
THE IDEAL POSITION OF PUBLIC RELATION IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA IN MINISTRY OF COOPERATIVE AND SMEs

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ABSTRACT

Since the existence of Public Relation sector in Indonesia, Public Relation Unit as an institution has not been managed properly, although the Presidential Decree Number 45 of 1974 concerning the organizational structure of governmental departments has regulated the placement of Public Relation Unit, promoting its important existence until it gradually gains improvement. In the government circles, the attitude and view on Public Relation has only recently developed, at first as a unit dealing with matters relating to the mass media and having not directly involved people as a target of its activities. This study aims to evaluate the position of Public Relation in the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs to answer the questions of the study: (1) how is the relation between the position of echelon III and the performance level of Public Relation, and (2) what is the ideal position of Public Relation in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. This study applies Weber's model of bureaucracy with a combination of two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models initiated by James Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) and Cybernetics Model proposed by Littlejohn (1999). The findings show that (1) the position of Public Relation in the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs inhibits its functions and role because it is not given the opportunity to play the role as a communication technician and placed not in a dominant position. Therefore, Public Relation takes longer time to provide public services, and (2) the ideal Public Relation in the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs should be positioned at a more strategic level within the organizational structure, granted special authority from the supreme leader, and capable of deciding actions and serving without having to go through a long bureaucratic process.

INTRODUCTION

In general, communication is a process of delivering information, messages, opinions, and ideas from communicators to receivers through certain media, in order to achieve a common view of a thing. Communication serves to convey thoughts or feelings, be isolated or not isolated from the environment, teach or tell something, know or learn from

events in the environment, get to know yourself, get entertained or entertain others, and reduce or eliminate the feelings of tension. It also fills spare time, adds knowledge and changes attitudes and habitual behaviors, and persuades or compels others to think, act, or behave as expected. Communication is closely related to Public Relation. Communication even becomes the foundation of the science of

Public Relation. Public Relation (PR) can be interpreted as a series of activities to convey information to create a harmonious relationship between organization and society or certain parties, in order to get support and response to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the organizational basic duties (Nawawi & Martini, 1996, p. 192).

Since the existence of PR sector in Indonesia, PR Unit as an institution has not been managed properly, although the Presidential Decree Number 45 of 1974 concerning the organizational structure of governmental departments has regulated the placement of PR Unit, promoting its important existence until it gradually gains improvement. In the government circles, the attitude and view on PR has only recently developed, at first as a unit dealing with matters relating to the mass media and having not directly involved people as a target of its activities (Sunarto, 2012, pp. 9-10).

PR is also closely related to bureaucracy; according to Moore & Kalupa (1985):

"Public relation is a function of management, evaluating public attitudes, identifying the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization based on the public interest, and running a program to obtain public understanding and acceptance".

Position of PR unit in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. Thus, this study aims to (1) find out and analyze the obstacles encountered by PR unit in the current position (Echelon III) and (2) examine and analyze the ideal position of PR unit in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs.

This study is divided into five sections. The first section is an introduction, describing the background of the problem and the question of the study. The second section discusses the concept and methodology applied in this study. The third section is the finding of the study that is analyzed and discussed in the fourth section. The fifth section is a closing, covering the conclusion and recommendation of the study.

THEORY

The Concept of Public Relation (PR)

The development of PR as described by Frazier Moore and Frank Kalupa (1985) has begun since the Greek civilization characterized by a strong tendency towards secularization and individualism, endowed a person with a sense of personality. Opinion has become a key factor in people's lives. Cities in Greece are increasingly reflecting public opinion. The leaders are increasingly aware of their relations with their people through what is now called Public Relation. The Romans also have a concept of public opinion and Public Relation expressed in terms as follows: '*romores, voxpopuli, res publicae*' (translated as "public events", the root word of "republic") and SPQR (senatus populusque Romanus). The historical writing by Julius Caesar, temples, statues, carvings, and pamphlets regarding the era are all media of public opinions.

