoax news is usually not responded to is because public relations practitioners of the North Sumatra Diskominfo and Information Center believe that responding to things that are in fact hoaxes or slander is sheer waste, for them the most important thing is to work optimally and achieve the North Sumatra Provincial Government's digital public relations function in accordance with the vision and mission of Dignified

North Sumatra. Identification of opinions by public relations practitioners of the North Sumatra Diskominfo is through Monitoring Media.

3.2 Identify Issues

Identification of issues by North Sumatra Diskominfo public relations practitioners is through monitoring taglines or news titles published in various mass media and digital media. A piece of news can be said to be news that contains negative issues if the title is very contradictory and places the government or certain public figures at a disadvantage. Then, from monitoring the tagline, it will be forwarded to media monitoring.

4. Communications Technician

4.1 Organizations Don't Look Lightly on Cases that Happened

Public relations practitioners of the North Sumatra Diskominfo do not take lightly or take lightly any issues that are widespread in society. Therefore, as a public relations practitioner who works under the auspices of the North Sumatra Province public communication and information agency, a public relations agenda is carried out in the form of media monitoring, press conferences, press releases, media publications, buzzers, and podcast broadcasts which aim to accelerate the realization of the North Sumatra Provincial Government's digital public relations function. namely reaching an understanding between the Government and the people and to close the loophole for issues arising from media crises that could tarnish the image of the Governor of North Sumatra and hamper the bureaucracy.

4.2 Pay Attention to The Incident

The North Sumatra Diskominfo public relations practitioner pays attention to every case or issue that occurs around the Provincial Government of North Sumatra, especially regarding the Governor of North Sumatra Edy Rahmayadi. This attention is referred to as a response to the issues contained in the news in various mass media and digital media. The response in question is in the form of clarification in the form of press conferences, press releases, or media publications. But there are also responses that don't take any form or are left alone because the issues that occur or viral issues are hoax news and are deemed not to need any response from anyone in any form.

CONCLUSION

After obtaining the results of the research and then discussing them, The conclusions in this study are:

North Sumatra Diskominfo Public Relations Practitioners have worked optimally in carrying out their public relations role to build a positive image of Gubsu Edy Rahmayadi which is in accordance with the North Sumatra Provincial Government's digital public relations function. In addition, there are new public relations roles, namely: broadcasting live streaming podcasts on the YouTube account @infosumut, becoming a buzzer to fight hate comments on digital media, and uploading content on the North Sumatra info tiktok account to gain votes and support for millennials and generation z.

Obstacles faced by North Sumatra Diskominfo public relations practitioners in building and maintaining a positive image of Gubsu Edy Rahmayadi is the attitude and behavior of Gubsu Edy Rahmayadi who is firm and to the point in delivering statements before the press crew so that he is always an easy target to make controversial and contradictory news on public. This news is of course classified as negative news which has great potential to become a crisis media issue. So as to close the gap in the emergence of the crisis media issue, public relations practitioners of the North Sumatra Diskominfo Office implement a positive image restoration strategy and carry out a digital public

relations role, one of which is to manage digital media accounts such as youtube, instagram, and tiktok @infosumut which contain the North Sumatra Provincial Government's public relations messages aimed at to educate, and media literacy so that people in North Sumatra Province become pro-government citizens. A pro-government society is one of the main goals of the government bureaucracy, because with the creation of a pro-government society, it will be easier for the government to run its bureaucratic wheels in accordance with the current Pemprov's vision and mission, namely to make North Sumatra Province advanced, safe and dignified.

In order to maintain the positive image of Gubsu Edy Rahmayadi for the many public opinions and negative issues that are viral in the community, North Sumatra Diskominfo public relations practitioners carry out a positive image restoration strategy consisting of seven indicators, namely: identifying opinions, paying attention to cases that occur, identifying issues, the organization does not look lightly at the cases that occur, the organization determines communication targets, determines the restoration of the evaluation of crisis situations, and evaluates the image restoration that has been carried out.

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