

Quick Response Crisis Communication Strategies Insights from Public Relations PT. KAI DAOP 2 Bandung's Train Accident Response

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ABSTRACT

A crisis can happen to a company that can potentially damage its reputation. But if the crisis can be handled properly, the crisis will not be detrimental to the company. In this study, the author discusses the Daop 2 Bandung Public Relations Crisis Communication Strategy in the case study of the Turangga – CL Bandung Raya Train Accident using a qualitative method with descriptive presentation, while the analysis obtained through interviews with one informant, observation and documentation data. The purpose of this study is to find out the crisis communication steps and efforts taken by Daop 2 Bandung Public Relations in dealing with crisis situations caused by train accidents. The results of the study show that KAI Public Relations has made several efforts to maintain the company's image, namely: First, PT KAI's pre-crisis applies the principle of zero accident by improving employee competence and discipline as well as maintaining facilities and infrastructure. Second, the crisis of PT KAI collaborates with stakeholders, provides solutions, is quick to respond in serving the media by preparing accurate data and fact information. Third, post-crisis improves the image by compensating employees and accident victims and conducting evaluations to improve railway safety and security in the future

INTRODUCTION

Trains are a means of transportation that has its own characteristics and also advantages, namely minimal pollution, avoiding congestion, being general, the fare issued is more affordable, and can shorten travel time (Wijayanto, 2019). In addition, railways not only provide an efficient alternative to travel but also have an impact on economic development and relations between regions. Service development is always carried out by PT. KAI is like the development of the KAI *Access* application to maximize services to the community. Development must continue to be carried out in a sustainable manner because railways are an important means of transportation for the people of Indonesia today, it has a significant impact on the economy and people's mobility. Behind the benefits felt there are also risks faced, one of which is an accident, such as what happened recently (KAI Public Relations, 2024).

Quoted from Kumpran.com explained the chronology of the Turangga Train accident with CL Bandung Raya that on January 5, 2024 at 06.03 WIB, there had been a collision between the Turangga Train (Train) departing from Surabaya Gubeng Station to Bandung and

the Bandung Raya Local Commuter Line Train departing from Padalarang Station to Cicalengka Station. The collision occurred on the Single line between Haurpugur Station and Cicalengka Station, previously the PPKP (Central Railway Travel Controller) determined the crossing of the two trains at Haurpugur Station to PPKA (Train Travel Regulator) Cicalengka Station. The Turangga Train is scheduled to arrive at Cicalengka Station at 05.50 WIB and CL Bandung Raya arrives at 06.02. However, the Turangga Train experienced delays, but PPKA from Haurpugur Station saw a safe signal from Cicalengka Station, so CL Bandung Raya departed from Haurpugur Station. At 05.59 WIB, the Turangga Train just arrived at Cicalengka Station and PPKA gave instructions to depart immediately. After that, at 06.03 it was reported that the Turangga Train crashed into CL Bandung Raya at KM 181 +5/4 in Babakan Village, Cikuya Village, Cicalengka – West Bandung (kumparan.com, January 5, 2024)

The incident can be said to be a serious matter, because it has claimed lives and concerns the safety of passengers. Or in other words, the incident is a crisis situation for PT. KAI where in this case can cause negative news for PT. KAI, therefore, needs proper crisis management in handling the case. Crisis management is an effort to overcome or control crises to improve the company's image (Ayub, 2017).

For companies, image is important for the sustainability of relationships with the public. Therefore, the role of public relations is needed in the management function by implementing a crisis communication strategy in dealing with issues that cause damage to the company's image (Widyastuti & Ekoputro, 2023). Public Relations has several main tasks, namely: *First* creating a good impression on the company. *Second* Knowledge and understanding, namely providing accurate information to the internal and external public. *Third* creating public interest in the company. *Fourth* Public Relations must accept and be responsible in providing understanding to the public with a calm attitude that can change the public's attitude to understanding and acceptance. *Fifth* Sympathy, public relations must be biased to gain public sympathy (Ayudia & Wulandari, 2021). Good crisis management must be accompanied by good crisis communication because effective communication is the key to carrying out crisis management, such as helping to convey information to *Stakeholders*, managing the organization's image and building trust, on the other hand good crisis management provides a solid foundation for timely and accurate communication, ensuring efficient coordination and targeted response.