Frazier & Kalupa (1985) then describe the four elements of Public Relation. *First*, the basic element of PR is the social philosophy of management placing the public interest first on everything related to the organizational behavior. *Second*, Public Relation is a social philosophy expressed in policy decision. Each agency has policies specifying the number of actions to be followed in its activities. The policy-making, including a number of functions, is the ultimate responsibility of the management. The policy decision will reflect the public interest of the organization. The policy decision of PR of an organization is one of the most important policy decisions. *Third*, Public Relation is an action as a result of policy. A statement of policy, though reflecting the intention of the management to serve the public interest, is not enough. To be more meaningful, the policy must be expressed in acts consistent with that policy. *Fourth*, PR is communication through the accuracy in listening to public opinion, and sensitivity in interpreting any trend of failure in communication and evaluating as well as considering the possibilities to change the

nature, approach or emphasis of each phase of the policy. *Fifth*, through communication to the public, the management announces, explains, maintains, or promotes its policy to establish understanding and acceptance.

There are four models of PR proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1992, p. 23), with different perspectives. The first is Press-Agentry Model (or Propaganda Model). This model describes the programs of human resources with the sole aim of gaining publicity through the mass media that benefits the organization. The truth of the information submitted is unimportant (Grunig, Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang, & Lyra, 1995). The second is Public Information Model. This model describes the activities of public relations aimed to disseminate information to the public. The practitioners of this model, often called the media, create a press release as often as possible. However, different from the press-agentry model, the practitioners of this model consider conveying information important. The third is Two Way Asymmetric Model. This model is more sophisticated than the previous two models. PR practitioner applying this model uses the findings of scientific studies to develop messages to more easily persuade the public to think, act, and behave on the expectations of the organization. This model is also referred to as a model of scientific persuasion using the findings of scientific studies on attitudes, for example, to design messages (Gilboa, 2008). The fourth is Two Way Symmetrical Model. This model describes a model of public operation, operating based on scientific studies and using communication to manage conflict and improve understanding with public strategies. This model emphasizes the importance of a change in organizational behavior to respond to public demands (Guiniven, 2002). In other words, in addition to functioning to persuade the public, PR in an organization also serves to persuade the management of the organization. This is the most ethical model of PR that can be accepted schematically in an organization.

In addition to the aforementioned models, this study applies Cybernetic model. According to Littlejohn (1999, p. 42), Cybernetics Model is

a study of regulatory and control in systems emphasizing the nature of feedback. Cybernetics Model deals with the way of the system using output to estimate the effect and make the necessary adjustments. The process of regulating the system through feedback includes several aspects (Gregory, 2000). The system must have guidance of control and the control center must examine the environmental conditions to respond. The center should have the sensitivity to the environmental aspect for achieving the objectives.

The Concept of Public Relation in the Government

Public Relation in government agencies (departments, non-departmental agencies, State-Owned Enterprises/SOEs) is a functional requirement in the context of disseminating information on program policies and activities of the government agencies to the public. In all countries, including Indonesia, the function of PR in the government is essential. PR is a continuation of the process of policy determination and the provision of public services with an attitude adjusted to the interests of people or groups, in order that the agencies represented by the PR gain the trust of the public or the society in a broad sense (Ledingham, 2001). Good service and attitude are essential for the creation of the best understanding and appreciation.

Government PR has duties to provide information and explanation to the public about the policies and steps/actions taken by the government and seek the harmonious relationship between agencies and the public as well as give understanding to the public about the activities carried out by the government agencies.

The duties of government PR according to Rachmadi (1994, p. 78) are (1) to provide information and education to the public about government policies, measures and actions, as well as to provide services to the public in the form of information needed in an open, honest and objective manner, (2) to provide assistance to the mass media in the form of information materials on government policies and measures and actions, including the facilities

of media coverage for important official events. The government is an important source of information for the media. Therefore, an attitude of information disclosure is urgently needed, (3) to promote economic and cultural development that has been achieved by the nation to domestic and foreign society; and (4) to monitor public opinion on government policies, then convey public response in the form of feedback to the concerned head of government agencies as input.

Regarding the position of PR in government agencies, ideally PR is positioned in the core staff, directly under the leaders (decision makers) or top managers to be more capable in carrying out its duties (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2009). With that position, PR can directly learn the background of a decision taken by the leaders of the agency; so that PR can directly obtain the materials to be delivered to the concerned public. Therefore, Public Relation ideally serve as a direct channel of the environment of a decision-making process to the public to make the decision understood and accepted. In addition, Public Relation also accommodates public voices or responses regarding the policies and actions taken by the concerned agency. Thus, PR indeed requires a high position in the organization in order to carry out its activities easily and perform its functions optimally as well as to exercise the authority to take part in the organization's policy-making process.

