



Erick Thohir's Approach to Public Relations Politics in Building Image on Instagram Social Media

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ABSTRACT

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The development of social media into a platform that is widely accessed by the public has made many public or political figures pay attention to it. One of them is Erick Thohir, who plays quite intensely on Instagram social media with various content uploaded every day. This allows it to become a political public relations strategy in building its image in society. This study aims to determine the political Public Relations approach used by Erick Thohir through social media Instagram. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative by tracing and exploring the contents on Instagram. The findings of this research include, Erick Thohir uses the Political Relations approach with the Public.

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1. Introduction

Social media was born in the era of information technology that is developing very rapidly. On social media, everyone can connect with many people in different places in realtime. This advantage makes most people, including in Indonesia, addicted to social media. This is in line with the increasing use of the internet by the Indonesian people. Solis and Breakenridge in Rusfian (2015: 118) argue, everything that uses the internet in carrying out conversations can be said to be social media.

Data on internet users in Indonesia continues to increase every year. According to the We Are Social report, there are 204.7 million internet users in the country as of January 2022. The trend in the number of internet users in Indonesia has continued to increase in the last five years. When compared to 2018, the current number of national internet users has jumped by 54.25%. Meanwhile, the internet penetration rate in Indonesia reached 73.7% of the total population in early 2022. It was recorded that the total population of Indonesia was 277.7 million people in January 2022 (We Are Social, 2022).

This fact is an opportunity to take advantage of the large number of people who are connected to the internet for various purposes. Including in the political realm, the internet has become a tool to increase publicity for both individuals and organizations (political parties). The internet, including online media and social media, can be a means of political communication, which according to Gun Gun Heryanto (2018), enabling anyone to become an information producer. Including digital media can also be used as a means of political public relations.

As is known, Political PR is a political communication strategy that uses the basic concept of public relations, namely building two-way communication and optimizing listening skills. Political PR can be understood as a specific public relations process that seeks to establish communication with the internal public and external publics of an organization in a political environment. Political PR involves political components and resources to manage a number of issues to get attention, carried out in a systematic, planned, and directed manner to obtain mutual understanding with various parties in an effort to realize the political goals of an organization.



The main purpose of political PR activity is to get political support from the internal or external public in achieving the specific goals of an organization or political institution. If detailed, political PR aims, first create solidarity and internal cohesiveness of the organization through internal public service efforts, so that all components of political and organizational resources can be optimized in achieving organizational goals. Second, Political PR also aims to bridge the organization's relationship with the external public in order to foster understanding and support for a number of programs and specific organizational goals; Third, obtaining findings, conclusions, and recommendations on a number of issues and developing political dynamics; Fourth, to know for sure the position of the organization's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and challenges in the midst of its relationship with various internal and external parties of the organization through a systematic, targeted and sustainable evaluation.

In political PR, there are approaches commonly used by political figures or organizations. The approach includes, among others, Political relations with the public, this approach is actually influenced by public relations practices in America. This approach focuses on the process of identifying, searching and managing relationships with key people (key audience). Grunigian Political Paradigm, this paradigm is widely practiced in Europe, namely how to create a common understanding between the Organization and its public. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), the main action is on how to develop mutual benefits. The main prerequisite must be two-way symmetrical communication. Public relations is done through research on identifying the thoughts of voters or citizens so that they can create a win-win situation. According to Grunig,

Furthermore, Political Hype, this is a PR work that takes a publicity approach. The formula is "to make noise" to reach the audience's attention. Thus persuasion is mostly done through media relations. The use of press releases and building personal relationships with journalists is the work that stands out in this approach. Political Persuasion, Political persuasion is a pluralist approach where the power relationship is not the same. The persuasion step is an effort to enrich information and change the behavior and attitudes of key audiences. This approach is often identified with propaganda. Moloney (2006) even called PR as "weak propaganda" in showing the interest of influencing other parties. Apart from being identified with propaganda, this approach is also rooted in the rhetorical tradition.

