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Ari Agung Agung Prastowo  
ari.agung@unpad.ac.id

Retasari Dewi  
retasari.dewi@unpad.ac.id

Hanny Hafiar  
hanny.hafiar@unpad.ac.id

Renata Anisa  
renata@unpad.ac.id

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# **TRACK RECORD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH IN THE REPOSITORY**

**Ari Agung Prastowo**

Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung Indonesia  
ari.agung@unpad.ac.id

**Retasari Dewi**

Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung Indonesia  
retasari.dewi@unpad.ac.id

**Hanny Hafiar**

Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung Indonesia  
hanny.hafiar@unpad.ac.id

**Renata Anisa**

Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung Indonesia  
renata@unpad.ac.id

## **ABSTRACT**

Public Relations is a study that is part of the communication science family at a faculty in tertiary institutions in Indonesia. The graduates of this study program have produced thousands of research titles since they were established as independent study programs in 2013. Based on the track record of research results recorded in the university's repository, it is known that there are research trends relating to the development of international public relations scholarship. This is influenced by technological developments and globalization. These developments have led to a diversity of research topics carried out by graduates of public relations study programs. Therefore, this study aims to map research topics that have been documented, in order to sharpen the research direction of prospective public relations practitioners, as well as to contribute to strengthening the courses contained in the curriculum of study programs. The method used is descriptive quantitative based on secondary data. The results showed that the research topics produced by graduates of public relations study programs at a tertiary institution were more directed to topics that led to the profile of graduates with competencies as Public Relations Officer/Corporate Communications, and Public Relations Consultants.

Keywords: Public Relations, research trends, graduate profiles, study topics.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Technological developments also affect the development of the science of public relations. The presence of the internet has changed the communication styles of citizens of the world, including the communication styles of practitioners in relation to public relations practitioners. This change in communication style was detected through a number of public relations studies linking the roles and functions of public relations with the use of a number of digital communication media, including the use of social media.

This was revealed through research on identifying trends, patterns, and academic rigor in research studies focusing on Internet-related public relations through a review of articles published (Ye & Ki, 2012). In this article, it can be seen that a number of studies have attempted to examine the use of internet media in a number of public relations activities. Public relations research trends linking public relations activities with internet-based communication technology are also rife by researchers in the field of public relations in Indonesia.

This phenomenon can be seen from the results of an analysis of a number of scientific works in the form of a thesis where the scientific work was produced by graduates of a public relations study program in Indonesia. A public relations study program at one of the tertiary institutions in Indonesia is in the field of communication science. Not surprisingly, many studies took the topic of communication media. So that research titles containing the keywords Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Vlog, Blog, YouTube, and other social media, are found in many repositories of scientific graduates of this university.

This raises the curiosity of researchers to conduct studies on research themes, conducted by prospective scholars of public relations study programs. Because, researchers assume that, although communication technology is an inseparable part of public relations activities in the current era of the industrial revolution, of course, there are still many fields of public relations studies that require developmental studies. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to analyze the research themes produced by a study program in a tertiary institution, by referring to secondary data contained in the tertiary repository.

The study, which analyzes the results of research in the field of public relations, has been carried out by several academics in the field of public relations. Among them: a bibliometric review of Habermasian Theory in public relations research (Buhmann, Ihlen, & Aaen-Stockdale, 2019), a bibliometric analysis of CSR research in public relations academia from 1975 to 2011 (Kim & Lim, 2011), and trends in branding research (Shtovba, Shtovba, & Filatova, 2019).

However, so far no similar research has been conducted on public relations research, which was produced by educational institutions in the field of public relations in Indonesia. Therefore, this research is expected to be able to contribute to directing research topics, which can be produced by public relations education institutions, covering themes and fields of study that are associated with graduate learning outcomes, as well as expertise in the field of public relations.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a quantitative determination method which is carried out descriptively, to obtain an overview in order to map the results of research produced by graduates of the public relations study program, at a tertiary institution. This is intended to be known about the distribution of research themes and topics, as well as the development of research methods that should be strengthened through the curriculum and courses provided during the learning process.

This mapping can be used by policyholders to determine the direction of research conducted by students, as well as the determination of the positioning of public relations study programs at the tertiary institution nationally. It is also expected that the results obtained can provide an overview of research topics that are still rarely carried out and require scientific strengthening and development.

