PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGEMENT IN FORMING THE PARTY'S IMAGE AHEAD OF THE 2024 RI PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (Case Study of DPC Political *Communication* of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, Bekasi City)

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Abstract. Political parties are always formed with general and specific goals. Likewise regarding the mission of the PDIP struggle, including the DPC PDIP Bekasi City, since the 2014 Election and the 2019 Election PDIP has been committed to nominating Joko Widodo (Jokowi) as President of the Republic of Indonesia and it has been proven that the PDIP struggle has been successful in becoming a winner and delivering Jokowi's ideals as President of the Republic of Indonesia through two elections fought by PDIP. In the context of how political parties' efforts can achieve the general and specific goals referred to, it clearly requires the involvement/intervention of Public Relations/Public Relations management. In professional and quality PR/Public Relations management practices, the focus is often on maintaining political communication and organizational communication. This needs special attention considering that in 2024 elections will be held again. And it is certain that before the election, issues will emerge that are part of the political dynamics leading up to the implementation of the election. The aim of this research is to analyze Public Relations management in forming a party image ahead of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election through a case study of Political Communication at the DPC of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle in Bekasi City. This research uses a case study method with a constructivist paradigm. The results of this research are that the Bekasi City PDIP DPC is able to implement Public Relations management well through the Fact Finding, Planning, Communication and Evaluation stages. The result is that they succeeded in capturing issues that occurred in society and created follow-up programs that were preventive and solution in nature. Then, the implementation of DPC PDIP Bekasi City political communication is in accordance with the 5 existing elements starting from Political Communicators, Political Messages, Political Channels or Media, Political Goals or Targets (Political Communication) and Influence or Effects of Political Communication. This was done as a form of effort to build the image of the Bekasi City PDIP DPC ahead of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential election.

Keywords: Public Relations Management; Image Formation; Indonesian Democratic Party Struggle; Political *Communication*; DPC PDIP Bekasi City

INTRODUCTION

In an independent country (nation state) that adheres to a democratic system, the existence and role of political parties is an important instrument in the democratic process and the state process. Political parties as political organizations usually have different ideologies from one political party to another. PDIP was born as a political party resulting from the struggle and movement of Megawati Soekarnoputri together with pro-Mega, pro-democracy PDI activists and the little people in 1998 who were anti-authoritarian New Order. The aim of establishing PDIP was to carry out unjust political resistance and uphold democratic values that had been emasculated by the New Order government for 32 years under the leadership of Suharto. Apart from that, the founding of PDIP was to defend the welfare interests and other political rights of the little people group which for 32 years had not received attention from the state.

The movement to shape the image of political parties, especially ahead of the presidential election phase, legislative members or regional elections for each party participating in the election, has become a basic need for them. Without efforts to build a maximum image, it is difficult for political parties to be able to compete in the presidential election, legislative member election or regional election events. There are many case examples to better understand how vital PR/Public Relations management is in improving and maintaining a positive image of Political Parties. For example, the Eid homecoming assistance program initiated by the PDIP DPP, where this program is one of the efforts carried out by a political party which aims to create good relations between the political party and the community. However, not all programs can run well because if the program in question is ignored then it is difficult to hope that the campaign process or party image formation will be successful. We see the example of the PDIP public relations program in Bantul, East Java, which failed to build the party's image optimally, which had fatal consequences for the victory of the candidate pair promoted by the party, namely PDIP, in Bantul. In the context of how political party efforts can achieve general and specific goals, it clearly requires the involvement of Public Relations management. In professional and quality PR/Public Relations management practices which often focus attention on maintaining political communications and organizational communications.

In the two consecutive election periods, PDIP emerged victorious, both in the presidential election and in the election of legislative members (DPR RI). According to data released by Viva Budi Kusnandar on the total political Databoks, it was said:

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), PDI Perjuangan succeeded in gaining 23.67 million votes in the 2014 General Election (Pemilu). This amount reached 18.96% of the total 124.89 million valid national votes. With these achievements, PDI Perjuangan became the political party with the highest electability in the 2014 elections and succeeded in placing 109 representatives in the DPR RI for the 2014-2019 period.

