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Shell Indonesia's Digital Crisis Communication Strategy in Maintaining Reputation Amid Fuel Shortages

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Abstract

The digital era has positioned social media as a strategic arena for shaping public opinion and managing organizational reputation crises. This study aims to analyze Shell Indonesia's digital crisis communication strategy in responding to the 2025 fuel shortage through its official Instagram account @shell_indonesia. The study is grounded in the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) by Coombs, which emphasizes the alignment between crisis type and communication strategy, and is conceptually supported by reputation management and digital communication perspectives. This research employs a qualitative approach with an interpretive paradigm, using qualitative content analysis. The data consist of primary data (Instagram posts, captions, visuals, and audience responses) and secondary data (previous studies and policy documents). Data were collected through digital observation and documentation techniques, and analyzed through three stages: crisis type identification, classification of SCCT strategies (deny, diminish, rebuild, bolstering), and interpretive meaning analysis. The findings indicate that the crisis faced by Shell Indonesia falls into a low responsibility (accidental) crisis, driven by external regulatory factors. Shell predominantly applied bolstering and diminish strategies, where bolstering was used to strengthen positive brand image through non-fuel services, and diminish was applied through transparent and empathetic communication to reduce negative perceptions. This study shows that crisis communication functions not only as clarification but also as an integrated instrument of reputation management and digital marketing, contributing to the expansion of SCCT in non-communicative crisis contexts.

Keywords: Crisis Communication, Reputation Management, Social Media, SCCT, Shell Indonesia.

Introduction

The digital age is characterized by the rapid flow of information, and every organization faces the enormous challenge of maintaining its reputation amid the ever-changing dynamics of public opinion (Saputri et al., 2022). Initially, social media was only a means of promotion and closeness to consumers. However, it has now become the main arena for the spread of issues and crises (Abdurrazzaq, 2024). A crisis that is not managed properly can easily develop into a reputation crisis

that risks undermining public trust in the brand (Suwandi, 2025). Therefore, reputation management and crisis communication have become two increasingly important aspects of corporate communication strategies today (Siregar et al., 2024).

The crisis experienced by Shell Indonesia in 2025 is a real-life example of how global companies face such challenges in a local context. As a giant multinational energy company, Shell is widely known for its high-quality fuel products, transparency, and excellent gas station services (Alifia et al., 2025). However, since mid-2025, Indonesians have faced the reality that there has been a significant shortage of gasoline at Shell gas stations. This scarcity not only causes anxiety among consumers but also has the potential to damage the company's image as a reliable energy provider. In this situation, Shell Indonesia faces a considerable reputation risk because the public associates the brand with the unavailability of its main product, which has been its identity for so long. When experiencing fuel supply constraints, Shell Indonesia took a different communication strategy. Instead of remaining silent or merely providing technical clarifications, Shell remained active in communicating through various digital channels, especially on its official Instagram account, @shell_indonesia.

This phenomenon is interesting to study further because it illustrates how multinational companies such as Shell Indonesia implement adaptive communication strategies in the midst of a crisis (Ratnasari, 2025). When its main product was unavailable, the company did not shut itself off, but instead sought to manage public perception through reputation-oriented digital communication (Abdullah et al., 2025). Based on this explanation, the focus of this study is to analyze Shell Indonesia's crisis communication strategy in maintaining the company's reputation on social media.

The concept of reputation management has long been a major concern in the field of corporate communication. Reputation is the collective perception of the public towards an organization based on the organization's experiences, communications, and actions (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). Reputation not only reflects the current image but also the accumulation of trust and credibility built over the long term. Therefore, when a crisis occurs, reputation becomes the most vulnerable asset and needs to be protected (Yanuar, 2017). In the context of crisis communication, there is a theory known as Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), developed by (W. Timothy Coombs, 2023). SCCT is based on the understanding that every crisis elicits public perceptions about the extent to which the organization is responsible for the crisis. Based on the level of responsibility, (W. Timothy Coombs, 2023) divides crises into three main categories: victim crises (the organization is considered the victim), accidental crises (low responsibility), and preventable crises (high responsibility). Each type of crisis requires a different communication strategy so that the organization can minimize damage to its reputation.

