

# ***The Controversy of Pengurus Besar Esports Indonesia and Mobile Legends Professional League Indonesia on Social Media: Crisis Communication Insights***

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## **Abstrak**

Artikel ini menyelidiki konflik yang muncul dalam regulasi game online di Indonesia, dengan fokus pada perselisihan antara PBESI (Pengurus Besar Esports Indonesia) dan MPL (Mobile Legends: Bang Bang Professional League) Indonesia. Konflik ini berpusat pada klaim MPL Indonesia terhadap pelanggaran regulasi yang dikeluarkan oleh PBESI, yang mengatur pelaksanaan kegiatan esports di Indonesia berdasarkan Peraturan PBESI No: 034/PB-ESI/B/VI/2021. Dalam penelitian ini, kita menerapkan teori komunikasi krisis untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang konflik ini. Data dikumpulkan melalui analisis kualitatif, dengan penekanan utama pada Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). Analisis yang dilakukan dalam penelitian ini dengan jelas menunjukkan bahwa klaim MPL Indonesia tidak dapat dibuktikan berdasarkan bukti empiris yang tersedia. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan peninjauan ulang terhadap klaim ini, dipandu oleh prinsip-prinsip komunikasi krisis yang menekankan pentingnya pesan yang jelas, konsisten, dan transparan. Sebagai hasilnya, penelitian ini diharapkan memberikan pandangan yang kuat dan solusi efektif untuk menyelesaikan konflik ini, mencegah polemik yang berlarut-larut, dan melindungi kepentingan komunitas Mobile Legends: Bang Bang dan industri esports secara keseluruhan.

**Kata Kunci:** Mobile Legends Professional League Indonesia; Pengurus Besar Esports Indonesia; Regulasi.

## **Abstract**

*The article investigates conflicts that have emerged in the regulation of online gaming in Indonesia, focusing on the dispute between PBESI (Pengurus Besar Esports Indonesia) and MPL (Mobile Legends: Bang Bang Professional League) Indonesia. The conflict centers around MPL Indonesia's claims of regulatory violations issued by PBESI, which govern the implementation of esports activities in Indonesia based on Regulation PBESI No: 034/PB-ESI/B/VI/2021. Utilizing crisis communication theory, the study seeks to gain deeper insights into this conflict. Data is collected through qualitative analysis, with a primary emphasis on Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). The analysis conducted in the study unequivocally demonstrates that MPL Indonesia's claims cannot be substantiated based on the available empirical evidence. Consequently, a reevaluation of these claims is deemed necessary, guided by the principles of crisis communication, which stress the importance of clear, consistent, and transparent messaging. As a result, this research is expected to offer a strong perspective and effective solutions to resolve the conflict, prevent prolonged controversies, and protect the interests of the Mobile Legends: Bang Bang community and the esports industry as a whole.*

**Keywords:** Mobile Legends Professional League Indonesia; Pengurus Besar Esports Indonesia; Regulation.

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of science and technology has precipitated profound societal transformations across diverse strata. Human ingenuity has burgeoned, impelling the establishment of novel connections facilitated by technology, with the internet standing as one such exemplar. Current technology is witnessing rapid evolution, notably as a medium for entertainment, exemplified by online gaming. Online games, characterized by their utilization of internet connectivity, have become increasingly prevalent. Febriandari et al. (2016) emphasize that online games encompass websites or applications that furnish various gaming genres, enabling internet users to engage in concurrent gameplay across disparate locations and timeframes via online communication networks.

One of the online gaming phenomena that has experienced exponential growth in Indonesia is Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang, or also known as 'Mobile Legends' or 'ML'. Mobile Legends is a classic Multiplayer Battle Arena (MOBA) game, compatible with Android and iOS smartphones (Fahmi, 2018). According to data sourced from Google Playstore (2023), the game has been downloaded more than 500 million times. Beyond its engaging gameplay and user-friendliness, Mobile Legends has emerged as a favored pastime among both adolescents and adults for multifarious reasons. The game incorporates beloved heroes, affording gamers the capacity to assemble ideal teams for vanquishing adversaries. Gameplay further introduces virtual joystick controls on the left side of the screen and skill buttons on the right. Cooperative gameplay fosters strategic collaboration among players in dismantling opposing towers. The game also features a myriad of heroes and skins, available for purchase, spanning from Rp. 15,000 to Rp. 2,000,000 per item (Amran et al., 2020).

