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CRISIS COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PT KAI PUBLIC RELATIONS POST-INCIDENT ARGO BROMO ANGGREK CASE

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Abstract

This study stems from the case of the Argo Bromo Anggrek train derailment, which creates significant pressure on the reputation of PT Kereta Api Indonesia and requires a structured and rapid communication response. The purpose of this study is to analyze the application of crisis communication management based on Situational Crisis Communication Theory in an effort to restore public trust. The research used qualitative methods with case studies through in-depth interviews, analysis of official documents, and review of digital content related to the company's response. The results showed that PT KAI implemented a rebuild strategy through public apologies, compensation, and corrective actions combined with a bolstering strategy through the visual presentation of recovery progress in the field. The roles of the Supporting Public External Unit and the Social Media & Corporate Portal Unit complement each other, with the USPE maintaining the consistency of factual information in the mainstream media, while the USPC manages the dynamics of public emotions through more relatable and empathetic content. The findings also show that the company leadership's apology and transparency of information successfully reduced tensions and significantly improved public perception. This study concludes that PT KAI's success was influenced by the integration of consistent messaging, the use of digital sentiment monitoring, and the ability to balance technical explanations and empathy in crisis situations.

Keywords: crisis management, communication, SCCT, public relations, PT KAI

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh insiden anjloknya KA Argo Bromo Anggrek yang menimbulkan tekanan terhadap reputasi PT Kereta Api Indonesia dan menuntut respons komunikasi krisis yang cepat dan terstruktur. Penelitian bertujuan menganalisis penerapan manajemen komunikasi krisis berbasis *Situational Crisis Communication Theory* (SCCT) dalam upaya memulihkan kepercayaan publik. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus melalui wawancara mendalam, analisis dokumen resmi, dan telaah konten digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa PT KAI menerapkan strategi rebuild melalui permintaan maaf terbuka, kompensasi, dan tindakan korektif, yang diperkuat dengan strategi bolstering melalui penyajian visual progres pemulihan. Unit Supporting Public External dan Unit Social Media & Portal Corporate berperan saling melengkapi dalam menjaga konsistensi informasi dan merespons dinamika emosi publik. Gestur permintaan maaf pimpinan serta transparansi informasi terbukti menurunkan ketegangan dan memperbaiki persepsi publik. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi pesan yang konsisten, pemantauan sentimen digital, serta keseimbangan antara penjelasan teknis dan empati berperan penting dalam situasi krisis.

Kata kunci: manajemen krisis, komunikasi, SCCT, public relations, PT KAI



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INTRODUCTION

Crises in organizations often arise unexpectedly and cause uncertainty that affects operational stability. In the public transportation sector, this pressure is even greater because any disruption directly affects public safety and comfort. In the railway industry, operational risks are layered, ranging from daily hazards and field conditions to materials and potential equipment failure. A study by Abrar & Tamin (2024) shows that accidents in the transportation sector can be influenced by daily operational hazards (8%), material failure (22%), and equipment failure (12%). Given this complexity, PT Kereta Api Indonesia (PT KAI) needs a responsive, structured crisis management system, especially for public communication. The urgency of implementing such a system was clearly demonstrated when PT KAI was faced with the derailment of the Argo Bromo Anggrek train on August 1, 2025, which attracted widespread public attention.

The derailment of the Argo Bromo Anggrek train on August 1, 2025, is a clear example of such risks. The incident, which caused several carriages to overturn and damage the tracks, signaling, and switches, resulted in the cancellation of more than 80 trips until August 3, 2025. Although there were no fatalities and track repairs were completed on August 7, 2025, this incident attracted significant public attention. The rapid flow of information through social media shaped public opinion in a short time, especially regarding the Company's initial response (Bisnis News, 2025). This is in line with the phenomenon of information technology development that has triggered changes in communication systems to become faster, where access to information is no longer limited by space and time (Wiryaningrum et al., 2022).

Public reactions spread across TikTok, X, and Instagram platforms show complaints about delays in information, handling at the location, and unclear compensation. This negative perception indicates that the crisis is not only operational but also reputational, as crisis management is not just about addressing technical issues but also designing communication strategies to restore a positive image (Meltareza & Hati, 2025).



Figure 1.1 Tweets from X and Instagram users about post-incident service complaints

The post highlighted the lengthy and uninformative handling process at the location, giving the impression that the company's initial communication did not fully address the needs of passengers on the ground. The comments also showed public disappointment with the travel delays, inadequate facilities, and lack of information regarding compensation, which overall served as early indicators of a decline in public trust in the company's services after the incident.

