Politicos: Jurnal Politik Dan Pemerintahan
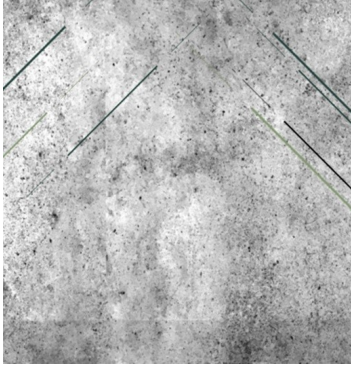## Volume 4, Number 1, 2024

Police Image Restoration: A Case Study of the Stampede (Crowd Crisis) at Kanjuruhan Malang

Purnama Ayu Rizky[1], Jesslyn Velingsia[2]

[1]Universitas Nasional Jakarta, Indonesia

[2]Universitas Bunda Mulia, Indonesia

Police Image Restoration: A Case Study of the Stampede (Crowd Crisis) at Kanjuruhan Malang

Purnama Ayu Rizky[1]*, Jesslyn Velingsia[2]

Universitas Nasional Jakarta[1]
Universitas Bunda Mulia[2]

Abstract

On October 1 2022, 131 people died in a "riot" at the Kanjuruhan Stadium, Malang, East Java. The riot occurred after Persebaya silenced Arema, the host football group. Arema supporters, who did not accept the defeat, then rushed into the stadium, so that the police (Polri) who were on guard at the location, dispersed the crowd by spraying tear gas, leaving the exit doors tightly closed, thus triggering massive panic. What happened in Kanjuruhan was an example of a stampede or crowd crisis which created chaotic conditions to the point that many were found dead. The aftermath of the tragedy was the erosion of public trust in the National Police institution. This research outlines the image restoration strategy of the National Police in overcoming the Kanjuruhan stampede, using Bennoit's Image Restoration theory. This qualitative research uses descriptive analysis to explain this phenomenon. The research results show that strategies to improve the image of the National Police, including denial, evading responsibility, reducing effectiveness, corrective action, mortification, have in fact proven to be ineffective. Because, this strategy failed to boost the institution's positive image. Thus, public trust in this institution has collapsed to this day.

Keywords: Stampede; Crowd, Image restoration; Crisis communication; Police

Introduction

During an interview with Najwa Shihab in the program "Mata Najwa: Three Bacapres Talk about Ideas" at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, on September 19, 2023, Presidential Candidate Anies Baswedan said it is important to improve the performance and image of the police force, which is now negatively perceived by the public. He offered four things, starting with building transparency, professionalism, and competence among members, being an example in law enforcement, and public involvement in control and supervision (Nuri, 2023). The negative image of the police is not a figment of the imagination. This was mainly fueled by three major "earthquakes" within the police force. First, the Kanjuruhan tragedy in Malang, East Java. Then there was the alleged murder of Brigadier Joshua Hutabarat by former Propam boss Ferdy Sambo. Finally, the drug syndicate dragged the newly appointed East Java Regional Police Chief (Kapolda), Teddy Minahasa.

Of the three cases, the Kanjuruhan Malang case has attracted the most public attention. Although the Kanjuruhan Malang tragedy happened more than a year ago, on 1 October 2022, the victims refused to forget. In the 12 July 2023 edition of Kompas, a group of victims' families rejected the plan to renovate the Kanjuruhan Stadium, Malang, which was originally to be carried out in August 2023. They argued that the legal process was flawed and did not give victims a sense of justice, so they continue to fight to this day. In addition, renovating the stadium is tantamount to removing evidence of the crime. The struggle to refuse to forget also echoed in President Joko Widodo's (Jokowi) working visit to Malang on 24 July 2023. During the visit, dozens of

families of victims, the majority of whom were women, carried photos of relatives, including their children who died in the Kanjuruhan Malang tragedy. After being blocked by Indonesian National Army (TNI) officers, the masses continued to deliver three core demands.

