

Consumer Protection Agency's crisis management for children's kidney failure cases in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Badan Perlindungan Konsumen Nasional Republik Indonesia (BPKN RI) is a government institution dedicated to protect consumer rights nationwide. In August 2022, instances of kidney disorders affecting children emerged in various regions of Indonesia, necessitating BPKN's involvement in addressing these cases. **Purpose:** This study examines how crisis communication factored into BPKN RI's crisis management strategy during the 2022 outbreak of atypical progressive acute kidney injury (APAKI) in children. **Methods:** The theoretical framework guiding this research encompasses organizational theory, corporate communication theory, crisis communication theory, and crisis management theory. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data collection involves interviews, internet observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with key figures, including the secretary of BPKN RI, the Public Relations and Education Division of BPKN RI, and the Investigation Team for APAKI cases in children. **Results:** The research findings reveal that BPKN RI's crisis management process involves identifying the crisis, analyzing its implications, isolating the crisis, formulating a strategy, and implementing a crisis control program, with crisis communication as the fundamental element of the crisis management strategy. **Conclusion:** BPKN RI's crisis management strategy prioritizes public welfare, ensuring easy public access, and maintaining transparency and honesty. **Implications:** BPKN RI disseminates regular and periodic information to the public, designates the Chairman of BPKN RI as the spokesperson, monitors community sentiments and media coverage, and establishes a public information center.

Keywords: Atypical progressive acute kidney injury; BPKN RI; crisis communication; crisis management; communication strategy

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INTRODUCTION

The main goal of government institutions is to provide solutions to social challenges through public service programs. In today's digital age, as a governing organization, government has the ability to communicate more openly and directly with the public, both for disseminating information and for promoting products, services, and advocacy (Kartikawangi, 2020).

Public trust is essential for a government to function effectively. Any uncertainty can lead the public to ask questions and rise mixed reactions, both negative and positive sentiments. That is why government agencies is very vulnerable to crisis. In Indonesia, since the 1998 reforms, government elements and their activities have often been in the public spotlight. When government officials behave or enact policies that are considered as harmful or not in favor of the people, it can push the institutions to the brink of crisis. Thus, crisis management plans are essential for government agencies. Many government agencies today, including the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) and the Indonesian Navy's public relations arm, the Information Service of the Indonesian Navy (Dispenal TNI AL), have already developed crisis plan manuals. These manuals serve as guidelines for responding to various crises, such as natural disasters (floods, fires), bomb threats, violence, or product misuse leading to fatalities. The Public Relations Division of KPAI utilizes a crisis management strategy that involves holding internal meetings, press conferences, and issuing press releases distributed through media channels (Cea et al., 2020). In contrast, Dispenal TNI AL employs the 4R Crisis Management approach developed by Wunderman Thompson. This framework consists of four stages: Readiness (utilizing drills like a Covid-19 tug-of-war exercise), Radar (monitoring the situation through established crisis handling SOPs), Response (implementing pre-defined actions based on three scenarios: Siaga 1, Siaga 2, and New Normal), and Restoration (working towards a return to normalcy) (Wahdaniah et. al., 2020).

Organizational crises have wide-ranging impacts on management, employees, stakeholders, and society. Effective crisis management requires a strong communication

perspective and involves ethical considerations, problem-solving, strategic planning, and good interpersonal communication. Crisis management is crucial for organizational control, image restoration, and keeping stakeholder trust (Marsen, 2020). Crisis communication is the lifeblood of crisis management. Without clear communications, even the best crisis management plans can fall flat. Effective communication is crucial throughout the entire crisis management process, influencing how both internal and external stakeholders perceive an organization's crisis management capabilities. Employing best practices in crisis management relies heavily on research in crisis communication to mitigate the negative impact of crises on stakeholders and the organization itself (Park et al., 2022).

In late 2022, public alarm rose due to a surge in atypical progressive acute kidney injury (APAKI) cases among children. These cases were strongly suspected to be caused by poisoning from compounds commonly used as solvents or diluents in liquid medications. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health as of November 6, 2022, the APAKI case had caused 195 child deaths. Meanwhile, the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN), who is responsible for safeguarding consumer safety and rights, faced criticism for its perceived failure to provide optimal service to the public. A meeting between Commission VI of the People's Representative Council (DPR RI) and BPKN on November 3, 2022 revealed sharp criticism. The DPR questioned BPKN's performance, particularly in safeguarding consumer rights concerning formula milk and syrup medication suspected to be linked to acute kidney issues in children. Andre Rosiade, a member of Commission VI DPR RI, even proposed the disbandment of BPKN, citing its perceived inability to advocate for consumer rights. BPKN was criticized for being passive, lacking proactiveness, and solely relying on incoming public complaints. As a state institution directly accountable to the President, BPKN RI ideally should have access to data from other institutions, such as hospitals, to ensure optimal consumer protection in Indonesia.

In terms of media coverage, public awareness of BPKN is relatively low compared to other government institutions such as the

KPPU (Business Competition Supervision Commission) or Komnas HAM (National Human Rights Commission). With so many incidents of consumer rights violations, BPKN as a state institution that is guaranteed by law must play a greater role as the front guard of consumer rights defenders. Observations suggest that BPKN currently lags behind non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like YLKI (Indonesian Consumer Institutions Foundation) in public recognition. Both entities work in consumer protection, but a January 2024 Google search reveals a significant disparity in popularity, with YLKI garnering 751.000 results compared to BPKN's 105.000. To increase its public presence, BPKN needs to develop an effective public relations strategy, as a crucial two-way communication approach to fosters trust, shapes public opinion, and builds mutual understanding between organizations and the communities they serve.