This phenomenon shows that public opinion dynamics in the early stages of a crisis develop very quickly and help shape the company's image. Previous studies emphasize that speed of response, consistency of message, and empathy are important factors in image recovery efforts in the digital age (Tawaqal et al., 2024). In this context, public communication is not only about conveying factual information, but also managing perceptions and maintaining relationships between the company and the public. Active

media monitoring is essential to track negative sentiment and prepare relevant responses to clarify misleading information (Armando & Liana, 2025). Thus, public communication and media monitoring in the early stages of a crisis play a vital role in shaping public perception and supporting the company's efforts to maintain and restore its image.

Although many studies use Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) in analyzing organizational crisis management, studies discussing its application in public transportation SOEs are still limited. Studies such as Kertanegara & Krypton (2025) highlight reputation mitigation based on rapid clarification, but the focus is not on the transportation industry, which has a high level of safety risk and high public expectations. SCCT itself is very useful for analyzing crisis responses because it focuses on how the public connects the causes of the crisis with the organization and the level of responsibility attributed (Meltareza & Hati, 2025). The application of SCCT, which covers the pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis stages, has proven effective in maintaining public trust in railway operations. This indicates that there is still a research gap in understanding how public service companies such as PT KAI carry out crisis management when facing cases that have a major impact and are in the public spotlight.

Based on these conditions, this research is important for understanding how PT KAI managed the crisis following the Argo Bromo Anggrek train incident through the SCCT approach. This research seeks to explain why the company needed to implement crisis management after the incident and analyze how crisis communication strategies were applied in the process of restoring its image amid increasing public pressure and the dynamics of the digital space. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of Public Relations studies and offer practical recommendations for public transportation companies to manage their reputations in the era of information openness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) was developed by W. Timothy Coombs as a basis for understanding how the public attributes responsibility in crisis situations and how organizations should respond to protect their reputation. Coombs explains that crises almost always trigger attributions because the public wants to know the cause of the incident and who is responsible for it (Coombs, 2013). These attributions influence public emotions and determine the extent of reputational pressure on the organization (Coombs, 2007).

SCCT is based on Attribution Theory, which explains that the public will assess the causes of a crisis based on who is considered responsible, whether the triggering factors are internal or external, and whether the situation is under the organization's control or occurred unintentionally. It is this level of attribution that determines the extent of public demands on the company and how the organization should design its communication response. In the context of operational incidents such as technical disruptions or workplace accidents, the public does not usually place all the blame on the organization. However, they still demand clear accountability because safety and service reliability are key expectations in the transportation industry.

SCCT classifies crises into three clusters based on the strength of initial attribution of responsibility:

Table 2. 1 Types of Crises According to SCCT (Crisis Clusters)

Crisis Cluster	Level of Responsibility Attribution	Examples of Crisis Types
<i>Victim Cluster</i>	Low/Very Weak	<i>Natural Disaster, Sabotage/Workplace Violence.</i>
<i>Accidental Cluster</i>	Moderate/Minimal	<i>Technical-Error Accident, Challenge.</i>
<i>Intentional/Preventable Cluster (Preventable)</i>	High/Very Strong	<i>Human-Error Accident, Organizational Misdeed.</i>

The classification of crisis clusters in SCCT is an important basis for determining the appropriate crisis response strategy, because each cluster reflects a different level of public attribution of responsibility to the organization and, ultimately, influences public expectations regarding the attitude and actions that should be taken. The higher the attribution of responsibility attached to the organization, the greater the public demand for a response that is accountable, empathetic, and corrective. Therefore, understanding the type of crisis cannot be separated from the selection of a crisis response, given that the compatibility between the two is key to maintaining public trust while minimizing reputational damage during the crisis. Based on these differences in the level of responsibility attributed, SCCT then categorizes crisis responses into several main categories that show variations in the level of acknowledgment of responsibility and efforts to make amends, as presented in the following table.

Table 2. 2 Crisis Response Strategies According to SCCT (Crisis Response Strategies)

Strategy Cluster	Main Focus	Example Strategies
<i>Deny</i>	Eliminate the organization's connection to the crisis.	Simple Denial (No crisis), Scapegoat (Blaming external parties).
<i>Diminish</i>	Reducing the perception of responsibility or negative impact.	Excuse (No malicious intent/lack of control), Justification (Reducing perceived damage).
<i>Rebuild</i>	Taking accommodative actions to repair the image and assist victims.	Compensation (Compensating victims), Apology (Full apology, accepting full responsibility).
<i>Bolstering (Strengthening)</i>	Additional strategies, reminding about positive aspects.	Reminder (Recalling past good deeds), Ingratiation (Praise stakeholders).

