

Journalists' Perceptions in Interpreting Press Conferences Held By Police Public Relations

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Abstract:

A press conference is one of the primary responsibilities of a public relations (PR) officer in an organization or institution, with the main objective of building a positive image through formal meetings with journalists to disseminate information. Press conferences are also conducted by the Public Relations Division of the West Java Regional Police (Polda Jabar) to foster public trust and establish the police as friends and protectors of society. This study aims to explore the experiences, motives, and interpretations of journalists from the West Java Regional Police press corps regarding press conference activities. The research employs a qualitative method with Alfred Schutz's phenomenological approach, using primary data obtained through interviews with journalists from the West Java Regional Police press corps. The informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The findings indicate that motives are divided into two categories: past motives ("Because of motive") and future motives ("In order to motive"). The past motives refer to the reasons why journalists attend press conferences, which include gaining viewership, maintaining media presence, obtaining information about criminal cases, and ensuring media sustainability. The future motives relate to the objectives journalists aim to achieve through press conferences, such as assisting in building a positive image of the West Java Regional Police as a friendly and protective institution, combating negative news and hoaxes, and expanding their journalistic knowledge. Furthermore, journalists' interpretations of press conferences are shaped by their experiences within the West Java Regional Police press corps, influencing their perceptions of the press conferences held by the Public Relations Division of Polda Jabar

Keywords: Press Conference, West Java Regional Police Journalists, West Java Regional Police Public Relation

Introduction:

Journalists and public relations (PR) professionals are two professions that share similar responsibilities, namely managing information for the public and working collaboratively. Journalists play various roles in society, one of which is being an informer, acting as the eyes and ears of the public by reporting events that are beyond public knowledge in a neutral and unbiased manner (Rani, 2013).

Establishing communication and fostering good relationships with the press community, including journalists, is crucial, as they serve as key partners for government institutions and organizations. The West Java Regional Police (Polda Jabar) Public Relations Division recognizes the importance of this relationship. By maintaining good relations with the press through the West Java Regional Police Press Corps (Media Pokja Polda Jawa Barat), the Public Relations Division gains support in disseminating news and securing positive media coverage of police activities and programs.

As the institution responsible for maintaining security and public order in the West Java province, Polda Jabar plays a crucial role in law enforcement. The Public Relations Division acts as a bridge between the institution and the public, employing various methods to ensure security, order, and legal enforcement, one of which is media relations strategies. One of the most frequently conducted media relations activities is press conferences. These press conferences or media briefings are typically held for one to two hours each month. Despite their relatively short duration, they have a significant positive impact, as the information presented during these conferences is later disseminated by mass media. Therefore, organizing a press conference requires thorough and detailed preparation.

The first press conference held by Polda Jabar's Public Relations Division took place in 1951. One of the major cases addressed in a press conference was a corruption case successfully handled by the Criminal Investigation Directorate of Polda Jabar in 2004. At that time, the initiative to hold the press conference came from the PR staff of Polda Jabar. The primary objective of conducting the press conference was to ensure that the information circulating in the public domain was accurate and to enhance public trust in law enforcement.

During press conferences organized by the Public

Information Subdivision (Subbid Penmas) of Polda Jabar, journalists from the West Java Regional Police Press Corps are always invited to cover the event. Journalists attending these press conferences hold diverse perspectives, not only do they seek, process, and help disseminate news, but they also gain strategic benefits for their respective media outlets. Their participation in press conferences contributes to the visibility and expansion of their media presence, which in turn shapes their perceptions of the significance of these events. Press conferences play a critical role in strengthening both journalistic credibility and the relationship between law enforcement and the media.

Journalists from the West Java Regional Police Press Corps (Media Pokja Polda Jawa Barat) partner with the Public Relations Division of Polda Jabar in publishing news related to all activities at Polda Jabar. The West Java Regional Police Press Corps was established to prevent the spread of hoax news related to the police. Additionally, it aims to assist the Public Relations Division of Polda Jabar in publicizing every activity carried out by Polda Jabar and its units.

The West Java Regional Police Press Corps is a joint organization consisting of dozens of representatives from both print and online media outlets. The purpose of forming the West Java Regional Police Press Corps is to strengthen the professional relationships among journalists and media professionals covering Polda Jabar through its public relations division.

Perception is a general or global view of an object, observed from several aspects that can be understood by an individual. It is an assumption based on experience or knowledge, which sometimes differs from person to person or may even be different from actual conditions.