METHOD

The paradigm in a study is used in two different meanings: first, paradigm means the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, etc. shared by the members of a particular society. Second, paradigm also points to a kind of element in the constellation, the solving of a concrete puzzle that, if used as a model or an example, can replace the explicit rules as the basis for solving the riddles of normal science left behind (Kuhn, 1996). A paradigm shift can cause a difference in viewing the reality of the universe. Reality is constructed by a mode of thought or a particular mode of inquiry producing a specific mode of knowing.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) classifies paradigm into four, namely: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. The four paradigms are the development of two major paradigms of positivism using quantitative approaches as the basis of truth-seeking and constructivism using a qualitative approach. For over three decades, there has been a tough debate between the two paradigms behind the studies of social science and behavior. The debate is based on a number of aspects behind the use of both paradigms in studies.

Referring to the basic assumption, this study applies paradigm of constructivism because it emphasizes on a qualitative method and inductive logic taking examples of the cases of PR in the Ministry of Cooperative and SMEs. The general conclusion is taken, particularly from the term of position in organizational structure. This paradigm also uses a subjective point of view because of the difficulty to separate the author with the object of the study since the author is a part of the PR unit in the studied environment.

This study uses a qualitative approach through the making of holistic study, searching for the essence, and implementing moral values in observation, analysis, and conclusion (Muhadjir, 2000, p. 29). This qualitative method is often called naturalistic method because the study is carried out on a natural setting. The qualitative method is also defined as the method used to examine the natural object (the opponent is the experiment) where the author is the key instrument. The data collection is conducted through triangulation; the data analysis is inductive, and the qualitative study emphasizes more on the meaning than generalization (Sugiyono, 2010, hal. 1).

In a quantitative study, the author uses an instrument to collect data or measure the status of the variables studied, whereas in a qualitative study, the author becomes an instrument (Sugiyono, 2010:2). A qualitative study promises the author the ability to process data more subjectively to solve complicated problems and place the effective solutions for each question of the study. Meanwhile, the

data criteria in a qualitative study are the exact data. The exact data is the actual data, not just the visible and spoken data, but meaningful data behind the visible and spoken data. In a qualitative study, data collection is not guided by theory, but guided by the facts found in the field (Sugiyono, 2010, hal. 3). The data analysis in a qualitative study is carried out since the author makes the proposal, carries out data collection in the field, and obtains all data.

Generalization in a qualitative study is called transferability, meaning that the finding can be used elsewhere, if the place has less different characteristics. In a qualitative study, the instrument or tool of the study is the author. Therefore, the author as an instrument must also be "validated" to the extent that the author is ready to conduct the fieldwork (Sugiyono, 2010, hal. 4-5). In this study, the author will examine the position of PR in the organizational structure of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs for its optimal role and performance.

The object of this study is the PR unit in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs in Indonesia. The author focuses on the PR practitioners for the activities of Public Relation. The independent variable or subject of this study is the agency responsible for conducting the activities of Public Relation, namely the parties directly related and responsible with the implementation of Public Relation. The justification of the selection of informants is carried out based on the level of involvement or relevance of the informant with the study and the level of responsibility of the informant to the problems encountered by the PR unit in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. The informants involved in this study are:

Table 1. The Informants of the Study

No.	Name	Position
1	A.A.G.N. Puspayoga	The Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs of Indonesia
2	Salekan	Assistant Deputy, the Former Head of PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs
3	Surmanto	The Head of Sub-Section of Documentation of the Ministry of

Cooperatives and SMEs		
4	Sahrul	The Head of Division of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs
5	Ali	Staff of PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs
6	Gatot S. Dewa Broto	Deputy V of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Former Spokesperson of the Ministry of Communications and Informatics
7	Hanni Sofia	Journalist of Antara News Agency
8	Suroto	Vice Chairman of Indonesian Consumer Union

The data in this study consists of primary and secondary data. Since this study applies a qualitative method, the data is collected from in-depth interview, observation, and literature study. In-depth interviews are conducted in a structured and unstructured manner, face-to-face or by phone. Structured interviews are used as data collection technique, if the author or data collector knows exactly what information will be obtained.

