

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Title of the Study

An Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Used by the Bengkalis State Polytechnic Public Relations Staffs to Build Campus Brand Awareness.

1.2 Background of the Study

Marketing plays an important role as a bridge between organizations and their stakeholders through effective communication strategies. Along with technological developments and changes in consumer behavior, traditional marketing approaches are no longer sufficient. Organizations are required to integrate various marketing communication activities to deliver consistent and effective messages to their target audiences.

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has become an essential approach in modern marketing, emphasizing the coordination of marketing communication tools such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, and digital marketing. IMC enables organizations to create message consistency across communication channels, strengthen relationships with stakeholders, and enhance brand equity. Schultz and Schultz (2004) define IMC as a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute, and evaluate coordinated and measurable brand communication programs for relevant internal and external audiences.

Although IMC was initially developed in the business sector, its application has expanded to higher education institutions that face increasing competition in attracting prospective students and building institutional image. Research shows that higher education institutions adopting IMC tend to achieve better communication effectiveness and brand awareness (Edmiston-Strasser, 2009). However, the implementation of IMC in higher education also faces challenges related to organizational complexity and coordination (Šerić et al., 2015).

In the Indonesian context, the application of IMC in higher education institutions, particularly vocational institutions, is still developing. Bengkalis State Polytechnic, as a vocational higher education institution in Riau Province, utilizes various marketing communication activities to promote its academic programs and institutional image. Information regarding campus profile, academic activities, partnerships, and new student admissions is disseminated through the official website of Bengkalis State Polytechnic (polbeng.ac.id). The institution manages its communication through digital media, public relations activities, and cooperation with industry partners to deliver consistent institutional messages in accordance with the characteristics of vocational education (polbeng.ac.id).

In this context, the Public Relations staff of Bengkalis State Polytechnic play a crucial role in coordinating marketing communication activities and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders, including prospective students. However, there has been limited research examining how Integrated Marketing Communication is implemented by public relations staff and how it influences campus brand awareness. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the use of Integrated Marketing Communication by the Public Relations staff of Bengkalis State Polytechnic in building campus brand awareness.

1.3 Formulation of the problem

1. What IMC strategies are implemented by the Public Relations staff at Bengkalis State Polytechnic to Build campus brand awareness?
2. What are the new students' perspectives on the implementation of IMC strategies by the Public Relations staff at Bengkalis State Polytechnic?

1.4 Scope & Limitation

- 1) Scope: This study focuses on analyzing the application of IMC principles by the Public Relations (PR) department at the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis and examines the integration of communication tools such as digital

marketing, media relations, and industry partnerships, particularly in the context of vocational higher education, to enhance campus brand awareness.

- 2) Limitations: The research is limited to the IMC practices of the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis and does not include a comparative analysis with other higher education institutions. Data collection will primarily rely on interviews and Questionnaire .

1.5 Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study is to describe the role and effectiveness of IMC strategies employed by the Public Relations staff at the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis in enhancing campus brand awareness. Specifically, it aims to:

1. To describe the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategies implemented by the Public Relations staff at Bengkalis State Polytechnic in Building campus brand awareness.
2. To describe new students' perceptions of the implementation of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategies by the Public Relations staff at Bengkalis State Polytechnic.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of knowledge in the field of marketing communication, particularly regarding the implementation of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in higher education institutions. It provides empirical evidence on how the Public Relations staff of Bengkalis State Polytechnic implement IMC strategies to enhance campus brand awareness and is expected to serve as a reference for future studies related to marketing communication, public relations, and hig-her education branding.

Practically, this study is expected to benefit Bengkalis State Polytechnic, especially the Public Relations staff, by providing an evaluation of the effectiveness of the IMC strategies currently implemented. The findings may serve as a reference for improving communication and promotional strategies,

particularly in strengthening digital marketing and social media management to enhance campus brand awareness. In addition, this study may also be useful for other higher education institutions in developing effective Integrated Marketing Communication strategies.