The four crisis response clusters show that the way organizations respond to crises depends heavily on how the public perceives the causes of the crisis. Not all crises require the same response, as the level of responsibility attributed to organizations also varies. In situations where the organization is perceived to have little involvement, a defensive response is still acceptable to the public. Conversely, when the public perceives that the organization played a major role in the crisis, a more open and responsible response becomes a key requirement. Meanwhile, image-building efforts are seen as a means of maintaining relations with the public, rather than as the primary response to a crisis.

Coombs emphasizes that crisis response must begin with two basic forms of information: *instructing information* (self-protection information for the public) and *adjusting information* (explanations, empathy, and efforts to reduce uncertainty) before organizations implement reputation recovery strategies (Coombs, 2013). After that, reputation response strategies are selected according to the level of reputation threat.

The *rebuild* strategy is the focus of this study. The *rebuild* strategy includes:

1. *Apology*, which is an apology that acknowledges moral responsibility.
2. *Compensation*, which is the provision of benefits or compensation to the affected parties.
3. *Corrective action*, which is an explanation of system improvements and preventive measures to prevent similar incidents from recurring.

According to the rebuild strategy, it is most effective in crises with moderate attribution of responsibility because it demonstrates the organization's commitment to improving the situation and restoring public trust.

SCCT also emphasizes the importance of message consistency across all communication channels. Coombs explains that the media, including social media, influences how the public understands a crisis through *framing*, because media messages shape the definition of the problem, attribution, and perception of solutions (Coombs, 2007). Therefore, message integration between external PR and digital channels is an essential element in controlling the narrative during a crisis. This SCCT framework serves as the basis for examining the dynamics of PT KAI's crisis messaging, the process of message integration between USPE and USPC, and the implementation of the *rebuild* strategy in post-incident image recovery.

Public Relations (PR)

The concept of Public Relations in this study refers to Grunig et al. (1995) with an emphasis on the model of two-way symmetrical communication and the role of the communication facilitator. Public Relations is understood as a management function that not only manages the flow of information, but also plays a role in building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and the public that influence the success of the organization. Within this framework, PR becomes part of the organizational decision-making process, especially when the organization faces situations that could affect public trust.

Grunig states that professional PR not only disseminates information but also fosters reciprocal relationships between organizations and the public through balanced two-way communication, dialogue, negotiation, and ongoing research. This approach positions the public as active participants, rather than mere recipients of messages, so that the organization's response to issues or crises can be formulated based on an understanding of public needs and expectations. In the context of a crisis, the symmetrical two-way model is important because it allows organizations to understand public perceptions in real time and adjust their messages based on feedback (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Grunig & Hunt (1984) also emphasizes that PR serves as a strategic bridge between the public's need for transparency and the organization's need to maintain internal stability.

The role of communication facilitator enables PR to translate technical information and managerial decisions into messages that the public can understand, without neglecting the internal conditions of the organization. This role is realized through communication that bridges technical information from the field with public demands for clarity, empathy, and consistency. PR is also responsible for maintaining relationships with the media (Watson, 2012). In a crisis situation, the media acts as the main intermediary between the organization and the general public, so well-managed relationships help prevent information distortion

and excessive speculation. Grunig mentions that the media has a great ability to shape public opinion, so PR must ensure that crisis messages are delivered quickly, accurately, and without contradiction.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach to understand the crisis management process of PT Kereta Api Indonesia's Public Relations after the Argo Bromo Anggrek train incident. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the meaning, experiences, and dynamics of communication that occur naturally in crisis situations, as qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups attach to a social or humanitarian issue. (Sugiyono, 2023). According to Yin (2018), case studies are an empirical method used to investigate contemporary phenomena in depth in a real-world context. Therefore, the case study approach was chosen in this research to comprehensively examine crisis management at PT KAI, using the derailment of the Argo Bromo Anggrek train as a single case that was analyzed in depth, allowing researchers to observe the communication process that took place in its entirety and contextually.

