



Media and Public Relation Through the *ERASE* Model to Socialize a New Image to the Public in Maintaining the Reputation of the University of Lampung

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ABSTRACT

Crisis communication can occur in any organization, including the State University of Lampung University. This university has always had a good reputation in the eyes of the public, but when the bribery case occurred, the public's trust in Unila was disappointed, embarrassed and protested. This news spread widely and quickly in the digital era, in less than 24 hours, Unila's news had become a trending topic in society which ultimately formed public opinion. Concepts that are relevant to this research are crisis communication management and public relations media relations to overcome reputation problems. This research aims to find out how Unila Public Relations media promotes a new image to the public while maintaining its reputation. Data collection techniques were carried out by observing online media publications and interviews. The research results of 17 news reports using the ERASE model, namely (Evaluation, Research, Action, Strategy, and Evaluation), explained that the first evaluation was an introspection process on Unila's previous management system. The results of research on public opinion in online media regarding reporting on the PMB bribery case in 2022 were mostly negative. The action stage entails launching Unila's new program as a means of changing the PMB system rules in 2023 with the tagline PROACTIVE and Be Strong as the new image of the University of Lampung. Following that, the public relation strategy manages writing or media content and selects media that is right on target, quickly accepted by the public, particularly generation Z on TikTok social media. Finally, an evaluation of the results implementation of Unila's new program saw an increase in interest in joining Unila, amounting to 18% of the number of students in the previous year.

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Introduction

News about the bribery case of the University of Lampung Rector was spread on the internet media: <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2022/08/20/13470761/kpk-tangkap-7-orang-dalam-ott-rektor-unila-karomani> The Lampung community, especially the press, was waiting for the University of Lampung to explain the crisis because it concerned the interests of the community. The first step facilitated by Unila Public Relations was to hold a press conference with the leaders of the academic community at the faculty and university levels, witnessed by various local and national media. Almost all organisations have experienced a crisis, it is natural that nowadays there is awareness from the leaders of organisations that they need their own readiness to deal with crises, especially those related to media relations or relations with the press (Akhyar, 2019). Such awareness can also be interpreted as a good opportunity for PR practitioners in organisations. According to H. Fanyo, (in Kriyantono, 2012) 'One of the targets of public relations activities is facing of crisis, handling complaints and dealing with crises. Essentially, Public Relations recovery of image in charge of repairing lost of image and damage.' (P. Maulin, 2016).

Public relations is a management function that evaluates public attitudes, identifies policies in the procedures of an individual or an organisation based on public interests and carries out a program to gain public understanding or acceptance (Coombs, 2006: 6). In addition, public relations is interpreted as an effort to build good relations and mutual understanding between the institution and the public. The process of involving the community in the process of providing education in higher education, such as in the form of public information disclosure, receiving suggestions and criticisms, as well as other matters related to the process of conveying positive information from PTN University of Lampung to the public or vice versa (Pohan, 2018: 12).

The crisis condition of Lampung University is a joint work between the leadership and internal parties of the institution to be able to maintain reputation, especially the public relations function of building a new image and countering public opinion that continues to flood the media so that this negative atmosphere can return to positive conditions. PR actions resolve crisis problems through the media relations PR model approach (ERASE) developed by Jerry Hendrix (Ruslan, 2012). The process begins with the Evaluation step, which is to first evaluate the events that are happening, whether it is likely to be done from internal management so that it must carry out introspection, then proceed with Research, which is to identify public opinion that has the potential to have problems, Actions (objectives), which is to arrange what programmes will be campaigned to the public as proof of good intentions to solve problems, Strategy, which contains planning to implementation in which the communication process runs, and Evaluation, which evaluates the process of achieving goals including adjustment and monitoring activities. The year 2023 is the new face of Lampung University to start significant system changes and improvements to reputation. Media relations Public Relations and Unila leaders have a work agenda to complete this crisis management by socialising a new image to the public to answer the identification of the problem as follows: (1). How did



Unila evaluate the crisis event, (2) How was the research related to public opinion in the PMB bribery case in 2022, (3) How was the PR action to create a new image to maintain Unila's reputation, (4) How was the PR strategy in media relations publication, and (5) How was the evaluation of the results of the PR media relations work in socialising Unila's new programme?