The researcher is interested in researching how the communication strategy and efforts to manage the crisis communication strategy of PT. KAI Public Relations Daop 2 Bandung. Therefore, in this study, the author has two problem formulations, namely: (1) how the crisis communication strategy implemented by PT. KAI during the crisis situation, (2) Efforts to Manage the Public Relations Crisis Communication Strategy of PT KAI Daop 2 Bandung. This research is expected to add new insights that are useful for the scientific practice of crisis management and communication in the field of transportation, especially in the railway industry. Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying more deeply related to the efforts and crisis communication strategies of PT. KAI which is applied during the accident situation.

Literature Review

Wasesa stated that crisis communication is a strategy in conveying what communication wants to be conveyed, wants to be done and what the organization has done in responding to the crisis (Irene Silviani, 2020). Communication is the main thing in every public relations activity to maintain *good will* government institutions in the eyes of the public. Poor communication can lead to an inharmonious relationship between public relations and the public. Therefore, when there is a problem with the community, public relations must be able to handle it quickly so that it does not develop into a crisis. A public relations person is also responsible for building a positive image of his company. Although a positive image is formed from positive public opinion, the formation of opinions and changes in attitudes cannot be separated from the role of public relations in building relationships with the audience (Nuruzzaman et al., 2024).

In this study, the researcher explained the crisis strategy of PT. KAI uses crisis communication theory according to Coombs (2010) quoted from the book (Kriyantono, 2015) Crisis communication strategies must also be adjusted to the stages of the crisis: *First*, pre-crisis, focusing on gathering information about crisis risks, crisis communication models are carried out in the form of forming knowledge about crises (internal, equalizing perceptions among members of the organization. *Second*, Crisis, knowing the triggering events and responses, as well as *damage containment* from the crisis, the communication model used is to influence public perception related to the crisis, perception of the organization, and all efforts of the organization to overcome the crisis. *Third*, Post-Crisis, the communication model carried out is to improve reputation and restore the reputation lost due to the crisis.

The results of this research found from pre-crisis that in facing the potential risk of accidents on trains PT. KAI applies the zero accident principle, one of which is by implementing PT KAI implementing 5 safety cultures including, safety briefing before work, using SOPs, using personal protective equipment, reporting potential dangers and caring for the work environment. The crisis communication strategy implemented by PT KAI when facing the crisis caused by the Turangga – CL Bandung Raya train accident consisted of a quick response in serving the media supported by accurate data, making press releases and conducting interviews with the media. Also, at this post-crisis stage, PT KAI is collaborating with the Ministry of Transportation, PT. KAI has resolved all problems related to accidents that have occurred, both related to the victim's family and other parties.

Previous research has the purpose of obtaining references and comparison materials as well to prevent the assumption of similarity in this study. In the study entitled Active listening in the management of crisis communication: case study of the 2017 terrorist attack in Barcelona - this study analyzes the use of social networks as a public relations strategy in the framework of the crisis communication strategy applied after the terrorist attack, the focus of this study is to analyze the content of the Catalonia Police Twitter account @mossos. This research method uses descriptive qualitative based on the analysis of the content of the Catalonia Twitter account. Data collection was carried out by interviewing eight communication experts. The results of the study show that the messages posted by the mossos d'esquadra Twitter account exceed service information, making it more in the field of public relations, in addition to management through continuous involvement and interaction with collaboration and mutual communication between the police and the community. This has an impact on improving the

image of the police in the community (Cristòfol et al., 2020).

Crisis communication in construction: Organizational strategies for worksite fatalities. This study analyzes crisis communication in construction casualties, which has not been thoroughly evaluated. The focus of this study is to assess best practices of more influential crisis communication and management and to take methods with models that can be used after deaths on construction sites. By using the literature review research method. The results of this study show that workplace deaths can be said to be a type of crisis that can be avoided, and have an impact on the legal, financial and reputational damage of the organization. A good response method includes an ingratiation, mortification or corrective action strategy that relies on stakeholders, responsibility, reputation and crisis history (Hinsberg & Lamanna, 2024).