This research was conducted at the Head Office of PT Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero), specifically in the Public Relations Unit, which plays a central role in managing the company's external communications. The research object focused on PT KAI's crisis communication management practices, including message formulation, communication channel selection, and the company's response to media coverage dynamics and public reactions, using the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) analytical framework. The research subjects were managers and Public Relations staff who were directly involved in crisis communication management and media publications. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in incident handling, understanding of external message formulation, and experience in media management. Researchers deliberately selected individuals and locations to study the central phenomenon of the research (Cresswell, 2013). Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, documentation studies of press releases and social media content, and non-participant observation of the company's visual materials and public communication interactions.

Data analysis was conducted inductively by following the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This procedure allows researchers to filter relevant information, systematically organise findings, and interpret the relationship between field data and the analytical framework to understand the crisis management practices implemented by PT KAI, using the interactive analysis model comprising data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. (Miles et al., 2014). The entire analysis process was conducted continuously from data collection to final interpretation in order to maintain consistency and accuracy in the interpretation of research findings (Cresswell, 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Urgency of Crisis Management in Incident Handling

The derailment of the Argo Bromo Anggrek train on August 1, 2025, was classified as a *high-risk* crisis based on the Crisis Management SOP (Doc. SOP-KANPUS-XX). This classification was driven by the magnitude of the operational disruption and the threat to

passenger safety, which required a rapid and coordinated response. Based on information from the Supporting Public External Unit (USPE), the incident was immediately identified as a major KKA (train accident) crisis, triggering the immediate activation of the crisis communication team through instructions from the Vice President of Public Relations. In such circumstances, crisis management becomes an urgent necessity not only for the technical handling of the incident, but also to reduce the uncertainty of information that could potentially trigger public unrest. This need is reflected in how the company activated its crisis protocol immediately after receiving the initial signal of disruption.

From the data findings, it appears that PT KAI's early detection system not only relies on conventional reports from the field, but also on digital monitoring. Informants from the Social Media & Corporate Portal Unit (USPC) explained that early indications of incidents often appear through digital signals before formal reports are submitted by operational officers. However, all information must still go through a verification process to ensure accuracy and prevent escalation errors. This process demonstrates that PT KAI's internal preparedness is not only procedural but also involves *real-time* information dynamics.

One of the USPC informants emphasized the verification process carried out by the company,

"The process begins with the Station Manager (KS) reporting the incident to the Control Center (PK), which is then forwarded to PT KAI Headquarters. Once the information has been validated, the Public Relations team drafts an official statement."

This process shows that all information released by the company has gone through a multi-layered screening process to prevent errors or speculation that could worsen the situation. This flow not only serves as a data clarification mechanism but also centralizes communication control, ensuring that all messages conveyed to the public have a consistent narrative and tone. This tiered validation process reflects a structured vertical communication pattern within the organization, where compliance with SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) is key to maintaining message consistency before publication on social media (Hati et al., 2025).

Theoretically, this strict verification mechanism aligns with the principle of *preparedness* in crisis management. Pearson et al. (1998) argue that an organization's ability to minimize ambiguity is the foundation of effective crisis management. By validating data before it is presented in official statements, PT KAI seeks to prevent the spread of rumors that could worsen public perception and reduce the risk of unfavorable attribution of responsibility. This preparedness demonstrates why crisis management is so important: without structured protocols, information gaps will quickly be filled with speculation, which could ultimately worsen damage to the company's reputation.

Application of SCCT in Media Relations Practices and Leadership Responses

The Unit Supporting Public External (USPE) was the leading actor in managing media narratives during the handling of the Argo Bromo Anggrek train incident. During the initial phase of the crisis, USPE focused its communications on stabilizing the flow of information, controlling message consistency, and affirming corporate responsibility through the direct involvement of company leaders. This step was designed to prevent media speculation and ensure that the public received accurate information. Throughout the critical period of August 1-7, 2025, USPE issued nine press releases that became the primary reference for the national media, culminating in a press conference on August 3, 2025, when the President Director of PT KAI made an official statement. At that moment, technical explanations were combined with a humanistic approach through a public apology accompanied by a bow.

The USPE spokesperson explained that although spontaneous, this action was in line with the company's communication strategy:

"The gesture of bowing is a natural thing for a spokesperson to do, but it turned out to be a blessing in disguise because it received a positive response. It became a symbol of humanistic communication to neutralize negative sentiment."

The gesture of bowing is seen as representing empathy and moral responsibility, thereby effectively easing tensions and reducing negative sentiments. The presence of leaders in public communications also reinforces the image that the company is not merely conveying technical data, but truly understands the emotional impact of the incident on the community. Thus, this parallel technical and humanistic approach strengthens the company's credibility and helps rebuild public trust.