Addressing conflict and contentious scenarios between organizations and the public is a significant aspect of public relations activities to effectively manage issues and crises (Chon & Kim, 2022). Crises act as critical tests of an organization's resilience, demanding a well-defined response plan outlined in comprehensive programs and policies. Corporate communications play a pivotal role in crisis management, facilitating communication of set programs and policies to the public (Juwita, 2017). Effective communication approaches and strategies are essential for government programs and policies to succeed, ensuring the public not only receives information but also has space to express opinions or critique programs deemed less pro-people. In the digital era, the government, as a powerful organization, can communicate openly with the public, disseminating information, promoting goods and services, and advocating for various causes. Challenges in implementing the public relations function of government institutions may result in diminished public trust (Prastowo, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach to investigate the crisis management strategies

implemented by government institutions. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative researchers typically gather data directly from the field where participants encounter the issue or problem being studied. Information is acquired through direct interaction with individuals and observing their behavior within a given context. In this study, data collection methods include semi-structured interviews, documentation study, and observation of internet-related news and publications regarding cases of Atypical Progressive Acute Kidney Injury (APAKI) in children that occurred in 2022. The selected research subjects, inherently case-specific, aim to explain the empirical reality of a natural setting grounded in theory, providing a more specific, detailed, and in-depth understanding. Semi-structured interviews were conducted through face-to-face conversations guided by an interview instrument containing a list of questions related to the research subject. The researcher used pre-prepared guidelines or frameworks but was not strictly bound by them, allowing for flexibility to explore topics and adjust questions based on responses and conversation direction during the interview. This approach offers significant flexibility for researchers to gain comprehensive insights from sources without limiting themselves to a predetermined set of standardized questions. Specific sources have been identified to collect data and information pertinent to the research problem. The individuals serving as resource persons in this study are actively involved individuals considered to have the necessary competence and expertise regarding the issues and subjects under examination. This includes officials from the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) of the Republic of Indonesia, comprising the chairman, deputy chairman, secretary, commission chairman, and division head. In this study, the documentation analysis involves examining online publication articles, academic journals, the official BPKN RI website, and institutional reports sourced by the Fact-Finding Team researchers. These written documents are vital in qualitative research due to their relatively easy accessibility and lasting nature, providing comprehensive insights (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009).

To ensure data quality in this study, the researcher employs the triangulation technique

to assess the degree of similarity between information from key informants and the findings of the research. The triangulation method used in this study is data source triangulation. Data verification through triangulation is carried out until complete data verification is obtained from various aspects, forming the basis for drawing conclusions. This triangulation technique is conducted concurrently with field activities, enabling the researcher to record comprehensive data. Through interviews with key informants, the researcher obtains information regarding respondents' perceptions, experiences, and understanding related to the research topic. Interview findings are then compared with written documents and observations made by the researcher on the Internet. By combining these three techniques, the researcher can obtain a more comprehensive and objective understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The data analysis methodology in this study is based on Miles and Huberman's interactive model, comprising data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. Data reduction involves prioritizing, minimizing, or excluding data based on project objectives, requiring interpretation even at this stage. In both quantitative and qualitative analysis, a common error is presenting unorganized data in pursuit of objectivity. Qualitative analysis employs selective principles, combining deductive and inductive approaches. Data display organizes information to facilitate conclusions, aiding in pattern identification and theme discovery. In program evaluation, it helps understand project success. Conclusion drawing reflects on data significance, while verification ensures the validity of conclusions by testing their plausibility and credibility. This extends beyond technical validity to encompass defensibility and the ability to withstand alternative explanations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia's National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) is responsible for safeguarding consumer rights in Indonesia. Consumer protection efforts in the country traced back to 1968 with the issuance of Law No. 5, but its

effectiveness was limited. In 1999, significant changes occurred with the enactment of Law No. 8, establishing consumer rights, and encouraging the formation of robust consumer protection institutions like BPKN. BPKN was officially formed in 2014, and its leadership changes every three years, with members elected based on a presidential decree. The agency's formation is rooted in the 1998 reforms and the desire to address consumer protection. BPKN has undergone five periods of leadership, and its members, ranging from 15 to 25 people, represent various sectors. The formation of BPKN and its leadership changes align with the legal framework provided by the Consumer Protection Law of 1999. As written on the official website of BPKN RI (bpkn.go.id), the membership of BPKN for the first period of office from 2004 to 2007 consisted of 17 (seventeen) individuals, formed based on the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia No. 150/M of 2004 regarding the Appointment of BPKN Members. With renewed enthusiasm, the second period of BPKN consisted of 20 (twenty) members for the term of office from 2009 to 2012, appointed through the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia No. 80/P of 2009 dated October 11, 2009. Furthermore, for the third period of office from 2013 to 2016, through the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia No. 80/P of 2013, 23 (twenty-three) members of BPKN were appointed, representing the government, academics, experts, and Non-Governmental Consumer Protection Organizations.

