Relationship between the Student Registration Services Communication Process and Student Characteristics

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ABSTRACT: Introduction/Main Objectives: Universities need effective communication with prospective students through various communication channels to attract them to their programs. Background Problems: Public relations universities need to provide maximum service to prospective students in accordance with student characteristics and university communication media. Novelty: Many previous studies have examined the public relations of universities with the theme of image or social media of universities. This study examines the relationship of individual characteristics with the public communication process in universities in terms of use, message content, and frequency. Research Methods: The method used in this study is descriptive correlation with quantitative and qualitative approaches. This study used a quota sample. Hypothesis tests were conducted using spearman rank correlation test. Finding/Results: The results of the study show that the use of communication channels, which has a great influence on the character of students is brochure, the content of the message, which has a great influence on student characteristics is the brochure communication channel. The frequency of communication channels that have a great impact on individual character are verbal messages, Facebook and banner. Conclusion: It is necessary to focus on the increased use of brochure communication channels, the content of brochures and the frequency of verbal messages, Facebook and banners.

Keywords: Public Relations, Student service communication, communication process, communication channel.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education, as part of the national education system, has a strategic role in forming the life of the nation and promoting science and technology by observing and applying the values of humanities and sustainable culture and strengthening the Indonesian nation (Kementerian Agama, 2020).

Private universities in Indonesia have the potential to develop the country's education system, considering that the number of universities reaches 2990. This number is very high when compared to the number of state universities, which is only about 125 universities (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2019). With this number, private universities in Indonesia can play a key role in equalizing the quality of education in Indonesia.

When choosing a college, many factors influence students' decision to study at that college (Aguirre & Matta, 2021; Choy & Yeung, 2022). Universities need to have effective organizational communication with consumers or prospective students, i.e. they need to inform prospective students about different study programs, activities, etc. to motivate them to be interested in the program (Mašková et al., 2022; Moriyasu & Kobayashi, 2022).

The numerous universities are in fierce competition for the number of new student enrollments (Ansari, 2021; Tambe & Miguel, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). Therefore, new student admissions staff have an important role to play, with high credibility and appeal in communicating products and services at the university (Choi & Green, 2022; Fu et al., 2022; Garon-Carrier et al., 2022). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between the use of communication channels for new student enrollment and student characteristics.

The purpose of public relations is to get other people to know the organization better. Public relations creates a public understanding of the organization through various communication strategies with the public (Baharun, 2019). The function of public relations is to facilitate communication and build relationships with the public; public relations is very important to improve reputation (Cronin, 2016). Increasing competition among higher education institutions forces higher education management to understand, manage, and leverage a strong brand position (Ann Voss & Kumar, 2013; Dennis et al., 2016; Rauschnabel et al., 2016). This includes open communication and close relationships with students, staff, and their stakeholders (Eger et al., 2019).

Under the conditions of intense competition in the world of education, building and developing a public relations system to promote public relations is important (Gonçalves et al., 2013; Turanina et al., 2020). Public relations in higher education institutions subtly promotes institutional interests, publicizes the positive aspects of higher education, uses the media to create and manage brand identities and promote competitive advantages (Cronin, 2016; Freberg et al., 2013). Various communication tools are used by educational institutions to establish different levels of relationships between the organization and the public (Azionya et al., 2019; Eger et al., 2019). Communication gaps sometimes occur due to the limitations of conventional media, so higher education public relations also uses social media. (Okaiyeto et al., 2021; Osakede et al., 2018)

In addition, optimal higher education public relations increases community and student satisfaction (Al Adwan, 2019; Fitch, 2014; Mules, 2018). Higher education institutions are expected to guarantee quality and performance by providing relevant information to various stakeholders such as the academic community and society (Deng & Feng, 2021; Meng, 2013; Ragas et al., 2015).

METHOD

The method used in this study is descriptive correlation with quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2017). The population of this study was students from a private university in Indonesia with a total of 1,780 students. Determination of the sample using Slovin's formula (e = 10%), that is, at least 95 respondents are selected from a population of 1780. The sample was determined from 210 respondents using quota sampling. Quota sampling technique is a technique to determine a sample from a population that has certain characteristics to the desired quota set (Muljono, 2012). The survey techniques used in this study were questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documents. Hypothesis testing using the Spearman rank correlation test (Sugiyono, 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Relationship between the characteristics of university students and the use of communication channels.

The statistical results regarding the relationship between the characteristics of university students and the use of communication channels at the university show that the cumulative grade point average of university students has a very significant negative relationship with the use of banners, a significant positive relationship with the use of brochures, and a significant negative relationship with the use of Facebook. The mother's education has a significant negative effect on the use of brochures. Her income has a significant positive effect on brochure use. The mother's income has a significant positive effect on the use of posters. In contrast, the education factor is not significantly related to the use of all communication channels.