Meaning refers to the definition of a word. It can also be understood as the intent contained within a word, whether in the form of a sentence or a paragraph. The relationship between perception and meaning lies in perception as a process of understanding or assigning meaning to information derived from stimuli. Stimuli are obtained as responses to objects, events, or relationships.

According to preliminary research and pre-observation findings based on the researcher's interviews, there are over 100 media outlets involved in the West Java Regional Police Press Corps. For this study, the researcher selected

several media outlets to complement the research, including Kimcipedes.com, Mataperistiwa.id, and Warpolnews.com. These media outlets are actively involved in publishing news and are prioritized by the Public Relations Division of Polda Jabar.

Whenever an event is shared in the West Java Regional Police Press Corps group, it becomes published information appearing across multiple media outlets, both online and in print. Since the National Police (Polri) interacts with nearly all aspects of individual, group, and community life, particularly when handling various issues and conflicts, the police institution is constantly under public scrutiny, criticism, complaints, and sometimes praise.

For this reason, the police must position themselves as the primary source of information for media professionals and mass media.

This study employs a qualitative research method using phenomenology as its approach. "Phenomenology is the process of linking scientific knowledge with everyday experiences and activities, from which that knowledge originates. In other words, social actions are based on experience, meaning, and awareness." (Schutz in Kuswarno, 2013:18).

The researcher uses phenomenology because this study relates to a phenomenological approach that attempts to explain or reveal the meaning of concepts or phenomena from the perceptions of journalists in interpreting press conferences conducted by the Public Relations Division of Polda Jabar.

This study aims to explore and analyze the phenomenon surrounding journalists' perceptions of press conferences held by the Public Relations Division of Polda Jabar.

The Phenomenology Theory of Alfred Schutz is used as the theoretical foundation for this research. According to Schutz, humans construct meaning beyond the mainstream flow of experience through a process of "typification." In Schutz's view, humans are social beings, and awareness of everyday life is a form of social awareness. The individual world is an intersubjective world, meaning that each person holds different interpretations and feelings as part of a group.

Humans are required to understand one another and act within the same reality. Therefore, there is reciprocal acceptance, mutual understanding based on shared experiences, and typifications of the

collective world (Kuswarno, 2013:18).

It can be concluded that companies and institutions heavily depend on the media as a publicity tool to convey various information and activities to the public to build a positive image. Companies and institutions need media as an effective tool to communicate ideas, strategies, activities, and programs they have implemented. The phenomenon of media relations, particularly press conferences, serves as a public relations strategy that facilitates the Public Relations Division's function of establishing relationships with both the media and the public. This creates a unique meaning for the Public Relations Division staff at Polda Jabar, as it helps build a positive reputation for the West Java Regional Police.

Based on the research background described above, the researcher aims to conduct an in-depth analysis on "Journalists' Perceptions in Interpreting Press Conferences Held by Police Public Relations" using a phenomenological approach.

Research Methodology:

The Qualitative Research Paradigm

The qualitative research paradigm is a research approach that positions humans as the subjects of study. This paradigm follows a humanistic model, as it considers humans as the primary subjects in the phenomena or events being examined. The qualitative paradigm holds the belief that humans determine their own behavior and the social events that occur. The humanistic model paradigm is a part of qualitative research methods.

Qualitative research methods are used to study objects in a natural setting (as opposed to experimental research). In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the key instrument, data collection is conducted through triangulation (a combination of multiple techniques), data analysis follows an inductive approach, and research findings emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2018:9).

Qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perception, motivation, and actions, in a holistic manner. This is achieved through descriptive analysis using words and language, within a specific natural context, utilizing various naturalistic methods.

Qualitative research methods generate findings not derived from numerical calculations or statistical

analysis but rather from processing data based on understanding and interpreting meanings provided by informants. The purpose of qualitative research is to explain a reality or understanding of experienced phenomena. In qualitative research, studies are conducted in a natural manner, aligning with existing conditions. Data is collected regarding a phenomenon and explained descriptively in words.

This study employs a qualitative research method with a phenomenological study approach to interpret the phenomenon of press conferences held by the Public Relations Division of Polda Jabar as a means of building public trust. The study presents a holistic analysis using descriptive language without relying on numerical data.

Results

A press conference is a form of relationship built and developed with the media to reach the public in order to enhance image, trust, and public loyalty. As an institution closely related to society, the police rely on media to publicize various activities carried out by the West Java Regional Police (Polda Jabar). Therefore, the police and media are mutually dependent—the police serve as an important source of information for the media, while the media require the police as a news source.

Gaining media access, building public trust, and establishing good relationships with the media are key functions of public relations (PR). The Public Relations Division of Polda Jabar holds press conferences as part of its strategy to maintain the credibility of police institutions, earn public trust, and combat the spread of hoax information.