BPKN is a non-structural institution under the trade ministry, located in the capital of Indonesia, and reports to the President. It may establish a representative office in provincial capitals if needed. In accordance with Article 33 of Law No. 8 of 1999, the functions and duties undertaken by BPKN are as follows: (1) Providing advice and recommendations to the government in formulating consumer protection policies; (2) Conducting research and analysis on existing legislation in the field of consumer protection; (3) Conducting research on goods and/or services related to consumer safety; (4) Promoting the development of Non-Governmental Consumer Protection Organizations; (5) Conducting research on goods and/or services related to consumer

safety; (6) Promoting the development of Non-Governmental Consumer Protection Organizations; (7) Disseminating information through media about consumer protection and promoting a pro-consumer attitude within society; (8) Receiving complaints about consumer protection from the public, Non-Governmental Consumer Protection Organizations, or Businesses; and conducting surveys related to consumer needs; (9) Conducting surveys related to consumer needs; and (10) In carrying out its duties, BPKN may collaborate with international consumer organizations.

The state budget covers BPKN's expenses, and the chairman, deputy chairman, and members receive financial rights, allowances, and facilities, regulated by a Presidential Regulation. Additionally, honorariums and facilities for agency secretaries and BPKN secretariat staff are determined by the Chairman's Decree after approval from the relevant minister in the financial sector, ensuring compliance with statutory provisions. The vision of BPKNRI is to be a leading institution dedicated to achieving dignified consumers and responsible business actors. Dignified consumers, as defined by BPKN, are individuals with awareness of their rights and responsibilities, possessing a critical stance towards products failing to meet consumer protection standards. These consumers are envisioned as partners with the government in monitoring the national market and understanding how to reclaim their rights. On the other hand, responsible business actors are characterized as professionals who fulfill their obligations, contributing to a healthy business environment encompassing security, health, safety, and environmental preservation (K3L).

In carrying out its organizational tasks and functions, BPKN RI has a legal basis that serves as both a positive aspect and a source of organizational strength. However, BPKN RI also faces several challenges. According to Charles Condrad, organizational management functions are ambiguous. Organizations often confront diverse choices and must make informed decisions. It is not uncommon for organizations to grapple with ambiguous situations characterized by uncertainty. In such scenarios, organizational officials must

utilize communication strategies as tools to navigate uncertainty. Furthermore, organization members need to strike a balance between personal interests and the interests of the organization. As a government institution responsible for safeguarding consumer interests in Indonesia, BPKN RI (National Consumer Protection Agency of Indonesia) inevitably confronts diverse impediments and complexities. Its inception is mandated by Law Number 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection, which forms the legal foundation for its establishment. Legally speaking, BPKN RI enjoys robust legitimacy due to its statutory origins, rendering it immune to presidential dissolution. Nevertheless, constraints on BPKN RI's responsibilities and authority have hindered its effectiveness in advocating for consumer rights in Indonesia. These limitations are being considered for amendment within the framework of consumer protection legislation. As of June 1, 2023, revisions to the Consumer Protection Law are still being deliberated in the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI). One notable obstacle faced by BPKN RI is fiscal constraints. Despite its pivotal role in safeguarding consumers nationwide, BPKN RI operates with a comparatively modest budget compared to other government entities. This financial limitation severely curtails BPKN RI's capacity to execute its functions optimally. Additionally, BPKN RI encounters a shortage of human resources, impacting both the quality and quantity of its personnel. The ambiguous employment status of BPKN RI's staff further compounds these challenges and affects organizational performance. Collaboration with various stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental institutions, presents another challenge. Some institutions are unfamiliar with BPKN RI, complicating the execution of its mandates. Nevertheless, BPKN RI benefits from certain strengths. It enjoys political support from the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), encouraging it to excel beyond routine duties. Moreover, its legal standing underpins its legitimacy and insulates it from presidential dissolution. Efforts are underway to address these challenges and bolster BPKN RI's capabilities. Proposed revisions to the Consumer Protection Law aim to refine and broaden BPKN RI's mandate,

enhance human resource management, and foster collaboration with stakeholders. Despite these obstacles, BPKN RI remains steadfast in its commitment to serving and safeguarding consumers in Indonesia.

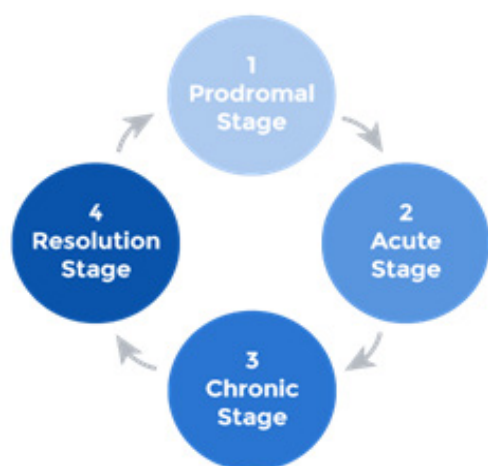
The occurrence of Atypical Progressive Acute Kidney Injuries (APAKI) in children, which affected more than 260 children throughout the country between August and November 2022, was very disturbing for Indonesians. This spike in APAKI cases has triggered a national emergency, so a fast and appropriate intervention strategy is needed. The impact of public health problems such as APAKI can disrupt people's lives and have an impact on economic and social aspects. Addressing public apprehensions amidst this crisis, entreaties were issued by diverse entities, encompassing governmental and societal stakeholders. To deal with a public health emergency, people tend to work together in an organized way. This is important when facing such situations, and it's a recurring topic about how to manage public health crises effectively. Governments are focusing on this issue, and scientists are studying it to understand better (Wang et al., 2021).