Then, Management of political relations, the purpose of this approach is to exert pressure and influence government policy. This approach maximizes ideas and contacts with individual activist organizations that are part of community policy. Political Reputation Management, this approach emphasizes cross-relationship management. Focus on identifying, regulating, and changing the reputation of the organization. This approach uses persuasive action to sharpen opinion for both key audiences and public opinion at large, so that it can direct public opinion in accordance with the expectations of the institution. Political public relations, this approach is a widely used perspective in Europe, whose focus is "working in public" by paying more attention to the handling of issues of human rights (Human Rights) and freedom of speech (Freedom of Speech). Political community building, this approach is commonly used in The Mid West America. The focus is on creating and managing a sense of community. This community approach is considered suitable, especially to reduce conflict.

These approaches can be applied by political figures and organizations in building an image. As is known, an image cannot be separated from an individual or an organization. Image needs to be built and maintained because if someone has a bad image, then usually that person will be difficult to trust by others. Especially for a leader, who has an important role in a group or area, he hopes to have a good self-image, so that its members can have sympathy, trust and are also willing to imitate their leader. Referring to Ruslan (1994: 66) the image is abstract and cannot be measured mathematically, but its form can be felt from the results of good or bad judgments that especially come from the community. Image is also closely related in the political realm. Currently, political people are competing to display a positive image so that the public will put their support and trust in them.

Meanwhile, political imagery is a long image that activates every party's values as a solution provider for the life of the nation and state. To build an image, especially a political image, it takes time every day, not just every 5 years, Wasesa (2011:4). On the other hand, not a few politicians interpret imagery as closeness to journalists. For example, when their comments are published in the mass media, that is the image. Although the perception of imagery is identical with media coverage, political imagery is also not just building a discourse in the mass media. Therefore, political imaging requires a process that is built with a strategy.

In this digital age, the strategy to build an image can be done through social media which is currently very developed, one of which is Instagram social media. Social media users who upload these images and videos in Indonesia are quite high, and are increasing every year. The latest report from DataReportal shows that



Instagram is the third most popular social media with the most users after Youtube and Facebook. In the report entitled "Digital 2022: Indonesia" it shows, the number of Instagram users in Indonesia reaches 99.15 million people or the equivalent of 35.7 percent of the total population. From the reach of Instagram ads, there are 52.3 percent of the audience are female users, while the remaining 47.7 percent are male.

So it is not surprising that politicians and political organizations use this platform as a means for Political PR. One of them was carried out by the Minister of State-Owned Enterprises, Erick Thohir. His activities on social media are quite intense, showing his various activities as the leader of the Ministry that oversees state-owned companies. However, before discussing about social media, it is worth knowing the brief profile of Erick Thohir as the object of research in this paper.

Born into a business family, Erick grew up as a businessman following in his father's footsteps. Prior to doing business, Erick pursued higher education in the United States, completing his undergraduate education at Glendale University, United States. Then he continued his master's program at the National University of California, United States, and successfully graduated in 1993. The major he took was Business Administration.

As a businessman, Erick Thohir started his business by establishing a media company called Mahaka Group. He is also in the sports business by buying a majority stake in a football club from the United States based in Washington DC, namely DC United in July 2012. The following year, Erick Thohir and two other Indonesian businessmen, Rosan Roeslani and Handy Soetedjo, succeeded in acquiring Inter's shares. Milan by 70 percent. Erick also became the first Asian to own a National Basketball Association (NBA) club by buying shares of the Philadelphia 76ers. For basketball clubs in Indonesia, Erick has two clubs, namely Satria Muda Britama and Indonesia Warriors.

Apart from doing business, Erick Thohir has also been a stakeholder in the management of the sports world, including serving as the General Chair of the Indonesian Basketball Association (PERBASI) for the 2006–2010 period and serving as the President of the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (SEABA) for two terms, 2006–2010. 2010 and 2010–2014. In addition, in 2015, President Jokowi appointed Erick Thohir to be the chairman of the 2018 Asian Games committee. This event was a great success and attracted the interest of the Indonesian and Asian people.