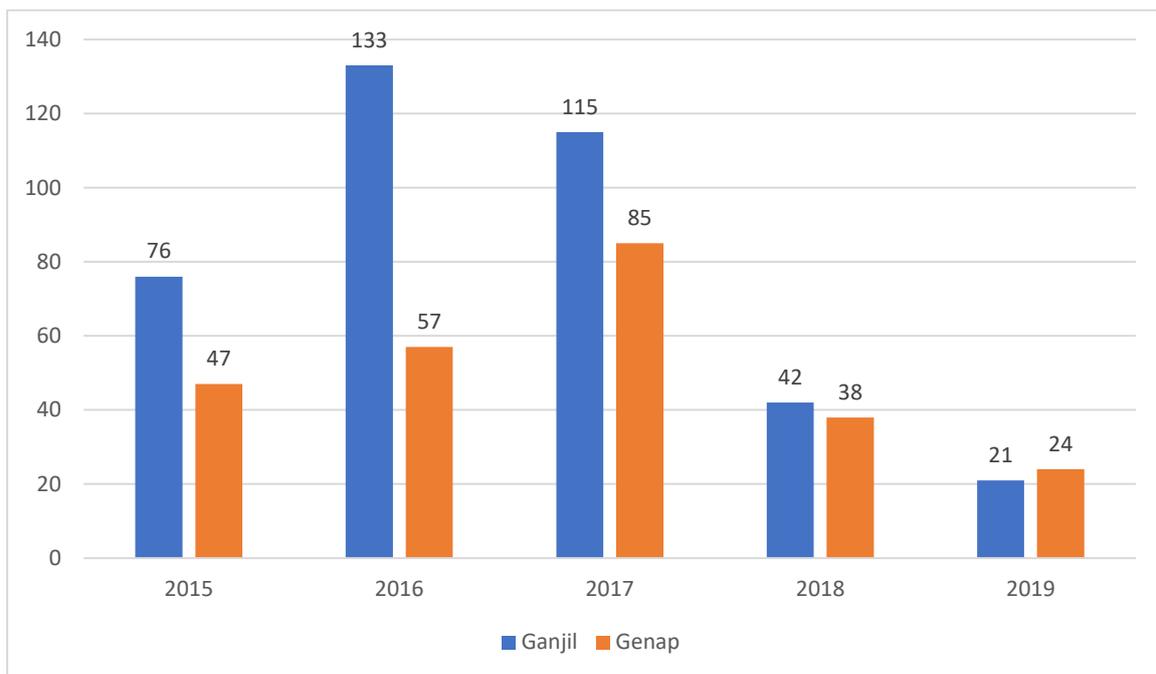
Therefore, the data collected as research data are secondary data obtained from the repository of the tertiary institution concerned. Data from the research results of students who have graduated, taken from the thesis submitted since 2015-2019. Determination of the period of the year, referring to the application of the new curriculum resulting from the curriculum workshop between the public relations study program with the user as a resource. The data are grouped based on the semester of graduates, the field of expertise study, the topic of study is based on the expected competencies that can be achieved by each graduate, as well as the methods used in conducting research.

The data were validated through two coders, and verified by verifiers. In the next stage, the data will be classified graphically, analyzed and interpreted on the basis of arguments derived from various literature references. Furthermore, the results of the analysis obtained will be used for conclusions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Public relations studies are not studies that can be researched only to academics. Indeed, the field of public relations studies can also be carried out by practitioners. This is in line with the idea that public relations have become a scholarly discipline as well as a professional one (Pasadeos & Renfro, 1992). However, as a public relations practitioner, of course, requires basic knowledge and skills in studying the field of public relations.

Therefore, the public relations study program should equip its graduates with basic knowledge and competencies that are in line with the needs of the job market. Based on this, university graduates are expected to be able to practice their knowledge in the world of work both in the real sector as workers and in the field of entrepreneurship as entrepreneurs. One of the basic competencies that must be possessed by a scholar is conducting research based on proven methodologies and scientific arguments. One of them is through the making of a thesis that is tested in a trial. The results of the thesis of public relations study program graduates recorded in the repository data of a tertiary institution can be illustrated in Figure 1 below :



**Figure 1.** The amount of research produced by graduates of public relations study programs in the last 5 years

Based on these data it is known that the amount of research in the form of a thesis produced by public relations study programs in one of the state universities in Indonesia shows a trend that the number of graduates produced in the odd semester is higher than that produced in even semester. This is because the lecture period in the odd semester is longer than the even period of the semester. Therefore it has an impact on the level of intensity of discussion or guidance between lecturers and students.

