

## STRATEGY OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DIVISION OF THE SIDOARJO REGENCY DPRD SECRETARIAT IN ENHANCING A POSITIVE IMAGE IN THE COMMUNITY

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### Abstract

The formation of a positive image of a public institution is not only determined by the quality of its performance, but also by the way the institutional message is formulated and conveyed to the public. This is reflected in the strategic role of the Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat in managing public perception through publications of council activities, media relations, and responses to sensitive issues. The dynamics of regional politics, demands for transparency, and public criticism and demonstrations make the public relations function crucial in maintaining legitimacy and public trust. This study aims to analyze the communication strategy of the Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat and the application of linear communication and symmetrical two-way communication in public relations practices. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The results show that linear communication is implemented through routine publications on social media, official websites, and e-clippings to maintain information consistency. Meanwhile, symmetrical two-way communication is used in responding to criticism and public issues through open dialogue and clarification. This hybrid communication strategy has been proven to strengthen public trust and a positive image of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD.

**Keywords:** Institutional Image, Government Public Relations, Public Communication, Symmetrical Two-Way Communication.

### A. INTRODUCTION

Image is understood as a social construct formed through the accumulation of public perceptions, assessments, and impressions of an organization, developing from experiences and information received continuously (Ripai, 2021). This process does not occur instantly, but rather is the result of continuous interaction between the organization and its public, both through direct communication and symbolic representations emerging in the public sphere. In the context of public institutions, the image-building process is influenced by the quality of service, the level of information disclosure, and how the media frames the institution's activities and performance in the public sphere (Fauziati, 2021). This information ultimately suggests that the media plays a crucial role as a primary mediator, transforming institutional reality into public discourse, allowing the emerging narrative to strengthen or weaken public perceptions of the institution's credibility and integrity, particularly within the Regional Representative Council (DPRD).

The DPRD, as a regional government institution, requires a positive image that serves as significant social capital to strengthen public participation and increase support for the

resulting political decisions (Ulumiyah, 2024). Various studies have shown that information transparency, accountability, and the institution's ability to convey messages clearly are key determinants in shaping public perception of the institution (Ripai, 2021). Ineffective communication can potentially distort perceptions, leading the public to negatively assess legislative performance and ultimately reduce public trust (Fauziati, 2021). This assertion further clarifies that public communication management is a strategic aspect inseparable from the institutional function of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). A positively constructed image will strengthen the DPRD's legitimacy in carrying out its representative role before the public.

The DPRD, as a regional legislative body, holds a strategic position in the political representation of the community, so the institution's image is crucially determined by its performance, transparency, and publicity of its activities (Norris, 2011). When legislative performance is not adequately communicated, the public remains unaware of the institution's positive achievements and is more exposed to negative issues. This phenomenon underscores the urgency of a legislative communication strategy that builds a positive narrative and optimizes public engagement. The lack of structured communication makes the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) vulnerable to being perceived as lacking transparency or being unresponsive to public needs (Benington & Moore, 2019). This reality positions institutional communication not merely as a supporting activity but as a strategic instrument that determines how the DPRD's performance is perceived by the public. In this context, the Public Relations Division of the DPRD Secretariat plays a key role, responsible for bridging the interests of the institution with the public's information needs.

The Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat serves as a strategic actor, bridging the legislative body with the public. Public relations functions include conveying information, strengthening relations with the media, and managing persuasive communication to build a positive image of the institution (Smith, 2020). The Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD faces various challenges, ranging from changing dynamics of regional political news coverage, increasing demands for public transparency, to the public's need for easily accessible policy information (Maulida, 2024). In the latest news period, demonstrations taking place on December 9, 2025, in front of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Building, sparked by public dissatisfaction with regional development that caused flooding in several areas, further reinforce the urgency of developing an adaptive communication strategy. This situation encourages Public Relations to strengthen media relations, provide digital-based information, and improve the quality of publications that meet community needs (Ulumiyah, 2024). Implementing the right strategy provides an opportunity for the Public Relations Division to strengthen the institution's positive image in a sustainable manner while increasing closeness between the DPRD and the community (Ripai, 2021).