The rapid advancement of this game extends beyond the realm of traditional "gaming" and has now become a prominent contender in major events and expansive venues. In Indonesia, the ascendancy of the Mobile Legends Professional League (MPL) and the Mobile Legends Development League (MDL) has attracted a diverse audience, particularly among Mobile Legends enthusiasts. Furthermore, Mobile Legends has made international strides, with events like the Mobile Legends Southeast-Asia Cup (MSC) and M-Series, where Indonesian Mobile Legends teams consistently excel. Recently, the Indonesian National Mobile Legends Team partook in the 2023 SEA Games held in Cambodia. To everyone's surprise, the Mobile Legends Men's National Team, favored to secure gold by the Indonesian E-Sports Association (PBESI) and based on pre-tournament expectations, faltered in the group stage, failing to progress. This outcome prompted widespread inquiries, as Indonesia, on paper, was considered the strongest team in Group B, surpassing the host nation, Cambodia, as well as Myanmar and Singapore (ggwp.id, 2023).

In anticipation of the SEA Games, various stakeholders, including professional players, casters, and analysts, anticipated that Indonesia possessed the highest likelihood of triumph in this edition compared to the preceding two. This optimism was attributed to the team's absence from the same group as their longtime rival, the Philippines, who had consistently clinched gold medals in prior editions, and their exclusion from the group with Malaysia, renowned for providing fierce competition. Additional factors included the star-studded composition of the national team's roster and the coaching prowess of Bjorn Ong, also known as Zeys, who boasted a plethora of international coaching achievements (esports.id, 2023). Paradoxically, the Women's Mobile Legends National Team secured gold by vanquishing the Philippines, rendering the Mobile Legends Men's Team the sole division in E-Sports to not contribute a medal (kompas.com, 2023).

The most salient and contentious facet of this situation ensued with the remarks made by the Secretary-General of PBESI, Frengky Ong, via his Instagram story following the Mobile Legends Men's National Team's elimination from the SEA Games, where he insinuated, "Perhaps they feel that defending the country and the red and white flag is not important to them. Therefore, can the country also consider them unimportant?" Additionally, he questioned the MPL Indonesia league, suggesting it was excessively exclusive and closed, thereby impeding the cultivation of resilient athletes primed for competition. In terms of achievements, Indonesian teams and the national team still lagged behind the Philippines, who dominated the international Mobile Legends scene.



Notably, only EVOS Legends (Champions of M1 World Championship and IESF World Championship 2022), RRQ (Champions of Mobile Legends Singapore Tourney), and ONIC Esports (Champions of MSC 2021) had secured international titles, with the remaining accolades predominantly seized by Philippine teams and the national team. Frengky Ong contended that this necessitated reforms through an open league system administered by PBESI to nurture "fighter" rather than "idols" (hitekno.com, 2023).

However, regardless of his intentions, it appeared as if Frengky Ong was implicating personal interests and isolating MPL, which, in reality, had been operating professionally with stringent regulations since 2018. The price of a single slot in MPL has now soared to Rp30 billion, with participants and players reaping various benefits, underpinned by meticulous oversight by MPL. While the prize pool may be comparatively smaller than that of FreeFire and PUBG leagues, the advantages derived from broadcasting rights and sponsorships inundate both teams and players. MPL's adeptness in managing the Mobile Legends league in Indonesia, including MDL, which serves as a stepping stone for prospective pro players prior to MPL entry, bespeaks its professionalism. Thus, it begs the question: Why did the Secretary-General of PBESI appear to cast blame upon MPL, when their joint collaboration could have been sought to devise solutions? It seemed as though the Secretary-General of PBESI was seeking a scapegoat due to his failure to achieve the objective of securing two gold medals in the Mobile Legends division.