Method

The method taken in making this research is a qualitative research method. This research is descriptive with qualitative analysis, namely exploring various problems carefully and in detail by connecting various existing data (Nova, 2011: 68). The data sources of this research consist of two, namely primary and secondary. Primary data sources are content on online media and secondary data from interviews with Unila Public Relations. The media relations process is to socialise the new image and maintain UNILA's reputation with the steps of the ERASE model approach, as follows:

- 1 Evaluation: The process of introspection in evaluating institutional crisis management. In this stage, the researcher describes how Unila conducts interpretation and corrective action, which is an act of review or correction of the organisation's own management.
- 2 Research: Identification of public opinion on social media and official_unila. In this step, there is a process of identifying public opinion on social media whether it is positive, negative or the public is ignorant of the event. Public opinion is an input for the improvement of Unila, adjusting the expectations and needs of the community.
- 3 Action: Launching Unila's new programme to solve image and reputation problems. At this stage is an action to overcome this crisis, steps to improve the conditions and regulations of Unila to change for the better, more transparent and objective. New ideas that have been formulated are immediately socialised by public relations to the media in the form of new programs with the aim of Unila having a new image to restore public trust and Unila's reputation.
- 4 Strategy: Content selection and online media. Unila Public Relations has a strategy in formulating a communication plan that includes how to deliver messages to the media. This includes choosing the right media platform, determining the information distribution schedule, and designing interaction strategies with journalists and other media.
- 5 Evaluation: Confirmation of the implementation of Unila's new programme, based on interviews with the public relations team and seeing the public's response to news on social media about Unila's new image. The success of a new programme is seen from public opinion that gradually changes from negative to positive.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the findings on online news and social media, there are so many public statements that create an opinion about the bribery case in college. as Bird argues in his book *The Press & Society* quoted by (Abdurrahman, 1995) that public opinion is a social judgement about something important and meaningful on the basis of the



exchange of thoughts made by individuals consciously and rationally. Public opinion about Unila is a number of accumulated individual opinions about an issue in an open conversation and affects a group of people. Thus, public opinion is formed through an activity in the form of a discussion debate, or exchange of information between individuals in a group' (Ruslan, 2012: 66).

This is actually no longer foreign news, some people also know about such a culture that seems to be still hidden, but the difference with the bribery case that shocked the world of education was because Unila dealt directly with the KPK Institution. The negative opinion lasted for 4 months, when Unila was still under the supervision of Dikti. The step to improve Unila was by electing a new rector so that Unila would not continue to be under the shadow of the previous leader. Throughout the time, the leadership of Unila and Unila Public Relations tried hard to rise from the downturn and crisis of trust from the community.

Public opinion greatly affects an institution, therefore the creation of public opinion that is detrimental or in favour of an institution is the main concern of public relations. Public opinion has an important position in public relations activities (Putri, Y. M, 2020). When public opinion is positive towards the institution, public relations must maintain the image or reputation of the institution, but when the situation is the opposite, public relations must have the competence to manage the crisis that occurs, meaning that if negative public opinion is formed, public relations plays a role in fighting back by creating positive public opinion. One of them is a strategy through public relations media to create a new image.

In delivering messages in crisis situations, institutions are required to deliver information with: (1) immediately, (2) openly, and (3) consistently. Delivering messages immediately means providing opportunities for stakeholders, especially mass media or internet media, to find out about what is really happening. The goal is to fill the information gap during a crisis. A slow response gives other parties, especially those who want to make things worse, the opportunity to fill the information gap with speculation or misinformation. An immediate response will also form a perception in the eyes of the public that the institution can control the situation (Coombs, 2006: 171-173). In a crisis situation, public relations must be able to win the battle of opinion in the community, because public judgement will affect the legitimacy of the institution (Kriyantono, 2012: 214).

Crisis cannot be an option that an organisation or company can refuse. Crises live and evolve along with the pace of the organisation and the pace of the organisation's communication. When a crisis arises, the opportunity is to manage the crisis to be more controllable. Public relations should be present as part of the organisation that bridges between the organisation and its public (Maulin, MP; 2017: 167).

As Unila's new image, public relations conveyed Unila's new programmes by echoing the PMB Unila tagline - PROACTIVE (Professional, Accountable, Transparent, and Informative) and the Be Strong tagline, which means Unila is strong in facing crises and strengthening its institutions and human resources for a better purpose. Strengthening is done not only internally but also externally. Public

Relations uses the ERASE model approach (Evaluation, Research, Action, Strategy and Evaluation) to manage publications in online news media and social media.