The main cause of the fuel shortage experienced by Shell Indonesia was a government regulation limiting private fuel imports to a maximum of 10% of the previous year's volume, i.e., 2024, based on a circular letter from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources No. T-19/MG.05/WM.M/2025 dated July 17, 2025 (Jayanti, 2025). In such circumstances, organizations do not need to use defensive strategies or excessive apologies, but can instead pursue a bolstering strategy by strengthening their positive image by highlighting the company's contributions and positive values to the public. This can be done through messages that show closeness to customers, social activities, innovation, and other forms of corporate responsibility (W. Timothy Coombs, 2023). Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is relevant because it explains how organizations adjust their communication strategies based on their level of responsibility in a crisis (Aurelia et al., 2025).

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), developed by (W. Timothy Coombs, 2023), is a theory that explains how organizations should respond to crises based on the level of responsibility inherent in the situation. SCCT is rooted in Attribution Theory, which emphasizes that the public will assess who is responsible for the crisis, and that assessment will affect the organization's reputation. According to (W. Timothy Coombs, 2023), there are three types or clusters of crises that distinguish the level of organizational responsibility, namely the victim cluster, accidental cluster, and preventable cluster. In the victim cluster, the organization is positioned as a victim of the crisis and has a low reputation threat. In the accidental cluster, the crisis occurs due to unintentional actions, so the organization's responsibility is moderate. Meanwhile, in the preventable cluster, the organization is

considered fully responsible for the crisis due to internal errors that could have been avoided, resulting in a high threat to its reputation (Aurelia et al., 2025).

In addition, (W. Timothy Coombs, 2023) explains that the crisis communication process takes place in three stages, namely pre-crisis, crisis event, and post-crisis. The pre-crisis stage focuses on prevention and preparation by identifying potential risks. The crisis event stage is when the crisis occurs and the organization must immediately respond to control the situation. Meanwhile, the post-crisis stage serves to restore the organization's image and relationship with the public after the crisis has subsided. When dealing with each stage, SCCT offers four main strategies, namely deny, diminish, rebuild, and bolster. The deny strategy is used to deny the existence of the crisis or the organization's responsibility; diminish aims to reduce negative public perception by providing reasons or justifications; rebuild focuses on restoring reputation through apologies and compensation; while bolstering is used to strengthen the organization's positive image by reminding the public of its previous achievements and contributions. Through this framework, SCCT provides comprehensive guidance for organizations to choose the most appropriate communication strategy according to the characteristics and threat level of the crisis they are facing (Aurelia et al., 2025).

Previous studies such as (Aurelia et al., 2025) indicate that the crisis experienced by Erspo falls under the Preventable Cluster, due to the failure to meet public expectations regarding the design and quality of the Indonesian national team jersey. When facing the crisis, Erspo implemented a Rebuild strategy by publicly apologizing, providing clarification, and involving supporters through a new jersey design contest as a form of public engagement. In addition, Erspo rebranded by changing its logo to improve its long-term image. This strategy proved effective as it successfully restored its reputation, increased public trust, and boosted product sales. Then, (Hadiyani & Azis, 2024) in their research showed that the handling of the pandemic in both countries was greatly influenced by the effectiveness of the government's crisis communication. This study found that the spread of misinformation at the beginning of the pandemic was caused by public panic and delayed government response. A quick, consistent, and open response from the government proved to strengthen public reputation and trust, while delays caused panic and distrust. On the other hand, this study also emphasized that the responsible use of social media and the government's exemplary role in providing accurate information were key to reducing misinformation and building more adaptive behavior among the public during the crisis.

