

Media Relations and Communication of Crisis in the Digital Era

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Abstract — This paper aims to describe how the construction of an organization's media relations contributed to the success of crisis communication. In the body of an organization, the crisis becomes as a necessity that accompanies the dynamics in the body of the organization. The crisis in the organizational structure can be triggered by internal or external conflict. If the conflict is not well managed, it is likely to be publicly disproportionate. The mass media have a role to disseminate news are the ones who need to be made partner when we are experiencing a crisis organization. This paper is a theoretical study and will use some of the literature to gain a foothold for analysis clicking crisis communication issues are some organizations that have occurred in Indonesia. The case or conflict of TNI AU (Indonesian Air Forces) mess of Cokrosuman, Surakarta and the Alexis hotel will be illustrated in this study. Instead of comparing the two organizations is diametrically, because instead of apple and apple, but rather the attempt to describe that work for them - each in connection with the construction of media relation that they build. The crisis within an organization will be affect the image / reputation in society, especially in the digital age where news will be real time and simultaneously. The result of the study is the public relations division within an organization is very important in constructing the media relation between the institutions with the existing mass media institutions. In this study it appears that public relations of Adi Soemarmo Air Force base has managed to build a good media relations, so it does not enter the trap of organizational crisis that occurred. Alexis hotel public relations stuck the moment of crisis, so that efforts to restore the image of a cultivated company still overshadowed by the perception of the community that first spread.

Keywords — *Communication of Crisis; Media Relations; Image; Reputation; The Digital Era.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital aesthetic, any information is spreading so fast, simultaneously and massively. Within seconds or even a split second what happens somewhere can be seen elsewhere. Internet technology succeeded beyond time and space with an amazing strength. The Internet is successfully applied to various areas of life, including important and prominent its application in the field of news or the press. When it's linked to the public relations function within an organization or institution, the dissemination of information to do is direct and indirect.

The digital age allows an institution or organization to make publications about things that happen within the institution through pages, Facebook, twitter, and Instagram. With the vehicle publication can be done directly. Publication is done indirectly through third parties, namely

the mass media. The mass media will spread more broadly, because the preferences of people or audiences for information sources tend to refer to the mass media, rather than the pages of an agency directly, let alone for information with the dimension of conflict. The mass media also has a stronger infrastructure and an extensive information distribution network. At this point the public relations division within an institution is very concerned to establish good relations with media institutions. A good strategy is needed so that public relations officer relationships with institutions and media institutions can be constructive. Thus, in this reflection will be discussed also how media relations strategy that can be built by the public relations division of an organization.

In a dynamic life, the organizations certainly get the condition up and down. Business organizations, for example, competition and country policy also affect the

internal atmosphere. Government organizations are also not free from the possibility of a crisis, as a result of its relationship with other agencies and with the public. In short, the crisis is a necessity that must be anticipated its possible impact. At the very least is to make information about the crisis before the public becomes more proportional.

Furthermore, the scope of this paper is crisis communication. In this context does not mean that communication led to a crisis (although there is also a crisis occurs as a result of communication is not good), but the communication activities of the company or organization when the crisis will be occur. Communication activities referred to in this discussion is the communication activities performed by the organization, institution or enterprise to control a wide range of public opinion. The opinion usually arises as a side effect of the crisis. This paper is limited to be solved in communication with the public organization or institution / audiences. In addition, the optimization of the mass media to control the image of the institution as a result of the crisis.

II. THE THEORIES LANDSKAP

A. THE CONCEPTION OF CRISIS

In one communication science literature, crisis has three fundamental understanding. *The first* sense, the crisis was a disaster, misery, distress came suddenly. The crisis is rooted in non-human strength, beyond the fence system and cannot be predicted, such as disease outbreaks, natural disasters, etc. *Second*, the crisis is a danger that comes periodically because never taken adequate measures. The source of this crisis together, factor beyond the power of man, but the arrival can be calculated. Examples are floods, landslides, The fire of forest, which has to do with human action. And the *third*, a crisis is defined as blasts of a series of irregularities that overlooked to the system to be helpless. The source of the crisis in the form of system dysfunction. An example is the leadership crisis due to corruption, collusion and nepotism (Hardjana, 2000).

