

Visualisation of image restoration for Indonesian public officials during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract Most studies on image restoration concentrate on text analysis of firms and CEOs in the Western context; hence, there is a need to explore similar practices in public organisations or public officials in an Eastern context. This study intends to investigate tactics and methods for repairing the image of public officials in eastern nations, including Indonesia, to fill this void. Visual and thematic analysis was performed on a dataset containing 2,000 Instagram posts from seven public officials in Indonesia. According to our findings, the visual analysis identifies six content kinds, while the thematic analysis identifies ten content types. They constitute image restoration methods, such as compensation, bolstering, corrective action, and shifting the blame, and image recovery strategies, such as reducing offensiveness of event, corrective action, and denial. This study reveals that, contrary to western literature, public authorities in Indonesia tend to employ the method of minimising the offensiveness of an occurrence.

Keywords: image restoration; public officials; Indonesia; COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

In a crisis, a lack of expertise and experience in crisis management will cause public authorities to generate incorrect assertions and policies (Carnevale & Gangloff, 2022; Power & Crosthwaite, 2022; Sobral, Carvalho, Łagowska, Furtado, & Grobman, 2020). These errors can devastate their reputation, allowing them to commit blasphemy to the point where they lose public trust (Herrero & Marfil Medina, 2016; O'Connell, De Lange, Stoner, & Sangster, 2016). After committing a mistake, public leaders must implement a strategy to repair their image because the media and the general public are watching.

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In Indonesia, an inaccuracy in identifying the COVID-19 Pandemic led to the Government's inability to effectively manage the Pandemic, particularly in its earlier stages (Mietzner, 2020). Instead of suspecting and preparing for COVID-19, Indonesians watch jokes that ridicule it (Djalante, Lassa, Setiamarga, Sudjatma, et al., 2020).

A crisis poses a threat to the reputation of an individual or organisation when an unwanted act or incident has occurred, and the individual or organisation is believed to have some degree of responsibility for it (du Plessis, 2018; Gai, 2016; Li Zeng, Zhou, Pan, & Fowler, 2018). The purpose of communications made during a crisis where the reputation of a person or organisation is under examination is to preserve or limit the damage to that reputation (Benoit, 2015). In image restoration theory, it is essential to frame the problem as accurately as possible and eliminate misinformation that can exacerbate the situation (TW. Coombs, 2006). Careful and efficient reaction management is essential for image preservation, restoration, and eventual recovery (Works, Wong, & Lee, 2021).

Individuals or organisations attempting to retain or repair their reputation in the face of a crisis often adhere to the tactics described in an established framework for crisis management response. This strategic framework has undergone numerous modifications, but it is essentially based on the typology of five frameworks titled Image Restoration Theory (IRT) provided by Benoit (1995, 2015) and others by Coombs (2006).

Numerous works on image restoration frameworks have been published, with the majority focusing on text analysis in the context of business organisations and CEOs (Avery, Lariscy, Kim, & Hocke, 2010; T Coombs & Schmidt, 2000; Hanna & Morton, 2020; Hillman, 2018; S. Kim, Avery, & Lariscy, 2009; Nazione & Perrault, 2019). At the same time, public organisations and public officials have actively adopted and integrated social media as one of their primary communication tools (Brainard & McNutt, 2010; Gesuele, 2016; Graham, Avery, & Park, 2015; Santoso, Rinjany, & Bafadhal, 2020). The usefulness of visuals as a vital source of data and the influence of visual media on online communication between government officials and the public cannot be overlooked in this vast digital arena (Steinmetz et al., 2020; Vykydalova, Jibril, Pilik, & Kwarteng, 2019). The growth of high interest in visual components and content (image-based) supplied by social media visual platforms such as Instagram can be viewed as a significant turning point by offering extra value because it is more engaging than textual content (Lee & Weder, 2021; Ramírez & Tejada, 2019; Willecke, 2020).