Among them is that the Kanjuruhan tragedy case be resolved thoroughly. Completion here also means providing a sense of justice for the victims, who continue to protest why the five defendants were given light sentences by the Surabaya District Court. The five defendants were Arema FC Panpel Chairman Abdul Haris, Arema FC Security Officer Suko Sutrisno, East Java Police Brimob Danki AKP Hasdamarwan, former Malang Police Samapta Head AKP Bambang Sidik Achmadi, and former Malang Police Head of Operations Kompol Wahyu Seto Pranoto. On average, they were sentenced to 1-2 years, and two defendants were even acquitted of all charges (Thomas, 2022). Secondly, they wanted the model B report at the Malang Regional Police (Polres) to be investigated.The model B report was prepared by the victim's family because they were not satisfied with the model A report prepared by the police. The article charged in the A report was only negligence rather than a serious charge such as murder. Report B was also born because during the initial four months of the investigation, only four people were questioned, and all of them were members of the police. Meanwhile, sources from medical personnel who witnessed the treatment of victims and academics who had conducted research were ignored (Triswanto, 2023).

Third, the residents rejected the renovation of Kanjuruhan Stadium. As mentioned earlier, the renovation, if carried out, will have the potential to change, replace, and or eliminate evidence. Arema FC, the Malang football club, even if it is renovated, they want its use to be changed for a monument or museum, because they cannot bear to cheer watching the match again after the incident that killed the supporters of the football club from Malang. On the one-year anniversary of the tragedy, thousands of people from the families of the victims are still voicing similar demands in front of the Kanjuruhan Stadium, 1 October 2023. In fact, there are six demands that they have updated. Among them, the masses urged President Jokowi to thoroughly investigate the masterminds of the Kanjuruhan tragedy, not only field actors but also police officials. Second, asking the National Police Chief to firmly instruct the Head of the Criminal Investigation Unit to re-develop the investigation and investigation. Third, make the Kanjuruhan tragedy a gross human rights violation in accordance with the recommendations of the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM). Fourth, that Komnas Perempuan and Komnas Perlindungan Anak Indonesia oversee and encourage law enforcement against women and children victims. Fifth, for Kompolnas to oversee the dynamics of law enforcement of the National Police. Sixth, that the Menpora and PSSI immediately establish 1 October as a national football mourning day.

For information, the tragedy that killed a total of 135 people occurred after Persebaya silenced Arema, the host football group. Arema supporters who did not accept the defeat, then rushed into the stadium, so that the police officers (Polri) who were on guard at the location, drove the crowd by spraying tear gas. Not only towards the field but also stand 10, where many families including women and children were watching. When the incident took place, the authorities also left the exits closed, triggering more massive panic. What happened at Kanjuruhan was an example of a *stampede* or crowd crisis. It was caused by panic and irrational actions realised by jostling, running, saving themselves in the midst of panic (Hardiantoro & Firdaus, 2023). As a result, people in the crowd who are found dead usually have characteristic wounds, usually on the head and chest. *Stampede* in de Almeida and Schreeb's (2018) research is defined as an irrational and panicked crowd, usually caused by systemic failures of the institutions concerned. Stampede usually leads to fatal consequences, including death.

Meanwhile, Lassa and Yusainy (2022), a stampede is a crowd flow crisis, which is associated with a combination of panic, run, push, crush each other until they step on each other and sometimes also attack each other phenomena. Furthermore, the crowd is a process rather than an entity. The logical consequence is that how a crowd forms and interacts is determined by how it is dispersed. They took three samples from stampede conditions at the London 2012 Summer Olympics and Paralympics, the 2012 Union of European Football Associations, European Championship final, and the 2012 and 2013 Hajj Pilgrimages. From the three cases, it can be concluded that

crowds have failed to manage their psychology (crowd control aka crowd management) are later prone to panic and trampling each other (Lassa & Yusainy, 2022).

The stampede in the world of football that leads to violence and even death is not the first time in the world. At the Ghana Football Stadium in 2001, 131 people died due to stampede. Previously, in 1989, at Hillsborough Stadium, Sheffield, England in 1989, 96 people died. Meanwhile, at the National Stadium, Lima Peru in 1964, the death toll reached 328 people. The majority of stampede cases above are related to several things, starting from the design capacity of the stadium which leads to security at the stadium and crisis mitigation from security officers (Lassa & Yusainy, 2022). Hutton (2022) wrote that British police officer Alexander Berlonghi said that *stampedes* that lead to mass deaths should make officers understand how to communicate, take competent and effective action. The reason is, without an understanding of these strategies, it is very potential that more victims will fall. Berlonghi's research is more than half a century old. However, the research is still considered relevant in this era. Especially when stampede cases that lead to death still occur in later years, including this *stampede* in Kanjuruhan, Malang.

