



The Role of Stakeholders in Handling Crisis Communication of Pertamina Hulu Energi: A Situational Crisis Communication Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of stakeholders in managing the oil spill crisis in Karawang in 2019 by Pertamina Hulu Energi—Offshore North West Java (PHE ONWJ). The research employs the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) developed by Coombs and Holladay. SCCT is used to understand how crisis communication responses can influence the perceptions and roles of various stakeholders. The research method used is a case study, collecting data through in-depth interviews, surveys, and document analysis. The findings indicate that the role of stakeholders was highly effective in supporting PHE ONWJ's crisis communication efforts. Transparent, swift, and targeted responses were able to enhance public trust, while slow and less informative responses tended to reduce empathy. This study provides significant insights into how companies can manage crisis communication effectively to maintain and enhance stakeholder roles. Additionally, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for other companies in handling similar crises in the future.

Keywords

crisis communication; stakeholders; Pertamina Hulu Energi—offshore north west java; situational crisis communication theory; oil spill;

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INTRODUCTION

A crisis can be defined as an event that arises suddenly and poses a threat to an organization. To be considered a crisis, an event must have potentially high consequences for those affected and limited time to make decisions. Therefore, a crisis must be dealt with quickly so the organization can return to normal operations. One crucial response is communicating with stakeholders regarding the ongoing crisis (Olsson, 2014).

Concerning the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, often called Deepwater Horizon in 2010, communication specialists and industry analysts noted that British Petroleum's (BP) response was delayed and ineffective. Some points that reflect communication failures include (1) Delay in providing information, (2) Lack of empathy and responsibility, (3) Inconsistent communication, and (3) Lack of engagement with the media (Mahmud, 2019).

Exxon Valdez was also considered a failure to handle the response and communicate effectively. The factors include (1) Delay in notification, (2) Lack of transparency, (3) Lack of coordination with local authorities, and (4) Poor impression management (Williams & Treadaway, 1992).

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Meanwhile, Shell Oil Company proved successful in dealing with the crisis in the 1999 oil spill case in Sydney Harbour, Australia. The significant phases in crisis management employed by Shell Oil Company include avoidance, preparation, recognition, resolution, and profiting. The company has demonstrated that it can achieve significant profits by effectively applying these phases. A key aspect of Shell Oil Company's strategy revolves around maintaining strong relationships with its stakeholders. Therefore, each stage in crisis management is geared toward communication efforts with stakeholders (Larasati, 2011).

On July 12, 2019, an oil spill occurred at *Pertamina Hulu Energi—Offshore North West Java (PHE ONWJ)*, Karawang, West Java. This incident seriously impacted the marine ecosystem, especially mangroves on the coast of Karawang and Bekasi Regency (Mewangi, 2019). The oil spill is predicted to have affected 77,713 mangroves with an area of about 140 hectares.

Table 1. Mangrove area in Karawang in 2013-2020

| Tahun | Luasan Mangrove (km ²) | Luasan Non Mangrove (km ²) |
|-------|------------------------------------|--|
| 2013 | 207,88 | 1798,48 |
| 2016 | 357,22 | 1635,73 |
| 2020 | 237,61 | 1770,86 |

(Source: Dinas Kelautan dan Perikanan Kabupaten Karawang, 2022)

In 2016, the mangrove area increased by 357.22 km² due to mangrove tree planting activities for 3 years. However, in 4 years, the mangrove area on the coast of Karawang Regency decreased by 237.61 km². Oil spills from PHE ONWJ oil mining caused this decline. The oil spill incident in Karawang damaged and killed 77,713 mangroves, including newly planted mangrove plants of small size (Pasaribu et al., 2022).

Looking at the success of Shell Oil Company in 1999, it is necessary to analyze the role of stakeholders in the case of the oil spill in Karawang to assess the extent to which their efforts helped PHE ONWJ for the impact on the environment. Applying Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), proposed by Coombs and Holladay (2002), will decisively enhance the analysis of stakeholder effectiveness in crisis communication during the 2019 oil spill incident in Karawang.

