

Crisis Communication Management of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency in Handling the Cancellation Policy for Prospective Indonesian Hajj Pilgrims During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Serdang Bedagai Regency

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20230246>

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyze crisis communication management of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency in handling the cancellation policy for prospective Indonesian hajj pilgrims during the COVID-19 pandemic in Serdang Bedagai Regency. This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative research. The subjects in this study are the Head of the Office of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency, the Head of the Registration and Regular Hajj Documents Section of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of North Sumatra Province, as well as the Executive Staff for Preparing Materials for Hajj Registration and Cancellation of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency. The data that has been obtained is analyzed using an interactive model of qualitative data analysis from Miles and Huberman which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that the crisis communication management implemented by the Ministry of Religion in dealing with the cancellation of the departure of prospective Indonesian pilgrims during the COVID-19 pandemic in Serdang Bedagai Regency is reinforcing or bolstering strategies.

Keywords: Crisis, Communication, Management, Prospective

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, the world was shaken by the detection of a virus called the corona virus, which then became an outbreak of a disease called coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), and was declared a pandemic on 9 March 2020 because it had spread widely in the world and then entered Indonesia. The presence of COVID-19 has had an extraordinary impact on all lines of life for countries in the world, including Indonesia. COVID-19 has an impact on all sectors and areas of life. Not only the health sector, but the socio-cultural, economic, and even religious fields have also experienced the impact of COVID-19 which has resulted in changes in mindset, ways of working, transactions, and activities that are usually carried out also experiencing changes, including in the aspect of worship world Muslims. In daily worship, the Indonesian government gives an appeal to Muslims, to carry out worship from home only. Religious activities such as gathering for recitations, congregational prayers at mosques to friday prayers, eid al-fitr prayers, and eid al-adha prayers are being carried out in an unusual way as a result of the spread of COVID-19. Likewise what happens to worship which is the fifth pillar of Islam, namely the pilgrimage. The

implementation of the pilgrimage has also been affected by the spread of COVID-19.

The spread of COVID-19 is so fast that the government takes action to break the chain of the existing virus. So that the government issued policies or regulations that were enforced during the COVID-19 pandemic, including policies on organizing the hajj pilgrimage. It is feared that the implementation of the pilgrimage in 1441 H or 2020 AD during the COVID-19 pandemic could threaten the health, security and safety of Indonesian pilgrims. So that the Indonesian government has cancelled the pilgrimage for two consecutive years, namely 2020 and 2021.

Based on the observations of researchers while carrying out pre-research at the hajj and umrah organizers section of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency, researchers obtained information about the response and condition of prospective Indonesian pilgrims from Serdang Bedagai Regency who failed to depart in 2020 and 2021. Many prospective pilgrims who cried, were scared and felt very disappointed with the government's policy regarding the cancellation of the departure of prospective Indonesian pilgrims during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those who were elderly. The fear of the prospective congregation is due to their age, health and physical factors. There were also several prospective pilgrims who were angry and complained to the officers or staff of the hajj section and directly to the head of the hajj and umrah management section and complained directly to the Head of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency. There are also several prospective pilgrims who withdraw the hajj repayment deposit funds for various reasons. In fact, many have withdrawn the hajj repayment deposit funds.

Various considerations have been reviewed by the Ministry of Religion before deciding to cancel the departure of the pilgrims in 2020 or 1441 Hijri. One of the reasons for the cancellation was the lack of certainty

from Saudi Arabia. According to the Minister of Religion, the lack of certainty means that the Indonesian government does not have enough time to make preparations regarding the service and protection of pilgrims. So the Minister of Religion, Fachrul Razi, announced the cancellation of the departure of the pilgrims. The cancellation of the departure of the Pilgrims applies to all Indonesian citizens.