Recently, the Secretary-General of PBESI has staunchly asserted that MPL Indonesia has violated regulations. As in Kribo (2023), Secretary-General of PBESI expounded that, in accordance with Law No.11/2022, all sports leagues in Indonesia must be conducted with the consent of their respective sports associations, including e-sports. He further articulated that sports leagues must adhere to an open system, incorporating relegation and promotion mechanisms. Allegations of violation appear perplexing in light of MPL Indonesia's continuous operation for 11 seasons, or approximately 5.5 years, since 2018. This has elicited considerable reactions from observers and Mobile Legends e-sports enthusiasts, including Lius Andre, formerly the Manager of Moonton Indonesia E-Sports, who implored Frengky Ong, the Secretary-General of PBESI, to engage in dialogue and temper the ongoing controversy. Earlier, Bung KB, a Professional Analyst and Shoutcaster for MPL Indonesia, dissected and analyzed PBESI Regulation No: 034/PB-ESI/B/VI/2021 on his YouTube channel, concluding that MPL had not transgressed any of its provisions. This analysis was met with a sardonic retort from Frengky Ong: "So, according to the MPL expert, there were no violations of the regulations" (Kribo, 2023).

E-Sports, exemplified by Mobile Legends: Bangbang, is characterized as a sport that leverages electronic media and equipment across all facets of its activities, encompassing PCs, laptops, and mobile devices. Additionally, e-sports harness video content and internet network utilities extensively in their proceedings, functioning as the epicenter for organizing both standard and competitive matches (Khudzaifah et al., 2023). More specifically, Mobile Legends: Bangbang represents a MOBA game wherein players control diverse heroes, each endowed with unique traits and abilities, across various game modes. This facet renders Mobile Legends: Bangbang, or ML, as its abbreviation, a preferred gaming choice in Indonesia. The advancement of e-sports, including ML, has been meteoric, encompassing the international sphere, albeit accompanied by a slew of challenges, as elucidated earlier (Amran et al., 2020).

The exchanges characterized by sarcasm and regulatory violation claims have galvanized this study. The aspiration is that the ensuing research findings will engender a more comprehensive understanding, particularly for researchers with cognate interests and the Mobile Legends e-sports community in Indonesia. The imbroglio between PBESI and MPL Indonesia is contemplated through the lens of social media communication dynamics, given that the exchange of sarcastic remarks predominantly unfolded on Instagram and Twitter. It is noteworthy that such exchanges are not unique and have been a recurring phenomenon, with many prior instances culminating in legal proceedings. The phenomenon of sarcastic exchanges has seemingly been normalized on social media platforms, which should ideally serve as conduits for fostering camaraderie, facilitating mutual confirmation, and refraining from derogatory exchanges (Fajar, 2022). This resonates with the assertion of Sari et al. (2019) that the relationship between



communication and social media is profoundly intertwined, as the advent of social media has accelerated and facilitated communication processes.

According to Azizah (2018), social media has emerged as a crucial communication channel for establishing connections between businesses and the general public. This viewpoint underscores the essential role of social media as an irreplaceable tool for firms in forging and preserving robust relationships with the wider community. Social media provides a platform for direct interactions, facilitating bidirectional communication that allows for effective information exchange, responses, and feedback. Thus, social media not only serves as a means for companies to convey their messages but also offers an avenue to listen to the public's needs, concerns, and expectations. Consequently, judicious and strategic utilization of social media stands as a pivotal element in successful corporate communication strategies in the contemporary digital landscape.

The viewpoint put forth by Solihin (2021) underscores that each crisis that emerges is accompanied by its distinct and unique characteristics. This highlights the importance of recognizing that each crisis situation possesses its own dynamics, which influence its progression and the required responses. Confronting various types of crises, be it natural disasters, pandemics, or economic crises, necessitates an approach tailored to the specific attributes of the crisis at hand. Awareness of the differing characteristics in each crisis is key to designing effective mitigation strategies and appropriate responses. This also signifies that successful crisis management must be flexible and adaptable, given that each crisis presents unique aspects that demand special attention.

