

## **The Public Relations Role Towards the Success of Waste Collecting Point Program in Banda Aceh**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study attempted to determine the role of Public Relation (PR) of Banda Aceh's Environmental, Cleanliness, and the Beauty of the City Agency on the "Waste Collecting Point (WCP) program. The theory used was role theory developed by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits. The method which was being used was descriptive qualitative, which the subject of the study was PR division and societies. The finding showed that PR division played a very important role in the success of Waste Collecting Point (WCP) program from the beginning until the outcome being shown on the cleanliness of the districts. Starting from the socialization process, the program showed significant success. Persuasive communication was being used to conduct the program. PR division made initial socialization by informing the societies about the danger of the waste if not managed properly then followed by monthly evaluation on the cleaning leader.*

**Keywords:** *Public Relation, role theory, waste collecting point, Banda Aceh*

### **INTRODUCTION**

John E. Maiston (as cited in Kasali, 2001) defined Public Relations (PR) as the planning, persuasive communication, which was designed to influence the significant public. Moreover, communication needs a persuasive approach to achieve the common goals and to be able to implement it in daily life. The aim of Public Relations, according to Amin (2008) is to develop harmonious relationships with others i.e. public (public, communities). The purpose of public relations is to create, foster and maintain an attitude of gratitude that are pleasing to the institution or organization on the one hand and with the public on the other hand with harmonious and reciprocal communication. The role of public relations is divided into four, which are: as expert advisors, as communication facilitator, problem-solving facilitator and communication technician (Broom & Smith, 1979).

Therefore, PR practitioners need adequate communication skills in order to be able to influence

the significant public. Persuasive communication is among the important communication skills that should be mastered by PR practitioners. Persuasion can influence an individual's mental state through steps that seek to change attitudes, which may lead to a change in behavior (O'Keefe, 2003) Sending messages to the public requires persuasion to achieve the intended effect. Moreover, communication needs a persuasive approach to achieve the common goals and to be able to implement it in daily life.

The PR practitioners of governmental agency should communicate effectively and persuasively to influence the societies in realizing the government programs. One of the vital government programs is to ensure the city's cleanliness and comfort. Banda Aceh city is controlling the cleanliness of its districts through the Environmental, Cleanliness and the Beauty of the City Agency. The Public Relations of Environmental, Cleanliness, and The Beauty of City Agency (DLHK3) of Banda Aceh plays an important role in ensuring

good connection with the community to achieve the same goal. In Banda Aceh, the garbage handling system starts by sweeping the streets and garbage collection. The city of Banda Aceh produces garbage as much as 197 tons in a day and it will be thrown away to Gampong Jawa. The Gampong Jawa landfill was first built in 1994 with an area of 12 Ha. When the earthquake and tsunami disaster of the year 2004 happened, all the trash in the landfill was completely destroyed and swept away. After re-functioning and being extended about 21 Ha, the landfill was reconstructed in the year 2008 by the Agency of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (BRR) of Aceh and Nias, then started operating in sanitary landfill (rubbish hoarded daily) in January 2009. For the closure of this garbage, every year it takes 5.000 m<sup>3</sup> of soil and 3.500 m<sup>3</sup> of compost. Compost is used to reduce the bad smell of the waste. Nevertheless, the current landfill capacity in Gampong Jawa has reduced and it was predicted that the landfill can only accommodate garbage until the year 2017. So starting from the year 2018 the entire garbage from Banda Aceh transferred to landfill Blang Bintang, Aceh Besar.

Environmental, Cleanliness, and The Beauty of City Agency (DLHK3) created a new program in 2017 which called Waste Collecting Point (WCP) in realizing the goal towards "zero waste". The aims of the program are to reduce the waste in Urban areas and to form a healthy living among communities in Banda Aceh. This program originated from Japan, and the government of Banda Aceh city were willing to implement such a program in creating a healthy environment. So, they conducted a study tour to Japan by sending some people (including significant people in society) to learn more about the program. Then, DLHK3 selected Gampong Alue Deah Teungoh as a model village to implement this program.

Based on the preliminary observation, this program succeeded in managing better waste management and creating a healthy environment in the mentioned village. Later, the education and socialization of the program which was conducted by DLHK3 managed to make Banda Aceh as a host of National Jambore of Free Garbage in 2017 also awarded Adipura as much as seven times. Another achievement is the program helped to foster the economy of the society by producing and marketing the product of WCP which is organic fertilizer.