Besides, there is a trend that the number of graduates produced in the last two years, namely 2018 and 2019, has decreased. This is because the number of students accepted since 2000 is unstable. The fluctuation of student admission is due to the limitation on the number of students admitted and the number of available lecturers, in other words, taking into account the ratio of the number of student lecturers so that academic services can run optimally. The number of students accepted from year 2000 to year 2016 is as follows:

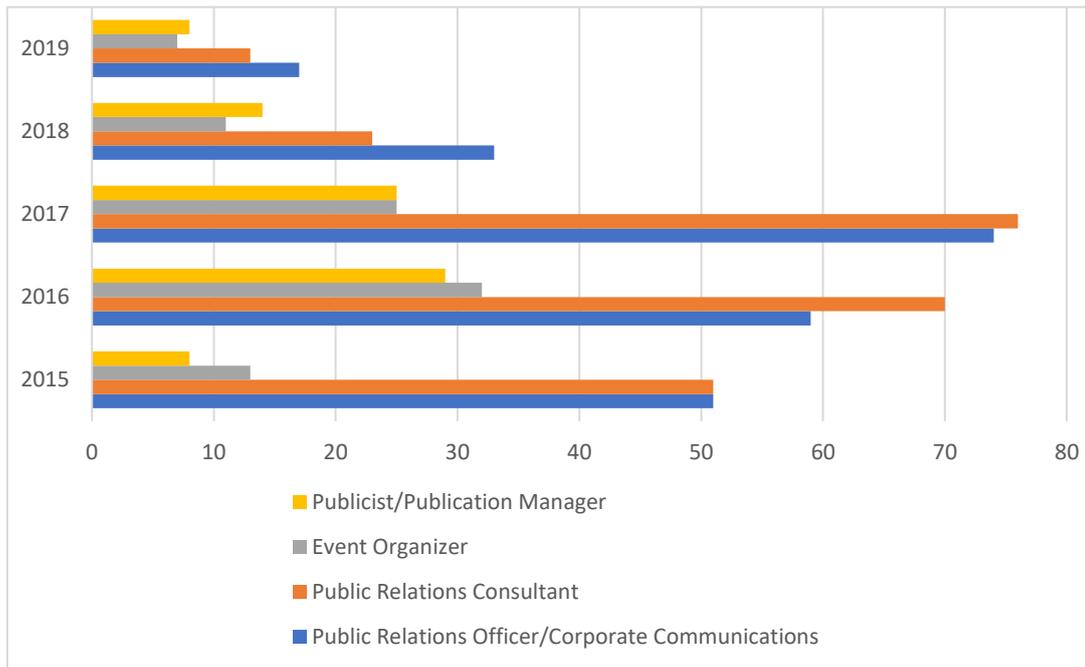
**Table. 1** The number of students accepted

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2000	57
2001	57
2002	105
2003	70
2004	248
2005	240
2006	139
2007	212
2008	134
2009	100
2010	146
2011	204
2012	103
2013	173
2014	54
2015	56
2016	112

Furthermore, research in the form of a thesis produced by graduates of the PR study program will be reviewed based on conformity with the graduate profile. There are four graduate profiles determined by public relations study programs, namely Public Relations Officer / Corporate Communications, Event Organizer, Public Relations Consultant, and Publicist / Publication Manager. The legal basis for determining the profile of graduates is the 2014 National Higher Education Standards (SN DIKTI).

In addition, there is also a decision of the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia, Number: kep.39 /men/ii/2008, concerning the Determination of Indonesian national work competency standards, the public relations and information sector in the field of public relations, which was made with the aim of Improving professionalism of practitioners PR in carrying out its role as a strategic management function so that it is recognized by stakeholders; Be a benchmark for the performance of professional PR practitioners; Produce a grouping of expertise of public relations practitioners in accordance with standardization validated by the certification body; Public relations practitioners have standards and ethical codes that are standard in carrying out their profession.