This means that PDIP's Public Relations/PR in the 2014 election was very successful because it managed to achieve the highest level of PDIP national electability with PDIP's national vote acquisition in the 2014 Election reaching first place out of the 12 parties participating in the election. PDIP's vote share was 18.96%, followed by Golkar in second place at 14.75%, and Gerindra in third place at 11.81%. In the same election in 2014 at the Regency/City level, the Bekasi City PDIP DPC achieved the most votes. This is reinforced by the contents of the speech of the Chairman of the Bekasi KPUD, Ucu Asmara Sandi, in Bekasi on 13 May 2014 at REPUBLIKA.co.id, BEKASI. It was said by Ucu that; "The most seats were won by PDIP, followed by Golkar and PKS."

Likewise, PDIP's PR/PR strength at the national level is also considered successful because PDIP's electability reached the highest compared to other parties participating in the 2019 election. In the 2019 Presidential Election and Legislative Election, PDIP was able to gain the largest number of votes among all parties participating in the 2019 election. These are the complete results of the 2019 Legislative Election determined by the KPU. The results of this recapitulation were determined on Tuesday (21/5/2019) at 01.46 WIB through the Republic of Indonesia KPU Decree Number 987/PL.01.8-KPT/06/KPU/V/2019 concerning Determination of the Results of the General Election for President and Vice President, Members of the Regional Representative Council , Provincial Regional People's Representative Council, Regency/City Regional People's Representative Council Nationally in the 2019 General Election, namely:

In full, here are the votes obtained by the parties in the 2019 Legislative Election which have been determined by the KPU, sorted from highest to lowest votes: 1. PDI-P: 27,053,961 (19.33 percent) 2. Gerindra: 17,594,839 (12.57 percent) percent 3. Golkar: 17,229,789 (12.31 percent),..... Based on the KPU's determination, PDI Perjuangan received the highest number of votes, namely 27,053,961 votes or 19.33 percent, behind PDI-P following Gerindra with 17,594 votes ,839 or 12.57 percent. Third place is occupied by Golkar with 17,229,789 or 12.31 percent.

In the 2019 post-conflict regional and legislative elections in Bekasi City, PDIP was considered successful because it came in second in terms of vote acquisition which was almost the same as PKS's vote acquisition which received the most votes in Bekasi City. According to information from Adi Ahdiat released on the media portal, namely Databoks (27/09/2023), namely:

The five strongest political parties in Bekasi City in the 2019 Legislative Election. PKS's position in Bekasi City at that time was in tight competition with the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP). Details of the 5 parties that won the most votes in Bekasi City in the 2019 DPR Election, namely: PKS: 287 thousand votes (22.50% of the total valid votes in Bekasi City), PDIP: 261 thousand votes (20.51%), Gerindra: 178 thousand votes (14.00%), Golkar: 135 thousand votes (10.60%), PAN: 81 thousand votes (6.35%).

In the context of the data above, the performance of Bekasi City PDIP Public Relations / PR in the 2019 regional elections has shown maximum results with a high enough electability level so that it can be ranked second, with the number of votes almost the same as the PKS vote acquisition which is in first place.

Therefore, we can assume that the implementation of Presidential election events, legislative member election events, and Regional Election events are always important moments for the Public Relations/Public Relations of each political party, including PDIP DPC Public Relations/PR, to maximize the task of winning politics at every event they face. This is because the candidate proposed is a leadership candidate who must be won by the party through either the Success Team or through the party's PR/Public Relations work program. Building relationships between the community and the party is often realized by visiting the community directly or holding meetings with the community. These activities give us an idea of one of the various political party PR/Public Relations work programs in an effort to maintain good relations as an external relations movement with external parties. public. The purpose of this research is to determine Public Relations Management in Forming the Party's Image Ahead of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election (Case Study of Political *Communication* of the Bekasi City PDIP DPC).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship Management Theory. Relationship Management Theory is a category of applied public relations theory in organizational management. Relationship Management Theory is a typical theory that can be implemented in building relationships within an organization. This theory focuses on efforts to build or establish mutually beneficial relationships within organizations (Waters, 2008). This theory is in line with the objectives of a political party, where in participating in a general election contest, the presence of a political party is expected to be able to facilitate the public in conveying their complaints through the legislative candidates who will take part in the election. Therefore, it is important for political

parties to know relationship management theory to get closer to attract sympathy from the public.