The above description showed the significant point to describe the role of PR in an attempt to succeed one of its excellent program. How to start and maintain the program will be beneficial information to the community as well as to other government agencies in carrying out their program. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the role of Public Relations of Environmental, Cleanliness, and The Beauty of City Agency Banda Aceh towards the success of Waste Collecting Point in Banda Aceh.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the book entitled by Your Public Relation, Glenn and Griswold stated that public relations is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance (Ernawan, 2001). According to (Amin, 2008) Public Relation objective is to develop harmonious relationships with the public. The government PR role is to learn public behavioral tendencies by interpreting, analyzing and evaluating, then relating the program to public interest (Ardianti & Wardiani, 2017). To reach its objective, PR division needs to create and plan communication strategy for the effectiveness of the message. Rizki (2016) stated that communication strategy can be conducted by knowing the audiences, composing messages, establishing methods, and using proper media.

Role theory became the foundation of the process of communication in this research. Robert Linton (as cited in Cahyono, 2008) have developed the theory of the role. The theory describes the social interactions in which the actors play roles according to what is set by the culture. The theory also explains the expected roles coming from shared understanding which leads us to behave in everyday life.

According to Thomas and Biddle (1966), role theory are divided into four classes which are: the people who take part in social interaction; behavior that appears in the interaction; the position of people in behaving; the link between people and

behavior. Horoepoetri (2003) stated some of the dimensions of the role are as follows: (1) Role as a policy. Adherents of this doctrine hold that the role is a policy that is right and good to be carried out. (2) Role as a strategy. Adherents of this doctrine postulates that the role is a strategy to get support from the community (public supports). (3) Role as a communication tool. The role as an instrument or a tool to get feedback in the form of information in the decision making. This perception is based on a notion that the Government is designed to serve the community, so that the views and preferences of the community is a valuable input to realize the decision that is responsive and responsible. (4) Role as means of dispute resolution. The role as a means to reduce or attenuate the conflict through the attempt to reach consensus from the different opinions. This perception is based on the assumption that exchanging of thoughts and views can increase understanding and tolerance as well as reducing the sense of distrust and confusion.

5) Role as a therapy. According to this perception, the role was played as an attempt to manage psychological problems of the community as well as the feeling of helplessness, confidence, and the feeling that they are not a critical component in society. Moreover, role theory will assist this research to examine the role of PR in achieving the expected goal. In this case, the success of the program depends on the role of PR in conveying the latest idea of the organizations to the public in result creating the same perception.

According Broom and Smith (1979), Public Relation has four roles, which are: (1) as expert advisor or prescriber, this role plays as an organization's acknowledged expert on all matters relating to PR; (2) as communication facilitator, this role serves as "go-between". This role involves in the process, monitoring, improving the quality and quantity of information flowing between management and key publics, sensitive listeners, and information broker; (3) problem solving facilitator, this role assists management to analyze and solve PR problems for the organization. They also collaborate with other managers to define and solve problems; (4) communication technician, this role provides technical support, generating collateral material needed to implement PR programs by other communication and journalistic skills such as

writing, editing, news release, etc.

## METHODOLOGY

The research was held in Gampong Alue Deah Teungoh, Kecamatan Meuraxa, Banda Aceh. The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. According to Jane Richie (as cited in Moleong, 2002) qualitative research is an attempt to present the social world and perspective in the world in terms of concepts, behaviors, perceptions and issues about human beings that are examined. Therefore, Moleong (2002) also suggested that qualitative research is research that intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the subject such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, actions and others. While this type of research is descriptive qualitative, i.e. as a procedure to solve the investigated problem by describing the condition of the research subject or object (a person, institution, community and others) at the time based on the visible facts and evidence.

This study employed semi-structured interview as a data collection technique, by using purposive sampling technique based on several criteria: public relation officer who has worked for three years and involved in WCP Program, community leader and group leader who are in charge of the program and the society who are actively involved in the program. Besides, this study also employed observation and documentation to enrich the data. Interview was done by recording the question and answer process and then reducing the data based on the objective of the study then followed by displaying the relevant data and verifying the result.

The object of this study is the roles of PR of Environmental, Cleanliness, and The Beauty of City Agency Banda Aceh (DLHK3) towards the success of Waste Collecting points (WCP) in Banda Aceh.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The initial observation conducted by the researchers, Waste Collecting Point (WCP) program has succeeded as it can influence the community to self-manage the waste or garbage and also educate

the people to reuse and recycle the waste becoming compost. The finding showed that PR practitioners played a very important role in the success of Waste Collecting Point (WCP) program from the beginning until the outcome being shown on the cleanliness of the districts. The socialization process succeeded in informing the community about the nature of the program. This program is starting from program socialization, program utilization, until the results can be seen by the community. The types of communication carried out by the public relations of Environmental, Cleanliness, and The Beauty of City Agency Banda Aceh is persuasive communication to socialize the programs Waste Collecting Point, where public relations DLHK3 makes early socialization to society about the dangers of trash if not managed properly, then conducting the evaluation on the program each month by evaluation the cleaning leader.