Meanwhile (Cinta Aulia Putri et al., 2023)'s research shows that PT. Debindo Mitra Tama successfully managed the crisis in the case of the Decorintex exhibition branding misunderstanding by implementing a communication strategy based on Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). The crisis that occurred was categorized as an accidental cluster, which is a crisis without any element of intent. The company implemented four main strategies: deny, diminish, rebuild, and reinforce through direct clarification to visitors, close cooperation with the media, and strengthening the company's positive image. The media relations-based strategy proved effective in mitigating issues and maintaining the company's reputation, although the study assessed that a more proactive approach to customer engagement was still needed for long-term image recovery. As well (Widyanto et al., 2022), the study shows that the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower (Kemnaker RI) implemented five crisis communication strategies based on Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) to respond to the rejection of Permenaker Number 2 of 2022 concerning the disbursement of Old Age Security (JHT). These strategies include: denial (denying the issue that JHT funds are used for government interests), excuse (giving reasons that the rules were made to ensure welfare in old age), justification (explaining that the drafting of the rules involved various parties), rebuild (restoring public trust by replacing the rules with Permenaker Number 4 of 2022), and compensation (providing ease of JHT fund disbursement and certainty of payment time). Overall, this strategy proved effective in mitigating the crisis and restoring the reputation of the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower in the eyes of the public.

Whereas (Juantito Agung Prasetyo, 2022) analyzed the crisis response strategies of the Indonesian government and PT Pertamina to the 2022 fuel price crisis using the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). Through content analysis of 43 news articles on Kompas.com and Detik.com, the results of the study show that the denial strategy was the most dominant form of crisis

response used by the government and Pertamina. This strategy was used to refute accusations or negative issues related to the fuel price increase policy and to maintain the reputation of the institution. In addition to denial, other strategies that also emerged were compensation, namely the provision of compensation in the form of cash assistance to the affected communities, and justification, namely emphasizing that the fuel price increase policy was based on global conditions such as the increase in world oil prices. The findings of this study confirm that a combination of denial, compensation, and justification strategies became the main approach in the efforts of the government and Pertamina to mitigate the crisis and maintain a positive image in the eyes of the public.

Based on previous studies, it appears that most studies using Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) focus on crises caused by organizational errors, controversial policies, or product failures, as in the cases of Erspo, the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower, Pertamina, and PT. Debindo Mitra Tama. Various strategies such as denial, justification, rebuild, and compensation have proven effective in restoring reputation after an organization faces a crisis that elicits negative public reaction. However, a research gap exists because there have been no studies highlighting the application of SCCT in the context of non-communicative crises, i.e., crises that are not caused by organizational errors but rather by limited oil import capacity due to external factors, as experienced by Shell Indonesia when facing a shortage of fuel supply. This study fills this gap by exploring how companies can continue to manage their reputation and maintain relationships with the public through proactive communication strategies amid temporary crises that are not caused by internal mistakes.

Based on this explanation, the problem formulation in this study is How did Shell Indonesia's digital crisis communication strategy help maintain the company's reputation during the fuel shortage, based on SCCT theory. Through this study, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of reputation management and crisis communication practices in the digital era can be obtained through the case study of Shell Indonesia. The Situational Crisis Communication Theory approach provides an appropriate framework for assessing the suitability between the type of crisis experienced by the company and the communication strategy used. This study analyzes Shell Indonesia's digital communication content during the crisis and will contribute theoretically and practically to the development of corporate communication strategies in the digital era.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach based on an interpretive paradigm, which views social reality as the result of meaning constructed through interaction and communication (Sugiyono, 2013). This paradigm was chosen because the study aims to analyze and explain how the digital crisis communication strategies implemented by Shell Indonesia in safeguarding the company's reputation during the fuel shortage align with the framework of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), as well as to identify the role of these strategies in maintaining public trust and managing reputation in the digital age.

The method used is qualitative content analysis, focusing on communication messages published through Shell Indonesia's official Instagram account, @shell_indonesia, during the period from August to December 2025. This timeframe was selected because it represents the crisis phase through the early recovery stage, marked by fuel supply shortages until the product became available again at several gas stations, as well as the company's relatively high intensity of digital communication during that period.