In the case of Kanjuruhan, so far, investigations have shown that there are indications that officers upstream and in the field misapplied the communication strategy. In the initial roll call before the officers went on guard, there was an instruction not to commit acts of violence. Meanwhile, officers in the field responded to the crisis with violent language. They sprayed tear gas indiscriminately, deliberately turned off the lights in the stadium, and locked the exits so that the crowd was trapped inside the stadium, experiencing asphyxiation, and many eventually died. In more detail, there are several key findings that have been compiled and announced by the joint fact-finding team, which are as follows (Mantalean & Setuningsih, 2022):

1. There was a mobilisation of several troops armed with tear gas when entering the middle of the second half. This is considered odd, considering that there was no potential disturbance or security threat at the time of the incident.
2. According to witnesses, there were some supporters who entered the field after the match was over. The reason is, the supporters want to motivate and provide moral support to the players. Unfortunately, the police responded excessively. Not accepting this condition, other supporters were desperate to go down to the field to help their colleagues.
3. The police did not take preventive measures, such as giving verbal orders or warnings. Also, the police did not provide soft empty hand control, but immediately shot tear gas at the supporters. This violates Perkap No. 1/2009 on the Use of Force, in which the police are supposed to go through certain stages before shooting tear gas.
4. This violence involved members of the Police and TNI. The joint officers dragged, beat, and kicked supporters.
5. Tear gas was fired at the South, East and North stands. As a result, according to supporters' testimonies, it triggered extraordinary panic.
6. There was a build-up of supporters at various doors that were deliberately locked when they wanted to leave due to the narrow and limited evacuation access. Consequently, the spectators who wanted to get out had difficulty breathing, were trampled, and died.
7. There was no adequate help from the police to the supporters who wanted to leave the stadium. These supporters struggled to get out on their own.
8. The violence continued inside and outside the stadium. Police officers are still firing tear gas outside the stadium.
9. There were certain parties who made intimidation efforts, both directly and indirectly. The aim is to instil fear in witnesess and victims so that they remain silent, not giving testimony.
10. The government did not provide complete information regarding the data on casualties and injuries. Even if it exists, it is limited, difficult to access by the public.
11. There has been communication between the Civil Society Coalition Fact-Finding Team and National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) and Witness and Victim

Protection Agency (LPSK) regarding the fact-finding report. But the police did not actually meet with witnesses and victims.

12. The police still persist in using the term "riot", which is misleading. In fact, there are indications of systematic attacks or killings of civilians.

The problem is that although the joint fact-finding team has provided recommendations, this legal decision is considered by the victim's family to not fulfil the principles of justice. In the judge's decision, the defendant AKP Bambang Sidik Achmadi was acquitted on three grounds. It is true that the defendant ordered the firing of tear gas but the shots were directed from the field to the stands due to mere gusts of wind. Then, the panic at door 13 was also not the fault of the defendant AKP Bambang Sidik Achmadi but the order of another defendant Danki Brimob Polda Jatim Hasdarman who was sentenced to a light sentence of 1 year and 6 months, lower than the prosecutor's demand of 3 years (Tempo, 2023).

Although the police have since responded by giving statements and communicating in public, the image of the police remains tarnished. This is characterised by a crisis of public confidence in the institution. In Indonesia, distrust of the police was affirmed by a survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI). Based on the results of the LSI survey on 6-10 October 2022, it was shown that the level of public trust in the National Police began to fall by 2 percentage points from 72 per cent to 70 per cent in August 2022. This figure continued to fall by 17 per cent points to 53 per cent in October 2022 (Lembaga Survei Indonesia, 2022). The Bhayangkara Corps is the law enforcement agency least trusted by the public, after the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), which has a public trust level of 54 per cent. The majority of respondents who do not trust the Polri generally come from those with a high level of education and income.