Peran Penting Komunikasi di Masa Krisis

Pada Insiden KA Argo Bromo Angrek 1 Januari 2025



Figure 4.2.1 Timeline of PT KAI's Crisis Communication Response (August 1–3, 2025)

Source: Internal Public Relations Documents of PT KAI, 2025

The timeline shown in Figure 4.2.1 illustrates how PT KAI's communication response intensity gradually increased over the first three days after the incident. Starting with internal information stabilization, the company then released a series of press releases before finally increasing the weight of its communication through a press conference attended by its president director. This systematic and tiered response pattern shows that the company managed the crisis with a measured and non-reactive structure.

This approach is in line with the principles of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). Based on Timothy Coombs' classification, the Argo Bromo Angrek train incident is categorized as *an accidental cluster*, so the organization is advised to implement a *rebuild* strategy through open explanations and public apologies. The gesture of bowing is a form of *mortification*, which is a sincere admission of guilt, as well as part of *adjusting information* aimed at emotionally calming the public. This humanistic element has proven effective in shifting the focus of news coverage from the narrative of "operational failure" to "leadership responsibility," thereby strengthening the company's position in the news during crises.

The effectiveness of this communicative strategy integration was clearly reflected in the post-incident phase. *Media monitoring* reports for the period of August 1–7, 2025 showed that positive sentiment dominated at 81%, followed by neutral sentiment at 18%, and only 1% negative sentiment. This drastic shift indicates that open communication from

company leaders, particularly through press conferences and apologies, significantly restored public perception.



Figure 4.2.2 Social Media Response to the Argo Bromo Angrek Train Incident (August 3–5, 2025)

Source: Internal Public Relations Documents of PT KAI, 2025

Figure 4.2.2, which illustrates the dynamics of conversation on social media, reinforces these findings: within three days, there were 793 mentions, reaching more than 5 million accounts and engaging more than 257 thousand. Positive sentiment reached 63%, triggered by the virality of a video of the CEO bowing as a symbol of empathy and moral responsibility.

The widespread distribution of the video, especially on TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, served as a counter-narrative to public complaints about trip cancellations and refund mechanisms. The visualization of fieldwork and official statements in social media content reinforced the company's commitment to transparency. The high emotional response from netizens showed that humanistic communication has a major influence on shaping public opinion during a crisis.



Figure 4.2.3 Media Response to the Argo Bromo Angrek Train Incident (August 1–7, 2025)

Source: Internal Public Relations Documents of PT KAI, 2025

Figure 4.2.3 shows how nine press releases issued by PT KAI headquarters during the week after the incident served as the main source of information for conventional media. Through publications containing apologies, operational updates, service recovery progress, and *refund* mechanisms, the company demonstrated consistent transparency. The sentiment graph in the figure shows a predominance of *positive tone* at 81%, with a significant increase after the public received official explanations and saw periodic reports of service recovery progress. This condition aligns with Sandova et al. (2025), who state that in crisis situations that have the potential to threaten reputation, transparency, and the acknowledgment of mistakes (apology) are crucial instruments for improving public perception and maintaining organizational credibility.

The biggest momentum occurred when the video of CEO Didiek Hartantyo's apology went viral and received more than 700 sympathetic *mentions*. This phenomenon is empirical evidence of the successful application of *mortification* within the SCCT framework. The public no longer focused on the technical aspects of the incident, but on the leadership attitude that showed empathy and moral responsibility. This shift in focus accelerated the restoration of PT KAI's image and maintained the company's reputation stability during the crisis.

Corporate Digital Communication in Crisis Situations

While the Unit Supporting Public External (USPE) focuses on the validity of information in mainstream media, the Social Media & Corporate Portal Unit (USPC) takes on a different role with a more personal and humanistic approach. This unit plays a strategic role in maintaining the company's image through the management of official accounts such as Instagram @keretaapikita, which not only functions as an information channel but also as a space for image-building interaction (Hati et al., 2025). This approach stems from the need to mitigate the rapid escalation of public emotions on social media while ensuring that public discourse remains constructive. Given that digital media requires a personal and adaptive response, USPC packages information in a language that is more relatable and accessible, without compromising accuracy.