Crisis communication in the case of the oil spill in Karawang is expected to be a basis for learning and improvement so that any company that experiences a crisis can better cope with similar situations in the future and improve public trust in corporate environmental responsibility. This responsibility must consider the relationship with stakeholders and the level of compliance and dedication to regulations in the Indonesian oil and gas sector so that it can positively contribute to maintaining the integrity and sustainability of the company.

In addition to crisis communication in accountability for the oil spill incident, this research will also analyze improvement efforts and lessons learned so that PHE ONWJ can become an example of a company that can effectively overcome crises, minimize adverse impacts, and rebuild public trust by considering the role of stakeholders.

METHOD

This study used a single case study research design and method with a descriptive-qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because, as Irawan (2006) explained, this research does not require numbers and variables in data analysis but focuses on in-depth and naturalistic descriptions of the phenomenon under study. This approach does not traditionally use populations or samples but sees cases as unique entities with their own characteristics.

The *holistic* single case study method by Yin (2009) was used to emphasize an in-depth understanding of one specific case as the focus of the research. This design allows researchers to explore the phenomenon of the oil spill by PHE ONWJ in Karawang in 2019 in a comprehensive and detailed way. The *holistic* single case study provides a richer and deeper understanding of the unique context and dynamics of the oil spill case in Karawang.

Kriyantono (2006) explains that qualitative research aims to explain a phenomenon through data collection from various sources. In the context of this research, the case study method allows

researchers to utilize various data sources and collect as much information as possible about the oil spill incident in Karawang in 2019.

We used documentary and interview data collection techniques. Researchers traced offline and online sources to get more sources of information. Bungin (2008) said that many academics doubted the validity of obtained online data, but the doubts disappeared when the media developed so rapidly. Online data collection methods can be done through media such as *websites* or other digital *platforms* that provide online facilities. This allows researchers to utilize online data in the form of both theoretical and factual information quickly, efficiently, and accurately and can be academically accounted for. A necessary procedure that must be considered in this method is to record the data source and search time (Bungin, 2008).

In data analysis, the researcher used Creswell's (2014) and Siyoto and Sodik's (2015) analytical techniques, starting with preparing data for analysis, reading the data as a whole, reviewing, labeling, and presenting it in the form of narratives and data interpretation.

To ensure data validity, researchers triangulated data sources by interviewing several stakeholders. Triangulation in qualitative methods is carried out by comparing observation data with interview results and interview results with relevant documents. The results of this comparison are expected to show similarities or differences in the reasons that arise (Moleong, 2007, p. 330).

We interviewed stakeholders directly involved in responding to the oil spill in Karawang in 2019, not those who only saw it through online or offline media publications. This is important so that researchers get information about stakeholders' real perceptions and roles towards the incident that occurred. The sources successfully interviewed by the researcher are attached as follows:

- Ardhan Indra from the Directorate General of Pollution Control and Environmental Damage, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK—*Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan*). His responsibility was for monitoring and controlling environmental pollution caused by various industrial activities, including oil spills.
- Waluyo from the Directorate General of Sea Transportation, Ministry of Transportation (Kemenhub—*Kementerian Perhubungan*). As an official at the Directorate General of Sea and Coast Guard, he was responsible for regulating and supervising sea traffic, including handling accidents and incidents in Indonesian waters.
- Roy Burdah from Consultant and Training Specialist, Oil Spill Combat Team (OSCT) Indonesia. Roy Burdah is the chief consultant and training specialist working with OSCT Indonesia. His team was responsible for responding to the oil spill incident in Karawang in 2019.
- Andriana Yudhistira was the representative for the community directly affected by the 2019 oil spill in Karawang.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), understanding stakeholder views and responses during a crisis is crucial for determining an effective crisis communication strategy (Coombs, 2007). SCCT emphasizes the importance of considering stakeholder perceptions of crisis responsibility and the history of previous crises. Organizations can choose the most appropriate response to minimize reputational damage and maintain stakeholder trust by understanding how stakeholders view corporate responsibility in a crisis. The correct initial response can help reduce public uncertainty and anxiety, provide accurate information, and gain stakeholder buy-in and support.