Even though the COVID-19 pandemic is still happening, it is different from previous years. The implementation of the 2020 hajj pilgrimage is carried out on a limited basis, namely only for pilgrims in Saudi Arabia. Pilgrims who are allowed to perform the pilgrimage are only those who are located or domiciled in Saudi Arabia. All countries in the world also cannot fly their pilgrims to carry out the pilgrimage, including Indonesia. However, Indonesian citizens and foreign nationals who were currently in Saudi Arabia were allowed to perform the pilgrimage. This policy aims to maintain the health and safety of pilgrims.

A crisis is something that can happen anywhere, anytime and to anyone, be it organizations, companies or the government. No organization, company or agency has escaped the crisis even though many things have been done to prevent a crisis from occurring. Many things and factors, both internal and external to the organization, are unpredictable and capable of threatening the stability and reputation of an organization, leading the organization to a crisis situation. Many definitions of crisis have been put forward by experts and academics (Kriyantono, 2015).

In general, a crisis can be interpreted as something that comes suddenly and presents a threat to the organization. As a threat, a crisis must be handled quickly so that the organization can run normally again (Prastya, 2013). A crisis is not necessarily a catastrophic event, but an event that remains out of ordinary business processes and routines that can cause significant reputational, operational or financial

damage (Fearn-Banks, 2011). To be considered a true crisis, an event must have high potential consequences for those affected and little time to make decisions, so one of the important responses is to communicate with stakeholders regarding the ongoing crisis (Amali, 2019). Crisis is a specific event, unavoidable, creates information uncertainty, creates panic, and has the potential to trigger conflict.

The purpose of this research is to analyze crisis communication management of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency in handling the cancellation policy for prospective Indonesian hajj pilgrims during the COVID-19 pandemic in Serdang Bedagai Regency.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research is usually carried out because of human curiosity in seeking the truth. Research is a series of activities to seek the truth by obtaining scientific data (Muslih, 2016). This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative research. Qualitative research is research that seeks to analyze social life by describing the social world from the point of view or interpretation of informants (Moleong, 2019). Qualitative research starts from existing data in the field and then uses theory to clarify the data obtained and if possible a new theory will be formed. In addition, qualitative research aims to explain the phenomenon in depth (Eriyanto, 2018).

The research subjects are informants who understand the research object information (Arikunto, 2011). The determination of research informants was carried out using a purposive procedure. The purposive procedure is carried out by determining the informants according to the criteria determined by the researcher and are also relevant to the research problem. The criteria include:

1. Mastering problems related to research.
2. Occupy positions related to the issue of departure of pilgrims.

3. Can give good answers.
4. Involved in the management of hajj departures in Serdang Bedagai Regency.

The subjects in this study are the Head of the Office of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency, the Head of the Registration and Regular Hajj Documents Section of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of North Sumatra Province, as well as the Executive Staff for Preparing Materials for Hajj Registration and Cancellation of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency.

Data collection techniques used are in-depth interview, observation, and documentation. Thus to obtain accurate and good data from the research location, the researcher will use the following data collection techniques (Rusmawati, 2017):

1.In-Depth Interview

Direct interviews with in-depth interviewees are intended to be able to reveal problems in depth without the limitations of the cultural context in the reality of society, by using unstructured interviews without using observation guides, only an outline of the problem. Researchers conducted interviews with informants who had been determined using a purposive procedure. Researchers conducted interviews directly or face to face with informants. This face-to-face interview is intended so that researchers do not only get information in verbal form but also get information from non-verbal communication provided by informants. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews using an unstructured interview technique, namely the researcher also prepared an interview guide in the form of outline questions posed to the informant and also prepared a device for recording interview activities.

2.Observation

Observation is an observation activity carried out by a researcher. Researchers made direct observations of the activities carried out.

3.Documentation

In this study, researchers also rely on existing documents because apart from what is currently happening, data on activities and activity reports are also needed. Besides that, documentation is also needed in the form of photos and pictures of other supporting activities.

The data that has been obtained is analyzed using an interactive model of qualitative data analysis from Miles and Huberman which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, where the process takes place in a circular manner throughout the research. The analysis process occurs before data collection in making a research design, at the stage of data collection and implementation of the initial analysis, and after data collection as the final result (Zulkarnain et al., 2017).