The data show that USPC carefully crafts its messages, particularly through neutral diction to reduce public tension. Terms considered too harsh or likely to reinforce negative sentiment, such as "anjlok" (crash), are replaced with more professional alternatives, such as "accident". This strategy helps the company control perceptions without appearing to cover up the facts. To support communication decisions, USPC also relies on the "Skema" *digital monitoring* system, which maps public sentiment in *real time*. In line with the thinking of Ramdan et al. (2024). This monitoring activity is crucial for public relations practitioners to ensure that public relations activities are carried out consistently and help shape positive public opinion in the midst of a crisis. The results of the monitoring then become the basis for determining the form of response, whether the company needs to provide additional clarification, reaffirm the core message, or strengthen empathy through visual content.



Figure 4.3.1 Visual of the Bromo Anggrek Train Evacuation on the Official KAI Channel

Source: Instagram @keretaapikita

On social media, information delivery does not only rely on text, but is also supported by a planned visual strategy. USPC utilizes photos of heavy equipment at evacuation sites, documentation of field officers' activities, and a spirit of mutual cooperation as concrete representations of the company's efforts in handling crisis situations. The use of visual content optimizes the function of social media digitalization, which allows for the simultaneous integration of text and images, thereby creating interactivity and triggering positive feedback from the public (Deryansyah et al., 2022). Strategically, these visuals serve as a form of bolstering, highlighting the company's positive efforts to counteract negative perceptions. Through this representation, the company is no longer perceived as an abstract institution called PT KAI, but rather as a group of individuals working in the field and making real efforts to improve the situation.

The accompanying text is designed with a more empathetic tone, for example, through apologies, expressions of gratitude for users' patience, and explanations of the steps that have been and are being taken. The "KAI Update" label and mention of the number of personnel in the field reinforce the image of transparency and responsiveness. All these elements show that USPC not only manages information, but also manages public emotions. Through a combination of diction selection, visual reinforcement, and *real-time* sentiment analysis from "Skema", USPC strives to keep public conversation stable and prevent it from escalating into collective anger.

The difference in approach between mainstream media and social media is clearly evident in the division of their communication functions. Mass media managed by USPE acts as *a source of truth* through the presentation of valid data, official releases, and statements from company leaders. The style of language tends to be formal, measured, and oriented toward the certainty of information, so that the public obtains a clear factual basis regarding the situation at hand.

KAI Sampaikan Permohonan Maaf Terkait Insiden Gangguan Operasional KA Argo Bromo Anggrek di Emplasemen Stasiun Pegadenbaru

Posted: 01.08.2025 Categories: *Siaran Pers*



Pemesanan Tiket

PT Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) memastikan bahwa dalam insiden anjloknya rangkaian KA 1 (Argo Bromo Anggrek) yang terjadi pada 1 Agustus 2025 di emplasemen Stasiun Pegadenbaru, tidak ada korban jiwa di antara penumpang atau petugas. Setelah insiden tersebut, semua penumpang berhasil dievakuasi dengan aman oleh petugas yang bertugas di lapangan. Kami memastikan keselamatan penumpang menjadi prioritas utama kami, dan segera melakukan tindakan untuk menghindari potensi bahaya lebih lanjut.

"Insiden ini menyebabkan gangguan sementara pada jalur hulu dan hilir, namun kami memastikan bahwa upaya perbaikan segera dilakukan dengan estimasi waktu perbaikan sekitar 8-10 jam. Kami juga menyampaikan tidak ada korban jiwa dalam insiden ini, KAI akan melakukan upaya rekayasa pola operasi memastikan perjalanan kereta lainnya tetap terlayani," ungkap VP Public Relations KAI Anne Purba.

Setelah menerima laporan pada pukul 15:47 WIB, KAI koordinasi dengan petugas terkait dilakukan pada pukul 15:48 WIB. Tim kami langsung melakukan langkah-langkah perbaikan untuk memastikan kelancaran perjalanan kereta api lainnya. Kami berkomitmen untuk mengatasi masalah ini dengan cepat dan efektif.

KAI sedang melakukan investigasi untuk mengetahui penyebab pasti dari insiden ini. Kami akan memberikan pembaruan lebih lanjut segera setelah kami memperoleh informasi lebih lanjut.

"Untuk perjalanan kereta api kami akan terus memberikan informasi pembaruan terkini kepada pelanggan. Kami mohon maaf atas ketidaknyamanan yang dialami oleh pelanggan yang terdampak. Keselamatan dan kenyamanan pelanggan tetap menjadi prioritas utama kami, dan kami akan terus berupaya untuk memberikan layanan terbaik," tutup Anne.