The role of the Public Relations Division becomes increasingly crucial as institutions strive to maintain a stable image. Public relations acts as a liaison between the institution and the public through systematically and sustainably designed communication strategies (Ulumiyah, 2024). Research conducted by Sidharta, Veranus, and colleagues confirms that the DPR RI News Bureau implements a structured communication strategy through information management, strengthening media relations, and improving message quality to maintain a positive organizational image. These findings indicate that image is not merely a product of publications, but rather the result of an institution's consistency in ensuring transparency and credibility of communications (Sidharta et al., 2025). Public relations functions include developing public narratives, mitigating sensitive issues, and managing media relations to ensure accurate and non-misleading information (Fauziati, 2021).

Similarly, research by Sari (2024) confirms that the role of Public Relations of the South Sumatra Provincial DPRD is crucial in shaping public perception through publications, information services, and managing media relations. These findings demonstrate that a positive image is not an instant outcome, but rather a construct built through a planned and consistent communication process, particularly in presenting an institution's performance objectively and professionally to the public (Sari, 2024). Therefore, the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of a communication strategy are crucial foundations for ensuring that the message aligns with public needs and institutional goals (Ulumiyah, 2024).

These overall conditions necessitate an in-depth study of the Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat's strategy to build a positive image, becoming increasingly urgent. The complex dynamics of public communication, demands for transparency, and pressures from public opinion place the Public Relations Division in a crucial position to determine the direction of perceptions of the legislative institution. This situation raises academic questions about how public relations strategies are designed, how institutional relationships with the media are formed, and how public communication is managed when the institution faces sensitive issues. These questions encourage researchers to examine legislative communication practices empirically, ensuring that this research not only explains the phenomenon but also provides a conceptual contribution to strengthening more effective and responsive government communication strategies (Freeman & Browning, 2021).

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Excellence Theory in Public Relations**

Excellence Theory explains that effective public relations practices must be implemented as a strategic managerial function integrated into organizational decision-making. Public relations serves not only as a technical implementer of publications, but also as a communications advisor, bridging the interests of the organization and the public in a balanced manner. This theory emphasizes the importance of symmetrical two-way communication, namely dialogue that enables mutual understanding between the institution and the public. In the context of public institutions, the application of Excellence Theory supports transparency, accountability, and institutional legitimacy. Therefore, a public relations strategy based on Excellence Theory contributes significantly to the formation and maintenance of a positive image of government institutions (Grunig, 2020; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2021). Indicators:

- Strategic position of public relations within the organizational structure
- Role of public relations in communication decision-making
- Implementation of symmetrical two-way communication
- Transparency and accountability of public information
- Quality of the institution's relationship with the public

### **Public Communication Strategy**

Public communication strategy theory views communication as a planned process for effectively conveying institutional messages to target audiences. Communication strategy encompasses determining message objectives, selecting communication channels, designing content, and managing the timing and context of information delivery. In public institutions, communication strategy serves to ensure that policy and performance information is clearly and consistently understood by the public. Structured communication helps minimize message distortion and public misunderstanding. Thus, an appropriate communication

strategy is a crucial instrument in building trust and a positive image of the institution (Smith, 2020; Freeman & Browning, 2021). Indicators:

- Clarity of communication objectives
- Consistency of institutional messages
- Selection of media and communication channels
- Quality of public information content
- Responsiveness to public issues

### **Institutional Image Theory**

Institutional image theory explains that image is formed from the accumulation of public perceptions, assessments, and experiences of an organization over a period of time. The image of a public institution is influenced not only by substantive performance but also by how the institution communicates its activities and policies to the public. Information that is conveyed consistently and credibly will shape a positive perception in the public mind. Conversely, poorly managed communication has the potential to create a negative image even if the institution's performance is relatively good. Therefore, public relations communication management is a strategic factor in building a positive image of government institutions (Ripai, 2021; Fauziati, 2021). Indicators:

- Public perception of the institution's performance
- Credibility of the information conveyed
- Consistency of institutional publications
- Public trust in the institution
- Institutional reputation in the public sphere

### **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research method uses a qualitative approach and descriptive research objectives because the primary focus of the study is to deeply understand communication strategies and public relations practices based on empirical reality in the field, rather than measuring variables quantitatively. Based on the two-way relationship approach in Excellence Theory (Grunig, 1992), data analysis was conducted to examine how message delivery patterns, feedback processes, media relations, and institutional image-building mechanisms are formed in the daily practices of Public Relations at the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat.