As stated by Akhyar & Pratiwi (2019), the telecommunications industry is identified as particularly susceptible to crises, especially given the increasing reliance on its products, such as smartphones and the internet, which have become essential to nearly every individual. This observation sheds light on the critical role of the telecommunications sector in today's interconnected world and highlights the inherent vulnerabilities associated with it. In an age where effective communication and digital connectivity are integral to both personal and business spheres, any disruption or crisis within the telecommunications industry can have far-reaching consequences. Whether it be technical failures, cyberattacks, or market instabilities, these potential crises necessitate meticulous planning and robust risk management strategies to ensure the continued availability and reliability of these vital services. Akhyar's assertion underscores the need for proactive measures and preparedness within the telecommunications sector to mitigate risks and maintain uninterrupted access to these fundamental tools in our daily lives.

The integration of the adaptability concept into crisis management, coupled with a framework for assessing the impact of social media, holds the promise of significant innovation and novelty within the realm of business studies. This research endeavor stands to contribute substantially to the understanding and utilization of social media in the context of corporate operations. The development of concrete action guidelines for mitigating risks and ensuring the maintenance of reliable services, as facilitated by this research, is poised to have a positive and far-reaching impact on the preservation of uninterrupted connectivity within the contemporary digital era.

In light of the aforementioned context, the primary objective of this research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the discord between PBESI (*Pengurus Besar Esports Indonesia*) and MPL (Mobile Legends: Bang Bang Professional League) Indonesia, utilizing the lens of crisis communication. It explores how crisis communication dynamics influenced the conflict's escalation or resolution and emphasizes the importance of managing conflicts within a suitable framework to avoid one-sided contentious discourse on social media platforms. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of conflict resolution in the esports industry through the lens of crisis communication.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) method. Rozali (2022) explicates that content analysis pertains to language and communication, specifically concerning



the content of communication. Research using this method presents an alternative approach for examining the elements and values of communication, typically centering on content containing audio, video, or text that represents communication. Therefore, this research methodology is well-suited for analyzing the intrinsic elements and values present within a dramatic script. The data source under focus in this study consists of secondary data, drawn from a variety of scholarly sources and information repositories that meet scholarly criteria while adhering to credibility and reliability aspects.

Data collection involves two distinct approaches: symbolic and semantic. Symbolic collection does not leave room for researchers to perform a total analysis of various references, necessitating the reduction and categorization of information based on the research's needs and relevance. Semantic collection, on the other hand, involves a detailed gathering process, demanding a higher level of focus through several stages such as direct and indirect quoting, synopsising, precision, and categorization.

The method's orientation inherently shares commonalities with general research methods, wherein objectivity and systematicity constitute two essential principles to be achieved. Objectivity, in this context, relates to the specific interpretation of analysis categories, aimed at facilitating the researcher in determining data and information reliability. Systematicity, on the other hand, refers to ensuring that there is no injustice in the formulation of research results (Utomo et al., 2022). The stages in QCA include (1) determining research objectives and focus, (2) generalizing analysis categories, (3) specific data source selection within content, (4) reliability testing, and (5) qualitative analysis based on the chosen themes.

Utomo et al. (2022) also highlight that these stages are procedural in nature, aimed at obtaining fundamental findings from the studied object. Researchers should pay attention to several aspects during the analysis. Firstly, it is imperative to ensure the accessibility of content or data before analysis. Secondly, procedures or stages should be integrated in an actual and organized collective manner. Thirdly, researchers should take into account the gradual emergence of meanings related to the interpretation of the study object through understanding and interpreting the achieved findings, ensuring they remain correlated with the predetermined research objectives.