Crisis occurs not without certain criteria or characteristic characteristics. Laurence Barton argued that s ne worthy event or occurrence is said to be a crisis if they fulfill three fundamental criteria (Hardjana, 2000). *First* is the event containing surprises, such as occurs suddenly come, the effect is widespread in space and time scales. *Second*, the crisis could threaten the important values that exist and grow in the community. An example is the crisis as a result of wage determination which was

considered not fit the real needs of society, so that employees do anarchic demonstrations, and the *third* is the crisis requires an immediate decision to act. In the latter characteristic of this crisis of crisis due to natural disaster, firms burned and others is a crisis condition that should get anticipation based on the right decision.

Causative dimension of the crisis more detail revealed by Otto Lerbinger, professor at the *College of Communication* at Boston University. In his mind, the crisis within the company may be caused by:

(1) Crisis Technology (Technological Crisis), the crisis brought about by the technology that is not functioning properly, failed to work and had adverse impacts such as poisoning, accidents and death. For example, the explosion of nuclear reactors in Chernobyl, Soviet Union (now Russia), as well as Union Carbide in Bhopal, India.

(2) Crisis Confrontation (Confrontation Crisis); namely the rejection of some employees at the discretion of the company, consumers boycotted product of company up to unblock the road to the office or the factory owned by the company.

(3) Crime Crisis (Crisis of Male Violence), in example, when the Organization I crime to attack or to errors of the company. One example is a bomb explosion in a subway in London. Indonesia could we demonstrated in a bomb blast at the JW Marriot, throwing finance company offices with Molotov cocktails and so on.

(4) Failure Crisis Management (Crises of Management Failure), this crisis is caused by one of the functions, one group or one division of an organization or company is not able to work properly and failed to carry out a task that has been assigned to him. Overview of the case is a fictitious credit involving internal corporate circles, such as embezzlement scandal at Bank BNI of Kebayoran Baru branch.

(5) The crisis related to other threats to the organization (Crises involving other threats to the organization). Another emerging threat here is the threat of forcible takeover of the company by a competitor (*hostile takeover*), the threat of acquisitions, mergers and so forth. Indeed, not every acquisition causes a crisis.

B. THE DIGITAL ERA

The present era is the digital era, where information technology manages to overcome spatial and spatial disparities. Digital era is characterized by the increasingly widespread network of integrated communication and information technology internet. The Internet is a loose network of thousands of computer networks that reach

millions people all over the world. His initial mission was to provide a means for researchers to accessing data from a number of expensive computer hardware resources. However, now the internet has evolved into a very fast and effective communication ground, so it has strayed away from its original mission. Today, the internet has become as powerful and powerful as information and communication tool that we cannot ignore (LaQuey, 1997).

In the event of communication, the thing that distinguishes the Internet and other global networks with communications technology traditional is the level of interaction and speed that users can enjoy to broadcast their messages. So far, no medium that gives the opportunity to communicate in real-time and simultaneously with thousands and even millions of people worldwide. Internet can be like as a fluid change at any time. As soon as information is disseminated, it is immediately different opinions, criticisms, inputs or whatever the name will soon mate as a response manifestation. An example is the posting of status in social media, briefly already appeared comments on the post.

The used of internet increasingly widespread, with the variant that more and more applications. The Internet with its various manifestations can be applied to help solve the problems of the various lines. In a business context, for example, use of the internet by professionals is one application of digital technology in the economic line.

Furthermore, many public relations practitioners in the field of *public relations* fields speak on behalf of the company have been considering the use of the internet as a public relation communication strategy. They have no other choice and make the Internet a part of corporate culture. Through the internet is also every individual can become a publisher, consumers or conduct campaigns to influence consumer behavior. Specialized in field opens new perspectives. Internet technology has changed the previous conventional PR communication patterns such as top-down, bottom-up, horizontal, or mass communication. All of problems have been left at a much more real-time after the birth of the Internet (Holtz, 1999).