Previous evidence reveals that postings with images earn more likes and comments and are shared more frequently (Sáez-Martín, Alonso-Cañadas, Galán-Valdivieso, & Caba-Pérez, 2018; Santoso et al., 2020). Since its introduction in 2010, Instagram has amassed over one billion user accounts (Statista, 2022), a testament to its popularity for

promoting visual content and facilitating self-expression through various features and capabilities (Hu et al., 2014). It also challenges the continuity between projected and perceived destination pictures by merging many layers of users, content, and places (Volo & Irimiás, 2021).

In this regard, social media, namely Instagram, gives ample room for analysing public officials' image restoration. False claims by public officials undoubtedly harm their reputation, and it is crucial to analyse this within image restoration theory. This study applies Benoit's (1995) methodology for image restoration by examining image enhancement solutions for a disclosure topic that has received scant attention in prior research - public officials' image disclosure using visual analysis. In order to overcome the research gap, the issue of this study is what tactics and techniques are most frequently employed by public officials to enhance their image after making misleading assertions.

This study focuses on seven Indonesian public officials who have previously made erroneous statements or adopted incorrect policies regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic. These errors will interfere with their work as public officials and politicians, who may lose public trust due to their errors. Instagram was selected for its superiority in displaying images and videos accompanied by captions (Volo & Irimiás, 2021). Previous research has concentrated heavily on text, making this an intriguing topic to investigate. In addition, there are currently 92.53 million Instagram users in Indonesia, ranking the country as the fourth most in the world (Katadata, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

Using empirical data from the Instagram accounts of seven public officials in the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Indonesia, this study employs quantitative descriptive content analysis to examine the reality of public officials' restoration. In addition, content analysis is a research strategy used to classify specific content by comparing it to content with similar characteristics (Krippendorff, 2013).

The data is extracted automatically using the Instagram Scrapper application, which enables researchers to obtain data from Instagram in the form of photos, videos, captions, comments, and the number of likes within a year of submitting the false statement/incorrect policy regarding COVID-19. The Instagram accounts of government officials are as follows: Ma'ruf Amin (@kyai marufamin, 395 posts); Mahfud MD (@mohmahfudmd, 136 posts); Budi Karya (@budikaryas, 300 posts); Syahrul Yasin Limpo (@syasinlimpo, 185 posts); Luhut Pandjaitan (@luhut.pandjaitan, 52 posts); Ridho Yahya (@ridhoyahya.id, 111 posts); and Edy Rahmayadi (@edyrahmayadi, 821 posts). The data are stored at 10.17632/8tjkg58pf4.1. These accounts were selected due to the blunders made by public officials in their erroneous statements and/or policies regarding COVID-19.

This study employs two methods to assess visual content, including visual and thematic analysis following Adamiş & Pınarbaşı (2022). Visual content communication on Instagram is comprised of various elements in diverse media; visual content (photo/video/image content/reels), thematic analysis (captions and photos) (Adamiş & Pınarbaşı, 2022). Instagram content is a personal expression on multiple levels; therefore, it can be used in various indirect ways to convey information. Thematic Analysis is a technique for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) in data that assists in qualitatively investigating phenomena by observing emerging patterns (Adamiş & Pınarbaşı, 2022). In the meantime, visual analysis conducted on visual content in social media provides a wealth of theoretical constructs for comprehending the communication process effectively. Diverse visual components of the content can play a role in the communication process, resulting in concepts that are appropriate in various ways. This visual analysis involves evaluating specific visual characteristics in photographs. The primary focus of the analysis is on the actions of public officials.