Regarding the data sources, they are drawn from credible media outlets and media partners of MPL Indonesia. One such credible media source is *kompas.com*, renowned for its credibility and popularity. Media partners of MPL, such as *hitekno.com*, *ggwp.id*, and *revivalTV.id*, are also included. It is worth noting that some may argue that Qualitative Content Analysis is less focused due to the multitude of sources. However, this is not a concern, as the content discussed from each source is identical. Thus, it aligns with the definition of Qualitative Content Analysis, not Qualitative Source Analysis.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The first controversy surrounding the Mobile Legends phenomenon in Indonesia revolves around the statement made by the Secretary-General of PBESI, Frengky Ong, through his Instagram story following the failure of the Mobile Legends Men's national team to advance to the SEA Games semi-finals. In his statement, he questioned the players' commitment to defending the national flag, suggesting that they may not consider it important. He also criticized the MPL Indonesia league, labeling it as too exclusive and closed-off to produce competitive athletes. Despite this, when considering performance, Indonesian teams, including the national team, still lag behind the dominance of the Philippines in the international Mobile Legends scene. Notably, only EVOS Legends (Champions of M1 World Championship and IESF World Championship 2022), RRQ (Champions of Mobile Legends Singapore Tourney), and ONIC Esports (Champions of MSC 2021) have achieved international titles, with the rest being dominated by Filipino teams and national teams. Frengky Ong argues that this issue needs to be addressed through an open league system managed by PBESI to create "fighters" rather than "idols" (*hitekno.com*, 2023).



However, the statements made by the Secretary-General of PBESI are incongruent with the goal of supporting game developers in Indonesia. Saputro & Rani, (2022) emphasize that the government, in this case PBESI, must provide full support for the organization of esports competitions in Indonesia. This focus aligns with the commitment of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy to optimize the potential of esports in Indonesia through various methods, incentive schemes, competitions, and esports festivals. Regarding the claim of an "idol league," the researcher will attempt to analyze it directly based on the regulations stipulated in PBESI Regulation No: 034/PB-ESI/B/VI/2021 Regarding the Implementation of Esports Activities in Indonesia, particularly in Chapter VIII regarding Leagues and Tournaments. First, in Article 13, paragraph (6), subsection a, which addresses "Professional Indonesian Athletes participating in professional esports teams shall comprise a minimum of 60% (sixty percent) of each esports team." As a franchise-based league, MPL Indonesia already adheres to this regulation, ensuring a minimum of 60% Indonesian players in professional esports teams.

Teams competing in MPL Indonesia predominantly feature Indonesian players, with only a few utilizing foreign players, which is in accordance with Article 13, paragraph (6), subsection a, stipulating the minimum requirement of Indonesian athletes in esports teams. Furthermore, Article 14, paragraph (1), subsection b, sub-point 5, states "to respond to the call to participate in the development process of the National Training conducted by PBESI." This rule has been diligently followed by MPL Indonesia and esports teams participating in it. MPL Indonesia's dedication is evidenced by the expedited MPL Season 11, reduced from the usual three months to only six weeks or one and a half months. This adjustment was made to allow players to focus on the National Training (Pelatnas) conducted by PBESI in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Moreover, the commitment of MPL teams to release their players to participate in Pelatnas for the benefit of the Mobile Legends National Team is noteworthy. Teams like ONIC Esports and EVOS Legends, after the SEA Games, immediately returned to compete in the MSC event while representing Indonesia.

Thus, the claim of an "idol league" lacking commitment to the country seems unfounded. The focus should instead be on evaluating whether the Article 14, paragraph (1), subsection b, sub-point 5, stating "to respond to the call to participate in the development process of the National Training conducted by PBESI" has been effective in contributing to the country's achievements. It is evident that the National Selection and Pelatnas program has been utilized three times since the SEA Games 2019-2023, with all instances resulting in second-place finishes as the highest achievement. This is significantly different from the open-selection model adopted by the Philippine National Team, where a complete team represents them at the SEA Games, resulting in better chemistry and gameplay without the need for adaptation (Wahyuni, 2023). Former Pro Player of EVOS Legends, Jonathan "Emperor" Liandi, expressed a similar sentiment through his Twitter post. His post garnered support from various quarters, with 590 retweets and 3,800 likes. Essentially, it appears that PBESI, particularly Secretary-General Frengky Ong, is attempting to assign blame for the failure at the 2023 SEA Games in Cambodia (Rachmanta, 2023).