The stakeholders' role in the crisis in Karawang in 2019 will be examined from several main aspects. First is the *crisis responsibility* aspect, which includes the role of stakeholders regarding their responsibility for the crisis experienced by Pertamina (Indonesian state-owned oil and natural gas corporation). Second is *crisis history*, which will discuss the history of crises experienced by Pertamina and a comparison of the role of stakeholders in it. For example, stakeholders tend to be more critical of the current crisis if Pertamina has a dire crisis history. Third, *prior reputation* will analyze the role of stakeholders in helping the effectiveness of Pertamina's response. Next, the *crisis response strategy* discusses the role of stakeholders in Pertamina's communication strategy in

responding to the crisis. Typically, this strategy should be chosen carefully based on the type of crisis and the approximate amount of perceived responsibility. For example, accommodation strategies such as apologies and compensation are more effective for crises with high responsibility (Coombs, 1995). Finally, *organizational reputation* or *behavioral intentions* refer to the role of stakeholders in reducing the impact of the crisis and fostering public trust by helping to improve Pertamina's reputation.

Crisis Responsibility

In 2019, the coastal community of Karawang was shocked by the appearance of an oil spill. The spill was shaped like a black ball and smelled like kerosene. After being scattered on the beach, the oil melted, and its pungent odor was felt by residents and visitors who were swimming (Awaluddin, 2019). This incident had a profound impact on the environment. The PHE ONWJ oil spill affected 12 villages in Karawang and Bekasi and seven islands in the Kepulauan Seribu.

It is said that since the oil spill in Karawang was reported, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) has assisted by issuing an official letter to Pertamina containing directions for the restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems due to PT PHE ONWJ's YYA-I pipeline leak. KLHK directed Pertamina to be responsible for restoring the affected ecosystems.

In the context of coastal and marine ecosystem restoration due to the leak of the YYA-I PHE ONWJ oil and gas pipeline in the northern waters of Karawang, KLHK plays an essential role in supporting the restoration efforts. First, an oil spill impact survey was conducted in Karawang Regency, Bekasi Regency, and Kepulauan Seribu to understand the impact and determine restoration steps. Second, KLHK held meetings on January 15 and 23, 2020, to develop a coastal and marine ecosystem restoration plan that is in accordance with field conditions. Third, KLHK developed an Environmental Function Restoration Plan (RPFLH—*Rencana Pemulihan Fungsi Lingkungan Hidup*) document to guide mangrove ecosystem restoration in the affected areas.

KLHK instructed PHE ONWJ to carry out *mangrove* restoration by planting three times as many *mangroves* as were affected in the three areas. Restoration must be completed in 12 months, with monitoring every six months for two years to ensure success. Success is measured by 75% survival of the planted *mangroves*. Restoration progress is reported every six months to KLHK and the Director General. PHE ONWJ must also monitor the impact of the oil spill on coral reefs and seagrasses. If coral reefs are affected, PHE ONWJ must restore them immediately, or they will be penalized according to the applicable regulations.

Along with KLHK, OSCT Indonesia also played an essential role in tackling the oil spill in Karawang as PHE ONWJ's official consultant. OSCT Indonesia conducted modeling to predict the movement of oil, analyzed its potential impact, and used the *Environmental Sensitivity Index* (ESI) for more specific analysis. From the prediction results, OSCT Indonesia provided strategy recommendations, including advice on equipment and personnel needed to deal with the oil spill.