The above research provides different knowledge about crisis communication in various contexts in using social media in terrorist crises, crisis communication strategies at construction sites, and in this research discusses crisis communication efforts in transportation companies. These different methods and focuses produce different findings, describing the different needs and challenges in each crisis situation studied.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the author uses a qualitative research method. Qualitative research methods are research methods used to research on natural object conditions, where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out in triangulation, data analysis is inductive, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Abdussamad, 2021). In qualitative research, researchers play a key role in collecting and interpreting data with descriptive presentation. The researcher uses a descriptive analysis approach because he is considered able to describe things clearly and each part can be studied individually, so that the facts of a case can be revealed transparently.

The data collection technique is in the form of interviews, Data collection was carried out for 3 months in this study the data sources consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from the results of an interview with Mr. Ayep Hanapi as the Public Relations Manager of PT. KAI Daop 2 Bandung. Then secondary data is obtained from documentation and literature studies with the support of print media and internet media in the form of news *Online* related to accidents and *Press Release*.

In this study, the author uses data analysis with the Milles and Heberman interactive analysis model which consists of four stages, namely: Data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawn. Dalam komunikasi strategi penelitian ini mereferensi dari penelitian kombs 2010 yang dikutip kriyanto 2015, antara lain: Pre-crisis, Crisis, and Post-Crisis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research is a research focused on Crisis Communication conducted by Daop 2 Bandung Public Relations in dealing with crisis situations related to the Turangga – CL Bandung Raya train accident. As a material for the research data study, the researcher conducted data search activities through in-depth interviews with the Public Relations manager

of Daop 2 Bandung. The things obtained from the results of the interview, are as follows:

Communication Strategy of the Public Relations Crisis of Daop 2 Bandung on the Turangga-CL Train Accident in Greater Bandung

The main task of being a Public Relations Officer is to build and maintain the company's image, for that a Public Relations must be "Humanist" to pay attention to external and internal relations running well, for example establishing good relationships with external such as the media, the community, all *stakeholders*, be it the local government, the region. In addition, public relations must also run certain events such as safety socialization at crossing gates, socialization to schools, etc. Then from the internal side of public relations, they must prepare *press releases*, hold press conferences, carry out adventtorial visits to the media.

According to Coombs (2010) quoted from (Kriyantono, 2015) The crisis communication strategy must be equated with the stages of the crisis:

1. Pre-crisis

The *pre-crisis* phase or also known as the pre-crisis period, in this phase, a company should share information with the public, especially related parties who have interests related to the potential crisis that can occur. From the results of the study, it was found that in facing the potential risk of accidents on trains PT. KAI implements the principle of *zero accidents*, one of which is by implementing PT KAI implementing 5 safety cultures including, safety briefing before work, using SOPs, using personal protective equipment, reporting potential hazards and caring for the work environment. The risk of accidents occurs because there are several factors, including external factors such as people who do not comply with the rules of crossing at the crossing level, the theft of railway assets, building illegal buildings around the tracks, and the act of throwing train glass. To overcome this, PT KAI always holds safety socialization to the community, groups regions, and collaborates with *stakeholders*.

In addition, to minimize the danger that comes from internal factors of PT. KAI is like unreliable facilities and infrastructure and *human error*. To overcome this, PT KAI conducts procedures for checking the feasibility of facilities and infrastructure that must be carried out within a certain period of time, as well as improving the communication system. In terms of human resources, PT KAI also improves employee competence and discipline such as organizing flash education (DIKLAT), field education (DIKLAP), *workshops*, *Focus Group Discussions* (FGD), and railway human resource certification by authorized institutions. Meanwhile, in digital media, PT KAI has a SRI (*Safety Railway Information*) *application*, which is a potential hazard reporting application, with this application every KAI employee can report various potential hazards and employees can also get information related to safety and weather forecasts in all operational areas. In addition to the SRI application, reporting potential hazards can also be done through the KAI accident prevention reporting contact center.

