

# Crisis Communication Strategy and Digital Reputation Management of Police Agencies through Social Media in the Era of Information Disclosure

Mardiani Putri Harahap, Fitri Rafianti, Henry Aspan

## Abstract

This study aims to analyze crisis communication strategies and digital reputation management of police agencies through social media in the era of information disclosure. This research uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach, with data sources in the form of books, scientific journal articles, official documents, and relevant literature that are analyzed through content analysis techniques and thematic analysis. The results of the study show that the police crisis communication strategy on social media needs to emphasize response speed, accuracy of information, consistency of messages, transparency, and a humane approach in order to be able to reduce negative public perceptions. Digital reputation management has also been proven to be greatly influenced by the ability of institutions to build two-way communication, anticipate viral issues, and clarify factually and accountably. In addition, information disclosure is an important basis for maintaining public legitimacy and trust in the police institution. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that social media is not only a tool for disseminating information, but also a strategic instrument in crisis recovery and strengthening institutional reputation. The implication is that the police need to strengthen digital public relations capacity, develop crisis communication protocols, and develop communication strategies that are adaptive to the dynamics of public opinion.

**Keywords:** *Crisis Communication; Digital Reputation; Police; Social Media; Information Disclosure.*

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## Introduction

Social media has become the main space for the public to obtain, disseminate, and interpret public information quickly and widely in the current era of information disclosure [1], [2]. Police agencies in this context are not only required to carry out law enforcement functions and security services, but are also required to build transparent, responsive, and credible public communication [3]. The presence of social media makes every action and statement or institutional response easy to observe, comment, and even debate by the public [4]. Therefore, the ability of police agencies to manage crisis communication and maintain digital reputation is very important, especially when events occur that have the potential to cause negative spotlights, misunderstandings, or even a decline in public trust [5].

Crisis communication in the police environment has a very distinctive character because it is directly related to sensitive issues such as case handling, the use of authority, the actions of members, and the institution's response to public criticism [6]. Social media is often the first arena where public opinion is formed, so speed, accuracy, and empathy in conveying information are the determining factors for the success of digital reputation management in crisis situations [7], [8]. Police agencies need to not only provide clarification, but also build a narrative that is calming, accountable, and reassuring to the public. The crisis communication strategy at this point is no longer just reactive, but must also be part of the institutional communication governance that is proactive and oriented towards public trust.

A number of previous studies have shown that crisis communication managed quickly, openly, and consistently can help organizations maintain public legitimacy in the face of pressure. Ai and von Mühlenen's research [9] found that institutional responses delivered through social media are able to dampen the escalation of negative opinions, especially when messages are structured in clear and empathetic language. Corrado and Frateur [10] emphasized that information transparency plays an important role in shaping the public's positive perception of institutions that are facing a crisis, because the public tends to be more accepting of organizations that show responsibility and openness in conveying the development of events.

Another study by Zheng et al. [11] It shows that an organization's digital reputation is heavily influenced by the consistency of cross-platform messages, so social media management cannot be done sporadically. Shahbazi and Bunker [2] In his research, it was found that two-way interaction between institutions and the public through comments, clarifications, and information updates is able to increase the public's emotional closeness to the organization. The latest research by Alsharairi et al. [8] emphasizing that the success of digital reputation management does not only depend on the content of the message, but also on the institution's ability to read the dynamics of public opinion, anticipate issues, and integrate communication strategies with overall crisis management. However, most of the research still discusses organizations in general, not specifically reviewing the character of crisis communication in police agencies in the context of information disclosure and the increasingly critical digital culture of society.

