



Public Relations Communication Management of Pt. PLN (Persero) UID S2jb in the CSR Program "Light Up The Dream" as an Effort to Brand the Company

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the communication management of Public Relations of PT PLN (Persero) UID S2JB in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Light Up The Dream program as a corporate branding effort. This program is present as a form of PLN's social concern for underprivileged people who do not have independent access to electricity. This research is motivated by the importance of effective communication management in the implementation of CSR programs in order to be able to build public understanding, minimize social misunderstandings, and strengthen the company's image in the eyes of the public. This research uses Communication Management Theory which emphasizes the process of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling communication in achieving organizational goals. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a communication management approach. Data were obtained through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The research informants consisted of the Public Relations of PT PLN (Persero) UID S2JB and the community receiving assistance from the Light Up The Dream program. The data analysis technique uses thematic analysis through the process of grouping themes, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that Public Relations communication management is carried out through the stages of planning and implementing communication in a structured manner. Public Relations conducts internal coordination, preparation of communication messages, the use of digital media, mass media publications, and direct communication with the public and stakeholders. This program also implements two-way communication through interaction and response of the beneficiary community. In addition, there are several obstacles such as a lack of public understanding of the assistance mechanism and the potential for social jealousy. However, these obstacles are overcome through coordination with village officials, persuasive approaches, and more open publications. The Light Up The Dream program is considered to be able to strengthen the company's branding by forming a positive image of PLN as a company that cares about the underprivileged.

INTRODUCTION

Tens, hundreds to thousands of families in various regions of Indonesia who live without access to electricity continue to be a social phenomenon that receives public attention. Various national and regional media reports often highlight underprivileged families who live for years in limited lighting due to the inability to pay for electricity installation and the limited income of each household in each region. This condition forces them to use alternative electricity such as lamp oil, candles or even hitchhiking to connect electricity to neighbors and close family (Scott, 2022).

This phenomenon shows that the problem of electricity access is not only technical, but also a social problem that has a direct impact on people's quality of life. This condition raises high expectations for PT PLN (Persero) as

a State-Owned Enterprise responsible for the provision of national electricity. This high public expectation certainly has a direct impact on the perception, trust and image of the company. Therefore, every policy or program carried out by PT PLN, especially those that are in direct contact with the community, requires proper and planned communication management from a Public Relations.

Although in 2024-2025 there are still public complaints that show the gap between institutional communication carried out by companies and real public experiences. As a form of response related to this phenomenon, PLN through the Corporate Social Responsibility program "Light Up The Dream", which is a free electricity connection program for underprivileged families who do not have independent access to electricity.

This program is a program that comes from the initiative of PLN employees who are consistently in various regions of Indonesia. This program has been run since 2020 until now which is still actively providing assistance to families in need because as of mid-2025 as many as ± 37,088 families have received assistance from this program (Editorial, 2025b).

The selection of recipients of this program has several specific criteria in determining which families are eligible to receive it. For example, prospective recipients come from underprivileged families, meaning that they are financially disabled, do not have their own electricity connection, and are prioritized to come from the 3T (Frontier, Outermost, and Disadvantaged) areas as well as with recommendations from village officials and those that have been recorded in the TNP2K Integrated Database so that they are right on target. There are several types of assistance provided, namely free electricity connections, home installations, and initial tokens.

At the regional level, PT PLN (Persero) South Sumatra, Jambi, and Bengkulu Distribution Main Unit (UID S2JB) is the parent unit of several large provinces covering urban to rural areas with diverse economic conditions of communities that actively participate in implementing programs Light Up The Dream This is included in the realm of Environmental Social Responsibility (TJSL). In October (2025) As many as more than 2,000 families in the S2JB area have experienced access to electricity as beneficiaries of the program in their work areas. Based on the criteria for prospective recipients of program assistance that have been determined by PT PLN, quoted from the Bengkulu Tribune (2025) that PLN UID S2JB has carried out simultaneous electricity start-ups in seven locations in its work area in August 2025 with a symbolic ignition in Bukit kecil, Palembang.

From here, it is known that without planned public relations communication management, this program has the potential to cause public misunderstanding, social jealousy, and perception Negative related to transparency and fairness in the distribution of program assistance. Therefore, the Public Relations function is an important element because it plays a role as a strategic communication manager who is fully responsible for message planning, media selection, and management with Squirrel and controlling issues and public opinion, so that the public understands that PLN is not only a provider but also a company that has social responsibility (Darwinsyah, 2018).

Meanwhile, no one has specifically discussed how to manage Public Relations communication through the Light Up The Dream program as a form of branding strategy , especially in the context of BUMN PLN UID S2JB. This research is important to understand how communication management carried out by Public Relations in the process of planning, implementation and how communication is carried out plays a role in building public understanding, minimizing the potential for social conflicts and of course to strengthen the company's image.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach used by the author is a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is research that aims to understand in depth a phenomenon under natural conditions through the collection of original, descriptive, and inductive analysis, with an emphasis on meaning and process, rather than on generalization. (Raihan, 2017). Qualitative research is defined as data expressed in the form of words, narrative sentences, and images (Nasution, 2023).