Eleven twelve, a Populi Center survey of 1,200 respondents spread across 34 provinces in Indonesia on 9-17 October 2022 found that 58.5 per cent gave a score of 6-10 on a scale of 1-10 to the National Police, while 33.9 per cent gave a score of 1-5. This figure dropped compared to a similar survey in March 2022 where 67 per cent of respondents gave scores of 6-10 and July 2022 when 64.4 gave scores of 6-10. If made an average, the institution pocketed 6.06 points and became the 10th most untrusted institution and a total of 13 agencies. The distrust of the Indonesian police, which was responded to with a strategy to restore the image of the institution, is the basis why this research needs to be done (Ramadhan & Santosa, 2022). This is because Indonesia is a country with a large football supporter base. They have different characteristics from the hooligans in Europe who tend to be more orderly. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, supporters psychologically tend to be more permissive of violence, anarchism, and so on. This condition is exacerbated by systemic problems in the Indonesian Football Association (PSSI), which has no effective control tools, in terms of preventive and curative.

Research on Kanjuruhan itself has been conducted several times by researchers. For example, Alwaton's research from Universitas Gadjah Mada (2023) discussed police crisis communication in overcoming the Kanjuruhan tragedy (Alwaton, 2023). Then there is the research of Ulum, et al (2022) who analyzed the news about the Kanjuruhan tragedy in *Radar Surabaya* and *Jawa Pos* (Ulum et al, 2022). Also, research released by the Institute of Criminal Justice Reform (2022) which focuses on the use of chemicals and the prohibition of the use of chemicals as chemical weapons regulated in Law Number 9 of 2008. However, the research that has been done does not identify how image restoration is carried out, what its objectives are, and whether it has been effective enough in coping with the tragedy and its after-effects. This is because, as the frontline officers in the field, they need to know how to conduct effective communication planning and management when dealing with crowds. So, the research question is, how was image restoration carried out by the police officers in dealing with the *stampede* in Kanjuruhan, Malang? How effective was the image restoration in the midst of a crisis?

Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. The aim is to systematically describe what facts, characteristics of the population, or a particular field in a factual and careful manner.

Furthermore, descriptive research simply describes situations or events, does not seek or explain relationships, does not test hypotheses or make predictions (Girsang, 2017). The qualitative approach also has advantages because it is able to present data that is systematic, accurate, and factual about the reality in the field (Neuman, 2017). As this is qualitative research, the data collected will be non-numerical. It refers to meanings, concept definitions, metaphors, characters, symbols, and other descriptions. This research uses detailed descriptions of a particular phenomenon, rather than highlighting numerical data and definite interrelationships between variables (Berg, 2001).

According to Rakhmat (2017), there are four objectives of descriptive research, namely:
1. Collect as much actual information in detail that adequately represents the symptoms that appear.
2. Identify problems or examine prevailing conditions and practices.
3. Making comparisons or evaluations.
4. Determine what others have done in dealing with similar problems and learn from experiences to establish future plans and decisions.

In this case, the statements made by Kapolri Listyo Sigit in a press conference on 3 October 2022 and 4 October 2022 were examined. Then the researcher also compared it with the Polri Public Relations Division's tweets through the @DivHumas_Polri account on Twitter (X) throughout October 2022. The consideration was that the Kapolri press conference was the most awaited moment for the grieving masses and hoped for a response from the police institution directly. Meanwhile, the Polri Public Relations Division account in X was chosen because it was quite active in tweeting about the Kanjuruhan tragedy that month.

Results

Based on the transcripts of Kapolri Listyo Sigit's statements in two press conferences, on 3 and 4 October 2022, researchers found two main strategies to restore Polri's image. First, *Corrective Action*, actually, Kapolri Listyo Sigit has shown good intentions so that this kind of incident does not need to be repeated. The trick is to carry out reforms within the police, especially those related to security duties. This can be seen from his verbal message:

> "We will be serious and investigate thoroughly, and of course in the future, related to the organising process and the security process."

Second, *Mortification*, Instead of defending himself or shifting responsibility, Listyo Sigit legowo apologised and admitted that his personnel had committed serious code of ethics violations related to the firing of tear gas towards the stands. In this press conference, Listyo also announced the naming of six suspects for the Kanjuruhan case, namely the President Director of PT Liga Indonesia Baru (LIB) AHL, the Chairman of the Organising Committee AH, security officer SS, Head of Malang Police WSS, Danki 3 Brimob Polda East Java H, and Kasat Samapta Malang Police BSA. In his statement, he said:

> "Of course this caused the audience, especially those in the stands that were shot at, to panic, feel painful and try to leave the arena."