Based on previous researches, it can be seen that there is a fairly clear gap, namely the lack of studies that specifically combine crisis communication strategies and digital reputation management in police agencies through social media in the framework of the information disclosure era. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the police as an institution that has a high burden of public legitimacy, while demanding a fast, humane, and accountable communication response in the digital space. This research is expected to be able to provide a more comprehensive picture of how crisis communication strategies are prepared, implemented, and evaluated to maintain the reputation of institutions in the midst of the dynamics of public opinion. The formulation of the problem in this study is how the crisis communication strategy of police agencies through social media in dealing with crisis situations in the era of information disclosure, and how these strategies contribute to the management of the institution's digital

reputation. The purpose of this study is to analyze the crisis communication strategies implemented by police agencies through social media and identify their role in building and maintaining digital reputation in the eyes of the public.

### **Literature Review Crisis Communication Concept**

Crisis communication is basically the process of delivering fast, clear, and trustworthy information when an organization faces a situation that has the potential to disrupt public legitimacy, trust, or stability [12]. In the context of social media, crisis communication no longer runs one-way, but takes place dynamically because the public participates in searching, comparing, commenting, and reframing information from various sources [13]. Riddell [14] It shows that the communication crisis on social media is non-linear, because users obtain information from organizations, media, and other users at the same time, and then assess the credibility of the message based on the source and the way it is delivered. Meanwhile, a review of narratives about crises and social media confirms that digital platforms have become an important channel for disseminating crisis information, shaping public perception, and influencing people's behavioral responses [15].

In practice, the success of crisis communication is largely determined by the speed of response, consistency of messages, empathy, and the organization's ability to read the direction of the public conversation [12]. In the digital age, crises can develop into "*Social Media Firestorm*" when negative conversations spread quickly and create great reputational pressure [16]. A recent study by Purnell et al. [17] emphasizing that such conditions demand continuous monitoring, timely communication, and a planned reputation restoration strategy. Therefore, crisis communication serves to alleviate problems and at the same time be an instrument to maintain public trust in the long term.

### **Digital Reputation Management**

Digital reputation management is a systematic effort to shape, maintain, and restore an organization's image in the digital space through content management, public response, and oversight of online conversations. In the digital environment, reputation is formed not only by the organization's official message, but also by user-generated content such as reviews, comments, and public responses [18], [19]. Systematic research on the relationship between online reviews and brand reputation by Pooja and Upadhyaya [20] It shows that reputation is influenced by several important dimensions, namely valence, volume, verification, and review interactivity. These findings confirm that negative sentiment can have a stronger impact on public perception than positive content, especially when it spreads quickly on social media.

Digital reputation is also heavily influenced by the quality of the experience that the public feels when interacting with organizations in the online space. A study by Iqbal et al. [21] About *Brand Experience* and *Electronic word of mouth* suggests that a good experience can drive the emergence of positive e-WOM, which ultimately strengthens long-term relationships with audiences. In the context of a crisis, the study of *Social Media Firestorm* emphasizes that organizations need to combine timely communication, consistent monitoring, and adaptive reputation strategies so that the impact of the crisis does not spread more widely [16], [17]. Thus, digital reputation management is not enough to be done reactively, but it should be part of an organization's ongoing communication strategy. **Social Media as a Means of Public Communication**

Social media has developed into a strategic public communication space for police institutions, as this institution is positioned as a public servant as well as a symbol of state authority [22]. A review of the literature in the field of policing shows that the police occupy a special position in public management, and the use of social media should be directed to maximize *Value Creation* while minimizing *Value Destruction* [23]. The study also became

*Review* comprehensive that specifically looks at the literature on policing and social media through the lens of *Public Engagement*, thus confirming that social media is not only a channel of information, but also a space for public engagement.

Social media in practice can function as a space for rapid information dissemination, a means of clarification, an advocacy space, and a medium to build accountability and transparency [24]. Research on the role of social media in improving the performance of law enforcement officials in Indonesia confirms that social media helps the rapid dissemination of information, provides a space for public discussion, and strengthens social oversight of institutional accountability and transparency [22], [25]. Other studies on *Pandemic Policing* by Laufs and Waseem [26] shows that during crises, police use social media to convey public safety concerns and strengthen the relationship between the community and the police. Researchers by Cullen and Williams [25] The police on social media shows that digital platforms are now a new frontier that helps shape how security institutions present themselves to the public.