The "Excellence" theoretical framework developed by James E. Grunig and colleagues emphasizes that an effective public relations function is a managerial-strategic function integrated into organizational governance, plays a role in policy-making, and facilitates a balanced two-way relationship between the organization and the public. In the context of local government (including the DPRD), the Excellence perspective emphasizes the importance of: (a) strategic positions within the organizational structure for organizational subdivisions; (b) the role of sub-organizations as communication policy advisors (policy-makers), not merely technical implementers; and (c) two-way (dialogical) communication practices to build legitimacy, trust, and public accountability. The application of Excellence principles makes public relations an instrument for achieving transparent and responsive governance goals, which is then relevant for designing strategies to improve the image of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD (Grunig et al., 2002).

The research was conducted at the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat, located at Jl. Sultan Agung No. 39, Gajah Timur, Magersari, Sidoarjo District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java 61212. This research focused on staff in the trial and legislation division, specifically the Public Relations Subdivision responsible for Protocol and Publication. Research informants were determined using purposive sampling, namely employees directly involved in public relations activities. Key informants included: 1.) Head of the Public Relations Subdivision,

2.) Public relations staff handling publications and social media, 3.) Protocol staff supporting institutional activities, and 4.) external parties such as local media journalists (where relevant). This informant selection method was used because they were considered to have direct knowledge and carry out public relations functions. After selecting informants, field data was collected through several data collection procedures.

Research data was collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, strategies, obstacles, and communication considerations employed by public relations officers in carrying out their institutional functions. This technique enabled researchers to obtain rich narratives from key informants regarding daily communication practices. Furthermore, researchers conducted direct observations of public relations activities, including attendance at internal meetings, coverage of activities, and monitoring interactions on the DPRD's social media platforms, as part of the empirical field documentation. These observations provided a factual picture of the work processes and communication dynamics. Furthermore, documentation study was used to complement field findings through a search of public relations publication archives, activity documents, public relations regulations and guidelines, media coverage, and posts on the Sidoarjo DPRD's social media platforms. These three techniques were applied in parallel to obtain a comprehensive, triangulated, and contextual understanding of the research object. After data collection, the next step was systematic analysis.

The collected data was then analyzed using thematic analysis. The stages include data reduction to sort relevant information from interviews, observations, and documents, followed by coding and grouping into thematic categories. Conclusions are then drawn by linking field findings with the two-way relationship approach in Excellence Theory (Grunic, 1992). Analysis is conducted simultaneously with the data collection process, allowing interpretations to develop iteratively according to field dynamics. To ensure the findings have a high level of validity, data validation procedures are carried out. Furthermore, member checking is conducted with informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations do not deviate from the original intent. This approach is used to strengthen the credibility, dependability, and reliability of the research results, ensuring that the conclusions obtained can be scientifically justified.

## D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Strategic Position of the Public Relations Division in the Sidoarjo DPRD Secretariat Institution

The Public Relations Subdivision occupies a strategic position within the organizational structure of the DPRD Secretariat because it acts as a direct liaison between the legislative body and the public. Based on Regent Regulation Number 10 of 2022, Part Five, Trial and Legislation Section, Article 15

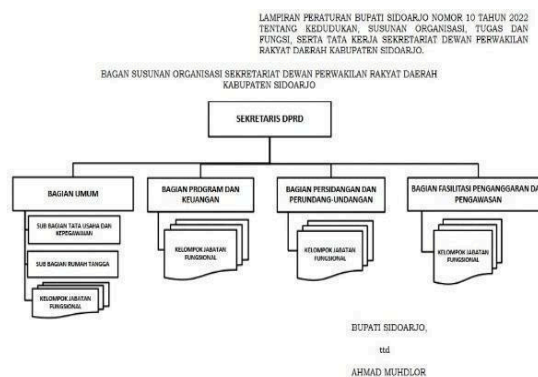


Figure 1. Strategic Position of the Public Relations Division in the Organizational Structure