It did not stop there, Erick Thohir began to set foot in the world of national politics by becoming the Chairman of the National Campaign Team (TKN). The announcement was delivered directly by Joko Widodo or Jokowi at the Cemara Menteng Post in September 2018. One of the reasons for the election of Erick Thohir was because he was considered successful in various ways. Besides being known as a successful entrepreneur, Erick Thohir has also successfully organized the 2018 Asian Games. Another reason is that Erick's name is already known among millennials or today's young people. After being elected as President, on October 23, 2019, President Joko Widodo included Erick Thohir as Minister of SOEs in the ranks of the Advanced Indonesia Cabinet (2019–2024).

Since leading the Ministry of SOEs, his name began to emerge as a political figure. Erick thohir's name has recently begun to appear in surveys as a presidential candidate, although the electability number is not as big as the names that have appeared so far, such as Prabowo, Anies Baswedan, and Ganjar Pranowo. However, this has made some people view that the intense activity of Erick Thohir on social media in recent times is in order to increase his electability and build his political image. His Instagram account, @erickthohir, which has 2.2 million followers or followers, is classified as active in social media, where at the time of writing Erick has shared 2,340 posts or content that the account has shared as of June 22, 2022.

In this paper, we will discuss Erick Thohir's political public relations approach in building an image on Instagram social media. A previous study that discussed political PR on Instagram was the one written by Anggie Ayu Astria Latuperode Pissa, entitled "Political Public Relations Approaches in Social Media in Formation of Political Image". This study discusses the Public Relations approaches taken by the Governor of DKI Jakarta Anies Baswedan in his content on Instagram. The results of the research show that in his content, Anies Baswedan has fulfilled at least seven of the eight concepts of the political public relations approach.

In this study it was also found that establishing relationships with the public is not limited to exposing activities or achievements, but further than that the government, political figures and institutions who are central figures in political communication must be able to use social media to hear aspirations and answer aspirations themselves. The relationship that is built must be two-way so that the agreement is well established. Apart from positive or negative comments that arise from each upload, the ability of the community to communicate aspirations and opinions should also be considered by all parties. A reciprocal relationship was

built between Anies and netizens in the form of uploads that explained information on policies carried out by Anies as the Governor of DKI Jakarta.

Regarding building a political image, Khoiruddin Muchtar, in his research entitled "Political Communication and the Formation of Party Image", states that the Party, as a political organization requires the creation of a positive image of the party, a positive image can be shown through attitude towards various political events by bringing appropriate political aspirations. with the demands of the public or its constituents. Political image is related to political socialization, because political image is formed through political learning process either directly or through empirical experience.

As for political public relations, Khoiruddin Muchtar and Aliyudin, in their research entitled "Political Public Relations of the Prosperous Justice Party in the West Java Election" stated that the imaging strategy carried out by the Prosperous Justice Party in the media was carried out by building good relations with the media and utilizing the media. social media appropriately as well as the use of E-mail, blogs, social media or Twitter. In this study, it is also stated that PKS in the West Java gubernatorial election seeks to raise the party's image by making changes in orientation that are more open and populist no longer being an exclusive party, no longer having an icon as a middle class party.

Several previous studies that have been mentioned have similarities with this research, especially regarding the approach to political PR and building the image of political figures and political organizations. However, this research will specifically discuss the use of social media Instagram as a platform to implement political public relations approaches as mentioned above, in building a political image of a figure.

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach, where the researcher explores and understands the meaning in a number of individuals or groups of people who come from social problems focusing on a particular side of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2016). In this case, dig up as much information as possible from Erick Thohir's Instagram social media, and also from other sources such as mass media for comparison. This information is then linked to the political public relations approaches discussed above.