From Listyo Sigit's two press conferences, there has actually been a fairly effective strategy to not add to the wounds of the victims and not push the crisis to a deeper point. There has been an awareness from this agency, represented by the statement of its head that there was involvement of Polri members through tear gas shots that made hundreds of lives lost in the Kanjuruhan stampede. He even openly promised to improve security in the future so that similar incidents would not happen again. From Listyo Sigit's two press conferences, there has actually been a fairly effective strategy to not add to the wounds of the victims and not push the crisis to a deeper point. There has been an awareness from this agency, represented by the statement of its head that there was involvement of Polri members through tear gas shots that made hundreds of lives lost

in the Kanjuruhan stampede. He even openly promised to improve security in the future so that similar incidents would not happen again.

The adage was uttered after the police were rocked by a case of alleged premeditatedmurder involving former Propam Cadre Ferdy Sambo. On that occasion, Listyo asserted that he would not hesitate to dishonourably remove members of the police who were caught committing offences. This was done because he wanted to create a clean institution and escape the negative image of decades ago. "Because I love the 430,000 police officers who have worked well and the 30,000 who have also worked well," he explained to the media (Harjanto, 2022). The remark about rotten fish was also repeated in his speech at the closing ceremony of the 30th batch of Sespimti Polri Dikreg, 61st batch of Sespimen Polri Dikreg, and 66th batch of Sespimma Polri, in Lembang, West Java, 27 October 2022. In his opinion, Officer graduates are definitely leaders in the future. To be a leader who understands problems and knows how to map out solutions, it is important for Polri to prove that they can be a role model. "There is a saying, 'rotten fish starts from the head', if the leader has problems, then the subordinates will have problems too," said Sigit at that time.

Sigit himself tries to consistently prove his political communication, through the concept of Presisi (Predictive, Responsible, and Fair Transparency) which is always echoed and applied in the reform efforts he has made in the Police to this day. This includes when responding to the Kanjuruhan case. In his two press conferences, he wanted to show the public that Polri as an institution can be precise. The problem is that, in the Kanjuruhan case, Sigit's spirit was not translated well by his subordinates in the police. Since the mass media has been busy reporting on the Kanjuruhan case, at the regional level, the Malang police have actually carried out a ceremonial act by prostrating themselves to apologise, as reported by the official Instagram of the Malang City Police, instead of committing to solving the case.

> "We prostrate and kneel down to ask for Your forgiveness, Ya Rabb, apologising to the victim and his family and all aremania aremanita."

Third, *Reducing Effectiveness*, The National Police's Public Relations Division had expressed deep sorrow for the deaths of many football fans at Kanjuruhan on 2 October 2022. The problem is that the next day, the Polri Public Relations post showed a different tone. Quoted from Era.id (2022), their X account uploaded two videos with covers: POLRI EVACUATION OF KANJURUHAN TRAGEDY BODIES and POLRI EVACUATION OF KANJURUHAN BODIES.

Figure 1. Screenshot of Divhumas Polri Video

Source: Div. Humas Polri account via era.id

In the video, it was explained how the police officers who carried out security duties at the Kanjuruhan Stadium were the most alert to help save the victims. The narrative is reinforced by the selection of diction such as "providing first aid", "evacuating the supporters of the football team who were victims of the riot", "working together to save the victims of the supporters", and "acting with full humanity". Fourth, *Denial*, From the same video, we also know that the National Police denied that the institution was responsible for the riot. Instead, it blames the supporters on

the field who became victims of their own actions. The choice of diction used is chaos, riot, instead of police negligence or error.In another upload on 7 October 2022, the National Police Public Relations Division raised a picture story with the title "The Sorrow of Indonesian Football. According to Gulam & Sahroji (2022), the Kanjuruhan tragedy would not acted fanatically. The illustration reads "fanaticism should remain measured, directed, and accompanied by logic."