Source: Regent Regulation Number 10 of 2022

The public relations function is not solely administrative, but also supports the smooth functioning of institutional tasks through the management of information, documentation, and publication of Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) activities. The placement of the Public Relations Subdivision within the formal organizational structure demonstrates institutional recognition of the importance of public communication in maintaining the institution's accountability and image. Thus, Public Relations serves as a strategic instrument that ensures that every DPRD trial process and legislative product is transparently and systematically understood by the public, thereby establishing a positive image in the eyes of the public. This position emphasizes that public communication is an integral part of good regional governance.

The image of a public institution is fundamentally shaped by how communication is conducted, how consistently information is conveyed, and how the public perceives the institution's presence in their daily lives. Efforts to strengthen a positive image require more than just a positive appearance in the media, but also a clear, responsive, and credible communication flow in the eyes of the public. Understanding the strategy of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat's Public Relations Division in enhancing its positive public image requires a thorough explanation of numerous aspects to provide a comprehensive overview of public relations practices within this institution. This includes several indicators from Shannon & Weaver's linear communication theory, as well as the two-way relationship approach in Excellence Theory (Grung, 1992).



Figure 2. Public Satisfaction Index at the Sidoarjo DPRD Secretariat as of 2025

Source: <https://setwan.sidoarjokab.go.id/index-1.php>

The 2025 Public Satisfaction Survey data further reinforces this picture, with the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) Secretariat receiving a score of 95.56 out of 154 respondents, with an average score above 5.7 across nearly all service aspects, from requirements and procedures to staff competency and complaint handling. This achievement demonstrates that the quality of public service and the institution's communication patterns are positively received by the public. These findings provide an important empirical basis for analyzing how public relations strategies operate in the field, both as a structured information delivery process and as a two-way communication mechanism for building public trust.

### Strategies for Building a Positive Image According to Excellence Theory

The process of building a positive image in public institutions always starts from basic communication principles, as the way a message is delivered, received, and perceived by the

public directly impacts the institution's reputation. Grunig's Excellence Theory model guides the understanding that communication works linearly, starting with the message source. In this case, the Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat determines the communication material and then transforms it into a form that is easily understood by the public through a coding process. This packaged message is delivered through various media, such as official websites, social media, video publications, and mass media coverage, before being interpreted by the public as recipients. The public, local stakeholders, and communities shape perceptions, and these perceptions ultimately determine the institution's image.

The central part of the strategy for enhancing a positive image is positioned as a key point because the communication strategy works by combining the technical flow of the linear model with a modern public relations approach. The two-way approach in Excellence Theory strengthens this process through dialogue, feedback, and reciprocal communication between the institution and the public. This concept emphasizes the importance of transparency, participation, and long-term, ethical and equal relationships, so that the institution not only conveys messages but also listens to the public's aspirations.

This entire process culminates in the formation of a positive public image, a condition where the message is conveyed correctly, a two-way relationship is established, and the public perceives the institution as responsive, credible, and present in its social dynamics. During an interview, the author discovered that the basic strategy implemented by the Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat is actually simple yet structured. This statement was obtained from the head of the public relations division, who said:

*"Improving a positive image within the DPRD is a challenge in itself, as there are still various loopholes that certain parties often exploit to issue negative assessments, especially when they haven't seen the actual performance and conditions."*

This statement demonstrates that institutional image issues do not always stem from substantive performance, but rather from information gaps between the institution and the public. From the perspective of Excellence Theory (Grunig, 1992), this situation emphasizes the importance of public relations as a strategic managerial function capable of managing public perception through planned and ongoing communication. When the public lacks access to adequate information, the interpretation space is filled with assumptions and negative narratives. Therefore, the image challenges expressed by the informant reflect the institution's need to strengthen two-way communication so that the public not only receives information but also understands the context and reality of the DPRD's performance as a whole.