The first evaluation that Unila's management did was to introspect the chaos that occurred. There is no one institution that expects to be hit by a crisis, and we cannot sort out what crisis can undermine the image of the institution. Therefore, the leadership of Unila cooperated with the public relations of Unila to find a solution to the problem, especially to save the reputation of the institution.

Then the results of Research (research) in the aftermath of the Unila bribery case, there are 17 news about Unila that are significant in providing information to the public, Four news about Unila communicating with external parties, especially to the KPK, besides that the Rector of Unila is very cooperative openly to the KPK on Unila management that must be addressed. News about Unila that shows a cooperative attitude to the public and the KPK can be seen below:

Table 1. Unila News Communication with External Parties

No	Headline
1	“Visit to KPK, Rector of Unila: We Change New Student Admission 2023’ Source: https://www.kompas.com/edu/read/2023/03/04/102030871/datangi-kpk-rektor-unila-kami-ubah-penerimaan-mahasiswa-baru-2023?page=all
2	“Discussing the Implementation of PMB 2023 and Improvement of Governance, Unila Audience to KPK’ Source: unila main news, 03-03-2023, https://www.unila.ac.id/bahas-pelaksanaan-pmb-2023-dan-perbaikan-tata-keloa-unila-audensi-ke-kpk/
3	“Unila Promises to Be More Open and Synergise with KPK’ Source, 01-03-2023, https://web.lintaslampung.com/unila-janji-lebih-terbuka-dan-bersinergi-dengan-kpk
4	“Unila Rector Committed to Clean New Student Admission’ Source: kompas.com, 04-05-2023, https://www.kompas.com/edu/read/2023/05/04/203034771/rektor-unila-komitmen-jalani-penerimaan-mahasiswa-baru-yang-bersih

Source: research processing results

Based on the content of the news, Unila shows openness and cooperative attitude with the KPK, with the news Unila promises to be more open and synergise with the KPK. One of Unila's new rector's programmes is committed to immediately ‘nourish’ Unila's reputation, which is to change the rules and governance of new student admissions by carrying out these rules cleanly. In this case, media relations of public relations is very important, as a mouthpiece of information that is eagerly awaited by the public, what actions or actions will be taken by the new Rector of the University of Lampung. PR decisions are not decisions that rely on mere intuition but are based on top management decisions with consideration from PR, where the position of PR should be close to or have direct access to top management. Especially if a crisis hits, therefore the role and function of Public Relations, which today is more emphasised on helping to solve problems in the company, becomes a necessity (Maulin, MP; 2017: 174).



News related to the event of the University of Lampung taking action (action) communication is cleaning, revamping and strengthening the management of the Institute internally. This news shows that Unila understands the needs of the community for the quality of education of its children, one of the actions of Unila is giving attention and awards to outstanding students, to lecturers with TRIDARMA, improving building infrastructure, facilities and infrastructure, and improving the quality of accreditation of all study programmes, as follows:

Table 2. News about Unila's internal programmes

NO	Headline
1	“Unila Starting in 2023 Give Awards to Outstanding Students’ Source: unila main news, 02-05-2023, https://www.unila.ac.id/unila-mulai-tahun-2023-berikan-penghargaan-kepada-mahasiswa-berprestasi/
2	“Unila-UPGRIP Agree to Establish Cooperation in Education, Research, and Community Service’ Source: unila main news, 03-05-2023, https://www.unila.ac.id/unila-upgrip-sepakat-jalin-kerja-sama-bidang-pendidikan-penelitian-dan-pengabdian-masyarakat/
3	“Rector Encourages FMIPA to Increase Superior Accreditation for All Study Programmes’ Source: unila main news, 28-04-2023, https://www.unila.ac.id/rektor-dorong-fmipa-tingkatkan-akreditasi-unggul-seluruh-prodi/
4	“Visit FH Unila, Rector Conveys Building Construction Plan by Bandar Lampung City Government’ Source: unila main news, 28-04-2023, https://www.unila.ac.id/sambangi-fh-unila-rektor-sampaikan-rencana-pembangunan-gedung-oleh-pemkot-bandarlampung/
5	“Facility Maintenance, Unila Rector Reviews Several Places on Campus’ Source: NU online Lampung,, 06-05-2023, https://lampung.nu.or.id/pendidikan/pemeliharaan-fasilitas-rektor-unila-tinjau-beberapa-tempat-di-kampus-Dzz9U