To this end, the claim of an "idol league," which allegedly only produces idols and not national champions, lacks a strong foundation. It is essential to assess whether the development process and Pelatnas have contributed to the country's achievements. The evidence indicates that the current system is not yielding the desired results. The open-selection model adopted by the Philippine National Team has proven to be more successful, ensuring a complete and well-adapted team for international competitions. Hence, it can be argued that the claim of an "idol league" is subjective and unwarranted, particularly when made by the Secretary-General of PBESI.

Then, the analysis focuses on the claim that the league does not comply with regulations, specifically, Chapter VIII, Article 13, paragraphs (5) point a, (6) points b and c. Firstly, in Article 13, paragraph (5) point a, it is stated that "Each League has recognized levels and classifications by PBESI, consisting of: a. Exclusive Esports Leagues..." and MPL Indonesia has established itself as an exclusive franchise-based league, meeting the criteria outlined in this point. In many of the PBESI Secretary General's Instagram stories, he advocates open competition, which is not

regulated in PBESI Regulation No: 034/PB-ESI/B/VI/2021 Regarding the Implementation of Esports Activities in Indonesia. If such rules exist, Moonton, the developer of Mobile Legends, has already organized them through the MDL, which serves as a stepping stone for the development of professional Mobile Legends players before participating in MPL Indonesia or gaining the attention of foreign MPL teams.

Furthermore, regarding paragraph (6) point b, which reads "the total participants for Exclusive Esports Leagues shall be a minimum of 8 (eight) and a maximum of 18 (eighteen) Indonesian Professional Esports Teams or Professional Athletes representing Indonesian Professional Esports Teams." As a franchise league, MPL Indonesia has already met the minimum quota of 8 (eight) Esports Teams, indicating that MPL Indonesia's exclusivity aligns with what is stipulated in PBESI Regulation No: 034/PB-ESI/B/VI/2021 Regarding the Implementation of Esports Activities in Indonesia. If one wishes to exceed the minimum quota, it can certainly be achieved by meeting the requirements set by MPL Indonesia. This is because the Franchise league is a system in which teams are required to "buy" a slot or invest to participate in the competition (Prasetya & Wijaya, 2021). Lius Andre, the former Manager of Moonton Indonesia, explained that exclusive leagues inherently have high slot prices and may appear to hinder the entry of new teams (monopoly). To join such leagues, teams must not only invest money but also adhere to strict rules. This is done to create and maximize the business potential of esports teams across various aspects, ensure the welfare of players, and maintain the long-term continuity of competitions (RevivalTV, 2023). Therefore, MPL Indonesia clearly does not violate PBESI Regulation No: 034/PB-ESI/B/VI/2021 Regarding the Implementation of Esports Activities in Indonesia, Article 13, paragraph (6) point b.

Regarding Article 13, paragraph (6) point c, which states "the Game being contested is recognized by PBESI as an Esport," this requirement has also been fulfilled by MPL Indonesia, as PBESI lists the game publisher Moonton's logo as the developer of Mobile Legends on their official website. A simple analogy to consider is why this alleged violation is only now being raised by PBESI after 5.5 years and following the failure at the SEA Games 2023 Cambodia? In terms of licensing issues, PBESI itself grants permission and formulates regulations. Regulations regarding esports competitions have also been outlined in Minister of Sports Regulation No. 11/2016 on the General Classification of General Electronic Interactive Games, which laid the groundwork for the Piala Presiden Esports and various other esports competitions, including MPL Indonesia (Rachman et al., 2020).