Public Relations Management. Management in general itself is a science that studies the process of planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling resources to achieve targets effectively and efficiently. Meanwhile, public relations itself studies analysis of the current situation, setting goals, choosing the public who will be the audience, choosing media that suits the target public, preparing a budget, and proper evaluation with the company (Kiki Esa: 12).

In the public relations process there are at least four main stages which fully refer to the public relations management process, namely fact finding, planning, communicating and evaluation.

- a. Fact Finding: Defining problems carried out through research by analyzing situations in the form of public understanding, opinions, attitudes and behavior towards the organization. This fact finding process can be done in several ways such as surveys and interviews.
- b. Planning: By looking at the results of the fact finding research, start determining and planning programs with certain strategies so that the program is right on target. In this planning, careful planning is made regarding the concept and objectives of the program, implementation steps, time management and other resources.
- c. Communicating: At this stage the PR officer must communicate the implementation of the program to all stakeholders or audiences and encourage them to support the implementation of the program.
- d. Evaluating: At this stage PR assesses the results of program implementation. Whether the program being implemented is successful and on target or not. By conducting a PR evaluation, you can make improvements that are deemed necessary for the next program.

In implementing public relations management, there needs to be collaboration so that the strategies implemented are more effective, one of which is spublic relations strategy with the media for the campaign program sector, the following are efforts to publicize PDIP as a party of the little people, as a modern ideological party, and as a party defending democracy, which is packaged through relations with the media, namely:

- a. Media Advertising Program: First, create DPP Ramadhan & Eid al-Fitr advertisements. Second, create digital media banners, detik.com and kompas.com. second, create outdoor media: banners in every PDIP DPD throughout Indonesia. Third, carry out publication of Ramadan safari activities in local and national media.
- b. Media Relations Program: First, visit leading national media: Kompas, Rakyat Merdeka, Detik.com. second, meetings and friendships with the Editors-in-Chief of leading national media (periodicals). Third, hold meetings and friendships with news makers, political observers and political analysts as spin doctors for Indonesian political development.
- c. Data & Information Center Setup Program: First, implement the IT & Multimedia Room (hardware & software), namely e-database, e-library, e-election. Second, the media center program, namely: Media Center Room (Hardware & Software), creates and carries out website development functions. Third, create and implement a social media account program, namely Twitter, Facebook, Blog, Instagram, Youtube.
- d. Political Spin, Opinion Leader & Content Management Program; First, responding to actual issues in accordance with the PDIP fields in various mass media and social media. Second, keep in touch with political observers (as a spin doctor) and news makers so that they have a positive view of PDIP.

Political *Communication*. What is meant by Political *Communication* is communication that involves political messages and political actors, or is related to power, government and government policy. In this sense, as an applied science, political communication is nothing

new. Political communication can also be understood as communication between "those who govern" and "the governed". According to Arifin in Syaifuddin (2020:78), political communication is a conversation to influence state life. Political communication can also be the art of designing what is possible (possible art) and can even be the art of designing what is impossible (impossible art).

In Syaifuddin's view above, the essence of political communication here is stressing how the communication that is built within the country is able to have a positive or beneficial influence on the progress of the country. In this way, political communication does not just play at an ordinary level, but is able to play at an extraordinary level by exploring various positive possibilities that many people think are impossible. In the study of political communication, it consists of various elements, including:

- a. Political Communicators are those who can provide information about things that have meaning regarding politics. for example the president, ministers, members of the DPR, politicians, and pressure groups in society that can influence the running of the government.
- b. Political messages are statements conveyed, whether written or unwritten, both verbally and non-verbally, hidden or overt, whether consciously or unconsciously, which contain political content. For example political speeches, political statements, books, brochures and newspaper news about politics, etc.
- c. Political channels or media are tools or means used by communicators to convey their political messages. For example, print media, electronic media, online media, socialization, group communication carried out by parties, community organizations, etc.
- d. Political Targets or Targets (Political Communicants), are members of society who are expected to provide support in the form of voting for parties or candidates in the General Election. They are entrepreneurs, civil servants, workers, youth, women, students, and the like.
- e. The influence or effect of political communication is the creation of an understanding of the government system and political parties, the activeness of the community in political participation, which will later have an impact on voting in the General Election.