Source: research processing results

When problems pass the warning stage without being resolved, damage to the institution begins to occur. This is the time to recover the institution from the loss. At least save what is left, whether the remaining infrastructure, reputation, image of Unila, the performance of lecturers, staff, and the learning process. During recovery, Unila has to deal with matters related to law, media, public pressure, and litigation. But the wisdom that can be taken is that Unila can see how a crisis will arise, how to deal with the crisis, and ensure the crisis will never happen again. even this time can be used to rise with a new face of Unila. News in media relations in an effort to restore public confidence with Unila's New Image, at least the University of Lampung and Rector Lusmelia are committed to improving the quality and excellence of Unila and maintaining Unila's good reputation, as stated in the news below:



Table 3. News of Unila's new programme and tagline

No	Headline
1	“PMB 2023, Unila Improves with Proactive Tagline’ Source: radar lampung, 30-01-2023, https://radarlampung.disway.id/read/661930/pmb-2023-unila-berbenah-dengan-tagline-proaktif
2	“Ready, Unila Leaders and Students Will Get Anti-Corruption Material’ Source: lampung geh, 01-03-2023, https://kumparan.com/lampunggeh/siap-siap-pimpinan-hingga-mahasiswa-unila-bakal-dapat-materi-antikorupsi-1zvchAC17js
3	“Rector Lusmeilia: We Focus on Running Unila's Work Programme’ Source: portal news, 20-01-2023, https://portallnews.id/headline/rektor-lusmeilia-kita-fokus-menjalankan-program-kerja-unila/
4	“Train Tendik's Leadership Insight, Unila echoes the tagline ‘Be Strong!’ Source: altumnews.com 21-05-2023, https://altumnews.com/2023/03/21/latih-wawasan-kepemimpinan-tendik-unila-gaungkan-tagline-be-strong/
5	“Unila is Ready to Collaborate with Bandar Lampung City Government in Various Aspects’ Source: berita utama unila, 27-04-2023, https://www.unila.ac.id/unila-siap-bersinergi-dengan-pemkot-bandarlampung-dalam-berbagai-aspek/

Source: research processing results

As the news above, that an institution must quickly counter public unrest or public opinion due to the institution's crisis. Opinions that say that reputation management is not an easy job. Building a reputation is not the same as repairing a house that has been destroyed, because there is a strong public trust factor attached to it (Satlita, 2006: 71). So that if the reputation is ‘down’ then the trust will be easily separated and difficult to attach it. This thought already exists in the senate of Lampung University to immediately elect a new Rector, with his leadership while carrying out this very heavy task, he started real steps for improvement. Media Relations Unila Public Relations plays a role in socialising Unila's programmes to improve Unila's reputation. Unila has taken various steps, especially to improve the PMB process in 2023. Unila's PMB tagline - PROACTIVE (Professional, Accountable, Transparent, and Informative) is the basis for the performance of the academic community and the tagline ‘Be Strong’ as a new image of Unila University to become a strong, confident and committed university to continue to improve quality and meet the expectations of the Indonesian nation.

Furthermore, the strategy referred to in ERASE refers to how Unila Public Relations has a strategy in designing writing content and media selection that must be effective and right on target to the public. Communication crises on social media must be handled immediately because of the great viral potential that can be fatal because it threatens the good reputation of the organisation (Akhyar, Pratiwi: 20019: 50). In the Unila bribery case, in less than 24 hours there were student demonstrations and wild public opinion and a wave of heated protests on social media. In this case, Unila University needs to have a fast and responsive crisis response strategy to deal with crises on social media. The challenge ahead is how to

utilise social listening tools to get early warning if it is suspected that a crisis will arise on social media.

In order to expand the knowledge of an institution's media relations strategy, a very important starting point is to start from the issue of crisis itself. A communication crisis is different from crisis communication. A communication crisis is a problem or crisis that occurs in a company caused by elements of communication. The communication process that contains a crisis is characterised by: (1) there is a sharp disagreement and does not show any intention or effort to understand each other, looking for each other's mistakes so that it has the potential to be followed by destructive physical action; (2) do not see the positive side or good intentions of communication, communication is only to demean the opponent's position, communication runs asymmetrically and convergence is difficult; (3) messages are received with strict selection, coloured by emotions and suspicion so that messages are distorted. (Akhyar, Pratiwi: 20019: 48).