The kidneys, an essential organ in the urinary system, primarily operate to filtrate waste and blood for excretion through urine. Typically, kidney diseases in children arise from congenital abnormalities. However, BPOM's (Indonesia's Food and Drug Supervisory Agency, or Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan) findings elucidate that the upsurge in APAKI cases among children in 2022 is linked to the ingestion of syrup medications containing hazardous chemicals, particularly Ethylene Glycol (EG), Diethylene Glycol (DEG), and Butyl Ethylene Glycol Ether (EGBE). Ethylene glycol, an odorless and colorless liquid with a sweet taste, and diethylene glycol sharing similar characteristics, can serve as solvents in medicinal syrups but carry a poisoning risk if consumed beyond established safety limits (BPOM, 2023). Kidney disorders in children are a condition where the child's kidney function declines suddenly, rapidly, and abnormally. Chronic kidney disease is a condition where the kidneys sustain irreversible damage, potentially leading to end-stage renal disease which poses a significant global public health challenge,

especially in developing countries (Harambat & Morin, 2023; Muyassaroh et al., 2020). Unlike typical kidney diseases in children, the cause of Acute Kidney Injury (APAKI) cannot be explained by a typical pattern. Health institutions and the government then refer to this series of cases as Atypical Progressive Acute Kidney Disorders (or GGAPA, which stands for Gangguan Ginjal Akut Progresif Atipikal) in children. The term "atypical" indicates that APAKI deviates from the usual disease patterns. This sudden decline in kidney function is characterized by a reduction in urine volume or the inability to urinate at all. This information underscores the importance of addressing the APAKI crisis and implementing effective preventive measures.

A series of incidents involving acute kidney failure cases in children, resulting in the deaths of 195 children, has put BPKN RI under public scrutiny. This situation has sparked criticism towards the National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) for its perceived sluggishness and failure to provide adequate protection to consumers. The DPR has questioned the performance of BPKN RI and even proposed the dissolution of this consumer protection agency. The loss of trust from the People's Representative Council (DPR) towards BPKN has pushed the institution into a crisis. A crisis is defined as an unstable event experienced by an organization with various possibilities that cause undesirable impacts (Devlin, 2020). According to Lawrence Barton (1993), a crisis has three characteristics: surprising, and threatening, and requires quick decision-making. A crisis requires immediate and appropriate handling, otherwise, it has the potential to cause many unexpected negative impacts. Health crises are more difficult to understand because they are usually rare and unpredictable but have severe consequences and large economic impacts (Kuckertz et al., 2020). As a legislative tasked with overseeing government agencies, including BPKN, the DPR's loss of confidence in BPKN may lead to a lack of support and funding needed for BPKN to effectively carry out its functions. This loss of trust can also impact public perception of BPKN, potentially resulting in decreased public support and legitimacy. Furthermore, the DPR's loss of trust can affect the internal motivation and morale of BPKN. Employees

Fink's Crisis Model



Source: Crisis Management, Planning for The Inevitable, 1993

Figure 1 Fink's Crisis Model

and leadership of BPKN may feel demotivated or lose confidence in their duties, worsening the institution's performance and deepening the crisis it faces.

Various crisis triggers, including natural disasters like floods and volcanic eruptions due to Indonesia's location in the Ring of Fire, along with industrial accidents, defective products, and issues with labour relations. Effective crisis management is crucial to minimize the negative impact on an organization's reputation and operations, especially during unforeseen events. Crises can be categorized into four main groups: natural disasters, technical issues, human errors, and management mistakes. Fink's Crisis Model (Fink, 1993) outlines stages of crisis, as depicted in Figure 1, from prevention to resolution, emphasizing the need for ongoing vigilance even after the crisis ends. Public relations must be prepared with effective strategies to address future crises.

When organizations encounter crises, their public relations division must devise a comprehensive strategy to effectively address them (Yulianti et al., 2020). Effective crisis communication hinges on public relations ability to grasp the intricacies of communication. This translates to pinpointing relevant strategies, encompassing information delivery, audience understanding, and the desired impact (Haupt, 2021). A robust communication plan is crucial

for dispelling uncertainties and conflicts that could lead to distrust, especially in the age of rapid information dissemination (Satlita, 2015). Governmental institutions categorize crises into systemic, confrontational, and image-related ones, each presenting unique challenges like erosion of public trust (Putri et al., 2019). Crisis management involves steps such as crisis identification, analysis, isolation, strategy determination, and establishing a crisis control program. A crisis presents both challenges and opportunities for organizational reassessment, potentially prompting positive changes if managed effectively. However, mishandling a crisis can lead to lasting damage to an organization's reputation and stability, emphasizing the critical role of timely and appropriate crisis response. The Public Relations and Education Department of BPKN RI plays an important role in maintaining positive relationships with media partners and monitoring issues related to the institution in the media. They prioritized accessibility for journalists and formed a Fact-Finding Team on November 3, consisting of academics, the Indonesian Pediatrician Association (IDAI), the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office. Apart from that, BPKN RI also appointed Dr. Rizal E. Halim as the spokesperson for information regarding the institution's findings and attitude towards the APAKI crisis. Dr Pandu from IDAI was also appointed as a key figure and member of the Fact-Finding Team. Investigations revealed that the consumption of toxic syrup was the cause of APAKI cases, prompting the creation of a dedicated complaint centre and multi-disciplinary investigation team. These actions were carried out in response to public complaints, which began to surface in September 2022, leading to strategic steps to overcome the crisis, including recommendations given to President Jokowi on December 14. This investigation highlights the urgent need for preventive measures to protect children from dangerous drugs containing toxic chemicals such as Ethylene Glycol and Diethylene Glycol. These chemicals, found in pharmaceutical syrups, can cause poisoning if consumed above safe limits, posing serious health risks to children nationwide (Rakhmatullah et al., 2022).