### **Information Disclosure and Communication Strategy**

Information disclosure requires public institutions to be more transparent, responsive, and communicative in conveying information to the public, including when facing sensitive issues or crises [10], [27]. Recent studies on *Social Mediated Transparency* in public administration by Villodre [28] It shows that social media does promise increased transparency, but the impact depends heavily on how managers leverage the platform's affordances. Villodre formulated three models of transparency: *guarantor*, *conversational*, and *Proactive*. Models *guarantor* emphasizing the availability of information that is neutral, model *conversational* emphasizing continuous dialogue, while the *Proactive* emphasizing anticipation of citizens' information needs [28]. This shows that information disclosure in the digital space is not only about the amount of information published, but also how the information is compiled and presented to the public.

Information disclosure for the police is very important because public trust is greatly influenced by the perception of transparency, consistency, and institutional responsibility [3], [29]. A systematic review of government social media use and citizen trust by Chi et al. [30] shows that the relationship between the two is still a debate, so more in-depth research is needed on aspects of communication and audience behavior. In the Indonesian context, the study of social media and law enforcement also confirms that social media provides a great opportunity for public oversight of the accountability and transparency of the apparatus, although it must still be balanced with a careful communication strategy so as not to magnify disinformation or polarization [31]. Therefore, the communication strategy of police institutions in the era of information disclosure needs to be designed not only to convey facts, but also to maintain public trust through accurate, open, and humane communication.

### **Research Methodology**

This study uses a type of qualitative research with a literature study approach (*Library Research*), which is a research that relies on the search and analysis of various relevant literature sources to understand crisis communication strategies and digital reputation management of police agencies through social media in the era of information disclosure [32]. The data sources used are entirely secondary data, including books, scientific journal articles, proceedings, official documents, institutional reports, and other written sources that have relevance to the research topic. Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation studies and literature review, by selecting, reading, recording, and grouping sources that are directly related to the focus of the study. The data analysis technique is carried out by content analysis (*Content Analysis*) and thematic analysis, namely by identifying the main ideas from the literature, comparing views between sources, and then drawing conclusions systematically to explain the

pattern of crisis communication strategies, digital reputation management, and its relation to the principle of information disclosure [33].

### Results Police Crisis Communication Response Patterns on Social Media

Social media has become a strategic instrument in police crisis communication because it allows institutions to convey information quickly, widely, and simultaneously to the public, while monitoring the dynamics of public opinion in a timely manner *real time* [14], [15]. Studies of police communication practices in Germany show that platforms such as Twitter/X and Facebook are used as the main channels of crisis communication, although the patterns of use differ according to the nature of the crisis [34]. In a crisis that is community, social media tends to be used as a means of disseminating one-way information to ensure the orderliness of public information flows. On the other hand, in organizational crises that have the potential to affect institutional legitimacy, communication patterns develop to be more dialogical in order to reduce reputational impact and maintain public trust [7], [8].

In the Indonesian context, police crisis communication in the digital space can no longer be understood solely as the delivery of an official statement, but also as a process of constructing a public narrative oriented towards maintaining institutional legitimacy. Research by Irawan and Rachmawati [35] shows that the transformation of the National Police's communication on platform X is moving from a hierarchical and one-way communication pattern to a more participatory, responsive, and open model to public criticism. However, research on crisis communication management in law enforcement institutions shows that the implementation of crisis communication is still not running optimally according to the pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis stages, especially in the aspects of preparedness, message coordination, and reputation restoration strategies.