While the method used in this research is descriptive qualitative using the phenomenological paradigm, where this paradigm will explain aphenomena, so as to be able to provide an overview of something as it is and in accordance with the actual situation. The data collection technique is to search for content in the form of relevant images and texts so as to find an understanding of the political public relations approach used by Erick Thohir through his social media.

3. Discussion and Analysis

The activities of a political figure on social media are now important to note, because the narratives displayed there can be a stimulus in shaping public perception. Therefore, the ability to process narratives on social media can determine an image (positive or negative) of a political figure or organization.

Erick Thohir's Instagram account is quite active because on average he uploads 3-6 posts every day, both in the form of photos and video reels. The posts usually describe his activities as the Minister of SOEs, then his meetings with figures, to unique moments, and content that is intentionally created to fill Instagram posts, with edits typical of young people.

3.1 Approach to Political Relations with the public

The concept in the approach to political relations with the public (Political Relations with the Public) has an important keyword, namely key audience. This approach argues that there are key figures who are able to influence the public's voice. This approach is used by Erick Thohir through posts on his Instagram account. The Minister of SOEs often displays his closeness and closeness with public figures who have a large following as a key audience.

One of them is as in the post on May 6, 2022, Erick Thohir uploaded his meeting with Habib Syech bin Abdul Qodir Assegaf, the leader of Rabithah Alawiyah, the Habaib organization throughout Indonesia. In the post consisting of two photos, Erick explained that he had kept in touch with Habib Syech, and discussed the economy of the people. As is known, Habib Sych has many students and worshipers in various regions. His Instagram account @syaikhassegaf also has quite a lot of followers, namely 1.8 million. Not only that day,



Erick's meeting with Habib Syech also took place on June 18, 2022, while praying with the congregation, which was also uploaded to Erick's Instagram account the next day.

In addition, on the upload on March 20, 2022, on the sidelines of the busy Mandalika MotoGP, Erick Thohir uploaded the content of his close relationship with Susi Pudjiastuti, former Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP). In that post, Erick and Susi showed intimacy by joking about the absence of a smoking area in the MotoGP arena in West Nusa Tenggara. We know that the name Susi Pudjiastuti is one of the former ministers who still exists even though she is no longer in office. Susi is often in the news in the mass media because her statements are critical and tickle on social media (twitter and Instagram. Plus the program on Metro TV titled Susi Cek Ombak makes her exist even though she is no longer serving as a minister. This upload with Susi has received as many likes as 129,676, and commented on by 1,233 people.

Then, in the content uploaded on May 31, 2022, Erick Thohir, who was in the United States at that time, met talents from 88Rising from Indonesia, namely Rich Brian, Niki Zefanya, and Warren Hue. The three young people can be called the key audience, because all three of them have many fans in Indonesia, even from the international world. As is known, the three of them made history by becoming the first solo musician from Indonesia to successfully perform on the Coachella stage in the United States last April.

During the meeting, Erick Thohir expressed his pride in witnessing the achievements made by the three rap musicians. For Erick, Rich Brian, Niki and Warren Hue are examples of the many talents of the young Indonesian generation who are able to go international. In addition to their talents, Erick sees the three of them can take advantage of opportunities to enter the global music scene. In this upload, several media also quoted him and made news in the online mass media.

3.2 Image of Closeness to Religious Figures

Judging from the uploads on his Instagram, Erick often shares content with religious leaders, as well as in religious activities. From the figures he met, as uploaded on Instagram, it can be seen how Erick Thohir tries to build an image of closeness with these religious figures. In addition to Habib Syech, as previously explained, Erick has also uploaded his togetherness with Gus Miftah, Nadirsyah Hosen, Mamah Dedeh, and mostly with kiai leaders of Islamic boarding schools. The issue of his closeness to this religious figure is also related to his membership in Banser, GP Anshor, the youth organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Because of this, Erick is often said to have a close relationship with the NU organization.