Waluyo from Kemenhub also explained the critical role of the Sea and Coast Guard Unit (KPLP) in handling the oil spill in Karawang by PHE ONWJ. The role includes notifying vessels to avoid the oil spill area, asking them to prioritize pollution control vessels, and reporting the incident to the Syahbandar. In addition, coordination meetings were held to develop action plans and inventory needs, and assistance was provided in the form of *oil booms*, patrol boats, and *buoys*. KPLP is also ready to assist with personnel and patrol boats, and if needed, the emergency status can be upgraded to Tier 2. The Oil Spill Response Team and Command Post were activated with the deployment of personnel and patrol boats. All actions are carried out under applicable laws.

The application of SCCT becomes very relevant in the context of the oil spill in Karawang. SCCT emphasizes the importance of understanding stakeholders' views and responses to a crisis to determine the right communication strategy. In this case, as key stakeholders, KLHK, OSCT Indonesia, and Kemenhub perceive Pertamina's responsibility to restore the affected ecosystem.

It is important to remember that during a crisis, an organization's stakeholders will likely extend beyond its immediate stakeholder network, including fringe groups that may be impacted or are interested in a particular issue. Crises draw attention to the organizations involved and the way those organizations respond to the crisis at hand. Crises raise new issues related to response, organizational behavior, and contestation in the rhetorical arena as voices from multiple stakeholders merge. Due to time constraints and prioritization during a crisis, organizations often

focus on known, prominent, or influential stakeholder groups, neglecting those on the periphery of the organization's operations (Ndlela, 2019).

Pertamina did not ignore the groups directly affected by the oil spill in Karawang. Instead, it received assistance from affected communities that helped contain the spill and maintain the logistics post. The assistance group consisted of fishermen and village officials for community protection (Linmas—*Perlindungan Masyarakat*) who volunteered to help with the operational process.

In addition, stakeholders also involved the media to help Pertamina deal with the crisis.

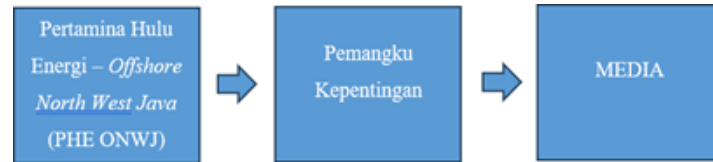


Figure 1. Media Support in Stakeholder Roles

This is evidenced by the publication of the Karawang Regency Government representing the affected communities and Kemenhub on the official pages of their respective agencies. This proves that the role of stakeholders has a technical effect on the affected communities and helps calm specific communities that gather on the Internet. This assistance is instrumental in avoiding negative perceptions that can damage Pertamina's reputation.



Figure 2. Media Support from Karawang Regency Government (Source: Dinas Komunikasi dan Informasi Kabupaten Karawang, 2019)

Crisis History

In SCCT, *crisis history* plays a crucial role in shaping public perception of an organization's responsibility during a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2009). *Crisis history* refers to the record of crisis incidents that have been experienced by the organization before. If an organization has a poor *crisis history*, the public tends to assume the organization has a greater responsibility for the crisis that is happening. This is due to the perception that the organization did not learn from previous mistakes or did not take adequate precautions. Conversely, suppose an organization has no crisis history or has a good history of handling crises; the public tends to be more tolerant and perceive the crisis as an isolated incident. Therefore, understanding and managing *crisis history* is crucial, as public perception can affect an organization's reputation and response to crises.

On April 30, 2018, an oil spill occurred in Balikpapan due to a ruptured Pertamina pipeline attracted by the anchor of the MV Ever Judger. The incident contaminated 12,000 hectares of coastal area and left five people dead. Pertamina initially denied that the spill came from their assets but later admitted it after an investigation. Crisis management in companies should be organized with clear roles, where the President, Director, or CEO conveys crisis information. The highest authority is the leading spokesperson in conveying policies, procedures, and directives.