He then further explained that:

*"In public relations, we focus on three things: ensuring public information is clear, publishing council activities regularly, and monitoring issues through media monitoring. The point is to let the public see what the DPRD is doing every day."*

The results of this interview represent communication practices aligned with the excellence framework model, where message clarity, channel selection, and noise minimization are key elements. Clarity of information and regular publications serve to ensure the institution's message is consistently conveyed to the public. Meanwhile, issue monitoring activities demonstrate a shift in the role of public relations from merely conveying information to managing strategic communications, as emphasized in Excellence Theory, which positions public relations as a unit that plays an active role in understanding public dynamics and providing communication policy input to the organization.

## **The Role and Practice of Public Relations in Two-Way Communication to Build a Positive Image of the Sidoarjo DPRD**

To enhance its positive public image, the Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat utilizes the e-clipping portal, <http://digiclip.sidoarjokab.go.id/>, as its primary tool for monitoring news coverage of council activities. This effort is complemented by consistent message dissemination through the DPRD's official publication channels, ensuring that the institutional narrative is coherent and does not create ambiguity amidst the rapid flow of information. The communication practices undertaken during this crisis situation demonstrate the application of the symmetrical two-way communication model as proposed by Grunig, which emphasizes dialogue, mutual understanding, and the search for joint solutions between the institution and the public. The application of this model has proven effective in preventing the escalation of issues, curbing the spread of negative opinions, and maintaining the stability of public trust in the regional legislative institution. The use of e-clippings does not merely function as a daily news repository but has developed into a systematic mechanism for early detection of changes in public opinion. In several conversations with public relations staff, the author found that the use of visual content is a priority in the institution's publications. A public relations staff informant (initials Z) explained that:

*"Visual content is the most effective. Photos and videos are more quickly captured by the public. So, meetings, hearings, visits—we document everything as proof that we (the Board and staff) are truly working."*

This assertion demonstrates that visual content is considered capable of creating a sense of direct public presence in legislative activities, thereby increasing levels of emotional and cognitive engagement. This explanation also aligns with Smith (2020), who emphasized the effectiveness of visuals in public relations. Even in formal activities, public relations continues to publish with a more relaxed approach. A public relations staff informant (initials Z) further explained that:

*"We'll still post it, but keep it light. We'll explain why the meeting is important so the public understands."*

The interview results, when linked to the Excellence Theory framework, show that this practice reflects a public relations orientation toward the public interest, not merely the interests of the institution. The simplification of the message demonstrates that public relations not only transmits information but also strives to build mutual understanding, which is the core of symmetrical two-way communication. This function is crucial considering that the image of the legislative institution is greatly influenced by how the media frames issues, both in the context of regional political news coverage, institutional performance, and public response to certain policies. Operationally, the use of e-clippings follows a structured workflow that includes: (1) collecting all daily news related to the DPRD; (2) classifying content based on positive, neutral, or negative news intonation; (3) analyzing potential issues that could potentially develop in the public sphere; (4) formulating responsive steps such as preparing additional publications, clarifications, and press releases; and (5) developing a daily communication strategy as part of managing the institutional image. This workflow not only confirms the capacity of Public Relations as an information manager but also demonstrates an analytical function that enables the institution to respond to public opinion quickly and in a targeted manner. For example, the anti-corruption demonstration on December 9, 2025, provides a concrete illustration of a strategy for handling negative issues. Public relations chose a non-defensive, dialogical approach. When an institution faced a sensitive situation with the potential to stir public opinion, such as the demonstrations from

December 9 to 12, 2025, Public Relations switched to a symmetrical two-way communication approach. An informant (initial A) explained:

"Demonstrations are normal. As a public institution, they are bound to be criticized. It just depends on how we respond."

This approach emphasizes dialogue, equalizing understanding, and finding joint solutions between the institution and the public. This practice was reflected in the Speaker of



the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) who personally opened a dialogue from the command car, openly appreciating public criticism, and transparently conveying institutional information to the media. This response reflects the characteristics of symmetrical communication, which prioritizes shared understanding and negotiation of meaning over simply disseminating one-way messages, as emphasized by Grunig (1992).

Figure 3. The Chairperson of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD meets with the crowd to gather their aspirations.