Untuk informasi lebih lanjut mengenai layanan KAI, termasuk KAI 121, Anda bisa menghubungi Contact Center KAI 121 melalui telepon di nomor 021-121, atau melalui WhatsApp di nomor 0811-1211-121. (*Public Relations KAI*)



Figure 4.3.2 Official Press Release from PT KAI Regarding the Argo Bromo Anggrek Train Operational Disruption Incident

Accessed from <https://www.kai.id>

At the visual and narrative level, USPE's communication style is evident in the formal "Press Release" format, which gets straight to the point. Straightforward titles, such as "KAI Expresses Apology..." and quotes from authorized officials reinforce the authority of the information being conveyed. The diction chosen is also neutral and technical, such as "operational disruption incident" or "operating pattern," to maintain professionalism and avoid word choices that could potentially lead to excessive interpretation.

Overall, USPE content serves as an anchor of information that prevents speculation in the public sphere. Meanwhile, social media managed by USPC serves as a space for public interaction that highlights the human side and emotional closeness. This synergy allows the company to convey messages widely through *broadcasting* channels while building closeness and public understanding through *narrowcasting*.

Theoretically, the USPC approach reflects the application of the Two-Way Symmetrical Model from Grunig et al. (1995). This model emphasizes balanced two-way communication, in which organizations not only convey information, but also listen and adjust their messages based on public input. In practice, USPC does not simply "inform" the public, but rather adjusts its communication methods based on the emotional dynamics and sentiments that develop on social media. The use of the "Skema" monitoring system is a key indicator of this public listening process. Public responses identified through this system are used as a reference in communication decision-making. This shows that the USPC's communication strategy is adaptive and contextual, rather than rigid or one-way.

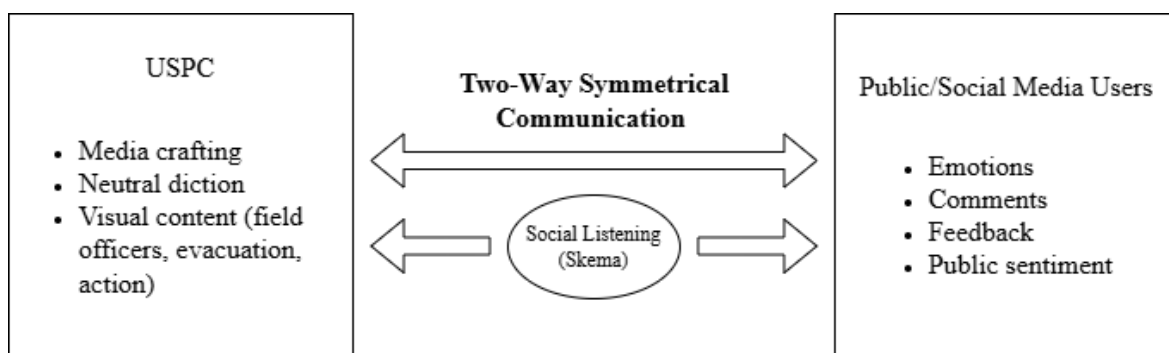


Figure 4.3. 3 Grunig's Two-Way Symmetrical Communication Model in PT KAI's Social Media Management Practices during a Crisis Situation

Figure 4.3.3 illustrates the application of a two-way symmetrical communication model in PT KAI's social media management during a crisis situation. USPC is positioned as the main actor managing messages in a reciprocal relationship with the social media user public. This unit not only conveys information, but also actively receives and processes public responses in the form of emotions, comments, feedback, and developing sentiments. Social listening activities mediate this exchange process through the “Skema” monitoring system. This system functions as a mechanism for interpreting public sentiment in real time. The two-way arrows in the diagram emphasize that communication is dynamic and adaptive, rather than linear.

The two-way symmetrical approach is also evident in the language chosen by USPC. Replacing terms that could potentially trigger negative emotions with more neutral and professional diction shows the company's efforts to maintain a balance between information disclosure and public sensitivity. This strategy is not intended to cover up facts, but to ensure that messages are received without exacerbating the situation. In addition to text, this two-way communication is reinforced by visuals that show officers' activities in the field. Visuals of evacuations, heavy equipment at work, and the involvement of KAI personnel are a symbolic response to public unrest, while also showing that the company understands the public's demand for a tangible presence and responsibility. Thus, communication does not stop at clarification, but also provides evidence of action.