At the start of the crisis, four Pertamina officials provided information, but this information was not based on definite facts. Issues Management systems and procedures should be in place to deal with issues proactively, including *standby statements* prepared in advance (Wongsonagoro, 2020). First, the environmental document does not include the critical impact of the shipping

channel on the pipeline. Second, the pipeline maintenance study was not included. Third, inadequate pipeline inspections. Fourth, there was no automated pipeline monitoring system. Fifth, there is no early warning system. KLHK considers that Pertamina is slow in anticipating the incident. KLHK immediately gave administrative sanctions and asked Pertamina to pay compensation. KLHK also ensures future improvements in Pertamina's crisis communication system.

A similar incident occurred a year later in Karawang in 2019, where KLHK oversaw and coordinated with Pertamina to ensure a better crisis response. KLHK considers that Pertamina has improved the effectiveness of crisis communication compared to the Balikpapan incident.

"From Balikpapan to Karawang, let's say there was a one-year interval, yes, there was an improvement in crisis communication. Emergency response to affected areas is also better. It's okay." (Interview with Ardhian Indra in Jakarta, May 2, 2024)

In the Karawang incident, KLHK worked closely with Kemenhub and OSCT Indonesia to mitigate the oil spill's environmental impact. KLHK also evaluated Pertamina's steps during the crisis and ensured that Pertamina had improved its crisis communication systems and procedures compared to the Balikpapan incident. This evaluation included monitoring the implementation of the improved crisis communication guidelines. In addition, KLHK plays a role in informing the public about the actions taken by Pertamina and the government in response to the oil spill. KLHK ensures that the information is neutral, accurate, and appropriate to the crisis situation to maintain public trust.

Compared to the Balikpapan incident, where crisis communication was deemed inadequate, the Karawang incident showed significant improvement in Pertamina's crisis response effectiveness. This was evident from better coordination between Pertamina, KLHK, and other stakeholders using a more integrated early warning system and communication procedures. In Karawang, KLHK supported and collaborated with Pertamina and other stakeholders to ensure a more structured and coordinated crisis response. This demonstrates improved inter-agency cooperation in handling crises. By understanding KLHK's role in these two incidents, it can be seen that KLHK's active role, close supervision, and Pertamina's remedial efforts contribute significantly to improving the effectiveness of future crisis communications.

Prior Reputation

Situational Crisis Communication Theory mentions the *prior reputation* element, which explains how previous reputation can assess how an organization treats its stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay, 2009). The goal is to determine the overall relationship status between the organization and its stakeholders.

Dharmawan Samsu (as cited in Arvirianty, 2019) explained that on July 15, 2019, Pertamina conveyed the emergency to the Special Task Force for the Execution of Oil and Gas Upstream Business Activities (SKK Migas—*Satuan Kerja Khusus Pelaksana Kegiatan Usaha Hulu Minyak dan Gas Bumi*) and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (Kementerian ESDM—*Kementerian Energi dan Sumber Daya Mineral*). In addition, Pertamina also continued to interact with other related institutions such as KLHK, Cooperating Contractor (KKKS—*Kontraktor Kontrak Kerja Sama*), Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises (Kementerian BUMN—*Badan Usaha Milik Negara*), military (TNI—*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*) and Police (Polri—*Kepolisian Republik Indonesia*), Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs (Kemenko Marves—*Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Kemaritiman dan Investasi*), National Search and Rescue Agency (Basarnas—*Badan SAR Nasional*), and Indonesian Forum for Environmental Protection (WALHI—*Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*) who played a role in assisting Pertamina in handling the crisis.