Two graduated students in communication science analysed the 2,000 sampled posts for this study. There are six steps to the coding process: (1) familiarising yourself with the data, (2) generating the initial code, (3) identifying a theme, (4) reviewing the theme, (5) determining and naming the theme, and (6) producing reports for thematic analysis with an emphasis on theoretical approaches. We conducted an intercoder reliability test in which both coders analysed 20,000 identical posts. Using Scott's pi formula, the intercoder reliability coefficient was calculated and exceeded the generally accepted value of 0.75 for content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013). In this study, the reliability ranges from 0.884 to 1.00 for visual analysis (0.883), thematic analysis (0.901), analysis of image restoration strategies (0.932), and analysis of image restoration methods (0.932).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Visual characteristics of public officials' image restoration

Visual analysis

Seven public representatives from the national, provincial, and municipal governments were involved in this study. Through the sharing of photos to their Instagram social media profiles, public officials use them as a technique to remedy inaccurate information regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic. The content genres submitted by public figures to their Instagram accounts are categorised in Table 1.

Table 1 displays the quantity of Instagram content uploaded by public authorities, broken down by content type. Their public officials are frequently documented and published on Instagram via their profiles. We discovered that image repair was conducted through six visual techniques in their Instagram material: sports activities, religious activities, adherence to health protocols, vaccinations, and the sharing

of COVID-19-related health education information. The implementation or application of health protocols was the visual characteristic for which six of the seven public officials involved in this study uploaded the most images, with a percentage greater than 50 per cent.

Table 1. Results of visual analysis

	Mafud	Yasin limpo	Ridho Yahya	Luhut	Edy	Budi Karya	Maaruf Amin
Sport activities	4.88 %	11.76%	0.00%	0.00 %	32.6 3%	2.82%	2.25%
Religious activities	24.3 9%	1.96%	25.90%	0.00 %	8.39 %	1.41%	22.47%
Health protocol images	70.7 3%	86.27%	53.96%	100.0 0%	24.3 9%	90.85 %	57.30%
Giving COVID-19 aid	0.00 %	0.00%	7.91%	0.00 %	1.89 %	4.23%	17.60%
Vaccination programme	0.00 %	0.00%	4.32%	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00%	0.00%
Education	0.00 %	0.00%	7.91%	0.00 %	0.07 %	0.48%	0.37%

Source: primary data analysis, 2022

Implementation of health protocols is the category with the most uploaded content. 100% of the images posted by Luhut Binsar Panjaitan depicted the implementation of health measures such as wearing masks, washing hands, keeping distance, avoiding crowds, and mobilisation. In addition, Yasin Limpo contributed 86.27 per cent, Budi Karya 90.85 per cent, Mafud MD 70.73 per cent, Maaruf Amin 57.30 per cent, Ridho Yahya 53.96 per cent, and Edy Rahmayadi contributed 24.39 per cent. The visualisation of compliance with health standards supplied by public officials reveals a call for the public to maintain discipline and tighten health rules to break the chain of COVID-19 transmission. Visualisation of health protocols can potentially be regarded as an admission that COVID-19 is real.

The next category is sports and recreation. Edy Rahmayadi, who uploads sporting events 32.63 % of the time, is the public official who frequently uploads sporting events. Other public authorities such as Yasin Limpo (11.76%), Mafud MD (4.88%), Budi Karya (2.82%), and Maaruf Amin (2.25%) also received substantial support. In contrast to other public authorities, neither Ridho Yahya nor Luhut Pandjaitan has uploaded content related to sports. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, uploads of public authorities engaging in athletic activities demonstrate to the public the significance of maintaining immunity and adopting a healthier lifestyle.

The subsequent category consists of religious activities. Ridho Yahya was responsible for 25.90% of the religious activities category uploads. Mahfud MD follows with a percentage of 24,39%, Maaruf Amin at 22,47%, Yasin Limpo at 1,96%, and Budi Karya at 1,44%. Luhut Pandjaitan did not post any images of religious activities. Public officials' religious practices represent the Indonesian populace as religious

figures. This demonstrates that public officials frequently utilise religion to improve their image since it can appeal to the emotions of major Muslim communities such as Indonesia. In addition to engaging in physical activities such as exercising and adhering to health regimens, this technique also requires the community to preserve their religion.

