BREAKING NEWS IN THE AGE OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM: A TWITTER CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE KANJURUHAN STAMPEDE TRAGEDY

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ABSTRACT

In October 2022, a disturbing incident occurred at Kanjuruhan Stadium in Malang, Indonesia. A short video emerged on social media platforms showing supporters invading the football field after a match, indicating a breach of security. The military then intervened, dispersing the crowd with tear gas canisters, causing panicked supporters to flee the tear gas-filled stadium. The video ended, and subsequent live reports revealed the severity of the situation. The death toll initially reported in single digits quickly rose to shocking numbers. This incident underscored the power of citizen journalism, shedding light on important issues such as police excessive force. Our study aims to investigate the role of citizen journalism in the Kanjuruhan disaster and its impact on reporting. Through content analysis on Twitter, we examine citizen journalism examples, including shared information and images. Our findings highlight the significance of citizen journalism in shaping public discourse and promoting media transparency. This study deepens our understanding of citizen journalism motivations, implications for journalism, and potential for positive societal change. It emphasizes the need for continued support for citizen journalism and media democratization to enhance transparency and accountability in reporting.

Keywords: Journalism; social media; media content analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of technology has made a significant contribution to how citizens can engage in event coverage, particularly with the emergence of new media

(Allan, 2013; Yusuf, 2017; Syahputra & Ritonga, 2019). However, it is not just technological progress that is needed; sufficient motivation is necessary to encourage citizen involvement. One of these encouragement is coming from participatory culture, supported by democracy and media democratization or liberalization (Luce et al., 2017; Allan & Hintz, 2019).

Resistance against distortions by mainstream media is at the forefront of some citizen journalism practices, therefore it serves as an alternative media as explained by previous studies (Rodriguez, 2001; Yusuf, 2013; Allan & Hintz, 2019; Zeng et al., 2019). Scholarly article (Rodriguez, 2001) have proposed that the rise of citizen journalism movements, particularly in less-developed countries, was initially sparked by distorted and misleading news as well as the expansion of capitalism. Grassroots organizations created local and community media as an alternative to mainstream outlets, aiming to democratize communication. This gave rise to "alternative journalism," driven by ordinary citizens and differing from mainstream media in terms of economy and organization. Alternative media opposes market-driven approaches and hierarchical structures in professional journalism. Alternative media also fosters for public opinion and prompt wider discussion (Moyo, 2009).

In addition to the previously mentioned motivation based on alternatives, experts argue that citizen journalism also arises from the urge for citizenship enactment (Rodriguez, 2001), It becomes particularly prominent during times of crisis, as individuals collaborate to provide surveillance accounts and foster a democratic culture by mobilizing demonstrations (Allan & Hintz, 2019).

The tsunami that struck Indonesia in December 2004 has notably became the first crisis event captured on camera by an amateur. It stands as one of the most devastating natural disasters in the nation's history, resulting in the tragic loss of 169,000 lives (BPBD PEMKAB BOGOR, 2022). This catastrophic event unfolded in Aceh, the westernmost region of Indonesia. The individual responsible for documenting the incident lacked formal reporting expertise but possessed the basic means to record the unfolding events firsthand. Consequently, these activities were recognized as the early manifestations of citizen journalism (Allan, 2013; Allan & Hintz, 2019; Zeng et al., 2019).

Similarly, the case of the Kanjuruhan Stampede was another crisis captured by several amateurs. It served as an example of amateur reporting that unveiled the true cause behind the incident. It began with a twelve-second video depicting a group of supporters running onto the football field at Kanjuruhan Stadium in Malang after a match. While the exact nature of the incident was not entirely clear due to the video's brevity, it appeared to be an escalating invasion and breach of security. The crowd was then forcibly dispersed by the police. Tear gas canisters were fired onto the field and

stands, causing the supporters to flee and the audience to evacuate. Thousands of people searched for a way to escape the increasingly tear gas-filled stadium. The video ended, and subsequent live reports from the scene revealed post-tear gas shooting casualties. Initially, the death toll was in the single digits, but it quickly rose to tens, even hundreds, shocking many people.