Some forms of observation to be applied in a qualitative study are participatory observation, unstructured observation, and unstructured group observation (Bungin, 2007, p. 115). The author uses participatory observation in detail, and by adjusting and being involved directly in this study according to the ability of the author towards the object of the study. With the existence of fieldwork through participatory observation, the author has the opportunity to collect data directly from the informants in more detailed and more careful manner. It is intended to gain a deep understanding and meaning about the duties and the functions of PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. This participatory observation is carried out by using a notebook to obtain and record unexpected data.

On the other hand, literature review is data collection where the source of data is obtained from scientific journals, books, newspapers as well as Law/regulations related to the discussion of this study. A large number of facts and data are stored in the form of documentation. Most of the available data related to the study are in the form of letters, diaries, souvenirs, reports, artifacts, photographs, etc.

Based on the stages of data analysis proposed by Sugiyono (2010, hal. 277), the data obtained from the fieldwork is analyzed through several stages of analysis. The first stage is to categorize and reduce the data, by collecting the important information related to the problem of the study, and then classify the data according to the topic of the problem. The second stage is to arrange the data in the form of narratives, forming a series of meaningful information in accordance with the problem of the study. The third stage is to interpret the information to the problem of the study. The fourth stage is to take the conclusion based on the narrative arrangements in the third stage to provide answers to the problem of the study. The fifth or final stage is to verify the result of data analysis with the informants based on the conclusion in the fourth stage. This stage is aimed to avoid misinterpretation of interviews with a number of informants that can obscure the true meaning of the problem and the focus of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Observed from the organizational structure of PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, it is known that the position of PR is not dominant. Structurally, as mentioned earlier, PR only becomes a Section led by an echelon III official. The section unit is the supporting or implementing element, not the policy maker, necessary to carry out the ministerial programs.

The activities of PR are carried out by 23 personnel of PR led by a Head of Public Relation. Such coordination and position is not ideal to carry out the duties of PR in accordance with the concept, because PR does not have dominant authority to bring the "image" of the agency to public domain.

The effective practice of PR according to this model is the result of the accumulation of two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models. Each model will make it difficult to reach an agreement. It could be a pure asymmetrical model, a situation where the dominant coalition tries to suppress the public to accept the position of the organization, or it could be a corporation model, a situation

where the public uses communication to convince the dominant coalition to accept the position of the public.

The problem causing PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs doesn't function optimally is the organizational structure. According to Grunig and Hunt (1992), public relation practitioners usually have no freedom to act as professionals unless they sit as part of a dominant coalition. If PR unit is a part of a dominant coalition, it has the authority to include the elements of social responsibility, public understanding or two-way communication. This way, it will be easier to see the contribution of PR to the organizational effectiveness.

Furthermore, if the purpose of PR is incorporated into organizational goals, the high officials of PR sit as a dominant coalition. The target of the program of PR will be more adaptable if the high officials of PR are the dominant coalition in the organization. Conversely, if the high officials of PR do not sit in a dominant coalition, it will tend to be difficult to determine the function of PR no matter how hard they are trying to fulfill their communication objectives.

In this study, the performance of PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is observed from the perception of stakeholders and the understanding of the contributions of PR within the internal body of the ministry and stakeholders. The following is the information from the informants of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. The first informant states that the authority of PR is documentation and publication for activities of the scale of the Minister of Cooperatives and SMEs and Deputies (echelon I). Another informant adds that PR should structurally be positioned under the Minister of Cooperatives and SMEs. Another informant argues that PR should report when there are outside parties who need information about the public ministry policy. PR should be able to release the information.

The third informant also argues that the responsibility and authority of PR is creating

an image of the agency, in other words, to create the image of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SME including its programs and policies to be known to all levels of society. In general, the opinions given by each informant have not been able to provide appropriate and detailed perceptions about the responsibilities and authorities of PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs.

The functions of PR are multi-perception. The uncertainty of the role and the functions of PR are still notably high even to the level of decision making. A multi-perception view of PR will be an advantage to be made into a unity to bring a belief that, in fact, PR is a profession that can be utilized by any profession. Being an umbrella of the integrated imaging process makes PR a strategic tool in an agency. Therefore, it is not a big deal to optimize the role of Public Relation. What is needed is the capacity in running the system of Public Relation.