In the category of COVID-19 aid content, Maaruf Amin uploaded the most material, accounting for 17.6% of all submissions. This was followed by Budi Karya as much as 11.35%, Ridho Yahya at 7.91% and Edy Rahmayadi at 1.89%. Such as basic supplies, cash, masks, and free hand sanitisers, many forms of social aid are supplied. Assistance is offered to meet and ensure that the recipients' necessities are met. Several Indonesian government programmes, such as the Family Hope Programme, the Basic Food Card Programme, and the Pre-Employment Programme, are funded by COVID-19 (Djalante, Lassa, Setiamarga, Mahfud, et al., 2020). Unlike prior public authorities, Mafud MD, Yasin Limpo, and Luhut Pandjaitan have never posted COVID-19-related Instagram content.

Ridho Yahya's vaccine programme-related content accounted for 4.32 per cent of the least-uploaded content category. At the same time, the other five authorities did not post a picture of the vaccine programme on Instagram. The uploaded vaccine programme provides an overview of the vaccine programme, the launch of required and free COVID-19 vaccines for the people of Indonesia, and the booster vaccine schedule for each region. The category of instructional content Ridho Yahya uploaded the most was 7.91%. In addition, Maaruf Amn was 0.37 per cent, Budi Karya was merely 0.24 per cent, and Edi Rahmayadi was 0.0 per cent. Mafud MD, Yasin Limpo, and Luhut lack educational visual material.

Thematic examination of the repair of public officials' reputation

In addition to examining visual activity on social media, we also analysed the type of content public authorities uploaded after making incorrect statements regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic. The analysis reveals that public officials upload five types of content: Everyday Professional, Everyday Life Private, Public official with a friend, public official with the politician, Public official with another public profile (celebrity, athlete, medical doctor, academia), Public official with religious Leader, Public official with the public, Public official with other public officials (president, minister, regent, major), and Public official with the public.

Table 2 depicts specific themes related to all public figures' social media output. The exact topic most frequently uploaded is everyday professional. Every day professionals refer to the professionalism of public officials in their everyday activities, such as work meetings, work visits, and speeches. Ridho Yahya uploads the most content related to his professional activity as a public official (78.72%), followed by Edy Rahmayadi (71.56%). Furthermore, 65.60% of Budi Karya Yasin Limpo

accounted for 63.79 per cent, Maaruf Amin for 39.06 per cent, Mahfud for 33.33 per cent, and Luhut for 12.16 per cent.

Table 2. Results of thematic analysis of public officials in image restoration

	Mahfud	Yasin Limpo	Ridho Yahya	Luhut	Edy	Budi Karya	Maaruf Amin
Everyday Professional	33.33%	63.79%	78.72%	12.16%	71.56%	65.60%	39.06%
Everyday Life Private	16.67%	6.03%	2.13%	0.39%	7.16%	1.83%	1.56%
Public official with friend	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Public official with politician	11.11%	5.17%	0.00%	28.63%	0.00%	13.76%	14.26%
Public official with another public profile (celebrity, athlete, medical doctor, academia)	22.22%	7.76%	4.26%	7.06%	1.83%	0.46%	4.69%
Public official with religious Leader	13.89%	0.00%	0.00%	47.06%	0.00%	1.83%	23.44%
Public official with public	0.00%	4.31%	14.89%	0.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Public official with other public officials (president, minister, regent, mayor)	0.00%	12.93%	0.00%	3.92%	3.30%	14.68%	4.30%
Public official with his staff	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	11.56%	0.00%	12.70%
Public official with military officials	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.59%	1.83%	0.00%

Source: primary data analysis, 2022

The second specific theme is the private life of public leaders, such as their function as family head who spends time with family, vacations, birthday parties, etc. Mahfud MD has posted 16.67% of his personal life on social media, followed by Edy Rahmayadi (7.16%), Yasin Limpo (6.03%), and Ridho Yahya (2.17%). Maaruf Amin is only 1.83 per cent, Mahfud is 1.56 per cent, and Luhut is 0.39 per cent.