The video showing the field invasion became an early harbinger of public reporting and reposting of the Kanjuruhan stampede tragedy, which, to some extent, revealed the root cause of the casualties. The use of tear gas canisters within the stadium to control the crowd was prohibited by FIFA regulations (Utama et al., 2022). This policy has its historical origins, as several events have taught hard lessons about the fatal consequences of tear gas use to manage crowds, such as the notorious case of the Ellis Park Stadium crowd crush in April 2001, which claimed the lives of 43 people after untrained security guards fired tear gas at the stampeding crowds (Bowley et al., 2004).

The recurrence of such incidents serves as an alarming indicator of the Indonesian police's carelessness, resulting in severe and fatal outcomes. This is particularly concerning when considering the previous instances of power abuse by related institutions that are often went unpunished such as human right violations in the Talangsari 1989 Tragedy, Semanggi, Trisakti, The 1998 May Tragedy, Tanjung Priok Event, etc. (Setiamukti & Nasvian, 2023). The Kanjuruhan stadium incident represents the culmination of various negative police practices, prompting nationwide discussions with hashtags such as #PrayforKanjuruhan and #UsutTuntas. The proverbial question of 'Who will shave the barber?' echoes the conundrum faced in law enforcement, as determining who holds law enforcement accountable when they themselves violate the law remains a challenge.

Several studies have discussed the incident from various perspectives. One study examined it from the angle of human rights violations (Azzahra, 2022), while another focused on the root causes of violence, specifically underlined it as a destructive violence (Utama et al., 2022). Researchers also analyzed the social movements that emerged from the Kanjuruhan tragedy and how they influenced policy changes (Mogot et al., 2022). Additionally, a study critiqued the immediate display of condolences by prominent figures in an exprolative approach (Malik & Y, 2022). Another research explored the mainstream media's framing of the event (Hamid et al., 2023). There were studies on public sentiment towards the Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) (Maulana et al., 2022), as well as a social network analysis of the #UsutTuntas hashtag revealed predominantly negative emotions depicting disappointment (Setiamukti & Nasvian, 2023). And conversely, a study analyzing public responses through the #PrayForKanjuruhan hashtag found that public sympathy far outweighed criticism towards the perpetrators (Perdana et al., 2023).

There is currently no research specifically examining citizen journalism practices during the incident, despite the crucial role citizen journalism played in uncovering the chronology of events and pushing for legal accountability to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

The implication of this study is to highlight the significance of citizen journalism in the modern media landscape. Furthermore, it aims to understand of the nature of content in this type of reporting, the patterns and trends, as well as the comparison to mainstream media, and finally the impact it has on journalism as a whole. This study also emphasizes the need for continued support for citizen journalism and media democratization to enhance transparency and accountability in reporting.

2. METHODS

This study is a qualitative study that utilizes the content analysis method. More specifically, the content analysis approach used is a descriptive approach, where this research aims to describe messages related to the research topic rather than testing variables(Eriyanto, 2015). The data collection method is through the documentation of Twitter posts related to the Kanjuruhan tragedy, including social media posts, videos, and other forms of citizen-generated content. The analysis will be guided by three stages.

The first stage begins with an examination of the nature of citizen journalism practices, where qualitative analysis will explore the nuances of the content, examining the language used, the perspectives represented, and the context in which the content was shared. The next step is identifying patterns and tendencies in citizen-generated content related to the Kanjuruhan tragedy, which will reveal the discourse of the community on the themes and topics that concern them. The final stage involves comparing reports with mainstream media reports. The researcher intends to analyze news articles produced by mainstream media to identify differences and potential leverage in both journalism practices.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the unfortunate events that unfolded in Indonesia in 2022, one of them was the Kanjuruhan tragedy, which gained significant attention and became a trending topic. The hashtag #PrayForKanjuruhan emerged on social media as people expressed their prayers and support for the victims (Sumitra, 2022). The emergence of the hashtag was initially sparked by the circulation of an amateur video. This video captured the unfortunate incident of football supporters being tear-gassed by the police who were responsible for maintaining security after the Persebaya versus Arema FC match on October 1, 2022. The video spread widely and was extensively shared across social

media, making it impossible to identify the original account that shared it. Additionally, the events captured in the video were not clear enough as the recording itself lacked any narration to explain what actually happened. This highlights the raw and unfiltered nature of citizen reporting, as it presents a firsthand account without elaboration.