Program Waste Collecting Point originally was a model of action conducted by DLHK3 of Banda Aceh working with Japan and made only one depot as the first movement or the pilot study. Then, the government made this program as the excellent program of the Environmental, Cleanliness, and The Beauty of City Agency of the city of Banda Aceh in the year 2017.

The purpose of this program are to create community awareness on the cleanliness and comfort of the village, the effort to reduce trash, and to improve public participation against waste management. Another important purpose is to foster the economy of the society in utilization of garbage which is worth economically and the optimization of the service of cleanliness and retribution. In the implementation of this program, the PR practitioners were using persuasive communication to influence the community through the team which was formed by the division of waste management. Then, the team was conducting the socialization then followed by program evaluation in order to achieve the desired goals. This is relevant to the suggestion given by Ardianti and Wardiani (2017) that the evaluation phase is somehow important to examine the program so that the improvement can be planned appropriately.

Furthermore, DLHK3 began publicizing and disseminating the program to many villages and implemented the creation of depots gradually

(shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2). In this case, the success of this program was also been socialized and publicized to other districts as an example of how to manage the garbage and to make it worth economically. Therefore, the role of PR is very significant to create the awareness of this program and on its benefits. The obstacle faced by DLHK3 in conducting the program is to place the depot in appropriate place, however the solution is to provide the socialization on the depot management by learning from the village which had succeeded on the WCP program.

Next, DLHK3 is also responsible for marketing the compost as a product of the Waste Collecting Point program, so that the society is more developed and independent. The community processes the organic waste so it can be used as organic fertilizer. Furthermore, DLHK3 encouraged the community to manage the farm by using organic fertilizer produced from the WCP program so that Alue Deah Teungoh village has its own garden. Then, DLHK3 also encouraged the community to buy the farm products as their participation in supporting the WCP program as well as fostering the society's economy. DLHK3 also promoted the recycled products in the National Jamboree of Free Garbage in 2017 and even now already exported out of the country.

Thus, based on the research finding, PR practitioners of DLHK3 was playing a very significant role in succeeding the WCP program by conducting the socialization, providing the assistance to the community, marketing as well as promoting the product of WCP to foster the society's economy. In this case, the PR performance was categorized as very good as they managed to make the program successful as it became the excellent program which was also learnt by other villages and districts. Their works contain elements of communication, conveying messages and inviting significant changes. This is in accordance with the opinion of John E. Maiston which discussed the definition of Public Relations as a planning, how to communicate in a persuasive way that has been designed to influence the public (Kasali, 2001).

The finding also agreed with the definition given by Howard Bohnam, Vice Chairman of the American National Reduksi Cross (as cited in Rosady, 2005) declared, "Public Relations is the art of

bringing about better public understanding which breeds greater public confidence for any individual or organization". Socializing to the public to protect their environment can elevate trust towards DLHK3, which implies that good waste disposal management can maintain a healthy environment.

Thus, PR practitioners of DLHK3 plays role as communication facilitators as it serves as mediators or "go-between" the organization (i.e. government) and the key publics. They are involved in the process of informing and educating the public about the new program which is called Waste Collecting Point (WCP). This is evident to the category of PR roles explained by Broom and Smith (1979) as one of them is as communication facilitator.

In relation to role theory, PR practitioners of DLHK3 have played an expected role in their social interaction with the public. This is shown in their success to use persuasive communication to influence the public (i.e. society) to change their attitude and behavior in creating better waste management. Moreover, this program has been widely recognized as a successful program in managing garbage around the city. Expectedly, PR practitioners of DLHK3 should learn the communication strategy to convey PR message by interpreting, analyzing and evaluating public behavior by creating "document analysis planning" as suggested by Ardianti and Wardiani (2017) in their article discussed about PR communication strategy in managing the waste of styrofoam.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above findings, then can be drawn several conclusions. PR practitioners of DLHK3 played a role as communication facilitator in succeeding Waste Collecting Point (WCP) program. They employed persuasive communication by conducting socialization about the program, educated the society about the better waste management and depot (of WCP), and promoted the product of WCP program which is organic fertilizer (compost).

The obstacles faced by public PR practitioners of DLHK3 is related to the placement of depots to avoid the society's inconvenience.

However, PR practitioners conducted the socialization about the cleanliness of the depot if managed properly and educated them on how to manage the cleanliness of the waste depot. Based on the finding and discussion above, this study offers suggestions:

1. DLHK3 should improve the communication strategy with the community so that WCP can be implemented in all villages of Banda Aceh. DLHK3 should educate the community to maintain a healthy environment by managing better waste management.
2. The community should improve their knowledge about the way to maintain a healthy environment and support the WCP program by actively joining the coaching activities conducted by the government.
3. For further research, the success of the WCP program can be analyzed by studying the society's satisfaction on the program itself, because this study is only limited to the role of PR in succeeding the program.

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