The qualitative research method was chosen because this research aims to understand in depth the process of Public Relations communication management in the implementation of CSR programs Light Up the Dream at PT PLN (Persero) UID S2JB. The phenomenon studied is natural, contextual, and requires direct explanations from the program actors, so that the qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the meaning, strategies, and experiences of informants holistically. According to Sugiyono 2019 (Nasution, 2023), qualitative research is used to examine the natural conditions of objects and emphasize meaning rather than numbers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Public Relations Communication Management of PT PLN (Persero) UID S2JB in the Light Up The Dream Program

Communication Planning in the Light Up The Dream Program

Overall, the findings of the study show that communication planning carried out by public relations of PT PLN UID S2JB in the Light Up The Dream program is not only carried out through internal coordination, preparation of communication messages, the use of media and the management of program narrative consistency. Messages disseminated through social media, mass media, and direct communication more emphasize the value of social concern, emotional closeness, and the real impact of the program on the beneficiary community based on what has been planned before the implementation of the program. Thus, program communication not only functions

as an information delivery, but also becomes a company's strategy in building the company's image and branding through a humanist communication approach."

Implementation of Light Up The Dream Program Communication

Direct Communication Through the Presence of Officers

Through this study, it was found that face-to-face communication has a great influence on the formation of public trust because it can directly see the company's involvement in the implementation of the program through the interpersonal communication pattern carried out.

Social Media as a Channel for Communication Implementation

This study found that the use of visuals in digital publications that are carried out continuously and consistently through social media helps strengthen the company's branding value because the public sees firsthand the real impact of the program. This is also based on the Internet penetration rate in the Sumatra Island region at 77.12% which strengthens the reason why PLN uses social media as a channel or communication medium for program implementation.

Print and Electronic Mass Media

Overall, in addition to being used for publication media, the activity is also a public relations communication management strategy of PLN UID S2JB in managing humane, persuasive, and social impact-based communication messages to build a positive image of the company as has been done in the program communication planning process.

Public Response Related to Communication Carried Out Through the Light Up The Dream Program in Company Branding

The findings of the study show that the success of program communication is influenced by the use of appropriate communication media, two-way communication with the community, and a humanist approach carried out by companies. Theoretically, this condition shows the application of organizing and implementation functions in Michael Kaye's communication management theory, which can be seen from the coordinated management of program communication between UID, UP3, village officials, and the community. In addition, the two-way communication carried out by the company also shows the application of the principle of feedback in communication management because the company not only conveys messages, but also receives community responses as part of the evaluation of program communication.

Thus, CSR communication carried out by Public Relations of PT PLN UID S2JB not only functions as a conveyor of program information, but also becomes the company's strategy in building public trust and strengthening the company's branding as a state-owned enterprise that cares about the underprivileged.

Obstacles in the Communication Management of the Light Up The Dream Program and the Role of CSR/TJSL as an Effort Branding

Internal Constraints in Communication Management

Therefore, these findings show that the main obstacle to the communication management of the Light Up The Dream program does not lie in the lack of communication media, but in the complexity of communication coordination between units in a large work area. This study also found that the involvement of many work units in the implementation of the program causes the Company to need a more adaptive and integrated communication coordination pattern so that the Company's communication message continues to run consistently in each area of program implementation. So it is known that the vastness of the work area is not only an administrative challenge but also affects the effectiveness of communication supervision in the field.

External Constraints on Program Implementation

The main focus of external communication in the Light Up The Dream program is not only on the delivery of information but is more affected by the low initial level of trust of the community in the free assistance program. This is due to the large amount of false assistance information that also affects the way the public interprets the Company's communication messages. So that the success of the assistance-based program is very influenced by the Company's ability to build social legitimacy and emotional trust in the community and the involvement of village officials is very important.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, the communication management of Public Relations of PT PLN (Persero) UID S2JB in the CSR Light Up The Dream program has been carried out through the planning and implementation stages of structured communication. In the planning stage, Public Relations conducts internal coordination, determines the target recipients of assistance based on data and recommendations from village officials, compiles communication messages, and selects the media to be used such as social media, digital

publications, mass media, and direct communication with the community. This stage is carried out so that program information can be conveyed clearly and on target.

At the implementation stage, communication is carried out through publication of activities, coordination with stakeholders, direct approaches to the community, to the symbolic implementation of electricity switching. The communication carried out is also two-way because Public Relations not only conveys information, but also receives responses and builds relationships with the beneficiary communities. Through planned and consistent communication, the Light Up The Dream program is able to form a positive image of PLN as a company that not only focuses on electricity services, but also has social concern for the underprivileged community so that it can strengthen the company's branding in the eyes of the public.

In addition, this study also found several obstacles in the implementation of program communication, such as the lack of public understanding of the assistance mechanism, the potential for social jealousy, and communication barriers in the field. To overcome this, Public Relations coordinates with village officials, persuasive approaches to the community, and utilizes communication media and publications more openly. Thus, the Light Up The Dream CSR program is not only a form of corporate social responsibility, but also a PR communication strategy in building public trust and strengthening the company's branding.

SUGGESTIONS

Practical advice

PT PLN (Persero) UID S2JB is expected to continue to improve the communication management of the Light Up The Dream CSR program by expanding the program's socialization to the community in a more equitable and sustainable manner. Public Relations also needs to strengthen interpersonal communication and coordination with village officials and community leaders so that information related to the mechanisms and criteria for aid recipients can be understood clearly so as to minimize misunderstandings and social jealousy in the community. In addition, the use of social media and digital media needs to continue to be improved through the delivery of more educational, informative, and transparent content so that the company's positive image can be stronger and more consistent in the eyes of the public.

Academic Advice

This research is expected to be a reference for future research that discusses public relations communication management, CSR, and corporate branding. Researchers are then advised to develop research using other communication approaches or theories in order to obtain a broader perspective on corporate communication strategies in the implementation of CSR programs. In addition, further research can also examine the effectiveness of digital communication, community response in more depth, and compare the implementation of CSR programs in other companies or regions so that it can enrich the study of communication science, especially in the field of organizational communication and public relations.

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