The analysis conducted so far clearly indicates that MPL Indonesia has not violated PBESI Regulation No: 034/PB-ESI/B/VI/2021 Regarding the Implementation of Esports Activities in Indonesia. Therefore, the claims made by the Secretary-General of PBESI regarding the "idol league" and regulation violations are unfounded. This has also been affirmed by PBESI itself in Article 39, paragraphs (3), (4), and (5). Claims of violations made by the Secretary-General of PBESI, according to Wahyuni (2023), represent one of the challenges facing the esports industry in Indonesia. Furthermore, Wahyuni (2023) adds that these issues should not be allowed to linger and must be resolved through consensus-driven discussions. Some reasons that need attention, according to him, include the vast Indonesian esports market, the substantial potential of Indonesian pro players, Indonesia's dominance alongside the Philippines in the international Mobile Legends scene, the numerous Mobile Legends competitions held, the need to minimize negative impacts on esports, especially Mobile Legends, and its recognition as one of the branches of esports featured in local, regional, and international competitions.

The earlier analysis reveals a communication crisis that should be resolved through crisis communication. In this context, a crisis is defined as something that poses a threat to an organization, corporation, or industry, as well as to anyone who is its public, whatever its product, and the services they provide (Heath & O'Hair, 2020). In the claims of violation attributed by PBESI to MPL Indonesia, there are three aspects that were perhaps not considered when making sarcastic remarks on social media. Firstly, the Secretary-General of PBESI did not use social media as a "conveyor" of messages but rather as a baseless critic. This has led to widespread disappointment. Secondly, there is inconsistency in communication; in addition to accusing violations, the



Secretary-General of PBESI also introduced another issue, namely that MPL is merely an idol league. Thirdly, although the criticisms were made publicly, they were not directed to the parties allegedly violating the regulations.

The intensifying tension between PBESI and MPL Indonesia must be resolved through effective communication. In this context, effective communication involves both open and closed dialogues to rectify and resolve existing issues. There are many concerns at stake, including the uncertain fate of MPL Indonesia, where many pro players depend on this competition for their livelihoods, sponsorship issues, and the proliferation of sarcastic memes featuring the Secretary-General of PBESI (Yani, 2020). Therefore, the best solution is hoped for in the future to preserve the image of PBESI as the home of Esports in Indonesia and MPL Indonesia as the esports competition with the largest valuation and the greatest contribution to the current esports euphoria in Indonesia.

## Discussion

Crisis identification is a multi-faceted process that involves a deep analysis of the ongoing conflict between PBESI and MPL Indonesia. It is crucial to delve into the intricacies of the crisis, understanding its nature, root causes, and the underlying factors that have led to this situation. This comprehensive understanding allows both parties to grasp the full scope of the issues at hand. A thorough crisis analysis empowers them with insights into the historical context, previous interactions, and external factors that have contributed to the conflict. This foundational knowledge is essential for shaping a strategic and well-informed response to the crisis.

The concept of a prompt response in crisis communication is not merely about reacting quickly but doing so with careful consideration. In the context of PBESI and MPL Indonesia, it means acting swiftly but also thoughtfully, without haste. Such a response demonstrates that both parties are taking the situation seriously and are committed to resolving it. It also conveys a sense of responsibility and professionalism in managing the crisis. A well-executed prompt response can not only prevent the crisis from worsening but can also serve as a model of effective crisis management to the public and stakeholders.

Effective message management in a crisis involves not only the content of the message but also the tone, timing, and channels through which it is conveyed. Both PBESI and MPL Indonesia should meticulously craft messages that are not only clear, accurate, and consistent but also empathetic and reassuring. The choice of language and the framing of the message are critical in shaping public perception. Moreover, messages should be disseminated through appropriate channels, including social media, press releases, and official statements, ensuring that the public receives information from reliable sources. This attention to message management is fundamental in shaping the narrative surrounding the crisis.

Coombs (2020) suggests that crisis communication, as defined, involves the collection, processing, and dissemination of information necessary to address a crisis situation. In the pre-crisis phase, it includes gathering information about potential crisis risks, making decisions on how to manage the potential emergence of a crisis, and training individuals who will be involved in the crisis management process. Crisis communication is a balancing act between open and closed dialogues. Open dialogues are essential for public transparency and accountability. In the case of PBESI and MPL Indonesia, this might include town hall meetings, public announcements, and social media interactions that provide insights into their efforts to resolve the crisis. However, some discussions are best conducted behind closed doors. Negotiations, problem-solving sessions, and deliberations are examples of closed dialogues where confidentiality and privacy are crucial. A strategic blend of open and closed dialogues ensures that the right information is shared with the right audiences at the right time.