2. Crisis

At this stage is the most important thing, because in this situation an accurate crisis communication strategy is needed in responding to the crisis that occurs, in this case the delivery of information and actions taken by a company can have an impact on the

sustainability of the company's reputation or image in the future. The crisis communication strategy implemented by PT KAI when facing the crisis caused by the Turangga – CL Bandung Raya train accident consists of quick response in serving the media supported by accurate data, making *press releases* and conducting interviews with the media.

KAI consistently conveys messages on social media and the official *website* page of KAI, PT. KAI provided detailed information on the development of information on the Turangga-CL Bandung Raya train accident. The crisis communication conveyed by PT. KAI includes the following, namely: (1) KAI and KNKT formed an investigation team to investigate the occurrence of the accident, in this case KAI in collaboration with KNKT transparently revealed the cause of the accident on the Turangga-CL Bandung Raya train, which occurred because there was human involvement, human contribution factors, confirmation bias that affected the decision-making process of PPKA Cicalengka Station and Haurpugur Station to depart trains from each station and there are problems with the signaling system (*uncommanded signal*), (2) To overcome the impassable southern line, PT KAI carries out line engineering by diverting to the northern line and providing other transportation facilities, (3) Repairing the line, (4) Providing compensation to employees who are victims of the Turangga – CL Bandung Raya train accident, providing a guarantee of treatment costs to the injured victims, as well as providing compensation to passengers who experience delays in departure due to the Turangga and CL Bandung Raya train accidents, (5) Conducting evaluations with relevant *stakeholders* to improve the safety of train travel in the future.

3. *Post – Crisis*

So in this case, the strategy is. Public Relations has full responsibility in overcoming every problem so it tries to find ways to restore the image and trust of the public (Anggraeni et al., 2014). The company should always have a plan to deal with crisis situations and avoid decisions that will later make the company fall further into a crisis. The last part in dealing with this crisis, it is necessary to pay attention to the way the company takes an action to build and maintain the company's good name. If the crisis occurs again in the company, the thing that must be done is to prepare for better in the future. In this post-crisis stage, PT. KAI has resolved all problems related to the accident that has occurred, both related to the victim's family, and other parties.

PT KAI collaborated with the Ministry of Transportation after the cause of the accident was revealed by following up on it to prevent similar incidents from occurring. Doing several things such as completing the signal diversion from mechanical to electric on the Cicalengka – Haurpugur route. In addition, the Ministry of Transportation is also working on the completion of the construction *of a double track*. Then PT KAI collaborated with Jasa Raharja in terms of providing protection to passengers and workers and PT KAI has ensured that the line between Cicalengka Station and Haurpugur Station is sterile and can be passed by train but with a speed limit of 20 km/h.

KAI is also committed to improving safety, the accident that occurred in Cicalengka, Bandung Regency made the evaluation together to improve railway safety and security in the future. To make a good impression on customers during Nataru 2023/2024, KAI has presented various innovations such as the inauguration of Luxury Lounge at Surabaya Gubeng Station, Purwokerto, Kertosono and skybridg at Purwokerto Station. KAI also gives appreciation to customers by organizing *snack for kids programs, free merchandise, Mother's Day gifts, and free tumblr.*

Efforts to Manage the Communication Strategy of the Daop 2 Bandung Public Relations Crisis on the Turangga – CL Bandung Raya Train Accident

As for the management efforts carried out by Daop 2 Bandung Public Relations in handling the crisis situation, according to Ayep Hanapi, the first thing the public relations team did was to directly visit the scene of the incident to find data and facts at the scene of the incident, then analyze the problem according to what was found in the field, after that make a plan, and the information obtained will be summarized to be submitted to the head office to then immediately get a decision. In looking for data and facts, coordination with related parties is also needed, for example in this case collaborating with the KNKT in an effort to investigate the cause of the accident. To obtain accurate information, Daop 2 Bandung Public Relations Establishes *a crisis center* in the form of an internal special team tasked with collecting data and facts Accurate data is an important foundation in making decisions for the Company. Because if the data taken is inaccurate, it can lead to strategy errors and damaged reputations. On the contrary, accurate data allows the Company to make better and more efficient decisions.