The press conferences discussed in this research represent a phenomenon occurring within Polda Jabar. This phenomenon is evident in the strong relationship between journalists from the Polda Jabar Press Corps (Pokja Polda Jabar) and PR staff at Polda Jabar. The positive image of the police is reinforced through media coverage of police activities, which helps maintain public trust and draws attention to the police force's activities.

During press conferences, the PR staff of Polda Jabar have clear motives that serve as the purpose and rationale behind organizing these events. Press conferences play a crucial role for PR staff and journalists, as they are an inseparable necessity in shaping positive public opinion. The media is an essential tool for PR functions, and press

conferences act as a PR strategy to ensure that police activities are effectively publicized. By using media relations, particularly press conferences, information can reach the public quickly and accurately.

As a public service institution, the Indonesian National Police (Polri) has faced ups and downs in building a positive image in its interactions with the public. Certain high-profile cases have tested the credibility and professionalism of Polri, particularly when they involve police officers in criminal activities. For instance, the murder of Brigadier Nopryansah Yosua Hutabarat (referred to as Brigadier Yosua in this study) and the drug trafficking case involving Teddy Minahasa significantly impacted Polri's reputation.

1. The primary objectives of press conferences, as stated in Republik Indonesia (2018), are as follows:
2. To disseminate positive information to the public.
3. To neutralize or refute false or negative news about an institution or its management.
4. To allow spokespersons to answer questions directly and comprehensively, rather than repeatedly responding via phone calls.
5. To restore and enhance the institution's image by attracting media attention and turning press conferences into newsworthy content.

According to Alfred Schutz (in Kuswarno, 2013:72), the role of phenomenology is to bridge scientific knowledge with everyday experiences, analyzing the activities from which those experiences and knowledge originate. In other words, social actions are based on experience, meaning, and awareness.

Schutz argues that understanding new phenomena can only be achieved if individuals directly experience those phenomena and actively interpret their experiences. He emphasizes that human essence lies in subjective experience, particularly when individuals take action and adopt attitudes toward daily life events.

The findings of this study indicate that the informants are individuals who have directly participated in and experienced press conference activities. These informants engage in communication and interaction with the media, leading to the formation of awareness and personal experiences.

Furthermore, the study identifies the underlying motives behind the organization of press conferences, explaining why these events continue to be held today. Through this research, the researcher analyzes two key aspects to draw comparisons regarding the role and significance of press conferences in the PR strategy of Polda Jabar.

Motives Behind Press Conferences: A Phenomenological Analysis

The following motives were identified by the researcher based on interviews with five informants who were directly involved in the implementation of press conferences:

1. Seeking information from the police regarding criminal offenses.
2. Obtaining information earlier and faster.
3. Gaining viewers to compete with major media outlets.
4. Ensuring the existence and expansion of local media.
5. Helping to promote positive news about Polda Jabar related to criminal offenses and leadership activities.
6. Contributing to building a positive image of Polda Jabar police to establish them as friends and protectors of society.
7. Combating negative news and hoaxes about the police.
8. Expanding journalistic knowledge and expertise.

According to Schutz (in Kuswarno, 2013:111), human actions can be understood through two types of motives:

1. Because-of motive (past-oriented motive) – Refers to past experiences or knowledge that serve as motivation for current actions.
2. In-order-to motive (future-oriented motive) – Refers to goals oriented toward achieving something in the future.

The motives behind the press conferences conducted by the PR staff and journalists of Polda Jabar are influenced by both of these categories, as defined by Alfred Schutz. The researcher classified the motives identified in interviews into these two categories.

Because-of Motive (Past-Oriented Motive)

This type of motive refers to past knowledge and experiences that serve as the basis for current actions. The past-oriented motives behind the organization of press conferences by the PR staff and journalists at Polda Jabar include:

1. Seeking information from the police regarding criminal offenses.
2. Obtaining information earlier and faster.
3. Gaining viewers to compete with major media outlets.
4. Ensuring the existence and expansion of local media.

In-Order-To Motive (Future-Oriented Motive)

This type of motive is goal-oriented, aiming to achieve specific objectives in the future. The PR staff and journalists of Polda Jabar conduct press conferences with the following future-oriented motives:

1. Helping to promote positive news about Polda Jabar regarding criminal offenses and leadership activities.
2. Contributing to building a positive image of Polda Jabar police to establish them as friends and protectors of society.
3. Combating negative news and hoaxes about the police.
4. Expanding journalistic knowledge and expertise.