Subsequent to the incident, a video that was originally intended to be accompanied by a sensitive content warning gained significant traction and quickly went viral. This video featured CCTV footage capturing a distressing scene, revealing the plight of hundreds of individuals trapped at the exit gate of the stadium. It appeared to be the reason for the high death toll due to the surge in the crowd. However, reports emerged suggesting that the video documenting this particular scene had subsequently been removed (Pebrianto & Amirullah, 2022).

In the aftermath of the tragedy, a press conference was held by the Chief of the Indonesian National Police, Listyo Sigit Pabowo, who confirmed that the incident was triggered by rioting supporters who were protesting the outcome of the match. The encirclement of the field by supporters forced eleven police personnel to fire seven tear gas canisters at the south stands, one at the north stand, and three onto the field. However, the consequences of the shooting were a stampede of supporters, as well as operational errors where some gates were opened late (Azzahra, 2022).

Amidst the commotion, a Twitter account with the handle @RezqiWahyu_05 provided a detailed account of the incident from his perspective as an eyewitness at the stadium. He shared his narrative in a thread consisting of 25 tweets. In the thread, the witness explained in great detail the conditions in the spectator stands from the first half to the second half of the match. He also described the moment when Arema FC lost and the team officials apologized, during which two spectators surged forward and appeared to cheer on the coach. According to the author of the thread, this incident served as the precursor to the pitch invasion by the supporters.

Image 1. Twitter screenshot depicting the chronology of the Kanjuruhan
tragedy according to an eyewitness.

The explanation by @RezqiWahyu_05 also received validation from another Twitter account. An account with the handle @Dian_Heditio presented additional evidence in the form of a video, which appeared to be an amateur recording, that proved there were initially some supporters who entered the field, followed by others, leading to an uncontrollable situation. Additionally, many tweets confirmed that the initial disturbance was caused by unruly spectators entering the field. This further emphasizes that the original chronology received detailed contributions from other witnesses, resulting in a collaborative reporting effort.

Image 2. Twitter screenshot validating the chronology

Furthermore, in support of the chronology presented by @RezqiWahyu_05, several accounts shared additional evidence highlighting the brutality exhibited by the Arema

FC supporters outside the stadium. These accounts shared videos that captured instances of violence perpetrated by the supporters. The footage showcased supporters throwing objects at vehicles associated with the Persebaya team, depicting an aggressive atmosphere. @Indo_Hooligans_ is a Twitter handle that shared some of these videos to corroborate the sequence of events described by @RezqiWahyu_05. This collective sharing of visual evidence aimed to provide a comprehensive perspective on the unfolding events.

Adding to the narrative, a photograph circulated on various accounts, depicting a cardboard box filled with numerous bottles. Some accounts suggested that these bottles were evidence of supporters smuggling alcoholic beverages into the stadium, insinuating a potential cause for the unruly behavior. However, it is important to note that subsequent investigations debunked this claim. The bottles in question were found to contain livestock medicine instead of alcoholic drinks, effectively refuting the allegation.

Despite the disproven allegation regarding alcohol, the initial accusations could potentially sway readers of the thread, inadvertently leading to a diminished sense of sympathy for the victims. It is crucial to discern the accuracy of information and refrain from forming premature judgments based on misleading or debunked claims.

Image 3. Twitter screenshot attempting to shape public opinion regarding the spectators.

The clarification regarding the alcoholic beverages was carried out by a prominent media outlet, @NarasiNewsroom, demonstrating that citizen journalism can work hand

in hand with established media organizations. Larger media outlets often possess the necessary resources to further investigate and authenticate reports submitted by citizen journalists. In this case, @NarasiNewsroom's involvement helped provide a more comprehensive understanding of the situation and debunked the false allegations concerning the presence of alcohol.