Source: Author's Documentation

The integration of these two approaches creates what can be called a Hybrid Communication Strategy, a hybrid communication pattern that combines linear communication for routine publications and symmetrical two-way communication for addressing strategic issues. This hybrid strategy has been found to be effective in maintaining a stable flow of information, mitigating negative issues, and building emotional closeness between the institution and the public. Maintaining stable information ensures the public receives consistent exposure to positive messages, while the application of dialogic communication in sensitive situations creates an impression of responsiveness and openness in the institution. Both of these effects contribute significantly to strengthening the image of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD (Regional People's Representative Council).

The Sidoarjo DPRD Public Relations (PR) has implemented a preventative and adaptive communication model. This context requires PR to focus not only on publication tasks but also to conduct ongoing situational analysis to determine the type of message, timing of publication, and the most effective media for conveying clarifications or information about institutional policies. This approach demonstrates coordination between the technical dimension of communication (message dissemination) and the strategic dimension, ultimately contributing to efforts to maintain a positive image of the DPRD as a regional legislative institution.

These findings indicate that PR's success in maintaining its image depends not only on the intensity of publications but also on its adaptive ability to select communication models appropriate to the dynamics of the issue. The Head of Public Relations stated:

"If there's criticism or a demonstration, we first check whether the information is true. Only then will we issue a clarification. The important thing is not to be reactive. We want transparency."

When all of these approaches are combined, they align with the two-way symmetrical communication model (Grunig, 1992), where the institution creates a shared understanding with the public. This was also evident in the Speaker of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), who personally addressed the crowd to open a dialogue. Upon closer examination, all of the activities described above align closely with Grunig's (1992) issue management framework, which emphasizes the importance of an organization's ability to detect early signals from the public before an issue escalates into a crisis that could potentially damage its reputation.

### **Implementation of Strategy by the DPRD Public Relations Division**

The connotation of this routine publication of council activities demonstrates the Public Relations Division's competence in implementing this strategy, in line with the excellence framework model, which emphasizes the importance of message clarity, effective channel selection, and efforts to minimize communication noise. This publication pattern serves not only to disseminate information but also as a primary tool for presenting legislative performance to the public. The author's findings demonstrate the consistency of publication of institutional activities through e-clippings and social media, which serve not only as a means of disseminating information but also as a means of building a positive image of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD).

In the context of routine communication, particularly regarding the publication of institutional activities such as commission meetings, field visits, leadership agendas, and e-clipping uploads, the Public Relations Division consistently applies a linear communication pattern. In this model, the primary focus is on clarity of message flow, effectiveness of communication channels, and minimization of noise that could potentially hinder public understanding. Field findings indicate that publications through the official website, social media, and the e-clipping portal (<http://digiclip.sidoarjokab.go.id/>) are used as the primary channels for disseminating information in a structured and systematic manner.

When the author's desired information began to be answered through an in-depth interview with the Head of the Public Relations Subdivision of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat, it was discovered that the communication strategy and programs implemented by the public relations division tended toward a publicist, relational, and responsive approach to issues. This pattern was reflected in three main activities: (1) routine publication of institutional information through digital channels and mass media, (2) strengthening institutional relationships with local and regional journalists, and (3) monitoring sensitive issues that could potentially influence public perception of the DPRD.



Figure 4. Coordination of publication of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD E-clipping site  
Source: Author's documentation



Figure 5. Strengthening institutional relationships with local and regional journalists

Source: Author's documentation

Strengthening the image of legislative institutions depends not only on the quality of messages delivered to the public but is also influenced by how strategically the relationship between Public Relations and the media is managed. Interview findings indicate that the Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat implements a proactive and relational media relations model as the primary mechanism for ensuring accurate and balanced information flow.