Table 2. The stakeholder roles accepted by Pertamina

| Stakeholders | Roles |
|---|--|
| Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) | KLHK assists Pertamina by forming a team to identify areas affected by the oil spill. They coordinate with the local government and provide direction regarding environmental restoration per applicable regulations in Indonesia. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Ministry of Transportation (Kemenhub) | Kemenhub held a meeting with Pertamina to discuss the oil spill in Karawang. They supported the handling of this incident and ensured good coordination in mitigation efforts, although the handling on the ground remains under Pertamina's responsibility. |
| Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (Kementerian ESDM) | Kementerian ESDM supports Pertamina in handling the oil spill at PHE ONWJ. Through a press release, they emphasized the importance of handling efforts to reduce the spill's impact and maintain stability at the YYA-I offshore project platform. |
| Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP—Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan) | KKP, through Minister Susi Pudjiastuti, expressed a commitment to working with other government agencies to address the impact of the oil spill. They also ensured that affected communities, such as fishermen and farmers, would receive compensation from Pertamina. |
| Special Task Force for the Execution of Oil and Gas Upstream Business Activities (SKK Migas— <i>Satuan Kerja Khusus Pelaksana Kegiatan Usaha Hulu Minyak dan Gas Bumi</i>) | SKK Migas, under Kementerian ESDM, appreciates Pertamina's response to the oil spill. They considered mitigation measures, such as drilling the Relief Well to close the well, to be effective and meet the set standards. |

Situational Crisis Communication Theory stresses that an organization's response to a crisis must consider its relationships with stakeholders (Coombs, 2007). Pertamina strives to maintain its reputation through transparency and close cooperation with various government agencies as key stakeholders in its implementation. These measures aim to strengthen relationships with stakeholders and mitigate negative impacts on the company's reputation. Effective cooperation with stakeholders can maintain the trust and role of various parties during crises.

Although KLHK considers that the Balikpapan oil spill incident did not receive the maximum response from Pertamina, the agency's role continued until the next oil spill incident occurred in Karawang. This shows that effective crisis response depends not only on relationships with stakeholders but also on the actions taken by the organization to take responsibility. This responsibility includes concrete actions taken to address the impact of the crisis, as well as clear and honest communication with all relevant parties. In Pertamina's context, this responsibility is evident in the steps taken to clean up the oil spill and minimize its environmental and social impacts.

Through this study, the SCCT emphasizes the importance of good stakeholder relations and organizations' assumed responsibilities in a crisis. Organizations can strengthen their reputation and ensure stakeholders' continued role by demonstrating a responsible attitude and compliance with applicable regulations.

Crisis Response Strategy

Stakeholders tend to assess an organization's responsibility in a crisis. The higher the stakeholders' perceived responsibility, the stronger the response required from the organization. Crises perceived as the organization's fault require a more proactive response.

Crisis communication is a crucial aspect of *public relations* (PR). Crisis communication is the responsibility of the company's management, namely the Head of Corporate Communications. In a crisis, information will be conveyed by the highest authority in the company, such as the President, Director, or CEO, who acts as the leading spokesperson in conveying policies, procedures, and directives (Wongsonagoro, 2020).

In the field, the second spokesperson is the highest authority on site, who only conveys technical information. The Head of Corporate Communications serves as the third spokesperson, coordinating crisis communications and being able to pass on information from the primary or secondary spokesperson. Others in the company are not allowed to provide information about the crisis.

When analyzed, Pertamina has responded according to Table 3. Each Pertamina official who led the press conference had specific tasks and functions according to their respective roles and positions. Dharmawan Samsu focused on technical explanations and coordination with relevant agencies, Fajriyah Usman handled public communication and apologies, while Nicke Widyawati ensured transparency and collaboration with the government on countermeasures. This structured

approach aligns with Wongsonagoro's (2020) statement on effective communication in dealing with crises.