The APAKI crisis reflects systemic

issues within the pharmaceutical industry in Indonesia, including compliance with Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and overall quality standards. Non-compliance with regulations, as highlighted by BPKN RI, indicates lapses in industry practices, impacting public health and consumer safety. The APAKI cases have drawn public attention, affecting the reputation of government agencies responsible for regulating the pharmaceutical industry and ensuring consumer protection. These challenges underscore the need for immediate and comprehensive interventions to safeguard public health and restore trust in regulatory institutions. The APAKI crisis in children is a systemic crisis due to its association with the compliance of industry stakeholders with SOPs and quality standards in the pharmaceutical sector of Indonesia. The APAKI crisis has brought all government stakeholders, such as BPOM and BPKN, into public scrutiny (confrontational crisis). The image of government agencies tasked with overseeing the pharmaceutical and food industries and protecting consumers is portrayed unfavourably, indicating a crisis of image or reputation where their effectiveness is questioned.

According to the Ministry of Health and the report from the TPF of BPKN RI, the region most affected by cases of Atypical Progressive Acute Kidney Injury (APAKI) in children is the DKI Jakarta Province, with a total of 83 child victims, followed by West Java Province with 42 children, Aceh Province with 32 children, East Java with 25 children, and Banten with 21 children. Additionally, West Sumatra has 20 child victims, North Sumatra has 15 children, and Bali has 16 children. In other provinces, cases are scattered with fewer than ten reported instances. The conclusions drawn by the Fact-Finding Team based on field findings are as follows: (1) The APAKI cases represent a humanitarian tragedy, with 202 children reported deceased as of November 27, 2022; (2) Most victims, accounting for 74% of the 324 cases according to Ministry of Health data, are toddlers from lower to middle-class families and largely lack comorbidities; (3) Initially presenting mild symptoms such as fever, cough, cold, vomiting, and diarrhea, APAKI patients' conditions deteriorated after consuming syrup medications; (4) Some APAKI patients did

not receive optimal treatment due to personnel and facility limitations in hospitals; (5) Certain APAKI victims undergoing outpatient care exhibit residual symptoms such as continued need for dialysis, tracheostomy, paralysis, among others; and (6) APAKI victims and their families have not received compensation or restitution for the tragedy, with families also demanding apologies from the government and pharmaceutical industry.

During crises, effective crisis communication is crucial for organizations to uphold trust, manage reputation, reduce uncertainty, ensure public safety, and ensure survival. It serves as a tool for demonstrating accountability, addressing problems transparently, and maintaining credibility with stakeholders. Providing clear and timely information helps reduce uncertainty among stakeholders and shapes the crisis narrative. Additionally, clear communication about risks and precautions is vital for public safety. By offering information and certainty to stakeholders, organizations can mitigate the crisis's impact on operations and financial stability, ensuring organizational continuity during challenging times. Effective crisis communication involves a continuous exchange between the government and the public, requiring ongoing engagement with the public (Wiese et al., 2023). According to Wilcox (Wilcox et al., 2015), implementing crisis communication involves specific strategies and tactics, including prioritizing the public, being accessible, taking responsibility, engaging with key public, avoiding "no comment" responses, being honest, providing a constant flow of information, monitoring news coverage, understanding media needs and deadlines, designating a single spokesperson, and establishing a central information centre. On December 14, 2022, the BPKN RI Fact-Finding Team provided recommendations to the President of the Republic of Indonesia regarding its findings on the Atypical Progressive Acute Kidney Injury (APAKI) cases in children, which include: (1) As a form of empathy and sympathy towards APAKI victims, the government and pharmaceutical industry are urged to provide compensation and restitution to deceased victims, those currently hospitalized, and those undergoing outpatient treatment to restore their health conditions as a moral responsibility; (2)

The government assigns the State Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia (BPKP RI) to conduct a comprehensive audit regarding the supervision and circulation of pharmaceutical products, including the use of raw materials in the pharmaceutical sector; (3) The government requests the Indonesian National Police to take firm action against responsible parties and to transparently investigate the case; and (4) Given the broad public health issues and safety concerns, there is a need to strengthen institutions independently protecting consumer rights to ensure the fulfillment of public rights universally.

According to Mr Irdham Satrio Dhamar, the Head of the Public Relations and Education Division at BPKN RI, the department has initiated various programs, including podcasts, press coverage, and social media promotion of activities. Press coverage involves visiting incident locations and inviting journalists, while collaboration with the Indonesian Association of Cyber Media is also undertaken. During crises or advocacy efforts, BPKN RI conducts press conferences and public exposure to inform the public about addressed issues. The communication strategy encompasses multiple media platforms, with a focus on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube for educational content dissemination. However, Twitter and TikTok utilization, though acknowledged, remains underutilized, with efforts underway to increase activity. Additionally, BPKN RI oversees consumer protection issues in Indonesia through manual monitoring and Media Monitoring technology to identify emerging concerns and key stakeholders. In the context of the Acute Atypical Progressive Kidney Disorder (APAKI) case, BPKN RI's attention is drawn due to consumer protection issues related to drugs and food, which are part of the National Consumer Protection Strategy established by Presidential Regulation No. 50 of 2017. The strategy focuses on nine sectors: Drugs and Food, Financial Services, Transportation Services, Electricity and Household Gas, Telecommunication Services, Health Services, E-commerce Trade Transactions, Housing and Electronic Goods, Telematics, and Motor Vehicles. The APAKI cases are significant not only for the safety and future of future generations but also directly relate to two main focuses of the National

Consumer Protection Strategy: drugs and food and health services.