The specific theme that receives the fewest uploads is public officials with colleagues. Only Mahfud MD, or 2.78 per cent, of the five public officials, shared graphic content with his colleagues/friends. This theme's visual content resembles a reunion with old acquaintances, an afternoon cup of coffee, and a visit to sick co-workers. At the same time, the fourth specialised theme focuses on public officials with additional public personas, such as celebrities, athletes, doctors, and academics. Officials encourage other public figures to educate the public on how to

stop the spread of COVID-19. Mahfud MD shared visual content on Instagram with a number of other public profiles, including Yasin Limpo 7.76%, Lutuh 7.06%, Maaruf Amin 4.69%, Ridho Yahya 4.26%, Edy Rahmayadi 1.83%, and Budi Karya 0.42%.

In addition to publishing closeness with friends and other public profiles, public authorities also upload closeness with religious leaders to combat the COVID-19 Pandemic. 47.06% of the visual content contributed by Luhut Pandjaitan featured religious figures. He invited all religious leaders to assist in educating the public to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and to enter the Central Isolation (Isoter) facility if found positive. In addition, Yasin Limpo, Ridho Yahya, and Edi Rahmayadi lacked visual content depicting religious leaders or personalities, whereas Maaruf Amin, Mahfud MD, and Budi Karya contained such imagery.

The next finding is public officials with the public. Ridho Yahya uploaded 14.89% of the visual content publicly. The visual content shows his role as a leader to invite the public to reduce the spread of covid and tighten health protocols jointly. Yasin Limpo only uploaded 4.31% of visual content to the public, and Luhut 0.78%. Unlike other public officials, Maaruf Amin, Mahfud MD, Edy Rahmayadi and Budi Karya do not have uploads with this theme.

Public officials often upload visual content with other officials, such as presidents, ministers, regents and mayors. Maaruf Amin has the highest percentage for this matter, 12.70%. Meanwhile, Yasin Limpo more often uploads photos with President Jokowi and several other Ministers, namely 12.93%, especially in accelerating the prevention and handling of COVID-19. Other officials are Luhut, 3.92%, and Edy Rahmayadi, 3.30%. Unlike other public officials, Mahfud MD and Ridho Yahya do not have content with this theme. However, Edy Rahmayadi is the only public official who shows his closeness to his staff through his 4.59% Instagram account to help his programme in handling COVID-19. At the same time, the other five public officials do not have uploads with their staff. Similar to the tenth specific theme, Edy Rahmayadi is the only governor or public official who uploads visual content with military officials in appreciating the synergy with the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), Kepolisian Republik Indonesia (Polri), Government and the community to build a 'dignified North Sumatra' and fight with all their might against the COVID-19 Pandemic. 19.

Public officials' image restoration strategy based on visual and thematic analysis

This study found six categories of visualisation strategies for restoring the image of public officials after making wrong claims or policies during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Table 3). We found the six forms of visualisation: Sports activities, Religious activities, Health protocol images, Giving COVID-19 aid, Vaccination programmes, and Education. The forms of visualisation that we found most often were

compliance with health protocols (52.14%), sports activities (28.9%), religious activities (13.2%), COVID-19 assistance (5.5%), education about COVID-19 (0.9%) and vaccination (0.3%).