A Public Relations Officer must have a close relationship with various kinds of *Stakeholders* to monitor opinions, perceptions and attitudes *Stakeholders* against what the company is doing (Wardiman & Amanag, 2022). This is implemented in the strategy carried out by KAI public relations, namely building closeness with the media by acting quickly and responsively in serving the media. Because the relationship between the media and the press in public relations can be said to be *Channel* in conveying the message. For example, continue to provide information developments by holding press conferences and conducting interviews with the media. media were also given the opportunity to conduct direct interviews with Top Management such as *Vice President Public Relations* PT KAI and Public Relations Manager of Daop 2 Bandung.

As according to (Silviani, 2020), meeting the media is an opportunity, not a threat, especially when a crisis occurs, journalists tend to be thirsty for information. In this case, communicating with the media is very important because it can help control the narrative of information circulating in society and the media also has great power in shaping public opinion. An important point that the researcher found from this point is that Public Relations should not answer with "*no comment*" In the crisis situation that is happening because if Public Relations fails to respond, the media or other parties may convey information that can lead to opinions or create hoax news. According to (Hermawan & Lestari, 2021) Hoax news tends to generate hostility and anger that has a bad impact on the company, for that a public relations person must be responsive, accurate and consistent.

The last effort made by Daop 2 Bandung Public Relations is to conduct an internal evaluation, Daop 2 Public Relations realizes that there are shortcomings in crisis communication carried out, such as not to be provoked by the media because they are afraid of the media asking provocative questions because they are worried that they only want to take advantage of the situation that is happening.

As explained above, an organization, both profit and non-profit, tends to have potential in facing crises. The crisis that occurs in the company will indirectly have an impact on all *stakeholders*. A crisis that is not handled properly will be detrimental to the company's sustainability, but if a company manages to overcome the crisis well, the crisis will not have a bad impact on the company's sustainability in the future. Therefore, *public relations* is needed because it has an impulse to try to create a good relationship between the company and the public (Sura & Sudilah, 2015). These efforts can give a good impression, so as to produce public opinion that is useful for the survival of the company. The company's ability to face and control crises can be prepared by forming a *crisis management plan*. Or in the sense that when the company is in crisis, it should maintain active communication with stakeholders. Crisis control planning owned by a company is the main reference so that the communication carried out can provide understanding for related parties so that they can maintain good relationships. But in reality, there are many companies that are confused in shaping crisis communication strategies and tactics. According to Wasesa, quoted from the book *Public Relations* as a solution to crisis communication (Silviani, 2020) states that crisis communication is a strategy to communicate what the organization wants to say, wants to do, and what the organization has done in responding to the crisis.

Information that comes from a company related to the crisis that occurs can minimize damage that has an impact on the company's image. In conveying information, companies are required to be transparent and provide accurate data related to the crisis that occurs, because accuracy and consistency in conveying information will increase the company's credibility. In this case, KAI is always consistent in conveying information development. The news issued by journalists is expected to be able to prevent the emergence of *false information* and rumors that can harm the company which may arise when the company is not transparent in conveying information.

CONCLUSION

In maintaining the company's image, PT. KAI carried out a crisis communication strategy related to the Turangga – CL Bandung Raya train accident case which caused casualties and several losses for passengers. In this study, the researcher explained the steps taken by KAI in dealing with crisis situations, which are divided into three phases, namely; First, Pre-crisis, KAI implements zero accidents by prioritizing safety, Second, Crisis, in this phase KAI makes efforts to handle the accidents caused by the Turangga – CL Bandung Raya train, such as the evacuation of passengers, the number of casualties, information on cancellations and changes in departure schedules, as well as providing compensation to fatalities and injured victims, while the crisis strategy carried out in this phase is quick response in serving the media supported by data that accurate, make a press reality to be sent to the media and conduct

interviews with the media. Third, PT KAI's Post crisis collaborated with the Ministry of Transportation after the cause of the accident was revealed and followed up to prevent similar incidents from occurring. In addition, it collaborates with Jasa Marga to provide protection to passengers and workers.

The results of this study show that KAI is committed to providing accurate data and facts to the public by forming a crisis center for the community. In addition, in this study, PT. KAI is quick to respond in providing information to the media is also one of the keys to crisis communication.

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