



The Role of Public Relations in the Television Series "The Boys"

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Abstract: The television series "The Boys" is a series that tells the story of improving the image of a hero by a public relations practitioner. This television series also raises the issue of the life of a hero in the eyes of the public and the media who have a bad image. The purpose of this research is to find out the role of public relations in the character Ashley J. Barrett, played by Colby Minifie in the television series "The Boys". The research method used by researchers is a qualitative method, with a semiotic approach, namely a science that studies signs. The theory used focuses on the level of reality, the level of representation, and the level of ideology of John Fiske's television codes. In this research, the data collection techniques used were literature study, observation and documentation. The results of this research conclude that at the reality level it can be seen in the form of the behavior and appearance of Ashley J. Barrett's character, who is an expert communicator and expert advisor who carries out persuasive communication, showing the role of public relations, and Ashley J. Barrett's appearance tends to be stable when meeting with the public, namely by wearing a formal suit. The level of representation in the form of camera code and dialogue code, and the level of ideology can be seen from the ideology that appears in the television series "The Boys", there is discrimination between the black race and the white race and based on point eight of the international public relations code of ethics.

Keywords: Public relations, Semiotics, Television Codes

Introduction

"The Boys" is a superhero franchise that debuted in 2019 as a series on Amazon Prime Video. This series, developed by Eric Kripke, like other superhero universes, is adapted from the superhero comic of the same name by Garth Ennis and Darick Robertson. Today's superhero universe has gone through various imaging trends, starting to feel repetitive and boring. Where when heroes appear in bright costumes, they claim to be the guardians of humanity. "The Boys" reaped success at the right moment because it presented the latest superhero image when we were starting to get bored with alien-killing superheroes and romantic villains (Saulnier, 2023). Not adapting these two perspectives, "The Boys" presents its own flavor and twist of the superhero universe. The Seven is an elite superhero team created by the conglomerate company, Vought International, which has dominated the business and media markets in the United States. Where to support national security they recruit residents of countries who are endowed with superpowers.

But more than just Nick Fury to save the world by forming the Avengers, Vought has more prospects for their superheroes. The Seven is treated as a 'product', no different from a firearms company in America that offers 'security' to its population. In "The Boys" capitalism in the name of The Seven is shown excessively as satirical material. Almost every face of every elite superhero from The Seven is on drink packaging, food, merchandise and city billboards. They also have reality shows, attend various public events as guest stars, and film franchises like the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Not only does it want to dominate the market, Vought is also seeking a position in the military division to reap material benefits. To achieve this target, Vought is willing to do whatever it takes. It is no different from state politicians to gain power and strong positions in state government institutions who rely on all means. In the television series, Ashley J.

Barrett is Vought International's new publicist and Director of Talent Relations, played by Colby Minifie. While she was initially fired by Madelyn Stillwell in the first season after Starlight publicly commented on her sexual harassment by the Deep, Homelander rehired her in the second season as the new Senior Vice President of Hero Management so he could use her to spy on Stan Edgar. In the third season following Edgar's leave, Ashley replaces him as CEO of Vought while continuing to serve under Homelander. As a public relations person, Vought to change the public view or image of The Seven so that it can be well received by society and change the way The Seven presents itself to the public. The role shown by public relations in this television series varies in each strategy it uses to restore the image of The Seven, one of which is holding a press release that provides an apology and statement to the public. This problem is related to the definition of relations from Howard Bonham which is quoted by Neni Yulianita in her book entitled "Basics of Public Relations" which says "Public relations is the art of bringing about better public understanding which breeds greater public confidence for any individual or organization." (Yulianita, 2012: 27). Bonham defines public relations as the art of deepening the trust of a person or organization, to create better public understanding. What is meant by art in this definition is art related to communication, where a public relations person must be able to display the art of good communication so that it will benefit the good name of a person or organization. The basic principle of the art of communication is anything related to a person or organization that can attract public interest and deepen public trust.

In this research, the researcher took the research object in the form of the role of public relations in the television series "The Boys", because it was felt that it contained many public relations roles in it. The television series "The Boys" also features a public relations practitioner and also focuses on the public relations practitioner to solve the problem of a hero who has a bad image. With a public relations person appearing to solve problems regarding their image, the television series certainly has elements of a public relations role (Clementson, 2023).