Meanwhile, crisis communication is the activity of providing information to explain the occurrence of a crisis (which in this context occurs in the organisation). The crisis can be caused by natural disasters, technical disturbances, human error or institutional management efforts to resolve the crisis. The purpose of crisis communication is to achieve crisis management objectives. The goal of crisis management is, of course, to avoid the crisis above all else. But if it cannot be avoided, the goal is to stop the crisis quickly, limit losses, restore and restore public confidence, regain a damaged or lost reputation. The success of crisis communication is seen from its success in helping to realise the objectives of crisis management. In the case of Unila University, crisis communication is carried out by Unila public relations together with Unila leaders through various media relations.

Unila Public Relations conducts media relations with online news media radar lampung, lampung post, coil, lampung geh, and Kompas. In addition to content creation, it is also necessary that a leader figure appears to communicate on social media so that the goal is to be more communicative with generation z to eliminate crisis communication and communication crisis, this was conveyed by Unila Public Relations during the interview. One of the effective media choices is tiktok social media which is used to socialise the new Unila rector program, such as the example below:



Figure 1 Content of Unila Rector on Tiktok Social Media

The last ERASE series is an evaluation of the implementation of Unila's programmes. There are 3 news that show the success of the new programmes carried out by the Rector of Unila, namely since the inauguration of the Rector Lusmeilia promised that in the next 100 days she would focus on improving Unila's image. This has been explained earlier about the Be Strong and PROACTIVE taglines that were socialised on social media. Through media relations Unila Public Relations little by little with the new image has an impact on the good reputation of Unila University gradually recovering. As a measure of the community's trust in the education of their children, 4000 prospective students registered at the University of Lampung and 2338 prospective students were accepted at Unila through the SNBP route in 2023. This means that there is still an increase from the previous year's enthusiasts of around 18%.

The opinion of one of Unila's Public Relations stated that public trust in Unila has improved, because publications continue to be intensified with other media, echoing Unila's new system and renewing the PMB system and improving the quality of Unila Education. Unila Be Strong tagline, which means to be strong. That is the main target of setting Unila's target to enter the top 1,000 World Class University and also enter the top 10 university rankings in Indonesia. Then in the future, Unila is ready to become PTNBH in 2024 and this is being prepared because one of the requirements is Unila's income. Because currently most of it is from student tuition fees, if it becomes a PTNBH, at least 30% of income is sought outside of tuition fees. Unila Publications held a healthy walk with thousands of people to show Unila's togetherness and confidence as one of the universities loved by the community. This healthy walk will be an ongoing programme, said Prof Lusy. below the news proves the evaluation of the implementation of Unila's new programme:



Table 4. News of the success of Unila's new programme

No	Headline
1	“100 Days Work Programme as Rector, Prof Lusmeilia Focuses on Improving Unila's Image’ Source: release id lampung, 28-12-2022, https://lampung.rilis.id/Ragam/Berita/100-Hari-Program-Kerja-Sebagai-Rektor-Prof-Lusmeilia-Fokus-Perbaiki-Citra-Unila-beUWEdU
2	“2,388 Freshmen Candidates Accepted at Unila Through SNBP 2023 Pathway’ Source: unila main news, 28-03-2023, https://www.unila.ac.id/2-388-calon-maba-diterima-di-unila-melalui-jalur-snbp-2023/
3	“Thousands of People Follow Unila Healthy Walk’ Source: lampung.co, 14-05-2023, https://m.lampost.co/berita-ribuan-masyarakat-ikuti-jalan-sehat-unila.html

Source: research processing results

Conclusion

Crisis communication at Lampung University can run well, Public Relations of Lampung University quickly acted to communicate with the public, then initiated, assisted and socialized the new Rector's policy regarding the new image as an effort to maintain Unila's good reputation. The proof that the media relations of public relations are going well is that news or publications about Unila in various online media continue to flow, the leadership of Unila and its staff are never silent, always striving for Unila to return to public trust.

Crisis cannot be denied, it comes unexpectedly, but every institution must prepare general guidelines that can help PR or crisis management team when a crisis occurs, namely: (1) Prepare a contingency plan (crisis management team members can be formed in a short time, always hold training to deal with various kinds of crises). (2) Immediately announce the official spokesperson (crisis team member) who has the right to speak and provide information about the crisis to the public and the media. Unila Public Relations should be present as part of the organisation that bridges between the organisation and its public. Crisis Management is an area of expertise that every PR should have, which is future-orientated and tries to anticipate events that could disrupt important relationships. Unila's PR has an important role and function in planning crisis preparation programmes, crisis management itself during a crisis and post-crisis strategies.

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