The Role of Phenomenology in Understanding Human Behavior

Phenomenological studies aim to explain human behavior as experienced in consciousness. This research method seeks to explore individual experiences of a phenomenon through in-depth analysis of the subject's daily life.

Schutz emphasizes that human essence lies in subjective experiences, particularly in decision-making and responses to everyday life. Phenomenology connects scientific knowledge with daily experiences, analyzing the activities from which knowledge and experiences originate. In other words, social actions are based on experience, meaning, and awareness (Schutz in Kuswarno, 2013:18).

By applying Schutz's phenomenological theory, this study identifies that the motives behind press

conferences can be categorized as past-oriented motives (because-of motives), which are the underlying reasons that drive PR staff and journalists to hold press conferences, and future-oriented motives (in-order-to motives), which are the desired outcomes or goals of conducting press conferences.

This classification highlights that press conferences are not just routine media events but are deeply rooted in journalistic and institutional needs—from gathering information and enhancing media presence to building public trust in law enforcement.

Experiences and Meanings of Press Conferences: A Phenomenological Perspective

The researcher conducted interviews with informants who were directly involved in the coverage of press conferences. The informants shared their experiences during press conference coverage, their reasons for attending, and the meaning press conferences hold for them. The interviews revealed that while each informant expressed different perspectives, their responses shared similar core ideas and objectives.

Inter-subjective Meaning in Press Conferences

Motives give rise to inter-subjective meaning, a concept that fosters human relationships and constructs objectivity in reality and human life. This applies to the Public Relations (PR) staff of Polda Jawa Barat and journalists covering press conferences.

For Polda Jabar's PR staff, press conferences serve as a strategy to restore public trust, re-establish the police as friends and protectors of society, and counter negative news that tarnishes the police's reputation due to misconduct by certain officers, such as the Teddy Minahasa and Ferdy Sambo cases. With the assistance of internal Polda Jabar journalists, the PR team ensures continuous publication of police-related news, including criminal cases and leadership activities.

On the other hand, Polda Jabar journalists participate in press conferences to gain early and rapid access to information and to attract more viewers to local media platforms, increasing recognition and credibility among the public. This mutual relationship benefits both sides—if journalists continue to publish positive news about Polda Jabar, the public will become more aware of the police force's positive activities, improving police credibility. Simultaneously, local media

outlets gain more viewers, enhancing their existence and expansion in competition with major media outlets.

Based on interviews with five informants, the researcher concluded that press conferences are conducted to convey official information or statements on various matters, including:

- Case disclosures
- Criminal offenses
- Destruction of evidence
- Leadership activities of the West Java

Regional Police Chief

Press conference coverage at Polda Jawa Barat ensures that journalists receive factual and direct information from official sources. The PR staff of Polda Jabar plays a crucial role in facilitating and delivering the best service to journalists covering press conferences.

The PR team organizes press conferences by inviting mass media journalists to a designated location at a scheduled time. Through these events, informants gained professional experiences, developed their skills, and enhanced their interactions with PR staff.

Informants reported that through press conferences, journalists from Polda Jabar's Press Corps (Media Pokja Polda Jawa Barat) experienced various professional and personal developments, including:

- Building closer relationships with PR staff at Polda Jabar.
- Collaborating with Polda Jabar in reporting official police-related news.
- Gathering information or news about criminal cases for local media organizations.
- Publishing at least eight news articles daily on Polda Jabar with approval from the PR Head of Polda Jawa Barat.
- Expanding and sustaining local media outlets by developing one news story into multiple reports (e.g., turning one article into five).

The Mutual Dependency Between PR and the Media

It is widely recognized that Polda Jabar's PR staff relies on the media as a tool for publicity, ensuring that news and information about Polda Jabar's activities reach the public. Conversely, media

outlets depend on PR for official, accurate, and complete information.

Thus, press conferences go beyond a formal working relationship—they also foster emotional and personal connections, creating a sense of trust and comfort between Polda Jabar's PR staff and journalists from the Polda Jabar Press Corps.

The experiences of West Java Regional Police (Polda Jabar) journalists in covering press conferences, as explored in this study, are derived from the objectives and benefits they gain during their coverage, as well as their direct involvement with the Public Relations (PR) staff of Polda Jabar. These experiences are formed through conscious actions and attitudes displayed by Polda Jabar journalists while covering press conferences.

Beyond their experiences, understanding is also developed among journalists regarding press conferences, shaped through their continuous interactions with PR staff at Polda Jabar. This understanding helps journalists comprehend the purpose and objectives behind the press conferences they cover. Moreover, the level of understanding depends on the roles and involvement of journalists in these press conferences. The motives and experiences of both journalists and PR staff at Polda Jabar significantly influence the perspectives formed in their minds, leading to varied interpretations of the meaning of press conferences from different aspects and viewpoints.