Methodology

Public relations is a management philosophy and function to serve the public interest which is expressed through policies and activities, carrying out communication activities to create understanding and goodwill from the public. Thus, if seen and translated from the original word, the meaning of public relations is "Relationships between the Public" or in short "Public Relations". In Rosady Ruslan's book (2014: 12), Onong Uchjana Effendy reveals the role of public relations, which covers a broad field regarding relationships with various parties and not just in the form of relations in the narrow sense, because personal relations in carrying out public relations campaigns has quite a role big (Zhang, 2022).

How to increase awareness, understanding and comprehension of company or institution activities including forming good attitudes (favorable), good will (tolerance), mutual understanding (mutual understanding), mutual trust (mutual confidence), mutual respect (mutual appreciation), which creates a good image in the end. According to this definition of role, for a public relations person the role is the most important part. The definition of this role is divided into four categories, namely, Expert Prescriber, Communication Facilitator, Problem Solving Process Facilitator, and Communication Technician. According to John Fiske, semiotics is the study of signs and the meaning of sign systems; the science of signs, of how meaning is constructed in media "texts"; or the study of how signs in society communicate the meaning of any type of work. According to Fiske, The Codes of Television are the codes that appear or are used in television programs that are interconnected to form a meaning. According to this theory, a reality through codes that arise does not just appear, but is also processed through sensing by television viewers according to the references they already have, so that a code will be perceived by different people differently. The Codes of Television itself consists of three levels, namely, Reality Level, Representation Level and Ideology Level (Tran, 2024).

Result and Discussion

Reality Level Analysis

At this level there are three codes, namely: Behavior, Appearance and Dialogue. In the television series "The Boys" researchers found that the role of public relations is as an expert communicator and as a calmer for the public. When the public was angry with The Seven, there a public relations person acted as a calmer and as an expert communicator. In the second episode scene, researchers found that in this episode Ashley played a media relations role. Basically, Ashley carried out media identification to find out the consequences of The Seven's actions so that a case arose against The Seven by analyzing media reports, then the next step was media analysis to further ensure that the crisis was indeed what was experienced. Besides that, the role of public relations seen in the scene is as an expert advisor and as a facilitator of the problem solving process. In the scene of the role of public relations in the form of a communication facilitator, in this case the public relations practitioner acts as a communicator or mediator to assist management in hearing what the public wants and expects. There is also a public relations role as a communications technician, different from the three previous roles of professional public

relations practitioners which are closely related to the functions and roles of organizational management. In the scene, the visible role of public relations is as an expert advisor, seen when Homelander is about to leave The Seven, Ashley immediately tries to restrain him with persuasive communication so that Homelander changes his mind. Ashley's way of changing Homelander's mind can be said to be an expert advisor. In this scene, the role of public relations, which is seen as an expert advisor, is seen when Ashley explains how Homelander appears in front of the public (Weder, 2023). The second code for the level of reality is appearance. Ashley, as a public relations practitioner, always wears neat and formal clothes when in public and meeting with The Seven. In the first scene, you can see that Ashley is wearing a shirt, cloth trousers and high heels. Apart from that, Ashley's hair looks neat. In the second scene, he is seen wearing a black shirt, black trousers and high heels. In this scene, Ashley meets Homelander informally at Ashley's house, but Ashley still wears neat clothes to show her professionalism as a public relations person. In the third scene, Ashley is seen wearing a white shirt, skirt and high heels. When in official activities such as press conferences, Ashley takes care of her appearance. In the fourth scene, Ashley is seen wearing a bright colored shirt, trousers and high heels. Ashley, as a public relations officer, shows her image when in front of a small public such as at the police station, she still displays a good appearance (Qu, 2019).

Representation Level Analysis

At this level there are codes, namely camera code and dialogue code. The camera code was taken using various shooting techniques to clarify the storyline in the television series "The Boys" so that the message contained therein can be conveyed well to the audience. In the first scene, the camera code that is visible when Ashley is the focus of the object and the public behind her is the camera code, Framing with Background, the aim of this shooting technique is actually to give a beautiful effect. After that, the picture taken is a Group Shot, which is a picture taken of a group of people. Meanwhile, when Ashley walked into the crowd, the camera code that was visible was Walking Shot, as the name suggests, this technique takes pictures of objects that are running. In the second scene, the camera code seen during the conversation between Ashley and Homelander is Two Shot, which is a shot of two people. After that, the camera code that is visible after that, the camera code that looks like Homelander's eyes are looking at the television is the Eye Level camera code, which means the angle of shooting is parallel to the object (Feng, 2022).