Concept of Image and Political Branding. The simple concept of image is a self-image, whether personal, organizational or corporate, which is deliberately created to show personality or characteristics. Image is how other parties perceive a company, a person, a committee or an activity. According to Oliver in I Gede Widya 2018: 68) the definition of image according to the Collins English Dictionary quoted in the book Public Relations Strategy, image is as a mental picture; ideas generated by imagination or personality shown to the public by a person, organization, and so on.

According to Dan Nimmo and Sanders in Afdal Makkuraga (2020:102) Personal image in politics has at least three benefits; first, how true or false it is, whether a person's knowledge about politics is complete or not, the image provides a way to understand certain political events. Second, general liking or disliking in a person's image of politics provides a basis for evaluating political objects. Third, a person's self-image provides a way to relate himself to other people. A person's image helps in understanding, evaluating, and identifying events, ideas, goals, or political leaders. Imagery helps provide subjective, relatable reasons for why things appear as they do, political preferences, and getting along with others. People not only have reasons to act, but also have a need to act).

According to Sutojo (2004:42) in Handbook of Public Relation (Ardianto, 2011:72) there are three types of image that a company can highlight:

a. Exclusive image, namely an image that can be highlighted by large companies. What is meant by exclusive is the ability to present a variety of the best benefits to consumers and customers.

- b. Innovative image, namely an image that stands out because the company is good at presenting new products whose models and designs are not the same as similar products on the market.
- c. Cheap and cheerful image, namely the image highlighted by a company that is able to present products with good quality, but at low prices.

Along with changes in the political system, especially in the 2009 Election, with a longer campaign period and a majority voting system, political communication and imagery carried out by politicians, both institutionally and individually, has become more diverse and interesting, through various strategies that sometimes ignore political ethics.

First, pure publicity namely popularizing oneself through community activities in a natural or natural social setting. For example, moments from big holidays, Independence Day celebrations and so on. In general, parties and candidates take advantage of this opportunity to portray what is called the politician's political self.

Second, free ride publicity namely publicity by taking advantage of access or exploiting other parties to help popularize themselves. Appear as a speaker at a forum, participate in event-event sports, sponsoring social activities and so on.

Third, tie-in publicity namely taking advantage of extras ordinary news – very unusual incident. Tsunami events, earthquakes or flash floods, for example. Candidates can portray themselves as people or parties who have high social awareness. An extraordinary event always gets major media coverage, so participation in it is very profitable.

Fourth, paid publicity namely how to popularize yourself through purchasing rubrics or programs in the mass media. For example, installing advertorials, advertisements, blocking time programs, etc. Along with this, political consulting agencies/imaging agencies, which serve imaging projects from upstream to downstream, starting from mapping client weaknesses and strengths, public opinion surveys, formulating advertising concepts, creating taglines (slogans), advertising materials, placing advertisements in the media, issue management, and organizing client events, grow like mushrooms in the rainy season.

METHOD

This type of research is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. According to Bodgan and Taylor, this type of research will produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. Thus, the research report will consist of data quotations to provide an overview of the presentation of the report. This data comes from interview scripts, field notes, photos, video recordings of personal documents, notes or memos, and other official documents. In writing reports, researchers analyze the data that has been collected and present it as much as possible in its original form (Jamil & Irawan, 2018: 154).

This research uses a case study method with a constructivist paradigm. Case Study as a qualitative research strategy is then defined by Creswell (2016) as a qualitative strategy where the researcher examines a program, event, activity, process of one or more individuals in more depth. These cases are limited by time and activities, so researchers must collect detailed information using various data collection procedures over a certain time period.