Figure 2. Post DivHumas Polri

Source: DivHumas Polri in X via Era.id

Fifth, *Evading Responsibility*, The most fatal thing is that Polri's public relations have washed their hands through their posts. On several occasions, Polri quoted academics who said that tear gas can never kill humans, even on a high scale. At best, it can only cause eye irritation. This statement actually shows that the Police Public Relations Division is very tone deaf in responding to the Kanjuruhan case. This tragedy occurred not only because of the tear gas that was deliberately fired into the stands, but the after-effects, namely the panic of the masses and the exits that were tightly closed by the police. The police statement hurt the hearts of the victims and their families, and created a crisis of confidence in the police institution. The police in this case also did not provide a sympathetic response when the Fact-Finding Team announced 12 key findings that proved the institution was involved in the stampede that claimed victims. The unsympathetic response included not apologising and committing to solve the case, not disclosing data transparently, and defending themselves by calling the incident a riot, rather than a systematic killing.

Ferguson et al. (2018) states that the most effective communication strategy to restore image is by mortification or apologising and admitting mistakes. This is one of the things that the public, especially victims, want to hear in a crisis situation. However, in the Kanjuruhan tragedy, there was confusion in the way Polri responded to the crisis. The Public Relations Division of the Police defended themselves by stating that what happened in Kanjuruhan was nothing more than a mass riot, rather than the fault of the police who did not have definite protocols regarding crowd funding. The Malang Police are busy prostrating themselves in gratitude. Meanwhile, Listyo Sigit expressed his commitment that unfortunately law enforcement was only on paper.

Discussion

In the case of the Kanjuruhan tragedy, it is important to see how Polri improved its image through its communication strategy in the midst of a crisis. The improvement of the image was mainly based on the realisation that the public viewed Polri with a bad image after the Kanjuruhan incident. Thus, a new social reality was created through image messages on social media as Polri's communication channel. Image itself is sometimes different from social reality. According to Lippman, image is like a stereotype, it lives in our heads, an image that is sometimes different from the actual social reality (L'Etang, 2013). Meanwhile, according to Berger and Luckmann in

Sobur (2009), social reality is translated as reality or reality that exists in phenomena that have a being that does not depend on the will of individual humans. Bungin (2018) also explained that sometimes social reality be-comes an everyday reality, including in the form of concepts, public discourse, and general awareness. In a crisis, image creation is needed to save the reputation of the police. This needs to be done because a good reputation is directly proportional to public trust. As a result, when organisations or agencies make certain policies, the public will tend to ac-cept them more. Still in a crisis situation, according to Gunanto et al (2020), crisis communication strategies include communicating messages clearly. Everyone can talk but not everyone can com-municate it to the public, so it takes certain skills so that the communication objectives can be achieved (Girsang, 2018).

Then there is the pull strategy, which usually uses more mass media. Finally, there is the pass strategy, which utilises community networks, volunteers, mass bases, loyal fans, and the like. Some communicators often add strategies with billboards, banners, radio adverts, or direct community social activities. However, the method that is considered effective according to Arasid et al., (2022) is to utilise new media, social media. Meanwhile, Benoit (1997) as cited by Heri (2012) states:

> "Human beings possess a basic instinct to engage in recurrent patterns of communicative behavior designed to reduce, redress, or avoid damage to their reputation (or face or image) from perceived wrong-doing. Complaints are routinely leveled at people in all walks of life for all sorts of alleged misbehavior; accordingly, we are repeatedly faced with situations that impel us to explain or justify our behavior, to offer excuses or apologies, for those aspects of our behavior that offend and provoke reproach from those around us. Our face, image, or reputation is valuable."

Humans have a basic instinct to engage in repetitive patterns of communicative behaviour designed to mitigate, repair, or prevent damage to their reputation (or face or image) for per-ceived wrongdoing. Complaints, on the other hand, will be regularly raised by those who feel things are not right all the time. Thus, we repeatedly face situations that encourage us to justify, evade or apologise for aspects of our behaviour that are considered offensive, provocative or in-sulting to our surroundings. It is the image or reputation that counts. Bennoit's statement also emphasises how image plays a significant role in one's life. For this reason, individuals and those who are members of certain organisations are willing to do anything to maintain or restore their image. They can give explanations, apologise, blame other parties, refuse to take responsibility, and so on in the name of image. A good image is beneficial to the individual or organisation. Conversely, a damaged image tends to have a long domino effect on the individual or organisa-tion. The level of trust is only one of them. The other is the destruction of credibility, relationships with other organisations, and can even have an impact on political and economic aspects.