Additionally, the researcher conducted observation and research to compare digital footprints, publications, and trends in digital media by comparing BPKN RI, an official state institution tasked with consumer protection functions in Indonesia, with the Indonesian Consumer Foundation (YLKI), a non-governmental organization focused on consumer protection issues in Indonesia. This was done to analyze the profiles of BPKN RI's official social media accounts and understand the interactions between BPKN RI's official accounts and the public. The analysis comparing BPKN RI's official social media presence with YLKI's reveals that BPKN RI's management of its social media accounts is not optimal, especially on Twitter and TikTok. While content generation is frequent on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, interaction with followers remains lacking. It was acknowledged that while most platforms are active, attention is primarily on YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, with limited activity on Twitter and TikTok. This highlights the importance of BPKN RI improving its social media management strategies, particularly on Twitter and TikTok, to enhance audience interaction and engagement.

Social media has emerged as a crucial tool in organizational crisis communication, offering quick and widespread access to both individuals and organizations. By leveraging social media, organizations can effectively disseminate crisis information to dispersed stakeholders, respond to their inquiries, and gain insights into their needs, thus bolstering organizational reputation and clarity (Roshan et al., 2016). However, while social media enables direct communication, it also heightens organizational vulnerability during crises by facilitating the rapid spread of information (Ngai et al., 2015).

Crisis communication is a fundamental element of BPKN RI's crisis management strategy in handling APAKI cases. According to Wilcox (2015), public relations practitioners need to implement the following strategies and tactics when carrying out the crisis communication function: 1) Put the public/victim first. Crises can disrupt the lives of the public, making them potential victims. Therefore, organizations must prioritize the public's well-being during a

crisis. 2) Be accessible. In a crisis, the public seeks information about mitigation measures and the potential impact on their lives. Easy access to information becomes crucial. 3) Take responsibility. Organizations must take responsibility for finding crisis management solutions. 4) Communicate with the key public. The key public is those with an interest or stake in an organization. In crisis communication, their participation is essential for effective planning. 5) Never say “no comment”, as it is often interpreted as an admission of guilt by the public. 6) Be honest. Public relations practitioners must provide truthful information and avoid misleading facts. 7) Provide a constant flow of information. Organizations must continuously provide valid and up-to-date information to meet the public’s information needs and prevent speculation. 8) Monitor news coverage. Public relations professionals must monitor media coverage to ensure accuracy and prevent the spread of misinformation. 9) Be familiar with media needs and deadlines. Public relations professionals should understand media needs and deadlines. Providing media kits and press releases regularly and in accordance with media schedules can help meet their information needs. 10) Designate a single spokesperson. A public relations practitioner is the ideal choice for an organization’s spokesperson. They have a strong understanding of the organization’s values and public relations skills, enabling them to communicate messages effectively. 11) Set up a central information centre. An information centre serves as a central point for receiving information, managing, and coordinating actions during emergencies.

As a part of BPKN’s communication strategy, BPKN RI prioritizes public safety and interests. This is reflected in its establishment of complaint centres and fact-finding teams. BPKN RI also urges stakeholders to provide transparent information to the public. During the Acute Atypical Progressive Kidney Disorder (APAKI) crisis, BPKN RI focused on educating and protecting consumers. This aligns with its strategy to prioritize the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors, two of the nine focal points of the National Consumer Protection Strategy. Additionally, BPKN RI designated Dr. Rizal E. Halim and Dr. Pandu from the Indonesian Pediatric Society (IDAI) as key spokespeople,

ensuring consistent and credible communication during the crisis. BPKN RI also maintains good relations with journalists, utilizing WhatsApp groups for information exchange and collaboration. The Public Relations Department monitors media coverage, addressing negative narratives promptly. This proactive approach helps mitigate potential damage to BPKN RI’s reputation. Through these crisis communication strategies, BPKN RI aims to provide accurate information, address public concerns, and protect consumer rights effectively.

The APAKI crisis in children is a systemic issue tied to compliance with SOPs and quality standards in Indonesia’s pharmaceutical industry, casting a critical eye on government stakeholders like BPOM and BPKN. The negative portrayal of these institutions raises concerns about their effectiveness in overseeing food and drug safety. In September 2022, BPKN RI initiated its crisis communication strategy, receiving public complaints through its complaint service application. The Public Relations and Education Division of BPKN RI plays a pivotal role in fostering relationships with media partners and ensuring accessibility to journalists. BPKN RI formed a Fact-Finding Team on November 3rd, including representatives from academia, IDAI, the Police, and the Prosecutor’s Office. On November 4th, a Central Complaint Center for GGPA Victims was established at the BPKN RI office. Centralizing information sources, Dr. Rizal E. Halim, Chairman of BPKN RI, and Dr. Pandu from IDAI were appointed as key figures and members of the Fact-Finding Team. The team’s findings on December 14th provided recommendations to President Jokowi on addressing the APAKI crisis in children. In carrying out its main tasks and functions of consumer protection in Indonesia, as well as advocacy, legal assistance, and protection for consumers and APAKI victims in children, BPKN RI encountered several obstacles, both internally and externally. Internally, BPKN RI faced limitations in resources, both human resources and budgetary resources. Furthermore, externally, BPKN RI encountered obstacles in cooperation with other stakeholders. BPKN RI faced difficulties in cooperation and communication, even among fellow state institutions. This is due to the limited authority of BPKN RI as regulated in Law No. 8 of 1999

