

Crisis Communication of Pekalongan City Communications and Informatics Department Towards The Community of North Pekalongan In Handling Rob Floods

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ABSTRACT (10PT)

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BPBD monitored tidal floods in Pekalongan City occurred in almost all areas in North Pekalongan as high as 50-80 centimeters. The impact of this crisis also very worrying, many houses and families are left without a place to live. In this case of crisis, local government required to have an effective crisis strategy especially in handling the crisis communication because this crisis have not handled properly. This research aims response and communication strategy of the local government in dealing with this crisis that occurred base on the strategy analysis of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). This research construct the theory from Timothy W. Coombs which will look at the response, and strategy from local government to people's. The method of this research is case study with data collection through depth-interview. This research use triangulation data from Miles and Huberman, collection data using documentation, observation, and interview. Our research shows that the important thing in handling crisis that is still lacking from local government is involvement the people's in a forum before implementing a strategy. This point has a negative effect on the sustainability of the strategy because it often causes people's to misunderstand in next crisis situation. However, one local government strategy that has been successful is empathetic narratives that build people's awareness to local government.

1. Introduction

Topographically, Pekalongan City is one of the cities located in the lowlands of the North Sea coast that has an altitude of less than 0.2 meters above the sea level. The shape of the land surface in Pekalongan City is very low, reaching 0-8%, making it vulnerable to tidal flooding during high tides and rainfall (Pemukiman, 2021). The city's vulnerable and extreme situation makes the government look specifically which of the 4 sub-district in Pekalongan City are prioritized handling the impact of tidal floods according to the environmental conditions of the people's.

Based on data from BPBD as the disaster management department, North Pekalongan is the one of 4 sub district that are very vulnerable and even at the worrying conditions. According to Antaranews media, the area of inundation in North Pekalongan District continues to increase every year.

No	Year	Area of Inundation
1.	2015	1,920
2.	2016	1,870
3.	2017	1,396
4.	2018	1,391
5.	2019	1,057
6.	2020	1,730

Source: RPJMD Kota Pekalongan 2021 – 2026

Based on the table, the impact of tidal floods is very concerning for people's, other impacts occur are (1) damage to people's houses, (2) loss of livelihoods, namely ponds and rice fields that are flooded by tidal floods, (3) damage to public facilities such as roads and schools that are supporting access for the peoples. Tidal floods also hamperes tourism in Pekalongan City, which led to a decrease in the economic income of Pekalongan City (Ismanto, 2021). Data provided by Linmas and Kesbangpol as of 2020 there are around 1906 houses that have damage caused by tidal flood disaster (Majid, 2016).

With the urgency of this disaster, as of 2023, the Pekalongan City Government is building a flood control system which is one of the local government efforts to resolve the tidal floods disaster crisis. The role of the Communication and Informatics Department in this crisis disaster management is to develop the communication strategy to educate the public about the local government programs related the tidal floods disaster management. The Communication and Informatics Department plays a role in selecting a communication strategy to coordinate with all government stakeholders, the people's, NGOs, and related organizations about implementing the tidal floods risk reduction program in Pekalongan City.

In 2021-2023, the local government created a polder system with sea walls, mobile dams, and the construction of retention basins and pumps to reduce the risk of tidal floods. In this crisis disaster, not only the local government participates, the people's is the one of the important points for the success of this crisis management. The condition of Pekalongan City, especially North Pekalongan, which is the area most affected by tidal floods, is the reason for the communication crisis between the local government and the people's.

The local government is considered to have made a lot of urban infrastructure development activities but didn't pay attention to geological capabilities of Pekalongan City (Ula & Tijan, 2020). The communication crisis that occurred regarding communication between local government and the people's made the reputation of the local government unfavorable. Organization always be faced with various problems concerning the organization reputation (Roshan, 2016). The people believes that the local government is nor alert dealing with this tidal flood problem. In fact, the flood control system project has been promoted since early 2021.

Handling a crisis will affect the reputation of the organization itself. The crisis communication strategy is carried out by examining a problem related to empathic communication. Empathic communication can understand the openness and trust that will be built in collaboration to handle the crisis that is happening (Eriend, 2021). The lack of communication between the local government and the people's will lead to other failures in handling the tidal floods crisis. In crisis communication studies, communication between related agencies and stakeholders will bring an excellent readiness and responses when a disaster or crisis occurs (Nurfauzi, 2021).