Overall, USPC's communication practices show that social media is used as a space for interaction, not just a one-way channel for disseminating information. Through a process of listening, adjusting messages, and showing empathy, USPC strives to build mutual understanding with the public during a crisis. The existence of a sentiment monitoring system, such as “Skema,” strengthens the public's position as an integral part of the communication process, enabling the organization to respond more appropriately to the emotional needs and dynamics of public sentiment. This condition indicates that the public is not only positioned as the object of communication, but also as the subject that influences the direction and content of the organization's messages. Thus, USPC's social media management in crisis situations has substantially reflected the application of a two-way symmetrical communication model, where communication is not only oriented towards conveying information, but also towards the process of listening and adjusting messages. This approach strengthens the company's efforts to maintain communication stability while building public trust during the crisis.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that crisis communication management plays an important role in maintaining public trust in public transportation organizations that are in high-risk situations. The derailment of the Argo Bromo Anggrek train shows that crises not only have an impact on technical and operational aspects, but also affect public perception and assessment of the company. The rapid development of information in digital media means that reputational pressure can arise in a short period of time.

This situation requires organizations to implement crisis communication in a planned, coordinated manner that is in line with public needs. The results of the study show that PT Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) categorized the incident as a crisis with a moderate level of responsibility attribution in accordance with the accidental cluster framework in Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). This classification became the basis for determining the form of communication response taken by the company. PT KAI chose an approach that emphasized responsibility through apologies, compensation to affected passengers, and explanations of the corrective measures taken. This approach demonstrated the company's efforts to respond to public demands without avoiding responsibility for the impact caused.

Crisis communication practices were carried out through a clear division of roles between the Supporting Public External Unit (USPE) and the Social Media & Corporate Portal Unit (USPC). The USPE was responsible for managing communication in the mainstream media by ensuring that all information conveyed had undergone a tiered verification process. A structured vertical communication pattern helped maintain message consistency and prevent narrative differences in the public sphere. The clarity of this information flow strengthens the company's position as an official source of information during the crisis. USPC plays a role that focuses on managing communication in social media, which is more dynamic and interactive in nature. The information conveyed is packaged in language that is more accessible to the public, while still referring to the main message set by the head office. More neutral diction is used to reduce tension and avoid escalating public emotions. This approach shows that digital communication is treated as a space for dialogue, not just a means of delivering announcements.

The apology delivered by the company's leadership was an important part of PT KAI's crisis communication. The CEO's direct presence at the press conference demonstrated the involvement of top management in dealing with the crisis. The open manner of delivery, accompanied by explanations of the conditions on the ground, helped the public understand the situation more comprehensively. The response from the media and the public showed that the leadership's attitude contributed to a change in the tone of the news coverage and a reduction in pressure on the company.

The continuous delivery of information also played a role in maintaining communication stability during the crisis. Regular press releases provided updates on the progress of service recovery and the mechanism for handling affected passengers. The public not only received initial information, but also the latest developments relevant to their conditions. This communication pattern helped reduce uncertainty and limit speculation in the public sphere.

The use of visual content in digital communication reinforces the message conveyed by the company. Documentation of evacuations, field officer activities, and route recovery processes shows that the company is taking real action, not just making statements. These visuals help the public see firsthand the efforts being made in the field. The presence of visual evidence makes the company's communication feel more concrete and easier to understand.

Theoretically, the findings of this study reinforce the application of Situational Crisis Communication Theory in the context of public service organizations. Rebuild and bolstering strategies can be implemented simultaneously when organizations face crises with moderate levels of responsibility attribution.

The application of these strategies is contextual and adapts to the nature of the crisis and public expectations. This shows that SCCT can be used as a relevant analytical framework for understanding crisis communication practices in the transportation sector. This research also shows the relationship between SCCT and two-way communication practices in public relations. Digital sentiment monitoring activities enable companies to understand public responses and emotions continuously.

This information is used as a basis for adjusting messages, both in terms of language and delivery. This process shows that crisis communication is carried out as a dynamic and adaptive process, not as a one-way delivery of messages. From a practical perspective, this study illustrates that crisis communication requires cross-unit coordination and message consistency across all communication channels. Clarity of roles between mainstream media and social media managers helps companies maintain narrative stability during a crisis. Leadership involvement, information transparency, and the ability to read public dynamics are important elements in crisis management. The practices carried out by PT KAI show that crisis communication does not only focus on problem solving, but also on managing relationships with the public.

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