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LIBRARIANS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE PUBLIC RELATIONS FUNCTION IN THE LIBRARY MA LABORATORIUM UINSU MEDAN

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ABSTRACT

Public relations is an important service in libraries, public relations functions as the delivery of information to users. This research generally aims to determine the perception of librarians in implementing the public relations function at the MA Laboratorium UINSU Medan. The specific objectives of this research are; (1) to determine the perception of librarians' attitudes in serving library users, (2) to determine efforts to foster trust from library users in librarians, (3) to determine the constraints of librarians in serving library users. The results of this research are the perceptions of librarians at the MA Laboratorium UINSU Medan Laboratory regarding the implementation of the public relations function in the library including: the public relations function is part of the work that must be done, librarians feel happy when carrying out the public relations function, and librarians in carrying out the public relations function prioritize user needs, so that trust arises between both parties. Internal factors that influence librarian perceptions are the librarian's hope that users will be satisfied with the services provided, the librarian's willingness to be able to meet the needs of users, the motivation of librarians to create good services and external factors that influence include users' needs for information, technological developments

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INTRODUCTION

The library is an institutional unit that collects, manages, stores and disseminates information. As an institution that collects, manages, stores and disseminates information, libraries certainly have an important influence on people's lives, because people have a need for information that will never end. The existence of library services that are able to develop cannot be separated from the role of librarians who try to innovate so that the libraries they manage can gain sympathy from the public. This is not easy for them to do. The public generally thinks that libraries often provide poor service, so that the image of libraries in general is not good. Based on this, the library needs to provide understanding, attract sympathy from the community, and support from related parties so that later the library can develop further and be known as a pleasant place. One way to achieve a better library can be done by implementing the public relations function in the library. Implementing the public relations function in the library can be one way to build a positive image of the library. Through the implementation of the public relations function, positive library activities and services will be conveyed to the community. Through the implementation of the public relations function, the library can also collaborate with several institutions, of course this will increase the library's services.

A library is considered to have a good reputation if the activities or services provided can meet the needs of users. The library image is a set of impressions that develop in the mind of the user regarding the (visible) reality of the library and librarians. Currently, libraries in general are considered negatively by the public. This cannot be separated from the perception that the library is a boring place. This is because so far many libraries provide poor service and seem passive. This condition is exacerbated by the lack of good library promotion, so that good activities and services are less publicized to the public. This will be different if the library aggressively promotes positive library activities and services, then gradually the image of the library will improve.

Etymologically, perception comes from English, namely perception, and Latin perceptio which means receiving, while in terms of terminology it is an effort to enter things into our consciousness so that we can predict or identify them as objects in the outside world.⁴ Perception is observations about an object, event or relationships obtained by inferring information and interpreting messages.

Perception is an important aspect in responding to symptoms around them. A librarian is someone who has expertise and skills in the field of library science, documentation and information obtained through formal and non-formal education and has an attitude of self-development, willing to accept and implement new things by providing professional services to the community in order to implement the Constitution. 45, namely to make the life of the Indonesian nation smarter. Librarians, people who have competencies obtained through librarian education or training, and have duties and responsibilities to carry out library management and services. 10 There are many services available in libraries, this is to support facilities in serving library users. The information contained in the library will not be conveyed to librarians if there is no effort from the library service towards the library.

One of the services needed in a library is public relations which plays a role in library services to provide information and communicate with users. Public relations has a technician role and a management role. 15 The role of a public relations technician is to create information products. In libraries, the role of a public relations technician is to create reference materials such as journals which are useful as information used by users to meet their information needs. Basically, the information needs of each library user are different, which causes librarians to fulfill information sources by creating and presenting the library materials that users need. The role of public relations management is to form an organization that is useful for solving problems in the agency. In libraries there are problems in the form of misunderstandings by users in receiving information, so public relations plays a role in conveying correct information to avoid misunderstandings of information from users. When conveying public relations information in libraries, you must pay attention to how to communicate with users so that the information conveyed can be well received by users so that the public relations function of librarians can be carried out well.

METHOD

The research location taken by the author was at the Madrasah Aliyah Laboratorium (MAL) UINSU Medan which is located at Jl. William Iskandar Ps V Medan Estate Kec percut Sei Tuan Deli Serdang Regency. The author's research took place in May 2024

a. Research Design

In this research the author used a qualitative research method with a narrative approach. Researchers use this research approach because researchers go directly into the field to obtain and find out valid and accountable data. Based on Dedy

Mulyana's opinion in this research, researchers used a narrative approach so that researchers could focus on individual experiences and chronology in more detail (Dedy Mulyana, 2018).

Another factor is that researchers use qualitative research methods with a narrative approach because research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. Narrative research records experiences through the recasting of everyday events.

b. Participants

Based on Restu Kartiko's analysis, the participants chosen were deliberately determined based on certain criteria determined by the author to get the right and appropriate participants (Widi, 2020). Participants in this research consisted of one library officer. The identities of the participants in this research are kept confidential to maintain the privacy of the participants in order to avoid things that contain defamation from any party. Participants have a working period of 8 years with an educational history, namely a Bachelor of Computers degree.