This research look at 3 previous studies that both discuss tidal flooding in Pekalongan City. The first research was conducted by Ismanto (2021). This research descriptively by dividing the needs of people's into primary, secondary, and tertiary. Based on this data research, tidal floods has an impact on the people's as a whole is very severe. The impact is in to education, health, religious activities, work, and other social support. The conclusion of the research by Ismanto is that the community needs a large river embankment to reduce the cubic of water entering their environment.

The second research conducted by Adlina (2019) on people's adaptation related to tidal flooding. Adlina concluded that there are two types of people living in Bandengan area, those who move permanently and those who do not move. Adlina's research shows that people tend to make a physical adaptation to the place where they live, such as moving, building embankments, excavating the land and raising terraces of their houses.

The third research was conducted by Syafrei Iskandar (2020) on geospatial analysis of tidal flood inundation areas. Tidal flooding in Pekalongan City is caused by land subsidence of about 22cm/year. This data is an average because the closer to the coast the greater the rate of land subsidence. By 2023, land subsidence in Pekalongan City, especially North Pekalongan as the closest area to the coast, will reach 50.53%.

The 3 studies discuss the needs of the people's in material such as government assistance, analysis of city planning which is also a factor in Pekalongan City experiencing tidal floods. In this previous research will discuss the crisis communication strategy of local government to the people's of North Pekalongan who are affected by tidal floods. In addition, the local government is also seen to have carried out several strategies but has not achieved maximum result until 2023.

By using Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) by Timothy W Coombs, this study will serve as a reference for the local government to improve crisis communication management especially disaster crisis tidal floods. This concept chooses cause the strategy used by local government is not optimal.

2. Method

This qualitative research study aims to analyze how the local government communication strategy responds to tidal flood in Pekalongan City especially of the North Pekalongan. This research analysis uses a case study analysis method. This research uses Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) by looking at public perception in determining what strategy is best to formulate.

In this research, data will be collected through depth interviews with two different perspectives : the affected people's and the local government. The people's of North Pekalongan is the most affected by tidal flooding in Pekalongan. More than 30% of the residents lost their livelihoods, ponds, and their homes.

Informants in this depth-interviews will be selected through purposive sampling based on their experience, main tasks, and how affected they are by tidal flooding. The interview will be structured to explore the informant answers and allow for new question in the interview (Alijoyo, 2020).

Data from interviews will be analyzed using the Miles and Huberman data analysis model in the form of data reduction, display or presentation, and conclusions. Data instruments are collected by observation, interview, and documentation (Permatasari, 2021). Observation is carried out to observe the situation of the subject, in this case to observe how the situation after tidal flooding in North Pekalongan District.

Interviews were conducted with informants in depth, structured around the core aspects of the research to obtain the desired data. Documentation was taken from the archives of the agency that was the object of the research, namely the Pekalongan City Communication and Informatics Office. This is to support the results of observations and interviews.

The analysis will focus on identifying public perceptions of the tidal flood crisis and the government's response to the crisis. The analysis will look at how perceptions will later become the basis for formulating the best strategy for the government to respond to the tidal flood crisis.

The qualitative data testing of thematic analysis will use confirmability testing. Confirmability test is an objective test in qualitative research by looking simultaneously to be associated with the process that has been carried out. The concurrent testing in question is by looking at the results of

the analysis to be associated with the research process so that it fulfills confirmability (Ajat Rukajat, 2018).

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Result

The results of this research explore the extent of the government's role in managing disaster communications, especially in situations of crisis. First, this research will examine in more depth the effectiveness of the City Pekalongan government's crisis communication strategy in the context of handling tidal floods. This research uses data analysis which reveals different categories of analysis (1) communication strategies implemented by local governments, (3) the extent of community involvement in planning tidal flood strategies, (4) communication narratives provided by the local government to the community.

3.1.1. Communication Strategy Implemented by the Government

One of the results of this research is that the local government has carried out several strategies when a crisis occurs. The crisis communication strategy carried out is expected to an understanding the public that this crisis will handled by both the government and the people's.

"We always tell the people's that the government apologizes if there have not been significant changes. However, this is also still our project to continue working hard" (Informan IV, January 12, 2024).