The object of this research is the Public Relations Management of the Bekasi City PDIP DPC with the research subject being the Bekasi City PDIP DPC Public Relations Officer. Subjects were chosen purposively based on the results of observations and researchers as well as recommendations from the Bekasi City PDIP DPC administrators. This was done to explore and articulate their experiences of entering the world of politics and becoming Bekasi City PDIP DPC administrators. The research subjects were used as the main informants or main data sources. (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The interview will be carried out in Bekasi through direct interviews.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The PDI Perjuangan Party is one of the largest political parties in Indonesia and has a mass base spread throughout Indonesia. Before it was called PDI Perjuangan, this party was called PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party) which was formed on January 10 1973. Then due to internal conflict, on February 1 1999 PDI changed its name to PDI Perjuangan. The name change cannot be separated from the role of Megawati Soekarnoputri who serves as General Chair. The reason for the name change was so that the PDI Perjuangan could take part in the 1999 elections. In this research, researchers looked at the spirit of democracy that also took place in the Bekasi City PDIP DPC. The Bekasi City PDIP DPC is one of the largest political bases at the city level, specifically in Bekasi City. The Bekasi City PDI Perjuangan Branch Leadership Council (DPC) itself was established on May 13 1999. Currently the Bekasi City PDIP DPC is led by Tri Adhianto as Chairman and Acting Mayor of Bekasi. In the history of the struggle of the party bearing the Bull Head symbol in Bekasi City in particular, at the beginning of its formation, the Bekasi City PDI Perjuangan DPC was able to win 10 seats in the Bekasi City DPRD in the 1999 legislative election, then in the 2004 election it won 12 seats, the 2009 election won 11 seats, the 2014 election won 14 seats, and the 2019 election won 15 seats. This explains that the Bekasi City PDIP DPC has a strong mass base and has succeeded in winning various general elections in Bekasi City.

The success achieved by the Bekasi City PDIP DPC cannot be separated from how the Bekasi City PDIP DPC internally is able to maintain good communication and relationships between management and its members as well as with sympathizers and administrators at branch level. The implementation of public relations management in the Bekasi City PDIP DPC goes through 4 stages, namely Fact Finding, Planning, *Communication* and Evaluation.

In the Fact Finding stage, researchers looked at issues that emerged in the Bekasi City community, including aspects of Health, Education and Food Security. Bekasi City PDIP DPC captures issues developing in the community through several sources, namely door to door activities, complaints from branch administrators, and messages via social media. Furthermore, at the planning stage, from the issues that had been collected by the Bekasi City PDIP DPC team, the administrators then created several work programs as a form of follow-up effort to the issues found, both preventive and solution in nature. The hope is that through this program a good relationship will emerge between the management and supporters and a good image will be created in the eyes of the community. In implementing this program, the Bekasi City PDIP DPC management involved several parties, for example in the Community Greeting program "Pregnant Women Prevent Stunting", the Bekasi City PDIP DPC collaborated with Baguna PDIP Bekasi City. This program will be held on October 28 2022, located at Bekasi City Square. This program, which brings enthusiasm to educate the public, especially mothers in Bekasi City, about the dangers of stunting, is carried out through several service activities such as baby weighing, mother and child examinations and general health examinations. All of them were given the Bekasi City PDIP DPC for free. in the final stage, namely Evaluation, after planning and implementation, this stage is carried out to determine the extent of the effectiveness of the program that has been created and the impact of the program's effectiveness on the Party's image. In general, the Bekasi City PDIP DPC carries out evaluations through 2 methods, namely feedback provided by the community and through survey data.

In political communication there are 5 elements that support political communication activities, namely:

1. Political Communicator, DPC PDIP Bekasi City as a political organization provides space for legislative candidates to be involved in implementing several work programs. This certainly makes legislative candidates political communicators, where they provide information related to political messages.

- 2. Political Message, continuing from the explanation above, that the legislative candidates inform about their efforts in responding to issues occurring in Bekasi City society. The message is not only an appeal to be more sensitive to existing issues but there is also hope that the community can provide their support to party.
- 3. Political Channels or Media. Through door to door programs, structured communication from branch level to branch level, as well as the use of social media. This is done by the party as a useful political media tool to facilitate the party to convey political messages to the public.
- 4. Political Goals or Targets. Bekasi City PDIP DPC sees that the political target for contesting the 2024 election will see a new segmentation emerge, namely beginner voters, where in this case, if we talk about the PDIP voter base in Bekasi City, they tend to fall into the Boomer to Millennial category, while these beginner voters fall into the Gen Z category. Therefore, innovation and breakthroughs in campaigning are important factors in winning the hearts of first-time voters.
- 5. Influence or Effects of Political *Communication*. In this case it can be seen that PDIP Bekasi City has succeeded in being a good communicator through political messages with the right media so that the political messages conveyed can be right on target. This is proven by the effect of political communication which is reflected in the high electability of Tri Adhianto as a strong candidate for Mayor of Bekasi, as well as positioning PDIP as the number 2 highest party after PKS in the Bekasi City DPRD legislative election contestation.