Internet and intranet have been long enough to bring their own perspectives and patterns in the information age, in the form of network technology that allows anyone access anywhere to meet needs. For organizations or companies that adopt the internet will experience rapid development in the midst of an increasingly heterogeneous public of information and can capture a larger audience or target

market. No need to send it like a conventional way through postal and other delivery.

Furthermore, in theory the public relations practitioners can use the technology for a reason - for the following reasons:

(1) The public relations practitioners should be aware that the audience / public can access all *Press News Release* or transmitted using language that is familiar or easily understood by a wide audience.

(2) Public can access the press release in the home page or pages that are owned by a company / institution. This means ideally every agency / company is important to have a page.

(3) PR can create a mailing list from the public. *Mailing list* software is a computer / electronic applications that can spread the *press release* to the public through e-mail box (electronic mail) or e-mail. In the end, all of public relations activities over the network via the internet provide an opportunity for a public relation practitioner to communicate, both internally with the company, as well as with external parties, including most importantly the wider community.

C. THE MEDIA RELATION

Media can be understood as a communication channel that serves to disseminate messages. With the media, the message delivered is able to reach the audience or communicants in a larger scale. With the media also will spread of information far beyond the limits of space and time. In this paper, the media are meant to be mass media both internet-based (online magazine, or newspaper / daily online) and conventional, such as print newspapers.

In public relations functions, the relationship between public relations firm / institution and the media becomes a necessary necessity. Especially in the digital era, where everything is almost in our hands. The interaction between public relations with media institutions generally referred to as *media relations*. *Media relations* or *press relations* (press relations) by Frank Jefkins is an attempt to achieve publication or broadcasting maximum (optimal) for a message or PR information to create knowledge and understanding to a wide audience, the company's organization or company concerned. The main purpose of the holding of press relations is to create knowledge and understanding, not merely to spread a message as desired parent company or client to have an image that is more beautiful than the original in the public eye (Jefkins, 1992).

At the base level, all materials obtained and aired by the press must be free of values and interests unilaterally. All information submitted to the audience to be honest, in the sense as it is. The interests of the public to obtain the correct information must take precedence. The personal of public relation got positive response because put account of the honesty at the center. In addition to a positive response, good publicity wanted, as will be achieved and at the same time the entire interest was fulfilled (Jefkins, 1992).

For the created of the sake of good relations with the media, personal public relations of an organization or institution is obliged to know the workings of the required *partners*. As we know, the media is media that in men the information spread resting on delivery speed, accuracy, actuality, balanced and promotes the interests of readers. Moreover, the mass media should also be able to assist readers to digest the information conveyed with ease and simplicity. They do this because of the time people who read or watch watching them very short and the reader comes from people who are heterogeneous both in terms of age, expertise, knowledge and background of knowledge but still defend the criticality level. In addition, they always try to win the competition between the media that the level of competition is so high. Finally, should keep trying to grab the attention of the readers because outside them there is millions of information that hit and also attract attention.

III. DISCUSSION

A. *THE POWER OF MEDIA RELATION: A BRIEF REFLECTION*

The power of the media as a massive and simultaneous information sharing actors cannot be separated from the advancement of information technology and communication itself. If an institution or organization has its own organs to distribute information regarding the company, for example by publishing bulletins, pamphlets, building official pages, activating a Facebook account to twitter, still its decimation power is not as powerful as the mass media. The mass media both online and print and electronics are still needed as complementary instruments because one of the media is essentially irreplaceable by others. Each mass media has its own character - each.

This paper will refer to a case, how good media relations can help an organization in times of crisis. The crisis published by the media (both crisis concerning the internal or external affairs of the organization) will greatly affect the organization's image before the public. This image is an important element in an organization, or even individuals, because they were basically living on the image. Therefore,

efforts to establish a good relationship between the human being an institution with a public relations media institution is in order to maintain the image itself.