concerning Consumer Protection and the lack of familiarity not only by the public but also by fellow state institutions. After researchers analyzed BPKN RI's official social media accounts and compared them with YLKI's accounts, it was evident that the management of BPKN RI's official social media accounts was not optimal, especially on Twitter and TikTok platforms. On Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube platforms, as explained earlier, BPKN RI's social media management has frequently created and published content, although interaction with followers of BPKN RI's official media remains suboptimal. The obstacles in social media management and the implementation of BPKN RI's communication strategy are limited support from human resources and budgetary constraints. This affects the institution's performance, particularly in public communication, and BPKN RI is not well-known to the public. As observed by researchers by comparing interactions and digital footprints between BPKN RI and the Indonesian Consumer Foundation (YLKI). Therefore, BPKN RI needs to formulate strategies to address these challenges and obstacles. Referring to the RPJMN 2015-2019, it is mentioned that there are four obstacles to strengthening consumer protection, namely: (a) The number and capacity of consumer protection agencies are still limited, as seen from the relatively few numbers of Consumer Dispute Settlement Bodies (BPSK); (b) Low awareness levels of both the public and producers regarding consumer protection; (c) Limited efforts for standardization; and (d) Ineffectiveness in implementing regulatory systems and devices.

The Public Relations and Education Division of BPKN RI plays an important role in efforts to empower consumers in Indonesia. When consumers can protect themselves from disturbances, it can be said that their consumer protection program is successful. As mentioned earlier, consumers have self-awareness, understanding, and confidence in enforcing their rights and obligations as empowered consumers. When there is asymmetric information between producers and consumers, consumers will always be in a slightly disadvantageous position. Unlike consumers, producers will always have more detailed information about the goods/

services they sell. Furthermore, consumers will harbour a strong resentment towards the secrecy of information provided by business owners. Therefore, all consumer protection stakeholders in Indonesia must enhance cooperation and collaboration to realize empowered Indonesian consumers. Especially collaboration in the field of public relations and community education. This is because the main prerequisite for consumers to be empowered is to have up-to-date knowledge and information, whether related to goods and services or personal safety and obligations as consumers. Consumer rights and obligations in Indonesia are regulated by Law No. 8/1999, namely in Article 4 and Article 5. When facing problems in purchasing and using goods or services, empowered consumers will have the confidence to fight for their rights as consumers. The most important factor is that consumers become more critical and careful when conducting transactions. According to some studies, critical consumers will encourage business owners to produce goods that are of higher quality, safer, and more effective (according to consumer needs).

Communication, particularly in times of crisis, plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and perception. In simple terms, corporate communication shows how an organization engages with its stakeholders. This theory is supported by (Grunig, 2013), who explains that corporate communication involves two-way communication, either symmetrical or asymmetrical, with the aim of persuading audiences to form a connection with the organization. This requires organizational efforts to share information with the public through tailored publication activities. In the current digital era, Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) shapes and transforms organizational governance in both the private and public sectors. In the public sector and government organizations, the use of ICT is believed to improve performance and efficiency, especially in providing public services. Media engagement during crises becomes especially vital, as effective crisis communication can rebuild public confidence and safeguard the reputation of institutions (Sijabat, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way society receives information, with trust and credibility being paramount. The principles of

Table 1 Summary of Analysis Results

Research Topic	Analysis Results
Cases of APAKI in children	The sudden increase in Atypical Progressive Acute Kidney Injuries (APAKI) among over 260 children across Indonesia from August to November 2022 has caused widespread concern. This surge has prompted a national emergency, necessitating swift and effective intervention measures. Public health issues like APAKI can significantly disrupt lives and affect various aspects of the economy and society. To address public concerns during this crisis, appeals were made by a range of stakeholders, including government bodies and societal organizations.
Supporting Factors for BPKN RI in Performing Organizational Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and expectations from the community for BPKN RI to fully carry out its main tasks and functions. • Political support from Commission VI of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) was conveyed during the Hearing Meeting (RDP) on November 3, 2022. • Service spirit and work enthusiasm from the entire team and stakeholders involved in addressing the GGAPA crisis in children.
Barriers to BPKN RI in Executing Organizational Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited authority of BPKN RI as regulated in Law No. 8 of 1999 • Budgetary constraints. As a state institution tasked with protecting consumer rights for all Indonesian citizens as well as Foreign Nationals (WNAs) residing in Indonesia, BPKN RI's budget of 25 billion rupiah per year is not commensurate with its workload and is far smaller compared to the budgets of other state institutions. • Limited number of employees and employee status affecting BPKN RI's performance • Ineffective cooperation and communication with other stakeholders
BPKN RI Reputation Crisis	The DPR's distrust in BPKN has triggered a crisis. A crisis is a sudden, serious problem that needs fast solutions. If not dealt with properly, it can cause many issues. Health crises, like APAKI, are especially tough because they're rare, unpredictable, and costly. The DPR's lack of confidence means BPKN might not get the support it needs to function well. This loss of trust can also damage BPKN's reputation and demotivate its staff, making the situation worse.
Crisis Management Strategy	<p>The crisis management strategy steps implemented by BPKN RI in handling the APAKI cases in children include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crisis identification - Crisis analysis - Crisis isolation - Determining crisis management strategy. One important strategy applied by BPKN RI is implementing a crisis communication strategy - Establishing a crisis control program
Crisis Communication	<p>Communication, especially during crises, directly influences public perception. Media relations during crises are even more critical than usual. Successful crisis communication can restore public trust and protect institutional reputation.</p> <p>Crisis communication strategies are a crucial part of the crisis management strategy implemented by BPKN RI in handling the APAKI cases in children.</p>