In this case, the Bekasi City PDIP DPC shows that the implementation of public relations management is carried out in accordance with the basic principles of relationship management, namely:

- 1. The main focus is building relationships, as a political party this is of course the most basic thing. Good relationships give birth to good perceptions, good perceptions create a good image. To be able to carry out promotional activities related to social aspects, of course efforts to build relationships with the community are the basis for a political party to be able to capture the perceptions or aspirations of the community which will then give birth to effective programs according to the needs of the community.
- 2. Efforts to achieve benefits for both the organization and the public. Looking at what the Bekasi City PDIP DPC is doing, they have created programs which of course involve the community as implementers. This is a manifestation of how political parties gain benefits in the form of community support and vice versa, what political parties do is answer what the community needs.
- 3. It is dynamic so it changes all the time. As we know, the political climate is always changing, especially before the election. There are many issues that arise which can certainly affect the reputation of parties or political actors. This has of course been anticipated well and systematically within the Bekasi City PDIP DPC by consistently being one of the parties with a lot of mass support. Quoted from Databooks.katadata.co.id It was recorded that in the 2019 DPR elections, PDIP was in 2nd position with 261,959 votes.
- 4. *Communication* is a strategic tool for relationship management. Ensuring that messages are well received by the public is how political parties ensure that the flow of communication can run well. Apart from door to door movements where legislative candidates can interact directly with the community, social media is also a communication medium that is able to capture the aspirations of the community.
- 5. An organization's relationship with the public is influenced by the history of the relationship, the nature of interactions, frequency of exchange, and reciprocity. Carrying the tagline "Little Wong Party", PDI Perjuangan wants to convey the message that their existence is for the people, where PDIP is present to convey the voices of the people. So

this concept is able to win the hearts of the people and increase a high sense of trust between the people and the party. This phenomenon was also found in the Bekasi City PDIP DPC where the administrators were given a mandate by the General Chairperson, Mrs. Megawati Soekarnoputri, to get involved and mingle with the people. This is done to create a reciprocal relationship between the party and society.

6. The creation of data relationships occurs in various aspects of public relations (PR) studies and practice. This has been done through the application of Fact Finding, Planning, *Communication* and Evaluation, where this process is able to produce programs that answer the needs of the community, especially in Bekasi City. Bekasi City PDIP DPC applies public relations practices to shape the party's image in order to prepare for the 2024 election contestation.

In general, the Bekasi City PDIP DPC is able to distribute information and communication channels well from the central level to the branch level so that efforts to promote public interests through social activity programs can be realized and answer issues developing in society, especially in Bekasi City, as for issues that are able to they address are health, education and food security.

CONCLUSION

From the research that has been carried out, the researcher makes a conclusion based on the following points:

- 1. The results of this research see that the implementation of public relations management at DPC PDIP Bekasi City is quite good, where they implement 4 stages of management public relations that is fact finding, planning, communication dan evaluation. The result is that the Bekasi City PDIP DPC is able to create a follow-up work program that can be a solution to problems that occur in the community.
- 2. The advantages of implementing public relations management in the Bekasi City PDIP DPC are divided into 3 points, namely building the identity and image of the organization, being able to overcome crises and promoting political activities that focus on social aspects.
- 3. Obstacles faced by the Bekasi City PDIP DPC in implementing management public relations, divided into 2 factors, namely internal constraints and external constraints. For internal constraints, researchers found that the Bekasi City PDIP DPC had limitations in terms of the quality of human resources related to media management staff and the level of soft skills related to the understanding of DPC administrators or secretariat staff regarding public relations activities. Meanwhile, from external factors, researchers see that the Bekasi City PDIP DPC still needs to adapt to the political climate which is starting to shift into the era of digitalization.

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