Table 3. Pertamina Crisis Management

| Date | Activities | PIC | Responsibility |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| July 25, 2019 | Press Conference I | Dharmawan Samsu, Upstream Director of PT Pertamina (Persero) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining the chronology: Dharmawan Samsu explained in detail the chronology of the oil spill to the public, including the <i>re-entry</i> of <i>drilling activity</i> at the YYA-I well that resulted in gas bubbles at 1:30 am on July 12, 2019. Informing the emergency: He also shared how Pertamina reported the emergency to SKK Migas and Kementerian ESDM on July 15, 2019. Coordination with related institutions: Dharmawan explained Pertamina's interaction with various related institutions such as KLHK, KKKS, Kementerian BUMN, TNI and Polri, Kemenko Marves, Basarnas, and Walhi to handle the crisis. |
| July 26, 2019 | Press Conference II | Fajriyah Usman, Vice President of Corporate Communication Pertamina | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering an apology: In this press conference, Fajriyah Usman apologized to the affected communities and all related parties for the oil spill disaster in Karawang. This shows Pertamina's social responsibility and commitment to handling the incident's negative impact. Managing public communication: As VP of Corporate Communication, Fajriyah manages and directs public communications to ease concerns and emphasize Pertamina's commitment to problem-solving. |
| August 1, 2019 | Press Conference III | Nicke Widyawati, President Director of PT Pertamina (Persero) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining optimal efforts: Nicke Widyawati and Minister Susi Pudjiastuti explain Pertamina's optimal efforts in handling the oil spill. Collaboration with the government: Minister Susi Pudjiastuti and KKP Echelon I show the close relationship between Pertamina and the government in dealing with the oil spill's environmental impact. Ensuring transparency: Nicke Widyawati is also tasked with ensuring transparency and providing updates to the public on the steps taken by Pertamina to overcome this crisis. |

Communication begins after the crisis. Following the division of crisis communication responsibilities, it can be concluded that Pertamina has fulfilled an essential aspect of communication. In this case, the leading spokesperson appointed by Pertamina is Nicke Widyawati as President Director, the second spokesperson or the highest authority on site is Dharmawan Samsu as Upstream Director, and the third spokesperson or head of corporate communication is Fajriyah Usman as Vice President for Corporate Communication.



Figure 3. PHE ONWJ Crisis Communication Responsibility Level

When associated with Coombs and Holladay's (2002) SCCT, the crisis response strategy used by Pertamina includes several aspects. The first is rebuilding, which can be seen from Pertamina's efforts to publicly acknowledge the incident and apologize to the public and affected parties. This apology was delivered in the second press conference on 26 July 2019 by Fajriyah Usman, Pertamina's Vice President of Corporate Communication, who emphasized the company's responsibility for safety and the environment. Second, it provided a detailed explanation of the cause and chronology of the oil spill and the technical measures taken to address it, including using a new relief well rig and installing an *oil boom* to prevent the further spread of the oil. Pertamina also ensured the availability of sufficient equipment and fleet to handle the oil spill and conducted air and sea patrols to monitor the situation. KLHK, Kemenhub, and affected communities confirmed Pertamina's response during the pollution containment process in Karawang.

"From the beginning, the communication was smooth until the countermeasure stage, the arrival, and then the communication continued after more than two years. Sometimes, for example, they communicate here, asking for directions. For example, in one area, the mangroves died because of medicine or the weather was too hot. We finally suggested moving the planting location. The communication is still smooth, so there is no problem." (Interview with Ardhian Indra in Jakarta, May 2, 2024)

"In my opinion, yes, it's good, Mba. Their communication with the public also made a Crisis Center for the media. They also update every day; there must be data conveyed; data every day that they report, not only to us, can be shared with the media as well. For example, the number of corals that have been transported, updating the ships that are moving, the number of workers on the ship, the waters they are also updating daily." (Online interview with Waluyo in Jakarta, July 4, 2024)

"The profit per day, even per bag of waste collected, per sandbag is added up, compared to how much. Like the ponds, they also get double rupiah. How much is the net? Yes, it automatically can't be used anymore, so it gets double the rupiah. An account is immediately made per boat, per family, for example, per person affected, an account is immediately made, so the compensation is transferred directly to their respective accounts." (Online interview with Andriana Yudhistira, May 3, 2024)

Third, *bolstering* can be seen from Pertamina's recognition of the local community's contribution to the waste oil handling efforts and compensation for the volunteers involved. Dharmawan Samsu emphasized that Pertamina's top priority is safety and health for volunteers and affected communities. By adopting these strategies, Pertamina seeks to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis and rebuild public trust. A transparent and collaborative approach to crisis management reflects Pertamina's commitment to maintaining safety and environmental sustainability in the affected areas.