In crises related to public safety or large-scale events, the police response pattern is generally oriented towards delivering information, warnings, and instructions to the public. Research by Noor et al. [36] The use of Twitter by various agencies during Hurricane Irma shows that social media serves as a forum for the coordination and distribution of rapid information updates to the public. In policing practice, a similar pattern can be seen in the use of social media to convey information that is immediate, concise, and easy to understand, especially given the characteristics of digital platforms that demand high response speed and accessibility. Therefore, in the early stages of the crisis, police communication tends to be informative and operational in order to control the situation and minimize public uncertainty [15], [34].

The effectiveness of police crisis communication response patterns is generally determined by the speed of response, the accuracy of the substance of the message, and the ability of institutions to build closeness to the public without losing institutional authority. The success of digital communication is not only determined by the quality of the message conveyed, but also by synergy between institutional units, the ability to adapt to the dynamics of social media, and consistency in building meaningful dialogue with the community [35]. Thus, social media not only functions as a medium for delivering information, but also as an instrument to maintain institutional legitimacy and stabilize public perception during a crisis.

In contrast to crises related to public safety, crises concerning the reputation of institutions, such as criticism of the actions of police officers or issues affecting the image of the organization, tend to encourage a more careful and dialogical pattern of communication. Study by Zaidi and O'Connor [37] regarding the Canadian police showed that police social media managers apply the principle of *Procedural Justice* when facing negative comments and conflicts in the digital space. Meanwhile, Zheng's research [38] Regarding the transparency of crisis communication, the police in China found that information disclosure, recognition of responsibility, and public participation have a significant influence on the level of public anger

and trust. The findings suggest that in reputational crises, an effective response is not enough just in the form of factual clarification, but also requires accountability, openness, and institutional willingness to build two-way communication with the public.

In the Indonesian context, this dynamic can be seen in the handling of the Vina Cirebon case which has returned to public attention after the emergence of documentaries *Vina: Before 7 Days* [39]. Recent research on the case shows that the Public Relations of the National Police faced limited readiness at the pre-crisis stage, especially due to the lack of a system *Risk Profiling* and *Early Warning System* which is adequate for old cases that have the potential to go viral again on social media. The study also noted that the initial response of institutions tends to be slow, the messages conveyed are inconsistent, communication takes place predominantly one-way, and reputation restoration strategies in the post-crisis stage have not been optimally implemented [35]. This condition shows that when public opinion has formed massively on social media, delayed responses and inconsistencies in messages can actually deepen the crisis of trust in the police institution.

A number of other viral cases show that the pattern of police response on social media is still dominated by factual clarification strategies, affirmation of legal procedures, and administrative actions in the following Table 1:

**Table 1.** Police Crisis Communication Response Patterns to Viral Cases on Social Media

| No. | Case                                                                                   | Form of Police Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Crisis Communication Patterns                                                                   |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Viral arrogant actions of the officers of the car patwal RI 36 (January 2025)          | Polda Metro Jaya gave a stern reprimand to the officers involved [40]. The Criminal Investigation Branch of the National Police asked for clarification from related parties [41]. The National Police explained that the incident did not occur in Sragen [42]. | Administrative response and control of the institution's reputation through corrective actions. |
| 2   | Alleged online gambling promotion by Wulan Guritno (September 2023)                    | The Public Relations Division of the National Police explained the basis of the police report used in the arrest [43].                                                                                                                                           | Procedural clarification as a form of issue management in the digital space.                    |
| 3   | Viral video of a dog being skinned that is said to have occurred in Sragen (June 2025) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Factual clarification to reduce public misinformation.                                          |
| 4   | Palti Hutabarat Arrest (January 2024)                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Affirmation of the legitimacy of legal procedures and justification of institutional actions.   |

These various cases show that the pattern of police crisis communication response patterns on social media tends to be oriented towards factual clarification, affirmation of legal procedures, and administrative actions as an effort to control information and stabilize public perception. The strategy shows that social media is used not only as a means of conveying information, but also as an instrument for maintaining institutional legitimacy in the face of public opinion pressure in the digital space.