The impact of a crisis on an organization's reputation and image cannot be overstated. In the case of PBESI and MPL Indonesia, any damage to their reputations needs to be carefully assessed and addressed. Reputation management is not a one-time fix but an ongoing process. It involves taking concrete actions to remedy the crisis's effects and communicating these actions to





stakeholders. Additionally, building trust and credibility is vital for the long-term recovery of an organization's image. To do this, both parties should demonstrate their commitment to addressing the crisis's root causes and preventing future recurrences.

Achieving resolution in a crisis entails more than just a ceasefire. In the context of PBESI and MPL Indonesia, resolution involves addressing the underlying issues that led to the conflict and finding mutually agreeable solutions. This could mean revisiting policies, implementing changes, or introducing new practices to prevent a similar crisis from happening again. Resolution should be seen as an opportunity for growth and improvement, not just a means to end a dispute. Collaboration between the parties is essential to reach a resolution that is fair, sustainable, and beneficial for all involved.

Preventing further escalation is a delicate process that requires a proactive approach. Both PBESI and MPL Indonesia must exercise restraint and careful judgment in their actions and communications. They should refrain from taking steps that could further aggravate the situation or harm their relationships. Avoiding escalation is not a passive stance but an active effort to de-escalate tensions and create an environment conducive to resolving the crisis peacefully.

After the crisis has subsided, a thorough evaluation is essential for learning from the experience. Both PBESI and MPL Indonesia should engage in a reflective process that includes examining the crisis response, communication strategies, and the overall management of the situation. This evaluation goes beyond identifying areas for improvement; it should also serve as a foundation for instituting measures to prevent similar crises in the future. It's an opportunity to refine crisis management protocols and build resilience for future challenges

This strategy goes beyond reacting to immediate issues; it emphasizes open, honest, and empathetic communication to rebuild trust and restore their public image. By demonstrating professionalism and accountability, both organizations can not only mitigate current damage but also strengthen their reputations for handling crises responsibly. Furthermore, this approach is essential for the sustainability of the esports industry in Indonesia. It sets an example of constructive conflict resolution, attracting talent, sponsors, and fans who value stability and professionalism. This approach empowers PBESI and MPL Indonesia to analyze the root causes of the conflict, adapt to industry changes, and grow within the esports landscape. In summary, comprehensive crisis communication enables both entities to overcome current challenges and work towards a brighter future for Indonesian esports, benefitting all involved in the dynamic world of esports.

## **CONCLUSION**

The claims of regulation violations made against MPL Indonesia are unfounded and should be reconsidered and resolved through a crisis communication perspective. This conclusion is based on the compliance analysis referring to PBESI Regulation No: 034/PB-ESI/B/VI/2021 Regarding the Implementation of Esports Activities in Indonesia, specifically Chapter VIII concerning Leagues and Tournaments. Firstly, in Article 13, paragraph (6) point a, b, c, Article 14, paragraph (1) point b sub-point 5, and Article 39, paragraphs (3), (4), and (5). In other words, as an exclusive league, MPL Indonesia has fulfilled its obligations fully by upholding the applicable laws and regulations. The claims of violations directed at it are considered illogical, especially since they were only brought up after MPL had been running for 11 Seasons (5.5 years) and following the failure of the Mobile Legends Men's National Team to secure a medal at the 2023 Cambodia SEA Games.

Based on this conclusion, the researcher suggests that anyone wishing to criticize should clearly demonstrate the alleged wrongdoing by providing empirical evidence. Additionally, the delivery of claims of violation is expected to be made through official channels and resolved through dialogue to prevent the escalation of tensions within specific communities. Therefore, the researcher hopes that MPL Indonesia, as an exclusive league, will continue to maintain its existence by upholding the relevant laws and regulations, and that PBESI can collaborate positively and actively to realize a high-achieving esports industry in Indonesia.



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