The camera code that is visible is the Three Shot camera code, namely taking pictures of three people. Finally, the camera code is Group Shot, which is taking a picture of a group of people. In the third scene, you can see the camera code Point of Views Shot, which shows a shot in a formal conversation position, the camera will take turns taking a close up of the object (Duckett, 2024). Furthermore, when shooting Ashley, the camera code that is visible is Framing with Background, the aim of this shooting technique is actually to give a beautiful effect. In the fourth scene, the camera code seen in this scene is Two Shot, namely taking a picture of two people. In the fifth scene, this scene also shows from beginning to end the scene with the Two Shot camera code, namely taking pictures of two people. Its function is to show a scene of two people talking. The second code for

the level of representation is dialogue. In each scene, Ashley shows her role as an expert prescriber for The Seven. In the first scene, in the dialogue that Ashley conveys to the public, it is clear that Ashley is trying to defend The Seven from public attacks and trying to change the behavior of the angry public. In the second scene, Ashley has a dialogue with Homelander to try to tell him what Homelander's problem is and tries to convince Homelander.

In the third scene, this scene does not have any dialogue spoken by Ashley directly, but indirectly the dialogue said by Homelander is the result of Ashley's thoughts trying to influence the public. In the fourth scene, this scene, Ashley's dialogue is to inform the development of the strategy and also to persuade Homelander to continue with the strategy that has been implemented. In the fifth scene, the dialogue in this scene shows Ashley trying to teach how to behave in front of the public to get sympathy from the public itself (Bartlett, 2023).

Ideology Level Analysis

In the first scene, it can be seen that there is an ideology displayed which is racial discrimination between blacks and whites, where it is shown that Ashley is played as a white person while A train is played as a black person. In the second scene, in the second scene there is an ideology conveyed by Ashley which essentially encourages A train to follow the public's wishes and at the same time makes the public aware that A train has quite a big influence on society. This section should explore the significance of the results of the study. A combined Results and Discussion section is also appropriate. This section allows you to offer your interpretation and explain the meaning of your results. Emphasize any theoretical or practical consequences of the results. The Discussion section should be a reasoned and justifiable commentary on the importance of your findings. This section states why the problem is important; what larger issues and what propositions are confirmed or disconfirmed by the extrapolation of these findings to such overarching issues (Crouch, 2023).

Conclusion

The role of public relations in the television series "The Boys" is illustrated through John Fiske's visual codes, including:

1. Reality Levels Behavior: Ashley's behavior as public relations on the television series "The Boys" who can work as an expert advisor who provides input, problem solver in times of crisis, calming the public, providing and also channeling relations with the media, and informant of case developments which shows the role public relations. Appearance: Ashley's appearance tends to be stable when meeting the public and Vought as management, namely by wearing formal attire in the form of shirts, trousers, skirts and high heels.
2. Representation Levels, Camera Code: various shooting techniques in the television series "The Boys" are no different from other television series. The visible shots are Group shot, Walking Shot, Two Shot, Three Shot, Framing with Background, Eye Level, and Point of View Shot (Urriza, 2021). Dialogue: The dialogue used by Ashley

in this television series also really shows the role of Public Relations which shows that he is an expert communicator and expert advisor by carrying out persuasive communication.

3. Ideology Level, The ideology that appears in the television series "The Boys" is discrimination between the black race and the white race and is based on point eight of the international public relations code of ethics. and the role of Ashley's public relations is that Ashley has the ideology that a public relations person must act, in all circumstances, to take into account the interests of the groups involved, both the interests of the organization he serves and also the interests relating to the public (Mureşan, 2021).

With the research results that researchers have obtained, it is recommended, especially for students at the University of Lampung majoring in Communication Sciences, to be able to continue similar research regarding the role of public relations in television series further. It is also hoped that those who carry out similar research can take different research variables, or use a variety of methods that are different from those used by researchers so that they can explain things differently from research that has been researched by researchers (Rock, 2023). Practical practical advice, the results of this research are expected to provide input, especially for students, to know and understand more about the role of public relations in a television series because it is felt that it is important to know the content of the message in a mass communication, because a television series is also a medium learning. So that everyone, especially students, can know how to view or analyze the messages in a television series at various levels, and it is not only a means of entertainment but also a means of learning that educates society (Yoshikawa, 2022).

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