Examples of cases that will be discussed in this paper is the conflict between residents of Cokrosuman mess with Indonesian Air Forces (TNI AU) Base of Adi Soemarmo Solo. As a conflict event, it certainly has its own news value. Therefore all media in Solo preach the case with different angle - different. The news presented is true to the facts and even impressed " flat " although it could be the media highlighting the execution of the exuberant, eg civilian versus military or humanitarian side of compensation that is too small and so on. News broadcast is selected news, among viewpoint - the viewpoint of another bus just dropped the Air Force's image in public. Selected news that could degrade the image of the military institution. Title titles such as " Poor TNI Asset Management ", " Torts Invisible Citizens Humane For Cokrosuman " or " Military Wild When The Execution Done : Brother Against Myself " will not be raised by the media. In addition to the media are also reluctant to military institutions, there must be good media relations relationships built between the two institutions. The press / media institution with TNI AU Base of Adi Sumarmo established good media relations concept, so that the incident did not worsen the image of TNI in its news. News - the news delivered it provides public space for the public to assess the position of each party. Such public gets a chance to move the pendulum truth, to which it would be directed.

From the research of the researcher, in case of conflict of Cokrosuman mes long before the conflict happened the public relation of TNI AU have done good media relation strategy with media - media in Surakarta. Air Force Public Relations periodically been invited journalists to visit the Air Force base, simulating aircraft flew along with training, and reciprocal visits to the office - the media office. The visit is usually to introduce new officials to local media leaders. At the end of each year there is an official calendar distribution of agencies and souvenirs to media crews. And that indirectly is a preventive project that can be done in the public relations division of an institution or organization.

This is different from the case of the termination of Alexis hotel operations in Jakarta some time ago. At the time of the closure of the suspected hotels facilitate prostitution activity for the upper class; the public relations officials concerned also made a clarification by holding a press conference. As one of the media relations relation strategy press conference is necessary. Even the hotel

publicist also invited the television media to cover directly the room within the hotel that is considered to provide the facility of disguised prostitution. But does the attempt to recover the image work? It seems that the effort was in vain because the public got exposure to information after the event of the discontinuation of the hotel's operation took place. In fact, the public relations function in an institution is also necessary to undertake the task of preventive duties as a means of early anticipation in case of events that can shake the positive image of an institution. In the case of Alexis hotel, for example, the previous PR definitely monitor the corporate image over time. From time to time the public relation officer can be collecting opinions and perceptions about the hotel. From the absorption of that information, can be made report to the boss or head of the hotel to make a decision. It may be that if the public relations move quickly and even preventive dimension, then it would be not going to happen the closure of hospitality services business. Far - away days for instance refractive PR held a press conference and continued to build the company's image in the media to visit the place perceived by community as a prostitution location.

In reality a public relations practitioner should be able to think reflectively about what has happened with his work unit. This reflective thinking does require support or support from the institutional leadership structure, so when it requires execution a managerial step supports and protects. Therefore, absorbing what develops in the structure of society with regard to the course of the institution is indispensable. Life is ultimately a matter of course perception, so hearing about to improve performance is certainly a wiser real step, rather than an unsatisfactory self-defense effort.

B. THE CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN A CRISIS ORGANIZATION

In order to expand knowledge of media relations strategy of an institution, a very important starting point is to start from the issue of the crisis itself. Communication crisis is different from crisis communication. Communication crisis is a problem or crisis that occurs in a company caused by the elements of communication. The process of communication containing a crisis (crisis) is characterized by:

- (1) There is a sharp disagreement** and did not indicate any intention or attempt to understand each other, each seeking the other party, so the potential error followed the destructive physical action.
- (2) Do not see the positive side or the good intentions of the communication**, the communication simply to

humiliate your opponent's position; communication goes asymmetric and difficult to converge.

- (3) The message was received with a strict selection**, with emotion and suspicion so that the message is distorted. What stands out is not the equation of the fat ego, habits and so on. (Panuju, 2002).