The data sources for this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data consists of posts from the @shell_indonesia Instagram account, including captions, visuals, and public interactions such as comments and audience responses. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from scientific literature, relevant prior research, and government policy documents regarding fuel import restrictions, which served as the backdrop to the crisis. The types of data analyzed include textual data (captions and comments), visual data (images and post designs), and contextual data related to the crisis and external policies.

Data collection was conducted through digital documentation of Instagram post archives and non-participatory observation of communication activities on social media. Subsequently, data processing was carried out through several stages, namely data reduction by selecting posts relevant to the crisis

context, data categorization based on communication strategies within the SCCT framework, and the development of a content analysis matrix to facilitate the process of interpretation and mapping of communication patterns.

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative content analysis model based on the SCCT framework (W. Timothy Coombs, 2023), which emphasizes the importance of aligning the type of crisis with the organization's communication strategies. The analysis stages included: (1) identifying the type of crisis faced by Shell Indonesia based on SCCT categories (victim, accidental, or preventable cluster); (2) classification of communication strategies appearing in the posts (deny, diminish, rebuild, and bolstering); (3) interpretation of the meaning of messages and public responses; and (4) drawing conclusions regarding the implications of communication strategies for corporate reputation management in the digital age.

To ensure data validity, this study employs source triangulation by comparing findings from the @shell_indonesia Instagram posts with online media coverage and relevant official documents. Additionally, the credibility of the research results is maintained through the principle of analytical transparency, wherein all data is systematically documented, categorized, and analyzed to ensure the interpretation process is clearly traceable (Sugiyono, 2013). With this approach, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of Shell Indonesia's reputation management practices and crisis communication strategies in the digital era.

Result and Discussion

This section discusses the results of the analysis of Shell Indonesia's crisis communication strategy during the fuel shortage period that occurred between late August and December 2025. The analysis was conducted on posts from the official Instagram account @shell_indonesia, with the aim of understanding how the company managed its digital communications to maintain its reputation amid operational constraints. The analysis process was carried out using a qualitative content analysis approach based on the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) framework developed by (W. Timothy Coombs, 2023). Through this approach, each post was identified based on the communication strategies used, namely deny, diminish, rebuild, and bolster, and interpreted in the context of the relationship between the message, meaning, and public perception. The following analysis results are presented to show the patterns of communication strategies applied by Shell Indonesia in dealing with crises and their implications for corporate reputation management on social media.

Based on the analysis of eight posts on the official Instagram account @shell_indonesia from late August to December 2025, it was found that Shell Indonesia used a combination of crisis communication strategies that were predominantly oriented towards bolstering and diminishing strategies, (W. Timothy Coombs, 2023). These two strategies reflect the communication patterns of organizations facing crises with low responsibility (low responsibility crisis), where companies strive to reduce negative public perceptions while strengthening the brand's positive image through informative content and building closeness with consumers.

Table 1.1 Analysis of Shell Indonesia Instagram Posts

Upload Date	Main Message / Content Focus	SCCT Strategy	Strategy Form / Indicators	Meaning and Interpretation of Message	Public Response	Implications for Reputation
August 24, 2025	Shell Recharge promotion for electric cars (sustainable energy)	Bolstering	Highlighting innovation and environmentally friendly solutions	Shifting public attention from the fuel crisis to a modern, solution-oriented image	Positive and neutral comments; some still mention fuel	Demonstrating a proactive and innovative company image amid the crisis
September 3, 2025	Promoting Shell Auto	Bolstering	Providing added value through	Demonstrating that Shell remains	Positive public	Strengthening emotional