Organizational Reputation; Behavioral Intentions

Pertamina is working hard to regain public trust after the oil spill incident in Karawang on July 12, 2019. In the context of SCCT, an organization's reputation largely depends on how they handle a crisis, including how quickly, transparently, and responsibly they do so. Pertamina achieved second place in the ESG (*Environmental, Social, and Governance*) category for the Integrated Oil and Gas sub-industry globally in 2022, up from eighth place in the previous year. This reflects strong risk management in land use, biodiversity, human resources, and occupational health and safety.

In 2024, Pertamina won eight awards at the 2024 BUMN Corporate Communication and Sustainability Summit (BCOMSS), including the highest award, Best of the Best Sustainability. Erick Thohir, Minister of BUMN, appreciated this achievement and emphasized the importance of information disclosure, proper CSR implementation, and environmental protection. Arya Sinulingga, Special Staff III to the Minister of BUMN, also praised Pertamina's success in the sustainability program, which shows seriousness and a systematic approach. Pertamina is committed to continuing to benefit society and as a driver of the national economy, especially in the energy sector.

CONCLUSION

Pertamina Hulu Energi—Offshore North West Java (PHE ONWJ) successfully overcame the 2019 oil spill crisis by implementing effective crisis communication and involving various stakeholders. This success aligns with the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), which emphasizes the importance of managing responsibility, crisis history, reputation, and crisis response strategies to maintain the company's image during a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2009).

In this crisis, PHE ONWJ demonstrated the ability to manage crisis responsibility through close collaboration with key stakeholders such as KLHK, OSCT Indonesia, and Kemenhub. Each party played an important role in supporting the response to and recovery from the oil spill. KLHK contributes to environmental monitoring and cleanup efforts, while OSCT Indonesia, an oil spill response specialist, is directly involved in marine and coastal cleanup operations. The Kemenhub supports through the coordination of transportation logistics and communications. This collaboration strengthens PHE ONWJ's crisis responsibility.

Despite Pertamina's unsatisfactory crisis history, particularly with previous incidents that have damaged the company's reputation, they have made significant progress in crisis communication this time. Through transparent communication that included information disclosure to the public and stakeholders and active engagement in dialog with relevant parties, PHE ONWJ was able to rebuild trust and support recovery efforts. This shows that organizations can improve their image by implementing the right strategies despite having an adverse crisis history.

Previous reputation also plays a vital role in influencing the effectiveness of crisis response. The good reputation built through regulatory compliance, cooperation with communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and prompt support from government and related parties helped mitigate the negative impact of this crisis. PHE ONWJ successfully leveraged this reputation to strengthen cooperation with broader stakeholders, such as the local government and affected local communities.

The crisis response strategy implemented by PHE ONWJ emphasizes transparency, openness, and high responsibility. Given the history of previous crises, the company's responsibility must be more serious in overcoming skeptical public perceptions. PHE ONWJ actively strengthens its position as a responsible and crisis-ready company through improved crisis communication involving internal and external stakeholders.

These efforts are also evident in Pertamina's success in managing the impact of the crisis and repairing its reputation, which was recognized nationally and internationally. *Environmental, Social, and Governance* (ESG) initiatives and *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) programs strengthened post-crisis demonstrate the company's commitment to being socially and environmentally responsible, improving its public image and stakeholder trust. This aligns with the "Organizational Reputation" and "Behavioral Intentions" elements of the SCCT, which suggest that companies that succeed in crisis communication can improve their reputation and gain continued support from stakeholders.

PHE ONWJ's success in managing crisis communication during the 2019 oil spill incident shows they could handle the crisis's technical impact, maintain the company's reputation, and build stronger relationships with stakeholders. The steps taken demonstrate the application of SCCT principles in practice, which focus on effective crisis communication management, engagement with various stakeholders, and enhancement of the organization's reputation. This success proves that proper crisis communication can be a powerful tool to overcome crises and rebuild public trust.

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