Table 3. Image restoration strategies according to visual analysis

Visual characteristics	Meaning	Method	Strategy	Number of posts	Percentage
Giving COVID-19 aid	The Government provides help to the community out of good will.	Compensation	Reducing Offensiveness of Event	103	5.88%
Vaccination programme	The Government has good intentions by offering a free immunisation programme.	Compensation			
Religious activities	To hasten the conclusion of the COVID-19 Pandemic, public officials continue to engage in religious activities to become closer to God.	Bolstering		231	13.19%
Sport activities	Let's engage in sports to boost immunity	Bolstering		489	27.93%
Health protocol images	Detection of COVID-19 through the visualisation of adherence to health regimes	Corrective action	Corrective action	913	52.14%
Education	COVID-19 is a global pandemic, thus the only thing that can be done is to educate the general people.	Shift the blame	Denial	15	0.86%

Source: primary data analysis, 2022

We also analysed the activity in the Instagram photos of public officials and discovered several categories, including Everyday Professional (51.30%), Everyday Life Private (3.82%), Public official with a friend (0.06%), Public official with politician (10.76%), Public official with another public profile (celebrity, athlete, medical doctor, academia) (4.16%), Public official with religious Leader (14.40%), Public official with the public (0.81%), and Public official with other public officials as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 5 (for visual analysis) and Table 6 (for thematic analysis) exhibit the results of a correlation analysis between the independent variable (image restoration method) and the dependent variable (comments and likes) in order to determine what elements influence the level of comments and likes (number of comments and likes).

Table 4. Thematic analysis-based image restoration

Thematic analysis	Meaning	Method	Strategy	Number of posts	Percentage
Public official with politician	I am close to politicians, so what I do is get their full support	Attack accuser	Reducing Offensiveness of Event	633	36.61%
Public official with another public profile (celebrity, athlete, medical doctor, academia)	I am close to celebrities, athletes, doctors and academics, so what I do get their full support				
Public official with religious Leader	I am close to religious leaders, so I do get full support from them				
Public official with other public officials (president, minister, regent, mayor)	I am close with other public officials, so what I do get their full support				
Public official with military officials	I am close to military officials, so what I do get their full support				
Everyday Professional	We continue to work to free society from COVID-19 and its effects	Bolstering		1096	63.39%
Everyday Life Private	Apart from working hard, we also maintain a good relationship with our family				
Public official with friend	Apart from working hard and being close to my family, I am also close to my friends; I have many friends				
Public official with his staff	My staff and I continue to work to rid society of COVID-19 and its effects				
Public official with public	I am close to the community, so I do get full support from them				

Source: primary data analysis, 2022

Table 5. Pearson correlation analysis results for visual analysis

Visual analysis	Independent variables	Comment	Like
Giving COVID-19 aid Vaccination programme	Compensation	0.375***	0.109***
Religious activities Sport activities	Bolstering	0.791***	0.630***
Health protocol images Education	Corrective action Shift the blame	0.680** -0.221***	0.720** -0.124***

Significant at the 5% level. *Significant at the 1% level.

Table 6. Pearson correlation analysis results for thematic analysis

Thematic analysis	Independent variables	Comment	Like
Public official with politician	Attack accuser	0.208**	0.324**
Public official with another public profile (celebrity, athlete, medical doctor, academia)			
Public official with religious Leader	Bolstering	0.84***	0.742** *
Public official with other public officials (president, minister, regent, mayor)			
Public official with military officials			
Everyday Professional			
Everyday Life Private			
Public official with friend			
Public official with his staff			
Public official with public			

Significant at the 5% level. *Significant at the 1% level.

Source: primary data analysis, 2022

Tables 5 and 6 show that the bolstering and corrective methods (for visual analysis) and the bolstering method (for thematic analysis) have a relatively high correlation with comments and likes. They are statistically significant at the 1% level, whereas other methods have a relatively low correlation with comments and likes. This demonstrates that content containing bolstering and corrective action procedures is sufficient to make the public too exhausted to remark on or like it. The transfer-the-blame strategy negatively links comments and likes, indicating that this content does not create public interest in leaving comments or liking it.

Discussion

This study discovered that public officials utilise a variety of tactics to rehabilitate their image (Tables 3 and 4) after making misleading claims or implementing ineffective measures during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This study's sample consists of public officials, whereas many similar studies have been conducted in the context of commercial organisations.