	Care and vehicle maintenance education		educational content	relevant and useful beyond fuel products	response; high engagement	connections and public loyalty
September 13, 2025	Clarification on the unavailability of fuel,	Diminish	Acknowledging limitations with an empathetic and informative tone	Reducing negative public perception without defensiveness	Sympathetic comments, support from customers	Fostering empathy and maintaining public trust
October 3, 2025	Confirming fuel shortages accompanied by the message "we remain present"	Diminish	Prioritizing transparency and commitment to service	Demonstrating social responsibility and openness of information	Public support is quite strong; positive tone of conversation	Maintaining credibility and consistency of reputation
October 10, 2025	Shell Select deli2go promotion (coffee and gas station snacks)	Bolstering	Highlighting the lifestyle and convenience aspects for customers	Maintaining positive brand exposure amid the crisis	Positive comments, public appreciation	Enhancing the brand image that remains "present and warm"
November 8, 2025	Promotion of Shell Rimula LD4 Extra (lubricant product)	Bolstering	Reaffirming the reliability of non-fuel products	Shifting perception from crisis to the excellence of other Shell products	Stable engagement; positive public reaction	Reinforcing reputation as a company with innovation and high service commitment
November 18, 2025	Promoting Shell workshop services and the free nitrogen filling program (NitroGO)	Bolstering	Highlighting direct benefits and additional services for customers	Reaffirming that Shell continues to provide practical value even though fuel supplies have not yet fully returned to normal	Neutral and positive response; focus on service benefits	Strengthening the company's image as adaptive, customer-oriented, and consistent
December 7, 2025	Information on the availability of Shell Super fuel at a number of gas stations	Diminish	Transparency of information and reassurance messages	Marking the transition phase from crisis to recovery with open communication	Positive but critical response; the public questions stock stability	Strengthening credibility, consistency of communication promises, and restoration of public trust

In the early stages of the crisis, the August 24, 2025 post was a strong indicator of the implementation of a bolstering strategy. Shell promoted its Shell Recharge service for electric cars, highlighting innovation and energy sustainability as positive values of the company amid fuel supply constraints. This message shows Shell's efforts to maintain brand relevance by shifting public focus from the issue of fuel scarcity to environmentally friendly alternative services. Although some public comments still mention gasoline scarcity, the direction of Shell's communication message remains consistent in presenting a modern and solution-oriented corporate image. A similar pattern can also be seen in the September 3, 2025 post highlighting Shell Auto Care services. Educational content about motorcycle maintenance serves as a means of building an emotional connection with customers and reinforcing the perception that Shell continues to provide value to consumers beyond fuel products. This post demonstrates proactive communication, where the company seeks to maintain its presence and public trust through narratives of service and brand reliability.

Furthermore, on September 13, 2025, and October 3, 2025, Shell Indonesia implemented a diminish strategy by providing clarification and an apology regarding the unavailability of gasoline at a number of gas stations. In both posts, Shell did not make excessive denials or justifications, but took an informative and empathetic approach by openly confirming the situation to the public. Through

messages such as "We apologize for your inconvenience" and "We are still here to serve you with a variety of other products and services," the company sought to reduce negative perceptions without appearing defensive. This strategy is in line with the SCCT principle for operational crises, where the organization is not considered fully responsible for the cause of the crisis. The public response to these posts was generally positive and sympathetic, with supportive comments such as "Keep up the good work, Shell, you're the best" and "Please bring it back soon!" indicating that a transparent and empathetic approach is effective in maintaining public trust.

In the posts on October 10, 2025, and November 8, 2025, the bolstering strategy dominated again. Through the promotion of Shell Select deli2go and Shell Rimula LD4 Extra products, the company presented a dynamic, innovative image that remained focused on customer satisfaction. The promotional posts about coffee and lubricant products show Shell's efforts to maintain its closeness to the public through lifestyle narratives and automotive education. Although public comments still mention gasoline shortages, the intensity of positive messages repeated through non-fuel promotions helps maintain brand exposure and reinforces the impression that Shell remains active and relevant amid the crisis. This pattern of communication is a form of reputational buffering, where companies use their positive reputation and product variety to protect their corporate image from the negative impacts of a crisis.