Still according to Benoit (1997), there are two components that exist in image damage, namely that unwanted actions occur, and there is a responsibility to respond to them with con-crete actions. When referring to these two components, it cannot but be important to restore the image so that the crisis does not last longer. Image according to Waszkiewicz-raviv in Indrayani (2022) means the result of all interactions with the organisation, experiences, beliefs, feelings, and public knowledge about the organisation. It does not come from a vacuum but is formed and em-bedded over a period of time, thus becoming the image or identity of the organisation.

In a crisis situation where there is an event that is prone to produce a negative impact on the image of the organisation, including threatening the continuity of the organisation, an appropri-ate response is needed. This appropriate response, in Communication studies, falls within the realm of crisis management or crisis communication. This means systematic, controlled, and stra-tegic planning to prevent or minimise the greater risk of a crisis hitting the organisation. In Benoit (1997) perspective, crisis communication usually involves visual, verbal or written interaction be-tween the organisation and the masses. It can be embodied in text in mass media reports, social media posts, or verbal messages at press conferences. Meanwhile, image restoration is familiarly referred to as image repair theory. Benoit in Indrayani (2022) explains that image restoration

focuses on a set of strategies to restore an image or image as part of crisis management. After the crisis has been identified, more adequate skills are needed regarding message selection and production.

Furthermore, according to the same source, image restoration theory discusses five categories of image repair strategies. These include denial of responsibility, avoidance of responsibility, reduction of offence, corrective action, and mortification. In practice, these strategies can be combined with each other to produce more effective outcomes.

The following is a detailed explanation of the strategies according to Benoit (1997):

1. Denial: The accused organisation denies its involvement in the crisis situation. There are two types of denial here, namely simple denial (rejecting the accusation through supporting evidence that it has) and shifting the blame (denial strategy by blaming or scapegoating other parties as accused).

2. Evading responsibility: Organisations wash their hands or avoid responsibility for crisis situations. This is done in a variety of ways. For example, by provocation (counter-accusing); defeasibility (claiming lack of knowledge or control over the situation); accident (claiming it was a mere accident); or good intention (making an admission that the organisation actually had good intentions).

3. Reducing effectiveness: The organisation warns the public about how deserving it is of leniency. There are six methods that can be used, namely bolstering, minimisation, differentiation, transcendence, attack accuser, and compensation. Bolstering, claiming that there was only minimal damage caused by the crisis in an effort to try to suppress negative public sentiment (minimisation). Or comparing current actions with those taken in previous similar crises (differentiation). Also, Transcendence, which is the act of constructing the organisation's behaviour in a more favourable context. Attack the accuser, and finally compensate the victim (compensation).

4. Corrective action: The organisation decides to take corrective action, i.e. declares that it will not repeat the same mistake in the future. Or in other words, it promises that this crisis will not happen again.

5. Mortification: The organisation apologises or begs for forgiveness, admits itself, and takes responsibility for the crisis. This strategy is usually effective in gaining public sympathy.

Conclusion

From the research, it can be concluded that the political communication strategy used by the police was not effective enough to overcome the crisis that occurred after the Kanjuruhan tragedy. The police preferred to defend themselves, instead of formally apologising to the victims. In Jakarta, the police said the Kanjuruhan tragedy was the fault of the supporters, and rejected allegations that the authorities had followed proper protocol. Meanwhile, in Malang, the police used the prostration as a theatrical act, instead of apologising. This can be seen in the resistance that emerged where the victims rejected the renovation of the Kanjuruhan Stadium in August 2023 and hoped for a fairer resolution of the case. Despite these conclusions, this research has limitations, especially in terms of analysing police image restoration when dealing with other cases. This research is limited to analysing police image restoration in the *stampede* case in Kanjuruhan, Malang. If further developed, recommended topics for future work include police communication in a number of high-profile cases, including *obstruction of justice* in the murder and police violence involving Ferdy Sambo; police *abuse of power* on the streets, including fatal collisions by police officers or retired police officers with civilians; acts of bribery in the police that triggered a crisis of confidence in the police, and others. Research around this can concretely contribute to the agency to make improvements in order to restore the public trust that has been lost.

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