Collaboration between citizen journalists and established media outlets allows for a more rigorous and accurate reporting process. It showcases the importance of combining different perspectives and resources to ensure the dissemination of reliable information to the public. The involvement of @NarasiNewsroom in verifying and clarifying the facts contributes to fostering trust and credibility in the reporting process.
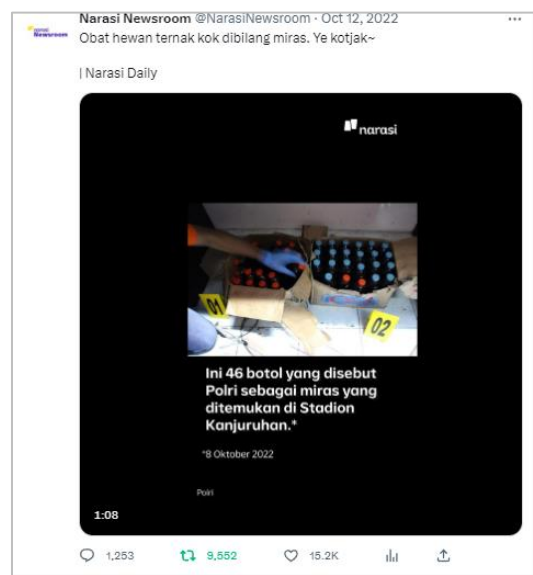

Image 4. Twitter screenshot of Narasi Newsroom's clarification.

Moreover, the collaborative contributions to the chronology extended to the sharing of a list of victims, which was disseminated by an account called @avorexa. This account shared detailed photos of papers containing the victims' information, seemingly captured with a mobile phone camera. This information proved to be valuable in understanding the severity of the Kanjuruhan tragedy, which resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives.

The sharing of the victims' details provides a humanizing aspect to the tragedy, emphasizing the personal toll it had on individuals and their families. Highlighting the individual names helps to create a more empathetic and comprehensive understanding of the magnitude of the incident.

Image 5. Twitter screenshot of the list of deceased and injured victims.

The extensive list of victims evokes a range of emotions among readers, including sadness and anger. Several accounts responded by expressing condolences and condemning the incident. Coinciding with these sentiments, other accounts emerged to discuss the acts of violence perpetrated by the police and military personnel assigned to maintain security. The emergence of these accounts and conversations contributes to a broader discourse on the responsibilities and actions of those in positions of authority during incidents of public safety and security.
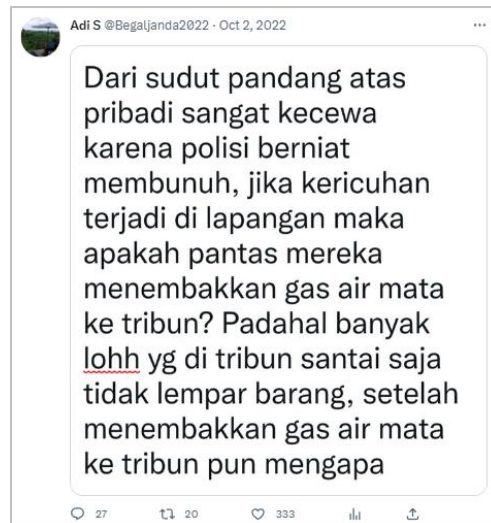

Image 6. Twitter screenshot highlighting security negligence.

Tear gas, as described by the account @Begaljanda2022 above which translates "From a personal perspective, I am deeply disappointed because it seems like the police intended to kill. If the chaos was happening on the field, was it necessary for them to shoot tear gas into the stands? Many people in the stands were just calmly watching the match without throwing any objects." The account implied that tear gas was indeed thrown into the spectator stands, causing panic among the crowd. This has been confirmed by several videos, which validate that tear gas was not only used to disperse the turmoil on the field but also thrown into the south stands of the Kanjuruhan Stadium. Eleven shots were fired within a ten-second interval towards the spectators. The videos capturing these incidents provide visual evidence of the extent of the response and the impact it had on the panicked spectators. Such footage serves as a crucial record in assessing the actions taken during the tragedy and initiating discussions on appropriate measures and accountability.