The strategy conveyed by the government refers to the concerns of the government, which both feel that the tidal flood is a common crisis. The strategy formed by the local government to create awareness so that the government is also considered to take part and feel what the community feels when a crisis occurs. Another strategy to deliver the message was also conveyed by Informan V :

"The local government does a lot of research so that our communication is well conveyed, we also remind the public a lot that the local government has made a lot of efforts to reduce tidal flooding, such as the construction of water pump infrastructure, dams, many more, especially in North Pekalongan" (Informant V, January 12, 2024).

There are many challenges for the local government in delivering communication to the people's. Especially, because the North Pekalongan is a coastal that has its own characteristics, especially on how they treated.

"Research is a never-ending job. We are required to understand their psychological development, so that what we do, what we communicate can reach them" (Informant IV, January 12, 2024).

After research was carried out by the local government, they tried to develop a message strategy by starting to focus on what they had done and were doing to this crisis. The implementation of a crisis communication strategy in communication challenges that occur between the local government and the people's is a reinforcing strategy, where the local government tries to form the awareness of their organization by reminding that the local government has implemented many solutions starting from 2021.

Based on interview with DISKOMINFO Pekalongan Government, the selection of media is importance, as it will influence the how a message is received, whether it is effective or not.

"The selection of media for DISKOMINFO is based on a factors, including the conditions (education, age, environment)" (Informant IV, January 12, 2024).

The government carryout extensive research on the people who are recipients of messages. The objective to minimize misunderstanding in the receiving the message. Research is conducted in order to ascertain the most effective means of communication, with the intention of fostering community involvement in tidal floods management.

"There are two media from the local government, online and in person. Online we go through PPID website and DISKOMINFO social media. However, in North Pekalongan itself, the education level is lower that other district, so we often go directly to the people's" (Informant V. January 12, 2024).

According to existing data, the use of media in handling tidal floods is very advanced. However, media literacy in the North Pekalongan is still a special thing that must be paid attention to. This is because many factors, especially education. This topic is unique to discuss, the lack of media literacy which does not keep up with the development of communication media requires DISKOMINFO to create a special strategy in conveying messages when a crisis occurs.

This statement was confirmed by one person's who was also a resource person Informant II,

"Mr. Walkot and his staff often mediate here, yes they invite us to discuss, for example, they want to build A B C to increase tidal flood. The problem is that people here use social media less. It's like more effective if they come directly to us" (Informant II, January 12, 2024).

The communication strategy formulated by Diskominfo begins with the research on the people's. This research was conducted to look at the conditions and factors that will influence message receptions. One issue was found where media literacy and education were still very lacking. This is an important problem for the local government. The solution to this problem is the local government conduct direct as a form of effective strategy in crisis communication (face-to-face).

3.1.2. Community Involvement in ROB Flood Management Planning

In the government communication literature review, there are 8 principles in handling a crisis in a government agency towards the community itself. Where some of the points referred to are that the community is one of the components that critically assesses the handling of a crisis. In an interview with Informant I, who is an affected community in North Pekalongan, said that the government's handling was already visible in terms of the shape of the building, but the community considered that in their opinion community involvement in this matter needed to be further improved.

"The handling from the government is already visible, what they make, what they facilitate to the community, but in our opinion, the community is not fully involved" (Informant I, January 12, 2024).

This has triggered many communities to actually see the government's strategy, but according to the community, the communication has not been evenly distributed. The community considers that the government is less communicative and tells more details from the beginning of what the handling will look like.

"Yes, often the government comes, apologizes, reminds them that they are building something. But we want to be involved" (Informant II, January 12, 2024).

The people's considered that the communication strategy built by the government was good, they felt that the government took part and empathized, but the people's critically considered that they really wanted to be involved as a whole in many government programs regarding this tidal flood.

"There is one program that we want to continue on a slightly larger scale, not with village officials or elders, but with the entire community and family cards that are really affected, namely regular joint deliberations" (Informant IV, 12 January 2024).

This program is one of the answers to the community's concerns about involvement in handling tidal floods.

3.1.3. Narrative Forms of Government Communication to the Community

Narrative in a communication forms an understanding that will be received by the communicant. Narratives in crisis communication will form a perception that will affect the image of an agency. Informant VI became one of the top officials in a government agency. This is very much in line with what is happening in the field.

"As one of the faces of the city government, I always say that we are concerned about what is happening in Pekalongan City. I always say that the government will continue to work hard so that tidal flooding is reduced" (Informant VI, January 11, 2024).