Ideal Public Relations Work Model of BPKN RI

To enhance consumer empowerment efforts, BPKN RI's Public Relations and Education Division could implement a Penta helix approach, facilitating collaboration with diverse stakeholders responsible for consumer protection in Indonesia. This model entails engagement with government, academia, industry, media, and society, collectively addressing consumer challenges through dialogue and action. Each sector provides unique insights and resources: the government offers regulatory frameworks, academia contributes research expertise, the industry shares market dynamics, the media disseminates information, and society represents grassroots perspectives. Leveraging these multi-disciplinary resources aims to achieve more robust and sustainable solutions for consumer protection.

Source: Research Results, 2023

empathy and post-pandemic communication are very important for organizations to implement. Public relations must convey messages clearly, transparently, and in accordance with community needs, while still prioritizing empathy. The emergence of Industry 4.0 has forced corporate communications to adapt, by including social and digital media as public communication channels that are actively utilized.

Implementing adaptive corporate communication is very important for the smooth exchange of information and coordination between companies and society (Purwandini et al., 2018). All organizations, including government agencies, must prioritize building strong internal communications before interacting with the external public (Wardhani et al., 2020). BPKN RI recognizes the importance of crisis communication strategies in managing the APAKI case involving children. To bolster its efforts in consumer empowerment, BPKN RI's Public Relations and Education Division can adopt the Penta helix approach. The Penta helix collaboration model requires cooperation between academics, educational institutions (Academic), government (Government), community involvement (Civil Society), private sector and industry involvement (Business), and the presence of a third party (3rd Sector) which acts as a catalyst in the collaboration (Muhyi et al., 2017). A summary of the analysis results can be seen in Table 1.

CONCLUSION

The significant increase in cases of Atypical Progressive Acute Kidney Injury (APAKI) among children in 2022 has been classified as a national emergency, signaling a dire need for immediate action. This surge has shed light on the perceived ineffectiveness of the Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN), a state institution entrusted with safeguarding consumer rights, in adequately addressing the issue. BPKN's reactive approach, which relies solely on waiting for complaints to be filed, has raised concerns about its proactive capacity and responsiveness. Consequently, this has eroded confidence in BPKN RI among stakeholders, particularly the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI). Internally, BPKN faces challenges such as resource and budget limitations, which may impede its ability to swiftly and comprehensively address emerging consumer protection issues like APAKI. Externally, insufficient collaboration and communication between BPKN RI and other stakeholders pose significant obstacles to effective problem-solving and coordination efforts. These internal and external challenges underscore the complexities and multifaceted nature of BPKN's role in safeguarding consumer rights amidst evolving health crises like APAKI. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to enhance BPKN's capabilities, foster collaboration with key stakeholders, and improve communication channels to ensure a more proactive and effective response to consumer protection issues in Indonesia.

Crisis communication is a fundamental element of BPKN RI's crisis management strategy in handling APAKI cases. The Communication and Education Division of BPKN RI as the institution's Public Relations implement the following strategies: 1) Prioritizing public safety and interests by establishing a complaint centers and fact-finding teams. 2) Utilizing various media channels to disseminate information, educate the public about consumer rights, and monitor emerging consumer protection issues in society. 3) BPKN RI also urges stakeholders to provide transparent information to the public. During the Acute Atypical Progressive Kidney Disorder (APAKI) crisis, BPKN RI focused on educating and protecting consumers. This aligns with its strategy to prioritize the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors, two of the nine focal points of the National Consumer Protection Strategy. 4) Designating Dr. Rizal E. Halim and Dr. Pandu from the Indonesian Pediatric Society (IDAI) as key spokespeople, ensuring consistent and credible communication during the crisis. 5) BPKN RI also maintains good relations with journalists, utilizing WhatsApp groups for information exchange and collaboration. 6) The Public Relations Department monitors media coverage, addressing negative narratives promptly. This proactive approach helps mitigate potential damage to BPKN RI's reputation. Through these crisis communication strategies, BPKN RI aims to provide accurate information, address public concerns, and protect consumer rights effectively.

Subsequent research has been directed towards examining corporate communication strategies pertaining to consumer protection in Indonesia. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for further investigation to delve into the correlation between BPKN RI's public communication endeavors and the level of public trust in the institution. Practical recommendations have been proposed, aiming to address the challenges faced by BPKN RI. These recommendations emphasize the importance of enhancing communication channels with other governmental institutions, such as the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), in order to optimize the effectiveness of consumer protection functions. Moreover, it is imperative for BPKN RI to refine its

communication strategies to effectively educate the public and enhance awareness of its role and responsibilities. Strengthening collaboration efforts is crucial and can be facilitated through the adoption of the Penta helix approach, which involves academia, private sector entities, government agencies, and civil society organizations. By leveraging this collaborative framework, BPKN RI can more efficiently fulfill its mandate of safeguarding consumer rights and interests across Indonesia.

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