



CRISIS COMMUNICATION ON X: AQUA'S RESPONSE TO BOYCOTT ALLEGATIONS OVER THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the crisis communication strategy of the X account @SehatAQUA in responding to the boycott issue triggered by the Israel-Palestine geopolitical controversy. The research applies the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) as a theoretical framework, using a qualitative case study approach. Observations were conducted on the @SehatAQUA account from March 24 to 29, 2025. The primary data analyzed consisted of 14 items: 5 negative public responses, 5 positive public responses, and 4 official posts or press releases from Aqua. Secondary data from news coverage and academic literature were used to strengthen the contextual interpretation. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation. The findings reveal that Aqua adopted a rebuild posture strategy as outlined in SCCT by delivering transparent clarifications, affirming political neutrality, debunking disinformation with UN-based data, collaborating with mainstream media, and promoting digital literacy. This strategy proved effective in shifting public sentiment from negative to more positive and reinforcing a humanitarian-based brand image. The study highlights the importance of a timely, data-driven, and values-oriented crisis communication response in addressing geopolitical pressure in the digital age.

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Keywords:

Crisis Communication Strategy, Digital Activism Geopolitical Boycott, Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The boycott of products perceived to be affiliated with Israel has seen a significant increase in recent years, in line with the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. In Indonesia, this phenomenon is reflected in a 7% decline in the number of products sold from various brands associated with Israel, dropping from 2,407,460 to 2,223,273 units during the period of June 1 to 7, 2024. This trend indicates that growing global awareness and solidarity with Palestine are increasingly influencing consumer behavior, not only through the rejection of certain products but also through massive digital campaigns on social media. The impact of these boycotts presents serious challenges for companies, particularly in maintaining brand image and reputation amid a digital landscape that is becoming more dynamic and sensitive to geopolitical issues.

This research focuses on analyzing the crisis communication strategy implemented by @SehatAQUA's X account in dealing with the boycott issue related to its alleged support for Israel. Using a qualitative and case study approach, this research aims to identify how Aqua manages its digital communication to mitigate the negative impact of the boycott and maintain consumer loyalty. The main questions to be answered in this research are: What is the crisis communication strategy of @SehatAQUA's X account in responding to the boycott issue related to its alleged support for Israel? The answer to this question is expected to provide insight into the effectiveness of crisis communication in the digital era as well as strategic implications for companies in managing reputation amid public pressure [2].

In the face of a reputation crisis triggered by a boycott, crisis communication strategy becomes a crucial aspect in maintaining brand image in the digital era. This research uses Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) as an analytical framework in understanding Aqua's response to the boycott issue. In addition, previous research on crisis communication in social media will be reviewed to identify patterns and effectiveness of strategies used by companies in handling public pressure. By understanding the dynamics of digital communication, crisis mitigation strategies, and the impact of public sentiment on consumer loyalty, this study is expected to provide a strong theoretical foundation in analyzing the communication response of @SehatAQUA's X account in the face of the boycott [3].

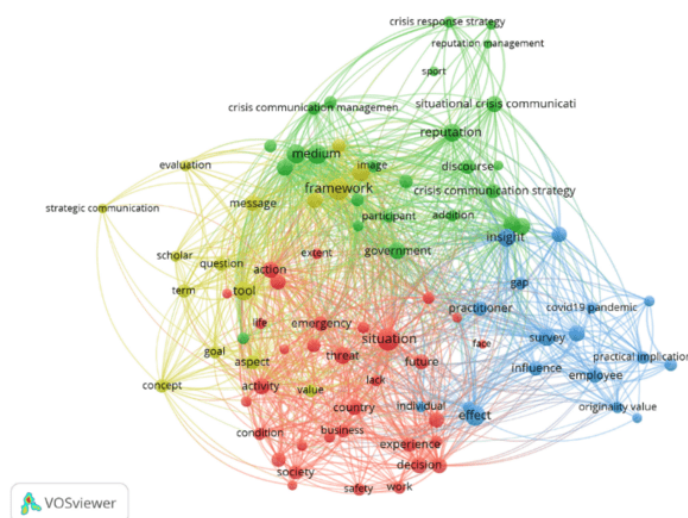


Figure 1. Network analysis of previous research

The figure above shows a network analysis of a thousand studies related to communication crisis management, visualized using a bibliometric mapping approach. The network is divided into groups or clusters that show the close interconnections between key concepts in the discipline. The green cluster, for example, focuses on frameworks, reputation and crisis communication strategy, highlighting the importance of integration between theory and practice to create effective crisis response. Meanwhile, the blue cluster highlights topics such as the COVID-19 pandemic, practical implications, and employee influence, indicating increased attention to modern global crises and their impact on human resources [4].