Image 7. Twitter screenshot of a video showing tear gas being fired.

Besides the tear gas shots that instilled panic among the crowd, there have been documented cases of security personnel resorting to violence, captured on amateur footage and shared by @AdepIbrahim. These incidents have ignited widespread anger and outrage among the public, who view the actions of the authorities as lacking precision and deviating from established operational standards.

The circulation of these amateur videos depicting instances of violence by security forces serves as compelling evidence, highlighting concerns regarding their conduct and the potential use of excessive force. The public's strong reaction underscores the urgent need to address these issues and ensure accountability for any misconduct.

Image 8. Twitter screenshot of a video showing violence by security personnel

The culmination of public anger occurred when amateur video footage, including one shared by @Iwakgatol87, spread widely. The accompanying text read, "Pintunya ditutup terus. Dilempari gas air mata secara brutal. Apakah Anda sengaja membantai kami wahai Pak Polisi" (The doors were continuously closed. Tear gas was ruthlessly thrown at us. Are you intentionally slaughtering us, Mr. Police?)

Image 9. Twitter screenshot of a video showing overcrowding of spectators at the stadium exit.

In the video, the faces of the spectators are filled with panic, fear, and helplessness as they struggle to escape the tear gas fumes while tightly packed together. The footage also captures a woman who appears to be on the verge of losing consciousness. Accompanied by such a powerful narrative, the public's response has transformed from expressions of condolences and concern to an overwhelming anger over the unnecessary loss of lives. This particular video, along with its provocative caption, captured the attention of the public and further fueled their outrage. The video serves as a catalyst, exposing the human toll and the perceived failure of those responsible for ensuring the safety and security of the spectators.

The Kanjuruhan tragedy claimed the lives of 129 people, but the condition of several victims being treated in hospitals worsened due to complications arising from the overcrowding, such as further infections and severe injuries. As a result, some of the hospitalized victims eventually succumbed to their injuries. @ainurrohman's tweet was an example of mentioning fallen victim after the incident, and he sarcastically quoted his reply to the Indonesian Football Association's (PSSI) post, implying their negligence in addressing the magnitude of the Kanjuruhan incident.

Such social media posts can serve as a means for individuals to express their frustration, disappointment, or dissatisfaction with the response and actions of relevant authorities or organizations. They contribute to the broader public discourse surrounding the tragedy, demanding accountability and meaningful measures to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Image 10. Screenshot of the 133rd victim after the incident.

The tweet by @aindraku also shared the identity of one of the victims who passed away after 20 days of treatment. This highlights that beyond the immediate incident, the Kanjuruhan tragedy continues to unfold, emphasizing the need to watchdog its developments. The citizen reporting aims to ensure that the public remains aware of the severity of the events that took place.

By sharing the identity of an individual victim, @aindraku's tweet personalizes the tragedy, evoking empathy and a deeper understanding of the human impact of the incident. This approach can be instrumental in fostering public support, empathy, and a collective sense of responsibility to seek justice and prevent future similar tragedies.

Image 11. Screenshot of the 134th victim after the incident.

Following citizen reporting, mainstream media coverage began to emerge, including an article by @tempodotco. The article provides a different perspective on the chronology of events, presenting the police's viewpoint and arguing that their actions were a response to the brutality of the spectators. This news from a mainstream media outlet offers a nuanced perspective amidst the public discourse surrounding the security lapses in the Persebaya-Arema FC match.

@tempodotco, being a mainstream media outlet, likely has access to specific resources and the ability to conduct interviews with the police. This sets it apart from citizen journalism, which often relies on subjective viewpoints and varying levels of technomaterialities. Professional journalism often employs a more formal language style and adheres to standardized reporting practices.