Based on these findings, the pattern of police crisis communication response on social media can be understood as a combination of response speed, accuracy of information, transparency, and the ability to manage public conversations consistently. Literature on institutional reputation and *Crisis Communication* emphasizing that the effectiveness of crisis communication is highly determined by the ability of institutions to conduct *Monitoring*, apply

*tactics of responding*, and managing public responses in an adaptive and targeted manner. Conversely, slow, inconsistent, or less transparent communication has the potential to worsen public perception and deepen legitimacy crises [38], [44]. Therefore, the police are required to be able to read the situation carefully, respond proportionately, and maintain the consistency of messages so that social media not only functions as a means of responding to public pressure, but also as a strategic instrument to restore and sustainably maintain public trust in a dynamic digital information ecosystem.

### **Police Digital Reputation Management in the Social Media Space**

Police digital reputation management can be understood as the process of maintaining public perception of institutions through consistent, transparent, and responsive communication in the digital space [19]. In the latest literature, the reputation of police institutions on social media is no longer determined only by what is officially published, but also by how the institution balances the need for openness with the drive to maintain a positive image. Jones et al. [22] shows that police transparency on social media is often limited by reputation orientation, while other studies confirm that transparency and participation on social media can actually strengthen the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the public [39]. This means that the digital reputation in the police force is at a sensitive point, which if too closed can trigger suspicion, but being too defensive can also create a manipulative impression.

In terms of communication strategy, social media is important because it allows institutions to respond quickly to crises, while adapting communication styles to different crisis characters [15]. Jungblut et al. [34] suggests that the police use Twitter and Facebook as the primary channels of crisis communication, with a distinct pattern between community crises and organizational crises. In community crises, messages tend to be informative and one-way, while in organizational crises, communication becomes more dialogical to prevent reputational damage. Other studies have also shown that visual, emotional, and content format influences citizen engagement, so digital reputation is not built only through the content of the message, but also through the way the message is packaged and disseminated [45]. In this context, digital reputation management means managing the content, form, time, and direction of communication simultaneously.

The management of the police's digital reputation shows an increasingly institutionalized direction. The official website of the Public Relations Division of the National Police displays a wide range of information channels, ranging from Tribrata News, Indonesia National Police Update, Polri TV Update, to official social media such as Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. The presence of these various channels shows that the National Police no longer concentrates communication on one channel, but builds a digital ecosystem that allows the public to obtain information from various formats and platforms. On the other hand, a study on public trust in the National Police confirms that the recovery of *Trust* It rests on three main elements, namely accountability, transparency, and communication. These three elements are an important foundation for an institution's reputation in a highly open and debatable digital space [35], [46].

However, strengthening digital channels does not automatically make the institution's reputation stable. Research on the handling of viral cases by the Public Relations of the National Police, especially in the case of Vina Cirebon, shows that the main problem lies precisely in pre-crisis readiness, consistency of information, and post-crisis recovery strategies. The study found weaknesses in early detection of risks, delays in early responses, and inconsistencies in statements that ultimately reinforce negative public perceptions [47]. This analysis is important because it shows that the digital reputation of the police is not only influenced by actions taken during the ongoing crisis, but also by the capacity of institutions to anticipate issues before they go viral. In other words, a strong digital reputation requires preventive, not merely reactive communication work [18], [44].

Research by Nusantara and Lasminiasih [48] The National Police's reputation strategy in dealing with digital disinformation shows that effective reputation management includes the use of official social media for clarification and education, collaboration with content creators and digital literacy activists, strengthening the digital communication competence of personnel, and revitalizing social media management at the regional level. These findings show that the digital reputation of the police needs to be built in stages, at the central level through a consistent official narrative, while at the regional level through a rapid and contextual response, and at the internal level through increasing the capacity of the apparatus to read the dynamics of the digital space. Therefore, police digital reputation management should be understood not only as an effort to maintain a good name, but as an institutional strategy to maintain public trust through accurate, adaptive, and responsible communication.