Based on these two foundations, the lecturer's direct students have the competencies needed, by deepening the study through the subjects and research that is reviewed in the thesis. The results can be seen from figure 2 below :



**Figure 2.** Field of Public Relations studies in research in accordance with the profiles of the graduates of public relations study programs in the last 5 years

Based on these data it is known that research topics related to graduate profiles in the field of Public Relations Officer/Corporate Communications, and Public Relations Consultants are more in demand. This becomes understandable because the composition of subjects with the contents of the two fields is given to students in greater numbers, compared to courses that contain Event Organizer, and Publicist/Publication Manager.

In fact, there are advertising subjects given to public relations study programs students, which attempt to attract students to become publication managers. Provision of this material is done in addition to offset the user needs for skills expected to be owned by graduates of public relations study programs, also due to the opinion that the integration of advertising and public relations is a topic of interest to their practitioners and educators (Park & Ki, 2017). Likewise, the PR writing subjects have been given to students to attract their interest in conducting publication activities in the form of press releases. Because institutions have an effective way of communicating in a press release (Autzen, 2018). However, it turns out, the two subjects have not been able to increase the interest of students to study the publicist field as a study examined in their thesis.

Therefore, the public relations study programs are deemed necessary to sharpen the object of study, which is deemed necessary for students to deepen in order to equip graduates with the distribution of competencies in accordance with predetermined graduate profiles. There are several studies that have examined the object of public relations studies, including Defining the 'object' of public relations research (Edwards, 2012), Trends of Corporate Social Responsibility (Khatun, Islam, Noor, & Sa'ban, 2015), and analyze the trends and patters working in public relations industry in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Juwita, 2017). However, the appeal of communication and information technology that changes the public relations work style is more attractive to prospective graduates of public relations study programs.

It is not surprising that topics regarding digital homework are more attractive to students. This trend does not only apply to one of the public relations study programs in tertiary institutions in Indonesia. The topic of digital public relations research is also attracting the

attention of researchers in the field of public relations in various countries, such as the impact of new media on public relations (James, 2008), *The Change and Disruption to Public Relations Practices* (Ahmad, 2019), *Digital and Social Media Use by Zimbabwean Public Relations Practitioners* (Ngondo, 2019), and *Public Relations in the Digital World* (Adlmaier-Herbst, 2014). Therefore, at this time digital skills are required by future public relations practitioners and the academy (Alexander, 2016).

The results of research in Indonesia produce the same conclusion, with the existence of artificial intelligence technology that has revolutionized the world of public relations, a series of routine public relations tasks are replaced with AI, but with the advent of new public relations devices, PR practitioners encourage PR practitioners to learn early and test each of the new devices accordingly. with needs (Arief & Saputra, 2019). Thus, the public relations industry has done a lot of adaptation to a number of strategies that prioritize funding efficiency, high mobilization, and greater achievement targets. So it can be concluded that the current public relations strategy reflects a pattern that emerged due to the disruption of industry 4.0 (Meranti & Irwansyah, 2018).

A lot of research on digital public relations produced by foreign researchers published in various scientific journals has given students awareness about the importance of knowledge and skills in the field of digital-based information and communication in the world of public relations. This also inspired students to make topics in their research or thesis.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it is known that the topic of student research in a study program at a tertiary institution in Indonesia is more directed to the topic that leads to the profile of graduates who have competencies as Public Relations Officer/Corporate Communications, and Public Relations Consultant. Even though there are two other graduate profiles that need to be prepared by public relations study programs, namely competency as an Event Organizer, and Publicist/Publication Manager.

Therefore it is necessary for the enrichment and deepening of the material through several subjects with content that leads to the Event Organizer, and the Publicist/Publication Manager. This enrichment and deepening can be done by increasing the number or composition of subjects with the contents of the Event Organizer, and Publicist/Publication Manager, or by increasing the number of UCU (University Credit Units) in the practicum field on subjects with the contents of both fields, this is done in an effort to attract students interest, in studying the two fields that have not become their favorites.

This is done to balance the competency composition of graduates of public relations study programs, in order to meet the needs of ready-to-use workers from public relations study programs to be placed in certain jobs, avoid the accumulation of the number of graduates with specialization in certain fields, and reduce competition in employment in the field of Public Relations Officer/Corporate Communications, and Public Relations Consultant. If this is done, it is hoped that all graduates of public relations study programs can be absorbed and placed in the field of work in accordance with their competencies and the fields of work they are interested in.

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