The established coordination pattern between Public Relations and the media serves as a check on potential bias in issue framing. Through a maintained relationship, journalists gain access to more comprehensive information, thereby preventing the formation of speculative or biased narratives in the institution. This relationship model reflects the practice of excellence in media relations as described in the Excellence Theory framework (Grunig, 1992), which places organizational and media relations as a crucial foundation for building the legitimacy and reputation of public institutions. Planned, responsive, and trust-based media relations practices contribute significantly to strengthening the positive image of regional legislative institutions. One of the most dominant findings in this study is the strategic role of e-clipping as an issue monitoring tool. The Head of the Public Relations Division explained:

*"Every morning it's our ritual. Sometimes before we've had any tea, we'll open the news first. We check the news about the DPRD. Whether it's positive, neutral, or something that's a bit disturbing."*

This statement indicates that Public Relations uploads and monitors hundreds of news stories from online media through the official portal <http://digiclip.sidoarjokab.go.id/>. This activity is not merely documentation, but part of the issues management structure, as explained by Grunig. On several occasions, the informant (initial A) even emphasized:

*"E-clippings are not just for archiving. They are our tool for reading the direction of public opinion. From there, we know what action to take."*

From this, the author learned that e-clippings function as an early warning system that helps Public Relations respond quickly to public opinion, especially when potential negative issues arise, such as the demonstrations on December 9, 2025. Overall, a consistent publication pattern results in repeated positive public exposure. This exposure then contributes to increased public trust in the legislative institution, which in turn strengthens the institutional image. Consistent publication creates a pattern of ongoing information exposure, thereby increasing public trust and ultimately strengthening the institution's image. This formulation shows that a positive image is not the result of incidental publications, but rather is the output of a public relations communication process that is designed systematically, planned, and continuously.

## E. CONCLUSION

A positive image is certainly essential for public institutions, particularly the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), as social capital to maintain legitimacy, public trust, and support for the implementation of its representative and legislative functions. This phenomenon demonstrates that the image of legislative institutions is not solely determined by substantive performance but is also strongly influenced by how that performance is communicated to the public through planned, transparent, and responsive communication patterns. In the context of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD, the dynamics of political news coverage, the increasing demand for information transparency, and the emergence of sensitive

issues in the public sphere present challenges that must be strategically managed by the Public Relations Division of the DPRD Secretariat.

This phenomenon prompted the author to conduct research and found that the Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat plays a strategic role as the primary liaison between the legislative institution and the public. Based on interviews with the Head of the Public Relations Subdivision, it was discovered that efforts to improve a positive image are carried out by focusing on the clarity of public information, consistent publication of council activities, and monitoring issues through the media. This strategy is understood as a preventative measure to minimize public misunderstanding of the DPRD's performance while ensuring the public can directly observe the institution's daily activities.

The research also shows that the communication pattern employed by the Public Relations Division is hybrid, combining linear communication in routine publications with symmetrical two-way communication in sensitive situations. Interviews with public relations staff revealed that visual content, such as photos and videos of Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) activities, is prioritized because it is considered easier to understand and more quickly attracts public attention. The presentation of information, packaged in a light yet informative manner, aims to ensure the public not only receives information but also understands the meaning and urgency of each DPRD activity.

In managing issues and reporting, interviews revealed that the use of e-clippings is a primary instrument for assessing the direction of public opinion. Every news item is routinely monitored, classified by tone, and analyzed to determine further communication steps. Field observations indicate that e-clippings are not treated merely as archives, but rather as an early warning system that helps Public Relations respond to potential negative issues quickly and measurably. This approach is evident when the agency faces public criticism and demonstrations, where Public Relations chooses not to be reactive but instead prioritizes fact-based clarification and open dialogue.

Further interviews with internal informants confirmed that when the institution faces pressure from public opinion, the communication strategy prioritized is openness and a willingness to listen to public aspirations. This practice is reflected in the efforts of the DPRD leadership to directly meet with the public to open a dialogue and provide transparent explanations. This communication pattern demonstrates the implementation of symmetrical two-way communication, as proposed by Excellence Theory, where the institution and the public are on equal footing, building a shared understanding.

Overall, this study concludes that the success of the Public Relations Division of the Sidoarjo Regency DPRD Secretariat in building a positive image depends not only on the intensity of publications, but primarily on the ability to manage communications strategically, adaptively, and dialogue-based. Interview findings reinforce that public relations practices have moved beyond technical functions to a managerial-strategic role, thus significantly contributing to maintaining public trust and strengthening the DPRD's image as a transparent, responsive, and accountable regional legislative institution.

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