This investigation discovered a large number of corrective activities. Similar research has indicated that corrective action is the most common method employed by firm managers. These findings are consistent with the present study (Arendt, LaFleche, & Limperopulos, 2017). Other research, such as Rudkin et al. (2019), discovered that organisations that suffered unfavourable occurrences employed various communication strategies based on the nature of the negative incident. This study's findings align with Rudkin et al. (2019), who discovered that organisations responding to errors rely on corrective action tactics. This result is consistent with Weber, Erickson, & Stone (2011), who discovered that error disclosure typically involves corrective action measures.

Our research also revealed that public authorities frequently share images with politicians, religious leaders, other public officials, and

military officers. This is part of the accuser's assault strategy, which aims to persuade the public and attack the disputing parties to demonstrate their political might. This is consistent with the findings of the corporate image restoration study, which revealed that the management of companies suspected of accounting irregularities attempted to persuade their stakeholders of the company's relationship with authorities (Nazione & Perrault, 2019; Rudkin et al., 2019; Li Zeng et al., 2018).

Moreover, our data indicate that public officials prioritise maintaining positive relations with politicians, religious leaders, other public officials, and military officials during times of crisis. This study lends credence to Zeng et al. (2018) contention that public officials have a strong preference for being close to individuals with political power to receive protection after committing errors. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the documentation in the same photograph demonstrates the support of politically influential players for public officials who made false statements regarding COVID-19 (Chen et al., 2020; Sanders, Tosi, Obradovic, Miligi, & Delaney, 2021). Despite the significant prejudice in the ratings of some experts, public officials interpret the evaluations as evidence of their success.

This study's findings contradict Arendt et al. (2017), who determined that rejection is the most common picture enhancement approach. This study indicated that denial was the least prevalent coping method. In the domain of educational content, we discovered that educational content is truly about information that COVID-19 is a global pandemic occurring worldwide, and, as a result, its current influence is being felt by nearly everyone in the world. Another Educational Content discusses COVID-19 as a Wuhan-originating virus. We consider this to be transferring the blame. This category is the least utilised by public authorities in this study and has been deemed ineffective and counterproductive when there is little evidence to support the accused (Benoit, 2015; Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997). Given that they are public figures whose lives are in the public eye and can be easily followed on social media, it seems obvious that denial is not a viable social media approach. This study revealed no indication of apologies. It is in line with the previous studies that firms employ apologies after investigations of crisis incidents (Avery et al., 2010; Molleda & Stephen, 2015; Nazione & Perrault, 2019; L. Zeng, Zhou, Pan, & Fowler, 2018). Apologies may be risky for public authorities since they may diminish public trust in them. This makes sense because apologising is equal to acknowledging responsibility, and in the instance of the COVID-19 Pandemic, they may have experienced a significant financial impact by having to compensate the afflicted communities with a large sum of money (Blaney, Benoit, & Brazeal, 2002; Ferguson, Wallace, & Chandler, 2018; L. Zeng et al., 2018).

The crisis communication literature in the West has repeatedly emphasised the need for companies to speak the truth promptly (Ayoko, Ang, & Parry, 2017; Bundy, Pfarrer, Short, & Coombs, 2017; Le &

Bartlett, 2014; O'Connell et al., 2016; Stapleton & Hargie, 2011). According to Coombs (2006), when warning indicators surface prior to the onset of a crisis, organisational members should take all necessary measures to prevent it. Organisations can garner greater public support and forgiveness before the media report a crisis by engaging in preventive measures. This finding is similar to Ye and Pang (2011), who hypothesised that cover-up was the most common method before a mistake was discovered. In a sense, this method reflects the eastern ideals of saving face and avoiding uncertainty, which is "held more strongly than the value of presenting the entire truth in every circumstance" (Yu & Wen, 2003). In Chinese culture, quiet is frequently considered a prudent decision (Li Zeng et al., 2018).