In addition, the religious activities that Erick Thohir often uploads on his Instagram account are Dhikr and Shalawat together. As in the upload on May 15, 2022, Erick displayed an upload that was following a prayer together at the Salafiyah Syafiyah Islamic boarding school, Sukorejo, Situbondo, East Java. In the prayer event which was attended by thousands of Islamic boarding school students, Erick was seen sitting on the stage with the Kiai and Islamic boarding school clerics, very solemnly following the prayer event. This post received quite high attention from netizens, because it got 52.2011 likes, and was commented on by as many as 1,012 people.

In addition, other dhikr and shalawat assemblies that were attended by Erick Thohir, for example with Habib Syech bin Abdul Qodir Assegaf, were uploaded on June 18, 2022. In this regard, Erick Thohir was also appointed to be the Advisory Board of the At-Thohiriyah prayer assembly, Nurul Islam Islamic Boarding School, Mojokerto, East Java. This sholawat assembly focuses on social activities to spread Islamic values and culture. This assembly has thousands of members spread across 17 regencies/cities in East Java. Erick was chosen as the advisor in the assembly because he is considered a nahdliyin who likes to pray. This activity was also uploaded to his Instagram account on June 17, 2022.

3.3 Image of Closeness with Young People

Through uploads on social media Instagram, Erick Thohir shows his closeness to young people. Various types of content that are currently trending on social media are also created and uploaded to the @erickthohir Instagram account. Apart from that, there are also collaborations with celebrities, and with them, Erick creates light, short, but entertaining content, such as "Sambungan Kata" content. In this content, Erick offers one word to be replaced with another related word. Several artists have been invited by Erick Thohir in this content, including with Enzy Storia, Vidi Aldiano, Andre Taulany, Nassar and several other celebrities. This short but entertaining content has received enough attention from Erick Thohir's followers.

His meeting with Rich Brian, Niki, and Warren Hue in the United States also showed their closeness to young people, especially because they have proud achievements as Indonesian musicians who are active in the United States. In addition, several times, Erick also conducted live Instagram sessions with young people which lasted for about 15 minutes with Muslim comedian Tretan. As is known, Muslim Tretan is one of the most

popular content creators on YouTube and has many followers, so if you do a live Instagram with him, it will at least attract the attention of Tretan fans, who are also standup comedians who graduated from the competition on Kompas TV.

During his working visits to the regions, Erick Thohir also did not forget to taste the typical food of each region. It is also made content and uploaded on his Instagram account. The style used by Erick in this content is similar to that of a food vlogger who is currently hot, coupled with unique and funny sound effects, adding to the impression of a young person. In this culinary adventure content, Erick Thohir also does not forget to collaborate with young people who are popular with eating content, one of which is with Nex Carlos, a food youtuber who is popular with the jargon "eat around Indonesia". Its subscribers on Youtube have reached 4.56 million, so it is enough to get the public's attention.

In addition to some of the content, Erick Thohir also uploaded his collaboration with Raffi Ahmad and Nagita Slavina, both of whom are husband and wife of top artists, with very wide fans in Indonesia. Then Erick also uploaded content while watching the concert of Denny Caknan, the singer of a Javanese pop song that is currently popular. In addition, Erick through his Instagram account also displays something that is currently trending among young people, for example creating content when he buys BTS meal for his child, reviewing the phenomenal KKN Desa Penari film, to making funny content using backsound that is currently viral in the media. social.

4. Conclusion

As a public figure, Erick Thohir must have good relations with the community or the public. Therefore, a public relations strategy in this case needs to be implemented. You can do this in various ways, one of which is through social media Instagram, which is currently popular. With 2.2 million followers, creating an @erickthohir account is an effective medium for the Minister of SOEs to implement a political public relations strategy.

The Political PR approach used by Erick is the Political Relations with Public Approach, in which this approach states that there are key figures who are able to influence the public's voice. In this case, Erick uploaded his closeness to public figures who have large followers or masses so that they will get higher public attention. While the image to be built is closeness to religious figures, and closeness to easy children. This can be seen in Erick Thohir's uploads on his Instagram account, which are quite intense in uploading content, which is around 3-6 content every day.

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