First-year students with a high Grade Point Average (GPA) prefer brochures and do not consider banners and Facebook when searching for information about universities because they believe that brochures provide complete information that meets their needs. A student in the accounting program said:

"My grade point average was above 3, and when I applied for the university, I thought the brochure had more comprehensive information than others. I have Facebook but it's not active, I play on Facebook when I have fun or free time while I see the banner, but the information is very concise and to the point."

New students whose mothers have low education prefer brochures to learn about universities because they are not used to learning from different sources, so their children's explanations who read brochures help parents learn more about the university. A student of communication studies said:

"The brochure I got from the university, I brought it to my parents and explained it again, so my parents understood more or less about the tuition and the cost through my explanation."

Statistics show that first-year students with high-income fathers prefer brochures to get information about the university. This is because the fathers of the students want their children to study in a good place or according to the costs incurred, so they are very interested in the brochure that contains complete information. One of the students of the management study program stated:

"Apart from the explanations given by the enrollment staff, I think the brochure is the most complete explanation. My father wants me to study in a place that is close and good for the costs incurred. That's why he also diligently reads brochures and prospectuses from different universities so that he will not be disappointed later and not make a wrong choice."

Statistics show that first-year students whose mothers have high incomes prefer posters to inform them about universities. Mothers of students who have a job are more likely to see the posters because the location of the university is outside the university gate. A student in the Islamic Banking program said:

"When my mother passed by the university, she saw a poster with all the information about the programs offered and the enrollment date".

The analysis of the students' characteristics, which are nominal data, was conducted using the chi-square test and cross-tabulations. The statistical results show that the chi-square test examines the characteristics of the students in relation to the use of communication channels.

To find out whether there is a relationship between the characteristics of the students and the use of the communication channels, the calculated chi-square value is compared with the value of the chi-square table at 0.05 significance level. If the calculated chi-square value is > chi-square table, the significance value is < 0.05, then there is a relationship. If the chi-square value < is chi-square table, the significance value > is 0.05, then there is no relationship.

Based on the value of the correlation test for gender with the booklet channel, the chi-square value was calculated > chi-square-table (5.044 > 3.841) with a significance value of 0.025 (< 0.05). These results indicate that there is a relationship between gender and brochure channel.

Students prefer to read brochures because they are attractively designed, such as with photos and creative designs. Males, on the other hand, prefer things that are simpler. A student in the Agribusiness program stated:

"I like colorful brochures, especially those with complete information, I always have them in my bag, especially brochures in the form of calendars or notebooks, and others that are useful to me, I definitely keep those."

The statistical results regarding the relationship between student status and website channel yielded the value of chi-square count > chi-square table (4.221 > 3.841) with a significance value of 0.040 (< 0.05). These results show that there is a relationship between student status and website channels. First-year students prefer the website because it is easier to access information through a cell phone. A student in the Islamic Education program stated:

"My friends and I searched for information on each university's website. Some use the Internet at school, others use the cell phone."

The results of the statistical tests showed that the use of communication channels that strongly influenced the students' character were brochures.

Relationship between the characteristics of college students and the content of messages

The statistical results regarding the relationship between the characteristics of the students and the content of the messages of the communication channel show that the grade point average (GPA) is significantly negatively associated with the content of the messages on banners and Facebook and significantly positively associated with the brochures. Mother's education is

significantly negatively related to brochure content. Her income is significantly positively related to the content of the brochure and significantly positively related to the content of the website message. The mother's income is significantly positively related to the content of the poster messages. However, there is no significant relationship between education and the content of the messages in all communication channels.

New students who have a high grade point average do not really like the content of messages on banners and Facebook to learn about universities, but prefer to read messages in brochures because the information in concise banners and Facebook is not comprehensive. A student in the elementary education teaching program stated:

"I saw banners of the college, but there were only information about the faculty and phone numbers, so I went to the campus to ask more questions, and then I got a brochure with more comprehensive information about the college. Even though the college's Facebook page does not seem to be very comprehensive in terms of information, it's Facebook."

Meanwhile, new students whose mothers have low education prefer messages in brochures to get information about universities because the mothers of these students rarely leave the home environment, so they do not get complete information. s student majoring in government, explained:

"My mother rarely travels because she is a housewife, so she does not have much information about universities. With the brochure I brought, I can talk directly to my parents."

New students whose fathers have high incomes appreciate the information on the website and the information in the brochures to learn about universities, because fathers are very interested in the costs they face and then compare them to the benefits they receive, because fathers are looking for money for family life and for their children in college. A student in the Islamic Banking program said:

"My father searches the website for information about tuition fees, facilities, and other things, but the information on the website is not enough, so my father has to read the brochure to get more information, and after he gets all the information, he will discuss it with me".