It is important to note that the overall performance of PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is good in the eyes of other stakeholders. They view that PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs are highly suitable to the tasks and functions of PR stated in each organizational document and working procedures. However, the duties and functions of PR in organizational documents and working procedures are not suitable for the characteristics of agencies that encounter challenges in addressing problems.

Other stakeholders or external informants generally state that PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs in particular needs the efforts to improve the coordination between PR and other divisions. The Head of PR, held by a person without the educational background and low competence of PR, is seen as the barrier to maintain the coordination between the internal of PR and other divisions. According to the informant, the work of PR needs responsiveness and high-speed coordination.

The findings of the study include an analysis of the response of the internal informants of

the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs and external informants (stakeholders of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs). In addition, the Minister of Cooperatives and SMEs is the key informant who in the bureaucratic and political position has full authority to determine the direction and the future, as well as to give approval to the position and programs, of Public Relation.

The internal informant, Salekan, now serving as Assistant Deputy, says that he doesn't understand the ideal theory of bureaucracy and Public Relation. However, in daily application, there are some shortcomings applied in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. In terms of organizational structure, PR is positioned at the low level, held by an echelon III official that directly impacts the function of the performance, whereas there are standard rules, although unwritten in the scope of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, that officials entitled to speak to the public in addition to the minister is an echelon I official. If PR is positioned at the level of echelon III, it is judged to affect the optimization of the performance of Public Relation. As a result, PR cannot function optimally because it does not have the authority to speak to the broader public. In other agencies, PR can function optimally. For example, in the Attorney, the Police, and the Ministry of Agriculture, PR is positioned at the level of echelon II. Therefore, it has greater authority. However, it doesn't rule out the possibility of special authority to be granted to PR through special regulations even though it is positioned at the level of echelon III.

The informant assessed that the strict rule of the bureaucracy has been an obstacle to the performance of PR. Based on the informant's experience as the former Head of Public Relation, there are standard rules in the ministry for not allowing echelon III to access the Minister directly. However, according to him, it can be excluded for certain functions, including optimizing the performance of Public Relation. Therefore, if necessary, a special authority can be legalized by the highest officials for PR to be able to directly access certain officials regardless of the level.

The informant, Surmanto, serving as the Head of Sub-Section of Documentation and Library of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, also argues that the position of PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is still less than ideal. According to him, in order to carry out its role more optimally, PR should be positioned at the level of echelon II. He believes that the position of the PR is crucial to support the performance of the ministry. He claims to experience the severe obstacles in the field with the current position of PR since the head of PR does not have full authority to determine a policy directly. According to him, the current PR is only a tool or the officials to carry out activities, although ideally, PR is the executor as well as the policy maker.

The informant admits the notable absence of awareness and concern from the officials in the ministry to consider PR as an important position. Surmanto agrees that the functions of bureaucracy in the ministries have to be implemented. However, PR should also be positioned at the ideal level or has special authority to specify the measures or policies. Therefore, he states that PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs as the third clusters of the ministry (C) in accordance with Law of Ministry of the State is not allowed to be present as a special division in the level of echelon two. However, it is still highly possible to combine PR with other divisions/bureaus. According to him, it is still possible for a bureau to hold more than one nomenclature, for example, the Bureau of Legal, Public Relation, and General. It allows the head of PR to occupy the level of echelon II with a higher authority.

Meanwhile, the informant, Muhammad Ali, serving as Staff of PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, argues that the current position of PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs at the level of echelon III is less precise. In its current position, PR is not able to play its role. Therefore, he assessed the need for PR to gain a greater role in determining the flow of information within the ministry. He asserted that if the PR is still positioned at the level of echelon III, it will be difficult for PR to perform its role optimally.

The informant encounters some obstacles while working as personnel of PR such as PR tends to be slow in carrying out its work because the decision-making is required to go through a tiered bureaucratic system. According to him, the amount of coordination to do is time-consuming. Therefore, an effort to cut the bureaucracy inhibiting the performance of PR is required. The most important thing is not a large budget issue. The important thing to be emphasized is the position of PR to make a decision. Despite the large budget, the existing planning of work programs must go through a tiered bureaucratic process. Therefore, PR needs to occupy a higher position in the organizational structure to cut the bureaucratic process. At least, PR should be positioned at the level of echelon II.