The reason the participants were willing to be interviewed by the researcher was because the participants wanted to share their opinions with the public regarding the issues they were experiencing related to the theme and the participants wanted to get feedback in the form of input from the researcher related to the participants' problems. Participants also fit the subject criteria in the research.

c. Data Collection Procedure

In collecting data, researchers conducted interviews with predetermined participants, namely through stages; First, before the interview begins, the researcher asks for permission to carry out documentation in the form of sound recording using a voice recorder application. Then, during the interview process the researcher used a semi-structured interview type because it would be flexible with participants' answers adapting to the researcher's needs. In this type of interview the researcher used Cholid Narbuko's opinion Cholid Narbuko and Abu Achmadi, 2019).

During the interview process, the researcher and participants agreed to determine the length of the interview process, namely 20 minutes and chose the interview location in the library room at MAL UINSU Medan. The researcher did not conduct the second stage of interviews because the interviews were only conducted for 1 day with the participants' availability.

Then, the interview with the participant began by giving the first 5 questions from

the list of questions provided by the researcher which was carried out by researcher 1. Next, researcher 2 asked 5 different questions from before, and lasted for 20 minutes.

Retrieval of documentation in the form of sound was carried out by researchers 3 and 4, using a voice recorder application. Before ending the interview, the researcher re-evaluated and ensured that the participants' answers were in accordance with what the researcher needed.

d. Data Analysis

The data that has been collected is analyzed based on Miles & Huberman's opinion that the process of compiling data obtained from interviews is systematic so that it can be easily understood and the findings can be informed to other people (Milles and Huberman, 2022). The researcher's stages in analyzing the data that have been obtained are: First, the interview data is transcribed according to the interview questions which are carried out alternately by the researcher, namely the answers to questions 1-5 from participants are transcribed by the 5th researcher. Second, transcripts of answers to questions 6-10 from participants were conducted by the 6th researcher.

Then, The collected transcripts were read repeatedly to determine themes which were carried out by the 7th researcher. After the themes had been determined from each transcript, the themes would then be interpreted. In the themes that have been interpreted, researchers will obtain new theories and findings that researchers use to support research evidence in the results and discussion sections

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Librarians' perceptions of the public relations function in the MA Library, UINSU Laboratory has implemented the public relations function well. The public relations discussion at the MA Laboratorium UINSU is:

1. The Attitude That Librarians Give to Users

In carrying out the public relations function, it is necessary to have an attitude that must be considered in serving the community. One indicator that employees are vulnerable to is attitude, because attitude is very influential in an organization. In libraries, public relations is carried out by librarians in serving users, librarians must have an attitude and show a good attitude towards users, because the good and bad image of the library depends on the services provided by the library. In the UINSU MA Laboratory library, the attitude given by librarians towards services to users has been

Good. Based on the research conducted, it was found that librarians provide services to users if users find it difficult to find the information they need, then the attitude taken by users is that they will help users when there are questions asked by users regarding the information they are looking for, then the librarian will help show them where to go. required information.

2. Efforts to Grow Readers' Confidence in Librarians

Based on the public relations function, librarians carry out interactions that make users interested in the existing library system, thereby creating a positive image of the library, especially in searching for information, a librarian must provide correct information to users. Tools are needed to support searching for information. Based on the results of research at the MA Laboratorium UINSU, when the librarian asks when searching for information that cannot be found, the librarian helps search the OPAC service so that the librarian can trust the librarian that the information provided is correct.

3. How Librarians Start and End Communication With Users.

In serving users in the public relations function, librarians communicate with users when conveying information needed by users. Communication that occurs in the library is interpersonal communication that involves the communicator directly. From the results of research conducted in initiating communication between librarians and users, it starts when the librarian seems confused about looking for information, the librarian takes action to ask what the librarian needs, in starting communication the librarian will ask the user something like "Excuse me, is there anything I can help you with?" Then the librarian will help find the information the user needs. After the required information is obtained, the librarian expresses his thanks to the librarian.

4. Obstacles in Serving Users

Every action taken will create obstacles. The public relations function in libraries does not rule out the possibility of causing difficulties in conveying information in serving library users. According to librarians, the obstacles that occur include differences in assumptions, limited availability of collections, still many rules that are violated by librarians, so that they have to try to understand science which is not the librarian's field but must still be able to provide the best service.

CONCLUSION

The library is a place to search, collect, process and present information. In conveying information, the library provides public relations services to users. Public

relations services are implemented by librarians in serving users. Public Relations operates in the field of communication and conveying information to readers. Perceptions of public relations in libraries include attitudes, efforts to foster trust in users, obstacles in communicating with users, how to start and end communication with users and how to notify users of the latest collections. The perception of public relations regarding the function of librarians at the Padang State University Library has gone well, this can be seen from the results of direct interview research with librarians. Implementation of the public relations function in the library is carried out by conveying information through print and electronic media. This form of service results in users getting information easily.

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