Meanwhile, within an organization, crisis can only happen to certain divisions or sections, such as accounting division, marketing, operational or even in the field of public relations. K RISIS public relations are due to functions of public relations (PR) is not operating effectively. Among others it is characterized by a publicist failing to produce information, not being trusted and people searching for other sources of information; failed to quell rumors; not knowing the development of internal organization; and top managers are reluctant to use information from public relations. The crisis caused by a communication containing crises in the PR department also can harm the company's fate. A heightened dispute can lead to organization split, dispersed even into criminal activity. Obviously the latter is when to contact physically incur losses (Panuju, 2002).

Instead, the crisis communication is to explain the activities to disseminate information about *terja* are conducive to the crisis (which in this context occurs in the organization). The crisis can be caused by natural disasters, technical malfunction, human error as well as efforts to resolve the crisis management firm. The purpose of crisis communication is in order to achieve the objectives of crisis management. The purpose of crisis management is, surely, avoiding crises more than anything else. However, if unavoidable, the aim is to stop the crisis quickly, limiting losses, recover and restore public confidence, to regain the reputation of the company that has been damaged or lost. Crisis communications determine their success seen from its success in helping realize the goal of crisis management. In the above case, crisis communication is equally done by the public relations personal of both institutions, but the result is different because of different media relations strategy.

C. TOWARDS OPTIMAL FUNCTION OF MEDIA RELATIONS

The case illustrated above shows optimal and non-optimal media relations. The second case reflects a non-optimal media relationship. H an association of media or *the media* is not optimal *relations* are relations cramped, pitch limits on the relationship between resources and news search. There is no relational construction built in the nuances of professional ethics. In contrast, relations or *media relations* are the optimal relationship that puts the

interests of profits together. Without sacrificing public interest, PR can make the press take sides with the company. Makes the press more *human* figure according to company size. The press can also be used to serve as *the Early Warning System*, provide early information so that the company can avoid the problem or crisis. With these actions, the whole function, all the potential contained in the relationship is utilized as possible so that finally the handling of crisis communications goes well and the crisis can be more quickly completed. Furthermore, some ways that might be able to optimize the role of media relations are:

(1) Become Source of Credible News. The information to be communicated to the media in addition to fulfilling the creed of 5W 1H, also the most important to be accurate, real-time, balanced and above all is newsworthy (*news value*).

(2) The Positive Construction of Agenda Setting. Generally the *agenda setting* theory is what makes many leaders of companies / organizations are reluctant to contact with the media. *Agenda setting* has the proposition that the media agenda influences the public agenda. More bit of information that comes out will be better, it is because the press suspected of having a hidden agenda that could destroy the company, so that the press is better avoided.

(3) Avoiding Trade News Construction. This model of news trade relations is not very good because the pattern of relationships woven if there is a momentary interest only.

(4) Positioning the Media as Your PR Officer. When companies position the media as homework, the relationship will be more familiar, without obscuring the construction of news as mandated in the code of journalistic ethics.

(5) Appreciate To The Journalist Profession. There are sometimes see the profession of journalists in the perception that is not good (stove maker, split the fact) that tends to close themselves from communication with media / journalists.

(6) Construction of Reciprocal Relations. Between the public relations organization / institution must be established pattern of reciprocal relationship so that no one higher opinion of the other positions.

IV. CONCLUSION

It cannot be denied, that the use of new media / internet in the digital era as it is today is a necessity. Relations with good media by PR organization will help with both these institutions in saving an image companies in times of crisis. A good relationship with the media at a time of non-crisis needs to be built as a manifestation of the preventive

function of an organization's public relations division. In times of non-crisis conditions, intimate relationship with the media may be able to catapult the image of the institution concerned, given the power of social penetration from the media that is extraordinary.

Furthermore, the result of this study is the division of public relations in an organization is very important in constructing media relations between the institution by institution existing mass media. In this study it is seen that the Air Force public relations of Indonesian Air Force Base of Adi Soemarmo has succeeded in establishing good relation media, so it is not included in the trap of organizational crisis that happened. Alexis hotel public relations stuck the moment of crisis, so that efforts to restore the image of a cultivated company still overshadowed by the perception of the community who first spread. The situation can actually be prevented, if there is a good relationship between hotel management with the media, which from the media can be measured how the image of the company in the realm of public perception.

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