The fourth informant is Sahrul, serving as the Head of PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, stating that the position of PR at the level of echelon III does not allow it to have the authority or the right to respond when the public asks for information related to the agencies. According to him, tiered bureaucratic system requires PR to follow bureaucratic rules, namely to first ask permission from the super ordinate to be able to convey the information accessed by the public. He argues that ideally, PR is placed at more strategic position in order to optimize its role and functions. Moreover, in many other government agencies, PR has been positioned at a high level so that it can take measure to cut the chain of time-consuming bureaucracy.

The informant wants PR to be given the space allowing it to have the authority to make decisions without first going through a time-consuming bureaucratic system. In regard to the Law number 39 of 2008 on State Ministry that mandates the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs to be in the third cluster not allowing PR to be at a higher level, it does not mean to be the absolute standard to weaken the performance of Public Relation.

Gatot S. Dewa Broto, a PR Practitioner now serving as Deputy V of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, is the first external informant. The

former Spokesperson of the Ministry of Communications and Informatics will be placed as the informant providing some ideas about the concept of the ideal Public Relation. Gatot is not interviewed specifically about the performance of PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, yet regarding his experience and views on the ideal Public Relation. When serving as the Head of Information Center and PR of the Ministry of Communications and Informatics, he obtained various awards as the best PR of the government. Therefore, his opinion about PR can be a source and guidance on how PR should carry out its duties and roles.

In comparison between theory and concepts about government Public Relation, the informant argues that frequently, PR is rigid in its application. In many occasions, he says that to be a good PR practitioner, someone basically cannot rely on physical features, but he or she should understand the theory of Public Relation. Although without educational background, the personnel of PR must be willing to learn the basics of Public Relation. It would be ideal for the personnel of PR to have communication background so as to know the theory of communication.

The second external informant is Hanni Sofia, a journalist of Antara News Agency. Since 2007, Hanni has been assigned to cover the policies and activities of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. She considers that the service and the support of the coverage provided by the PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs tend to be normative, in terms of the way it provides information and access to the informant. She considers that the PR has no newer and more modern way to provide information to the journalists. In terms of service, there is the principle of egalitarian and equal in serving journalists from various national and local media.

She believes that the most effective and ideal and most needed services by journalists is an "on call" service for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 30 days in a month. It also requires rapid information service without having hampered by tiered and time-consuming

bureaucratic system. Media requires high-speed information. Therefore, media demand PR to be able to bridge the needs of the information.

The third external informant is Suroto, serving as the Vice Chairman of Indonesian Consumer Union. Suroto is placed as the stakeholder receiving direct service from the PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. In this study, Suroto is asked to assess the extent of the performance and service of PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. Suroto admits that he accesses information through PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs for several times for the benefit of his union. He believes that the services provided have not been fully optimal as expected. He cited the unavailability of the data about SMEs he was looking for, even in the website www.depkop.go.id. He found the data elsewhere. When he sent letters to the officials in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs through its Public Relation, there was no reply. Therefore, Suroto considers that current PR unit in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is far from ideal in carrying out its functions and role.

Analysis

In its development up to this day, if associated with a state of being, and in accordance with the methods and theories of communication and Public Relation, the term PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is relatively incompatible with the ideal concept of the theory of Public Relation. Since 2004, PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives is posited at the level that relatively does not get enough portions and authority to portray the ideal function of PR in accordance with its concept (King, 1995).

The activities carried out by PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs in the findings in this study are only to make contact with the audience outside the organization, such as disseminating the press release to mass media, inviting journalists for an appointment, and designing a press conference (Rohdewohld, 1995). The conditions are not

appropriate with the translation of Public Relation concept.

The position of PR at the level of division led by officials of echelon III is assumed to be one of the causes of the less optimal role of Public Relation. The resistance and the climate of "*ewuhpakewuh*" (the feeling of reticent towards higher officials) as well as the rigid office-ethics make the bargaining power of PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs not strong. The PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs even has no authority to represent the agency and to provide direct information as the spokesperson to a wider public.