Image 12. Screenshot of Tempo.co's thread providing the police's version of the chronology

@NarasiNewsroom took a different approach in their coverage of the Kanjuruhan tragedy. They published their report twelve days after the incident, indicating the extensiveness of their investigation. Their approach involved collecting and compiling various accounts from eyewitnesses who were present during the incident.

The compilation of citizen reports by @NarasiNewsroom highlights the importance of grassroots reporting and the power of collaborative storytelling. It demonstrates how multiple perspectives and firsthand experiences can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the tragedy. The involvement of citizen reporters in the news-making process not only adds diversity to the information landscape but also fosters a sense of collective responsibility in uncovering the truth and seeking justice as part of citizenship enactment.

Image 13. Screenshot of Narasi Newsroom Investigation Video

DISCUSSION

The practice of citizen journalism exposed on the social media platform Twitter has greatly contributed to uncovering the chronology of the Kanjuruhan incident. The nature of reporting or compiling the chronology is detailed but subjective and tends to be anonymous and metashared, making it difficult to verify the truth. However, as responses to eyewitness reports increased, several surveillance accounts were involved, transforming the reporting into a collaborative effort (Barnes, 2012; Allan & Hintz, 2019). Feedback from the audience can provide additional verification of the reported facts, and the emotions of the audience can be perceived through such reporting.

The practice of citizen journalism immediately generated a social movement (Mogot et al., 2022), as it has the ability to shape public opinion and drive the agenda for comprehensive investigations into the root causes of the tragedy, aligning with previous research findings (Moyo, 2009). Thus, from initially expressing sympathy and condolences through the use of the hashtag #PrayForKanjuruhan (Perdana et al., 2023), it evolved into a movement pushing for thorough investigation with the hashtag #UsutTuntas (Setiamukti & Nasvian, 2023). Particularly in crisis situations where instances of abuse of power recur, including the deletion of CCTV footage(Pebrianto & Amirullah, 2022), citizen journalism appears to provide an alternative to mainstream media reporting (Rodriguez, 2001; Yusuf, 2013; Allan & Hintz, 2019; Zeng et al., 2019), ensuring that such cases do not go unpunished as in previous incidents (Setiamukti & Nasvian, 2023). This is a recurring pattern, considering that one of the frequently discussed public discourses is about the abuse of power by police authority. The success of this social movement can be attributed to the provocative language and carefully

crafted presentation of images in citizen journalism reporting, which evoke a sense of humanity and personal connection. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the themes of humanity and perceived oppression by the community are central to the Kanjuruhan tragedy.

Indeed, the way citizen reports personalize the tragedy and evoke empathy among the public, as well as the sense that anyone could become a victim, distinguishes them from mainstream media reports that may present the toll as mere statistics. Additionally, while mainstream media strives for balanced and accountable reporting, citizen journalism offers immediacy and grassroots perspectives. However, in the era of information openness facilitated by social media, mainstream media can now work in parallel with grassroots sources, leveraging their resources and ensuring transparency in news coverage (Robinson, 2009).

Overall, citizen journalism has emerged as a powerful force in uncovering and shaping the narrative surrounding the Kanjuruhan incident. The utilization of citizen journalism in crisis situations, particularly those caused by human error, goes beyond being just a practice of citizenship. In such cases, citizen journalism can also serve the purpose of monitoring and safeguarding the justice system. By actively documenting and reporting on the events, citizens can contribute to holding accountable those responsible for the crisis or human errors. It allows for alternative perspectives to be shared, potentially shedding light on different aspects of the crisis that may not receive adequate coverage from mainstream media. Citizen journalism in the Kanjururan tragedy particularly played a crucial role in ensuring transparency, raising awareness, and demanding justice.

The implications of the study on the media landscape underscore that citizen reporting has become an important source of news for the public, especially with the increasing access to media platforms. As a result, mainstream media outlets need to embrace grassroots journalists, recognizing them as valuable sources of information, particularly during times of crisis. Additionally, there is a need for education on ethical standards regarding citizen journalism practices. Moreover, it is essential to enhance media literacy among the general public to enable them to fact-check news and critically evaluate the information they consume.

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