RESULTS

General Description

Regency and city Ministry of Religion offices are domiciled in districts and cities, are under and are responsible to the Head of Provincial Ministry of Religion Regional Offices Regency and city Ministry of Religion offices are led by a head. Regency and city Ministry of Religion offices are tasked with carrying out the duties and functions of the Ministry of Religion in regency/city areas based on the policies of the Provincial Head of the Ministry of Religion Regional Office and the provisions of laws and regulations regulated based on PMA Number 19 of 2019 concerning Organization and Work Procedures of Vertical Institutions of the Ministry of Religion.

The vision of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency is the realization of the people of Serdang Bedagai Regency who are pious, moderate, intelligent and superior in order to realize a developed Indonesia that is sovereign, independent and has a personality based on mutual cooperation.

The mission of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency is:

1. Increase understanding and experience of religious teachings.
2. Strengthening religious moderation and religious harmony.
3. Improving religious services that are fair, easy, and equitable.
4. Improving equitable and quality education services.
5. Increase the productivity and competitiveness of education.
6. Strengthen good governance.

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The results of the study show that the crisis communication management implemented by the Ministry of Religion in dealing with the cancellation of the departure of prospective Indonesian pilgrims during the COVID-19 pandemic in Serdang Bedagai Regency is reinforcing or bolstering strategies. The process or stages in implementing the strategy start from identifying crises, analyzing crises, isolating crises, choosing strategies, and control programs. Crisis communication management has been implemented in the form of holding press conferences, outreach, collaborating with religious leaders to communicate persuasion to congregations, and utilizing various media such as television, radio, and newspapers to support the dissemination of correct and positive information.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the crisis communication strategy carried out by the Ministry of Religion in dealing with the cancellation of the departure of prospective Indonesian pilgrims during the COVID-19 pandemic in Serdang Bedagai Regency is the strength factor, namely the agility of the Ministry of Religion.

Serdang Bedagai Regency in overcoming the crisis and responding to the public, utilizes various media such as television, radio and newspapers in disseminating information, as well as holding press conferences and socialization so that there are no bad perceptions related to the crisis. The weak factors are the absence of a special team to handle crisis management and the lack of specific actions or policies from the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency which only follow the rules of the Central Ministry of Religion. The opportunity factor is that the crisis made a lot of media or journalists come looking for and even cover news about the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency, thus making the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency a subject of public attention and increasing the image of the Ministry of Religion Sergai in overcoming the crisis with good performance good. The last factor, namely the threat, is the uncontrolled emotionality of pilgrims and hoax news from several sources of information related to the decision to cancel the departure of prospective Indonesian pilgrims.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The results of the study show that the crisis communication management implemented by the Ministry of Religion in dealing with the cancellation of the departure of prospective Indonesian pilgrims during the COVID-19 pandemic in Serdang Bedagai Regency is reinforcing or bolstering strategies.

From the results of the research above, the suggestions for this research are:

1.Theoretical Suggestions

This research discusses the crisis communication management of the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency, so further research is needed on public perceptions or public opinion regarding crisis communication management implemented by the Ministry of Religion of

Serdang Bedagai Regency. This is done in order to get feedback from the community after implementing the strategy.

2.Academic Advice

The researcher suggests to further researchers to carry out further research by conducting a more in-depth study of crisis communication management using the case study method or focus group discussion.

3.Practical Advice

The results of the studies in this thesis research can be used as positive input for the Ministry of Religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency to improve better crisis communication management in order to get a good image in the public eye.

Declaration by Authors

Acknowledgement: None

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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How to cite this article: Nur'asiah, Dewi Kurniawati, Sakhyani Asmara. Crisis communication management of the ministry of religion of Serdang Bedagai Regency in handling the cancellation policy for prospective Indonesian hajj pilgrims during the COVID-19 pandemic in Serdang Bedagai Regency. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2023; 10(2): 367-372.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20230246>