### **Information Disclosure as the Basis of Police Communication Strategy**

Information disclosure is an important foundation in police communication strategies because the public assesses the performance of institutions not only from the results of law enforcement, but also from the extent to which information is conveyed openly, accessibly, and verifiably [3], [29], [39]. Research by Villodre [28] About *Social Mediated Transparency* shows that transparency through social media is not enough to be understood as simply "sharing information", but rather as a process that includes the availability of information, ongoing conversations, and the ability of institutions to anticipate citizens' information needs. Villodre [28] also explained three models of transparency on social media, namely *guarantor*, *conversational*, and *Proactive*, which shows that information disclosure can move from providing data to more active public dialogue.

In the context of the police, this principle becomes increasingly relevant because these institutions operate in a public space that is very sensitive to issues of trust, legitimacy, and accountability [23], [25]. Studies on official media use suggest that exposure to official media may be related to changes in public trust structures, while research on social media and administrative transparency confirms that effective openness depends on how platforms are used to build interactions, rather than simply producing one-way messages [49]. In other words, a police communication strategy based on information disclosure must be able to combine procedural transparency with communication that is able to convincingly explain the reason, context, and follow-up steps to the public.

From the perspective of digital communication, information disclosure is also closely related to the way institutions appear visually and communicatively on social media. The Jones et al. study [22] About *Police Digital Visibility* indicates that police personnel use a variety of visual devices such as photos, videos, infographics, emojis, memes, and GIFs as part of their professional communication practices. These findings are important because openness in the digital age is no longer measured only by the content of the message, but also by the ability to wrap the message to make it easy to understand, engaging, and remain responsible. At this point, an open police communication strategy needs to avoid a formal impression that is too rigid, but still maintain the boundary between emotional closeness and institutional professionalism.

The direction of the National Police's information disclosure can be seen from the digital communication ecosystem managed by the Public Relations Division of the National Police. The official website of the Public Relations of the National Police contains various channels such as *Tribrata News Update*, *Indonesia National Police Update*, *Police TV Update*, as well as official social media on Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, indicating that transparency is now positioned as a cross-platform communication practice. In addition, the National Police also received recognition through *Makaravox UI PR Awards 2025* in the information disclosure category, with assessments based on mass media and social media news during the period October 2024 to March 2025, as well as through *Monev KIP* that affirms a commitment to transparency, accountability, and public participation [50], [51]. These findings

show that information disclosure has become part of the performance measure of the National Police's public communication performance, not just an institutional slogan.

However, information disclosure still needs to be carried out strategically because the digital space also opens up opportunities for misinformation, misinterpretation, and opinion formation that is not always in line with the facts. Therefore, a police communication strategy based on information disclosure should ideally not stop at the publication of data, but also include quick clarification, easy-to-understand explanations, and communication that is able to build public understanding of the context of events [28], [49]. If coupled with previous findings, it can be concluded that information disclosure is not only an administrative aspect, but a key instrument to strengthen trust, maintain legitimacy, and ensure that social media truly works as a healthy public communication space for police institutions.

## Conclusion

Crisis communication strategies and digital reputation management of police agencies through social media in the era of information disclosure must be carried out quickly, accurately, transparently, consistently, and humanely in order to be able to maintain public trust in the midst of highly volatile digital opinion dynamics. The most effective response patterns are not only in the form of formal clarification, but also include monitoring issues, fact-verification, empathetic diction selection, and coordinated cross-platform messaging so that the crisis does not develop into a broader reputational crisis. From the perspective of information disclosure, social media has proven to be a strategic instrument for the police to build accountability, clarify the context of events, and strengthen institutional legitimacy in the eyes of the public. The implications of these findings are the need to strengthen the capacity of digital public relations, the development of social media-based crisis communication protocols, and the development of follow-up research that examines the effectiveness of each platform and the audience's response to police communication strategies in different crisis situations.

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