In posts on November 18, 2025, and December 7, 2025, there was a shift in the communication context from the crisis phase to the post-crisis recovery phase. The November 18, 2025 post, which highlighted repair services and a free nitrogen filling program, shows that Shell Indonesia maintained its bolstering strategy by emphasizing its commitment to service and direct benefits for customers, even though fuel supplies had not yet fully returned to normal. Meanwhile, the December 7, 2025 post informing the public about the return of fuel availability at a number of gas stations reflects the implementation of a diminish strategy in the form of transparency and reassurance, namely calming the public without making excessive claims. The combination of these two strategies demonstrates the consistency of Shell Indonesia's communication approach in maintaining public trust, while also marking its reputation management efforts during the recovery phase. This pattern shows that crisis communication does not stop when the crisis subsides, but continues as an ongoing process to ensure the stability of public perception and strengthen the company's long-term reputation on social media.

Based on all the posts analyzed, four main themes can be identified in Shell Indonesia's communication pattern during the crisis until the transition phase of fuel supply recovery. First, the theme of reputational buffering, which is the use of non-fuel content to maintain the brand's existence, visibility, and relevance amid operational limitations. Second, the theme of emotional proximity, reflected through the use of empathetic messages, apologies, and educational content that builds emotional closeness with the public. Third, the theme of digital responsiveness, namely Shell's consistency in maintaining the rhythm and sustainability of digital communication during the crisis, so that the public continues to receive positive information and narratives from the company. Fourth, the theme of post-crisis reassurance, which is the effort to calm and reassure the public through gradual information about service recovery and fuel availability without exaggerated claims. These four themes show that Shell Indonesia utilizes social media not only as a means of crisis clarification, but as a strategic instrument to build dialogue, maintain trust, and manage reputation sustainably in the digital era.

During the fuel shortage crisis, Shell Indonesia's communication strategy on Instagram not only focused on clarification and apologies, but also highlighted non-fuel services and products such as Shell Recharge, Shell Auto Care, deli2go, and Shell Rimula LD4 Extra. This communication pattern shows that crisis communication also functions as an effective digital marketing tool, because through these posts, Shell was able to strengthen brand awareness, engagement, and consumer loyalty even though its main product was limited (Felix, 2025). Content analysis shows that the bolstering strategy not only reduced negative public perception, but also highlighted the company's service excellence and innovation, which is in line with the principles of content-based digital marketing. For example, Shell Recharge promotions for electric cars and vehicle maintenance education through Shell Auto Care improve public perception of the company's innovation and added value, while maintaining audience

engagement on digital platforms. In addition, lifestyle content such as Shell Select deli2go builds emotional closeness with consumers, showing that crisis communication and digital marketing strategies can work synergistically, even in challenging situations. This research proves that Shell has successfully integrated reputation management and digital marketing through a proactive, empathetic, and strategically valuable communication approach, making social media an effective tool for maintaining and strengthening brand image amid a crisis (Sitohang, 2025).

Theoretically, the findings of this study are consistent with the basic principles of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) by (W. Timothy Coombs, 2023). According to SCCT, organizations facing low responsibility crises should use communication strategies that emphasize positive values and empathy, rather than self-defense or shifting responsibility. The bolstering and diminish strategies proved to be appropriate because they were able to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis and strengthen public perception of the organization's credibility. In the context of Shell, these strategies effectively minimized reputational risk without creating a defensive impression. By emphasizing innovation and service, Shell successfully turned the crisis narrative into an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to sustainability and customer satisfaction.

When compared to previous studies, Shell's communication pattern shows a paradigm shift in crisis management practices. For example, research by (Juantito Agung Prasetyo, 2022) shows that Pertamina and the Indonesian government rely more on denial and justification strategies in responding to fuel price increases. These strategies may calm the public in the short term, but they do not fully build emotional closeness with the audience. Meanwhile, Shell takes a different approach by using open and humanistic communication, highlighting empathy and positive values. This is in line with the findings of (Hadiyani & Azis, 2024), which emphasizes that openness and consistency of messages are key factors in the success of crisis communication in the digital age. This study also reinforces the view (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007) that reputation is built through a combination of communication credibility and public experience with the organization.