Consequently, there is an emphasis on being truthful, which is supported by earlier research indicating that honesty is positively connected with cooperation, support, and forgiveness (Ayoko et al., 2017; Rim & Ferguson, 2020; Stratulat, 2019; Tække, 2017). These discoveries may enable public officials to be more upfront with their conduct, boosting the likelihood of receiving pardons. According to Kim and Niederdeppe (2013), when an organisation encounters a crisis, it is essential to convey pertinent information and demonstrate a commitment to avoiding negative consequences. This study also reveals that public officials demonstrate their responsibility for the outbreak by offering aid to the community and promoting immunisations. With repeated consumption of his content, society learns more about him as a person, which leads to a favourable perception, which increases the possibility that he will be forgiven. Benoit (1995, 2015) emphasises that only implementing an imaging approach is insufficient; one must also consider persuasion in this technique. Consequently, these publics also take advantage of minimising offensive acts, such as by offering aid, which is frequently utilised in conjunction with other crisis response tactics. Traditional public leaders, such as politicians, frequently use this method to escape accountability and questioning for their mistakes (Sheldon & Sallot, 2008).

This study identifies boosting as one of the most important image recovery tactics. Public officials provide support through engaging in religious and sports activities, working diligently (daily professionals and public officials with their staff), and engaging in sports activities. This is consistent with the findings of prior studies, which indicate that bolstering is frequently the method of choice for image enhancement. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that firms that survive adapt reinforcement (including image strengthening, retrieval, and betrayal) as their immediate crisis communication strategy, a strategy suggested by the researchers to foster positive relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders (Benoit, 1995; TW. Coombs, 2006).

An additional implication is that Western crisis communication tactics provide public officials in Indonesia with some useful insights, at

least as evidenced by the responses of public officials in Indonesia to the crisis. Rather than relying mainly on Western crisis communication tactics, contextual strategies must be used. A public official or his public relations team will then develop a crisis and contingency management communication strategy in response to a crisis. The strategy should contain previous crisis experiences, normal reaction patterns, a crisis management team, and effective communication routes.

As with other studies, this study includes limitations that provide avenues for future research. This study is a cross-sectional examination. Longitudinal studies can examine how strategies and methods for rebuilding the image of public officials may evolve in response to economic, social, and political changes. Future research could also institutionalise a cybernetic model of impression management that includes feedback as an integral component of the communication process. Further research might investigate the perception of the image recovery approach. This research contributes to the knowledge of how public officials employ image-enhancement strategies.

This study involves descriptive content analysis. Future research should examine whether particular characteristics (gender, affiliation with political parties, military organisations, and religion) influence public officials' selection of image restoration tactics and techniques. This study did not investigate the relationship between image restoration procedures and public confidence. Future research could investigate public confidence in public officials following a catastrophe and how they can repair and reinforce their roles by enhancing their image. For scholars in public relations, many questions remain unanswered. For instance, how can the negative social effects of a public official's wrongdoing be successfully eliminated? How to handle intergovernmental relations? How to fulfil social obligations? Future studies might also examine how public officials manage their public relations and respond to disasters.

CONCLUSION

This paper examines ways to enhance the image of public authorities. This study reveals that certain public officials employ disclosure techniques that emphasise corrective or strengthening action. Frequently, the same public leaders employ these techniques concurrently. The findings of this study contribute to the discourse surrounding enhancing public organisations' images. This study has significant ramifications for public officials and their public relations teams, who must now consider how public officials might employ specific techniques to rehabilitate their image. In this regard, the public may also be interested in how public leaders attempt to rehabilitate their reputations after unpleasant incidents. Researchers investigating image restoration strategies may also find these results interesting.

How seven governmental leaders in Indonesia address incorrect claims and policies during the COVID-19 Pandemic provides an in-depth

example of crisis management in social, political, and eastern cultural environments such as Indonesia. Public authorities' tactics can show how they can manage future crises with a similar profile to COVID-19 more effectively. The public leaders' public relations team, if any, should be able to recognise the early warning indications of a crisis.

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