In terms of education and competence, the human resources (HR), particularly at the level of leadership, do not have a background and competence of Public Relation. It is also an estimated reason for the less optimal role of PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs.

The PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs has not applied the essential aspects of public relation. First, the goal of PR is internal and external public. Internal Public is the different people covered by the organizations, namely all employees from the staff to the Head of Bureau of General Affairs. External Public is those outside the organization related to and expected to have relations. As government Public Relation, PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs should establish a relation with journalists and Indonesian broadcasting associations as the related organizations, and a wide range of companies, advertising agencies, NGOs, and the public at large as the candidates to form cooperation.

Second, the activities of PR are two-way communication (reciprocal two-way traffic communication). It means that in the delivery of information, PR is expected to generate feedback, so that it can be material to evaluate agencies.

Apparently, the orientation of PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs cannot completely be described as "true Public Relation". It is different from the concept applied by the Father of PR Ivy L. Lee that PR

has a position in leadership and a freedom to initiate in the preparation of free and open information.

It is not surprising that PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is not structurally placed in a high level or the top of the organization. In reality, the leaders of the agencies often ask for the assistance of the Head of PR when dealing with the external public. Moreover, many activities are carried out in one-way communication.

In the context of the model of relationship with stakeholders, PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs applies the model of press agency/publicity and public information. In other words, communication conducted by the PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is one-way communication. In the model of press agency/publicity, PR treats its stakeholders more as passive targets in the delivery of information. In extreme, according to Grubig and Hunt (1984), this model considers that the truth of the contents of the message delivered is not important, even the content of the message is sometimes distorted by the interest to advocate.

Based on the result of the interviews and observations, the extreme statement by Grunig is not insufficiently appropriate. PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs always keeps and never distorts the content of the message delivered to stakeholders. Public information model is similar to press agency/publicity model applying the principle of one-way communication. This model relies heavily on the truth in managing the content that will be distributed. The PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs works with media/journalists to report to all stakeholders objectively.

Two-way communication with the stakeholders cannot be identified in this study. However, the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs has a special line, namely call center, which can be accessed directly by the public. However, PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs has not been able to optimize the facility in order to carry out two-way

communication with the stakeholders optimally. Analyzed from the interviews about the tasks, the PR tends to dwell on the activities of media relations. This practice is one of the important activities of Public Relation, but in creating two-way communication, the formats of more direct communication are required where PR plays an active role to facilitate other agencies to create the process of communication between the government ministries and stakeholders/public.

Two-way communication is dynamic. The information is exchanged in both directions between the ministry and stakeholders. In two-way communication, the most important thing is feedback. The feedback is important and useful information to be an input for agencies in carrying out their duties to achieve the ministerial goals.

However, there are some additional notes where PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is also trying to perform two-way communication. PR tends to play an active role in the campaign or two-way program conducted by the deputies of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. In reality, PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is often observed not only carrying out the journalistic internal task, but also trying to communicate with the surrounding community by doing some activities of community relations. Unfortunately, PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs does not have an internal media yet as a means of communication with its internal and stakeholders. Even though there is a record stating that similar media had ever existed in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, the change of regime abolished the internal media policy.

Based on the findings from the fieldwork, a number of personnel of PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs have been very aware that good two-way communication is the basic capital in creating common understanding, even though not symmetrical. Symmetrical common understanding is ideal, yet difficult to achieve because it requires a common position

of all communicators. However, there are some personnel of PR who do not understand their tasks and functions, even their role due to many reasons including the inadequate educational background and competence.

After discussing the model of communication performed by PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, the study will further focus on the role.

Observed from the information obtained from interviews in the field, PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs tends to play the role of the technician communications. The indication is that PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs has jobs that are technical communication in nature. The activities of internal journalistic are carried out more by coverage and dissemination of information through the media if necessary and the website or social media accounts. The role of communication facilitator is less carried out by PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. To facilitate communication with the public is carried out by frequent involvement in the activities of deputy work units vertically or horizontally.