Meaning as a Social Construction

A phenomenon generates meaning, which is constructed through various influencing factors. In this study, the researcher analyzed the collected data using Alfred Schutz's phenomenological framework. Through the social interactions between Polda Jabar's PR staff and journalists, the researcher sought to explore the meaning behind the press conferences held by Polda Jabar.

Meaning is an interpretation of something—it represents the concept or understanding embedded within a symbol and is always present in spoken or written communication. Meaning is the implied or intended significance of a word or statement.

According to Schutz, the process of meaning formation begins with sensory perception, which is a continuous experiential process. At first, sensory experiences lack inherent meaning, but meaning emerges when these experiences are connected to past experiences and social interactions. For

Schutz, human actions always hold meaning, which is closely linked to the motives behind those actions.

Social actions are oriented toward the behaviors of others whether in the past, present, or future. This aligns with the process through which Polda Jabar journalists develop meaning from their experiences in covering press conferences, as their understanding is shaped through continuous interactions with the PR staff of Polda Jabar.

The Meaning of Press Conferences for Polda Jabar Journalists

For Polda Jabar journalists, the meaning of press conferences emerges from their ongoing experiences of working and interacting with PR staff at Polda Jabar. Based on this, it is evident that for journalists, press conferences serve as an essential function of public relations, aimed at building public trust and combating negative news and hoaxes—especially in light of cases such as Teddy Minahasa and Ferdy Sambo, which have damaged the police's reputation.

Through press conferences, the police seek to restore their image as friends and protectors of society. This effort is supported by internal media journalists at Polda Jabar, who serve as promotional tools for the institution to facilitate the dissemination of information and policies to the public.

Furthermore, internal Polda Jabar journalists gain greater visibility and recognition among the public by continuously reporting positive news about Polda Jabar. This not only enhances public awareness of the police's positive activities but also helps local media outlets attract more viewers, ultimately contributing to their existence and expansion in competition with larger media companies

Conclusion:

This study examines journalists' perceptions in interpreting press conferences within the Public Relations Division of the West Java Regional Police (Polda Jabar). The research employs a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, based on Alfred Schutz's phenomenology theory.

Based on the findings, the study draws the following conclusions:

1. Journalists from the Polda Jabar Press Corps (Media Pokja Polda Jabar) experience various

aspects while covering press conferences.

- The experiences of Polda Jabar journalists during press conferences allow them to establish closer relationships with PR staff.
 - They collaborate with Polda Jabar, gathering news and information about criminal offenses for local media companies.
 - Journalists are required to publish at least eight news articles per day about Polda Jabar, with approval from the PR division head.
 - Press conference coverage includes reports on criminal cases and leadership activities.
 - One news story can be developed into multiple reports (e.g., one article expanded into five), ensuring the existence and expansion of local media outlets.
2. The press conference activities of Polda Jabar journalists are influenced by two types of motives: past motives ("because motive") and future motives ("in order to motive").
- Past motives (because motive), as identified in the research, include:
 - Seeking early and rapid access to information on criminal cases for local media companies.
 - Countering negative news and hoaxes.
 - Ensuring the existence and expansion of local media.
 - Future motives (in order to motive) identified in the research include:
 - Promoting positive news about Polda Jabar, particularly regarding criminal cases and leadership activities.
 - Building a positive image of Polda Jabar police, reinforcing their role as friends and protectors of society.
 - Combating negative news and hoaxes about law enforcement.
 - Expanding journalistic knowledge and expertise.
 - These motives define the purpose and expected outcomes of participating in

press conferences.

3. The meaning of press conferences for journalists from the Polda Jabar Press Corps is closely tied to the role of public relations in building public trust.
- Press conferences serve as a public relations strategy to combat negative news and hoaxes—especially cases such as Teddy Minahasa and Ferdy Sambo, which damaged police credibility.
 - The police aim to restore their image as a trusted institution, reinforcing their role as friends and protectors of society.
 - Internal media journalists of Polda Jabar serve as a promotional tool for the police, helping the institution disseminate information and policies to the public.
 - These internal media platforms gain more recognition by continuously reporting positive activities of Polda Jabar, which increases viewership and strengthens the existence and expansion of local media companies.
 - Thus, press conferences are not only essential for police-public relations but also provide strategic benefits for journalists and local media outlets, reinforcing a mutually beneficial relationship.

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