From a corporate communication perspective, the results of this study show that Shell Indonesia has implemented adaptive reputation management principles. The decision to remain active in communication, even when the main product is unavailable, reflects a high awareness of the importance of image continuity. This strategy not only maintains brand presence but also builds brand resilience the ability of a brand to remain relevant and trusted amid unfavorable conditions. Shell utilizes the speed of social media to maintain an emotional connection with the public, turning digital platforms into more than just a means of information dissemination but also a tool for reputation management. Thus, digital communication serves as a bridge connecting the organization with the public in situations of uncertainty.

In terms of effectiveness, Shell's communication strategy can be considered successful based on indicators of public engagement and a predominantly positive tone of voice. The public responded to Shell's posts with empathy and support, rather than anger or harsh criticism. This shows that the public understands the company's position as not being entirely responsible for the crisis, in line with SCCT's predictions. In addition, the visual consistency and non-fuel promotion narrative create an impression of a resilient, flexible, and solution-oriented brand. This image is important for maintaining public trust in the long term, especially when Shell will reintroduce its fuel products.

Overall, the results of this study show that Shell Indonesia's communication strategy during the fuel shortage crisis and the early stages of supply recovery successfully minimized the reputational impact through a combination of bolstering and diminish strategies. The proactive, empathetic, and valueenhancing communication approach reflects the appropriate application of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) in the context of an operational crisis with a low level of responsibility in the digital era. Shell not only focused on crisis control but also leveraged the momentum to strengthen its innovative, adaptive, and humanistic brand narrative through consistent digital communication. These findings contribute theoretically to the development of crisis communication studies in Indonesia, particularly regarding the role of social media as a strategic arena for sustainable reputation management. Thus, Shell Indonesia's communication practices affirm the relevance of SCCT in explaining the handling of modern crises originating from external and non-communicative factors. The

strategic digital communication approach applied by Shell shows that reputation is not solely built through formal statements, but through continuous presence, empathy, and consistent delivery of values. The success of this strategy serves as an important lesson for other organizations that in the digital age, reputation is shaped not only by what is communicated, but also by how organizations remain present, responsive, and build meaningful interactions with the public in the midst of a crisis.

Conclusion

Based on the research questions and the research findings, it can be concluded that Shell Indonesia's crisis communication strategy in responding to the fuel shortage on social media, particularly Instagram, was implemented through the application of two main strategies within the framework of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), namely bolstering and diminishing. The crisis experienced by Shell Indonesia is categorized as a low-responsibility crisis or accidental crisis; therefore, the communication approach used is not defensive but focuses on reinforcing a positive image and reducing negative public perceptions. The bolstering strategy was implemented through content highlighting innovations and non-fuel services such as Shell Recharge, Shell Auto Care, deli2go, workshop services, and lubricant products, which served to maintain the brand's relevance and presence amid supply constraints. Meanwhile, the diminish strategy is implemented through transparent, empathetic, and informative communication in conveying clarifications regarding fuel shortages as well as information on the gradual return of availability.

Furthermore, the crisis communication strategy implemented by Shell Indonesia demonstrates that social media is not only used as a means of clarification but also as a strategic communication space to maintain public trust and build positive perceptions on an ongoing basis. Consistency of messaging, communication intensity, and a humanistic and responsive approach toward the audience have proven effective in mitigating potential reputational crises. Thus, this study confirms that in the context of external crises with a low level of responsibility, organizations can effectively manage crises through a combination of bolstering and diminishing strategies integrated with digital communication. These findings simultaneously reinforce the relevance of SCCT in explaining crisis communication practices in the social media era, and imply that reputation management depends not only on crisis response but also on an organization's ability to maintain proactive, empathetic, and value-oriented communication continuity for the public.

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