From the data collected from the internal informants, external informants/stakeholders, and key informant, a number of facts of the study are obtained. Four informants agree that the position of PR in the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs has not allowed PR to play its function ideally in accordance with the concept of the ideal Public Relation. PR only becomes the executor of the policy without having special authority to issue and release an official statement on behalf of the agencies. These four informants admit that it is often be the main obstacle for PR to fulfill its function and role optimally. These four informants also argue that ideally, PR in the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs should occupy a higher level in order to have a special authority to perform its role and functions according to the ideal concept of Public Relation. Ideally, PR occupies a more strategic level in order to not only be the executor of the program set by the higher officials.

The solution offered by the informants varies, but it can be outlined that they want a special authority to be given to PR in order that PR has the legality to take action primarily to provide a statement to the journalists or the public in need without first having to go through the tiered bureaucratic system. If Law does not allow PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs to occupy the higher echelons (from echelon III to echelon II), then PR is expected to get special tasks and authority to function optimally. In addition, there is also an informant suggesting that the position of PR is held by the higher echelon officials in order that the position can be boosted in the organizational structure. Therefore, PR has more authorities to make decisions, including acting according to its tasks and role.

Meanwhile, the external informants illustrate the functions and role of ideal PR that should be implemented by PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. Compared to the ideal concept, PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is still far from meeting the criteria of the concept. According to the external informants, PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs can even be called a mere bureaucratic machine, or an executor of a program. PR has no "free will," or has not given the authority to make a policy or a statement representing the agency.

In the terms of service, the journalists judge that PR has an advantage from the personal approach but doesn't have more informative ways in delivering the latest information. PR of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs is considered slow in providing answers to questions because of a tiered bureaucratic system and the absence of a special authority given to PR to make a policy.

The informant from union has not fully understood the performance of the ideal Public Relation. However, the incomprehension about the function of PR makes the informant apathetic to generalize the perception that bureaucracy has actually inhibited the services provided. This could be a reflection of the view of the public of an agency in general.

Therefore, PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs has difficult homework to be able to change public perception and paradigm about bureaucracy. It actually can be resolved properly if PR has an absolute authority over a policy with a note that the human resources have adequate quality and competence in Public Relation, particularly in terms of experience and educational background.

These three external informants do not specifically mention that bureaucracy inhibits the performance of Public Relation. However, two of them encounter obstacles when trying to access information quickly through Public Relation. This illustrates that a tiered bureaucratic system has inhibited the performance of PR to be able to deliver services more quickly to the public. One of the informants does not mention that bureaucracy inhibits the performance of PR if the bureaucratic system provides a particular space for PR to be able to access internal information in an agency then convey it to the public. Therefore, it can be underlined that a tiered bureaucracy generally inhibits the performance of PR except if PR is given a particular space to "break through" the bureaucratic system.

Related to the position of PR in the organizational structure in an agency, the three external informants tend to not see the issue of the position of PR in the organizational structure. As long as PR is able to provide the best service, the position is not a serious issue. The key informant, the Minister of Cooperatives and SMEs AAGN Puspayoga, tends to want to optimize the existing bureaucratic system. He admits that structure and position are not his jurisdiction, but if the system works properly, the performance of all ministries will be better. In general, the Government of Working Cabinet under President Joko Widodo indeed assumes that the position of PR in the government is a notably strategic position.

CONCLUSION

In general, the findings of the study and the descriptive explanation show that the Government of Working Cabinet under

President Joko Widodo indeed assumes that the position of PR in the government is a notably strategic position. Nevertheless, the findings and the analysis of the study show that the position of PR in bureaucracy of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs inhibits its functions and role because it is not given the opportunity to play a role as a communication technician. It occupies not a dominant position; the marginal position is proven by many levels of bureaucracy that must be through to carry out its function. Therefore, PR requires a longer time to deliver public services.

In addition, the ideal PR in bureaucracy of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs should occupy a more strategic level in the organizational structure, be given a special authority from the supreme leader, and be able to decide its actions and serve without having to go through a long bureaucratic process as well as to improve the quality of human resources (HR) in order to be more creative and solution-based on any problems encountered and the development of a good image and reputation.

Both shows that the position of PR still needs to improve in the implementation in accordance with the purpose and function of Public Relation. Thus, this study provides two inputs on the efforts to improve the position of PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. First, theoretically referring to the discussions and findings, it can give contribution to be used for the development of the science of communication in general and the government PR in particular. Secondly, practically referring to the discussions and findings, it can be a material of consideration in policy making, particularly in the work of PR in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs.

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