New students whose mothers have high income prefer messages on billboards to get information about the college because they like to travel or get out of their home environment. An undergraduate management student said:

"Before I went to the office, my mother often saw the posters of the university, and this information was the first to be conveyed to me, so I was interested in going to the college to ask questions about studying at the college."

The analysis of the characteristics of the students, which are nominal data, was carried out using the chi-square test and cross-tabulations. The statistical results show the chi-square test of the student characteristics with the content of the message. To find out whether there is a relationship between the student characteristics and the content of the message or not, the calculated chi-square value is compared with the value of the chi-square table at 0.05 significance level. If the calculated chi-square value is > chi-square table, the significance value is < 0.05, then there is a relationship. If the calculated chi-square value is < chi-square table, the significance value is > 0.05, then there is no relationship.

Based on the value of the relationship test, for gender with the content of the news booklet, the chi-square value was calculated > chi-square-table (8.366 > 7.815) with a significance value of 0.039 (< 0.05). These results indicate that there is a relationship between gender and the content of the brochure message. The female gender prefers to read the content of the brochure because the information is quite complete. Males, on the other hand, prefer things that are simpler. A student in the Islamic Education program stated:

"When I go to the admissions office to look for enrollment information, I think the brochure on new student admissions is the most complete information medium".

The results of the statistical tests showed that the message content that most influences student characteristics is the brochure's communication channel.

Relationship between student characteristics and frequency of communication channel use.

The statistical results regarding the relationship between students' characteristics and the frequency of using communication channels in universities show that GPA was significantly positively related to the frequency of using Facebook. Mother's education was significantly positively related to frequency of banner use. However, the factors of education, income, and mother's income were not significantly related to the frequency of all communication channels. New students who have a high grade point average are more likely to see Facebook because the new student enrollment department uses Facebook for announcements or the latest news regarding new student enrollment. One of the students in the physical education program stated:

"I often see announcements about admissions tests and other things through Facebook, so I often get notifications on Facebook because there are new status updates from the new student enrollment department staff, so Facebook needs to continue to be seen because the latest information continues to appear."

First-year students whose mothers have high levels of education are more likely to read Banner for information about the college. Because mothers with higher education often monitor their children's progress in school, they do not see college banners by accident. A student in the computer engineering program said:

"My mother works as a teacher, in school she often sees college banners, and she informs me about the information".

The analysis of the students' characteristics, which are nominal data, was conducted using the chi-square test and cross-tabulations. The statistics show the chi-square test of student characteristics with frequency. To find out if there is a relationship between the student characteristics and frequency of messages, the calculated chi-square value is compared to the chi-square table value at 0.05 significance. If the calculated chi-square value is > chi-square table, the significance value is < 0.05, then there is a relationship. If the calculated chi-square value is < chi-square table, the significance value is > 0.05, then there is no relationship.

Based on the value of the relationship test for gender with the frequency of verbal communications, the chi-square value was calculated > chi-square-table (4.643 > 3.841) with a significance value of 0.031 (< 0.05). These results suggest that there is a relationship between gender and frequency of verbal messages. Female new student are more likely to use verbal communications than boys because females like to ask and answer questions directly. One student in the geography program said:

"I prefer to ask the staff directly when enrolling new students instead of reading them first, so I can get the information faster from the staff's explanation when enrolling new students than reading it myself."

The results of the test value of the relationship between gender and Facebook frequency yielded the value of the chi-square table > (6,748 > 5,991) with a significance value of 0.034 (< 0.05). These results show that there is a relationship between gender and frequency of Facebook. Female new student are more likely to use Facebook because Facebook has become a useful tool for women, such as selling or buying products, members of cooking groups, etc. Women who use Facebook frequently always open notifications on their phones, so the information disseminated by freshman admissions staff on Facebook is frequently read. A female student in the geography program said:

"When the notification tone sounds on my phone, I reflexively open the message from Facebook and read it. So I am sure to read the Facebook message from the freshman admissions office."

The test value of the relationship between student status and frequency of verbal messages yielded a calculated chi-square value > chi-square table (5.328 > 3.841) with a significance value of 0.021 (< 0.05). These results suggest that there is a relationship between status and frequency of verbal communications. Prospective students who have just graduated from high school prefer verbal communications because they need a lot of information and their questions can be answered immediately with verbal communications. A student in the Islamic Education program stated:

"I went to the admissions office looking for registration information, and then the staff explained everything to me in detail and answered all my questions."

So that from the statistical results, the frequency of communication channels that have a great impact on individual character is Facebook, banner, and verbal messages.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the use of communication channels, which has a great influence on the character of students is brochure, the content of the message, which has a great influence on student characteristics is the brochure communication channel. The frequency of communication channels that have a great impact on individual character are verbal messages, facebook and banner. The results of this research suggest that it is necessary to focus on the increased use of brochure communication channels, the content of brochures and the frequency of verbal messages, facebook and banners.

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