Informant VI illustrates that a leader in a crisis event must be a good leader. This was not only conveyed by informant VI, but also informants III and IV.

“The words we always use are those that build their spirit. Like this disaster is not just their disaster, but we all participate in helping and feeling their sadness” (Informant III, January 11, 2024).

Informant III said that the narrative built by the government has a huge impact on society. People who feel that the government will walk with them in handling this crisis will create a positive image for government agencies.

3.2. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to analyze how the government's crisis communication strategy in conveying about the handling of tidal flooding strategy. The results of this study show a significant form of strategy from the government in developing crisis communication. In this study, it was found that research is one of the important thing that will make a significant changes more effective (Yuanita, 2021). The point in the research carried out by the local government before formulating a crisis communication strategy are education, environment, and habits.

These 3 points make it easier for local government to formulate a crisis communication strategy. The crisis communication strategy start with 3 points to pay attention to. This is evidenced by the narrative aspects in the formation of messages when a crisis occurs, the government's role in handling tidal floods, and the media used in crisis management strategies.

The aspect of composing a narrative in a message that is carried out during a crisis is an important aspect in improving the organization's image (Solihin, 2021). Empathy narrative in a crisis handling creates a feeling of trust between stakeholders and related organizations, that they also feel the crisis that occurs (Dolamore, 2021). This certainly fosters awareness of the organization which will have an impact on improving the organization's image in handling the crisis.

In a crisis strategy, the contribution of stakeholders to design and handle crises together with related organizations is an important aspect in handling crisis. This because managing relationships with stakeholder when a crisis occurs more effective (Christensen, 2014). This makes stakeholders feel involved and noticed when a crisis occurs. Research conducted to determine a media that delivers messages in a crisis is also an important point in handling. This is due to many factors in media selection (geography, education, environment, habits).

The results showed that in handling a crisis in an agency, media, community involvement, and crisis narrative strategies need to be considered. Crisis management will shape the image of an agency depending on the strategy they take (Thiessen & Ingenhoff, 2011). The effectiveness of disaster communication management that refers to the use of media, selection of narrative strategies, and community involvement will affect the success of crisis communication when a disaster occurs, both pre, and post (Puji, 2018). The narrative formulated in a communication strategy will give rise to a perception in a communication. Empathy narratives in a crisis communication strategy will form public awareness to an organizations. In this case, it is important for the narrative to be built and formulated well so that the public's perception of the organization is in line with the strategic objective of the crisis, cultivating a good image.

That the selection of the strategy of DISKOMINFO in the crisis communication of the tidal flood disaster departs from a research on the audience or the community itself. The form of communication and the narrative and media chosen was done initially by making a research that displays various factors of communication barriers such as age, education level, and environmental conditions of the North Pekalongan sub-district. The research conducted will have an impact on the reception of messages from the community and lead to the effectiveness of receiving the message itself (Aziz, 2023).

Informants in the government felt that the choice of narrative was very important in a crisis disaster. Informants in the government always convey a form of apology and repeat what the government is doing or will do according to policy makers. This informant's strategy refers to a crisis communication strategy to build the image and support of the community and remind the government of its goodness as the authority in handling disasters.

Based on data in this research, it was found that local government only focus on what they have done. The government has formed a reinforcing strategy where the government apologizes and reminds the public what they have done from 2021 until now. However, with this kind of strategy, it turns on the public awareness, the public still thinks that the local government not communicating enough and not optimal in handling the tidal floods disaster.

Several points that need to be improved in this crisis communication strategy in handling tidal floods crisis (1) Costumer focus, in this case, the people's are required to understand what information needs are desired by the people's and their trust must be built by providing accurate and precise information, (2) Situational awareness, analysis, data collection and information dissemination that must be controlled when a disaster occurs. This needs to be done because when a disaster occurs, the people's need a transparency and a trustworthy information. This point will help the people's receive messages from the local government because they feel that the government listening their aspirations.

4. Conclusion

The research investigate the communication crisis strategy of the Pekalongan City government, especially DISKOMINFO for the North Pekalongan people's regarding strategies for managing the tidal floods disaster. It was found that informants in preparing communication strategies always carry out research, this is to anticipate any miss communication strategy. There are 3 aspects that are successful in achieving it, the media used, the form of communication, the people's involvement, and the narrative in communication. Apart from the government informants, the people's must continue to be involved in all aspects, this will build trust and awareness of the local government to make if effective in another crisis.

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