On the other hand, the red cluster emphasizes more pragmatic and operational aspects, such as crisis situation, threat, decision, and society. This cluster reflects the relationship between emergencies and the need for quick action based on social and business values. In addition, the close connections between clusters show that the study of communication crisis management does not stand alone, but also involves a multidisciplinary approach, such as strategic evaluation, individual experience, and long-term implications for organizational reputation. Thus, this network analysis provides deep insights into the existing knowledge structure and indicates opportunities for further research in the context of modern crises [5].

Fajri Gusnadi, Mohamad Efendi, and Nuriya Apriyana (2024) [6] analyzed how brand hate and brand avoidance influenced consumer decisions to boycott Starbucks in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Using a quantitative approach based on statistical analysis, this study revealed a significant relationship between negative brand sentiment and boycott decisions. However, the research did not specifically address the crisis communication strategies employed by the company in response to public pressure. Similarly, Kh, U., Chalim, A., and Su, F. (2024) [7] explored Indonesian society's response to Israeli products within the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement using a qualitative approach. The study highlighted the role of religious moderation in influencing consumer decisions to participate in boycotts, offering deep insights into the social and ideological factors underlying the movement. The key difference with this study lies in both the analytical focus and research subject. This study examines how Aqua responded to the boycott through digital communication on social media platform X, providing a more strategic and corporate-centered perspective on brand crisis mitigation in the face of geopolitical pressure.

Novera (2019) [8] examined Lion Air's Public Relations (PR) strategy in managing its reputation crisis following the JT610 plane crash, while Pratiwi, Musdalifah, Yusa, and Rahmawati (2022) [9] discussed crisis communication after the Sriwijaya Air SJ182 accident. Both studies emphasized the importance of transparency, rapid response, and appropriate communication strategies in crisis management to maintain public trust. Toha, Anoh, and Iswadi (2023) also contributed to this discourse by investigating PR strategies in addressing negative news regarding the implementation of new technology in Indonesia. While these studies focus on operational and technological crises, the present study addresses a crisis rooted in ideological conflict and public sentiment surrounding the Israel-Palestine issue. This complexity requires a more adaptive and sentiment-aware communication approach, particularly in the digital sphere. Thus, this study contributes new insights into how corporations navigate polarized geopolitical environments through structured, digital-based communication strategies.

However, there is a significant research gap regarding the application of crisis management theory to cases involving political controversy or international conflict. The red cluster, which focuses on operational and pragmatic aspects such as crisis situations, decision-making, and social impact, has less explored issues related to organizations facing boycotts due to their involvement in geopolitical issues, such as support for a particular side in a global conflict. Research on the issue of boycotts against Aqua due to its support for Israel can enrich the existing literature by linking aspects of global reputation, stakeholder relationship management and political impact to crisis communication strategies. This opens up opportunities to investigate how multinational companies respond to socio-political pressures by maintaining public trust and business sustainability.

This study is important due to the growing role of social media as a primary arena for shaping public opinion and disseminating information. The digital interactions occurring through the X @SehatAQUA account demonstrate that corporate communication must be more adaptive and responsive in addressing reputation crises that evolve rapidly and unpredictably. To date, research that specifically examines crisis communication strategies based on Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) within the context of geopolitical boycotts against companies in Indonesia remains very limited. Yet, if such crises are not managed properly, they can result in long-term reputational and economic losses that threaten business sustainability. Therefore, by analyzing the crisis communication strategy implemented by Aqua, this study is expected to contribute to the development of crisis communication theory and provide practical recommendations for companies in formulating more effective communication strategies in an increasingly complex digital era marked by geopolitical pressure.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to explore holistically and contextually the crisis communication strategy implemented by the X @SehatAQUA social media account in responding to the boycott issue related to the Israel–Palestine geopolitical controversy. This approach is selected for its ability to uncover the dynamics of crisis communication in depth, while taking into account the social, political, and cultural complexities of the digital environment.

The data sources in this research consist of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through non-participatory observation of the X @SehatAQUA account from March 24 to March 29, 2025. A total of 10 data points were observed, comprising 5 user responses expressing opposition to Aqua, 5 user responses in support, and 4 official posts from Aqua. Secondary data were gathered from mass media reports and relevant academic literature to provide contextual depth and strengthen the interpretation of the primary data [10].

Data collection techniques included documentation and observation of posts and interactions on the X @SehatAQUA account. The data were analyzed using manual thematic analysis conducted directly by the researcher without the use of software tools. The analysis followed the model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, involving three core stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Thematic coding was applied to group data into categories such as clarification, defensive narrative, public criticism, and emotional responses [11].

To ensure the credibility of the findings, source triangulation was applied by cross-referencing primary social media data with secondary sources from mainstream media and scholarly references [12]. The entire analytical procedure is illustrated through a process flow diagram, outlining the steps from observation and thematic categorization to the final interpretation in a systematic and transparent manner.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Public Sentiment: Communicative Phenomena in the Aqua Boycott Discourse on Media X

In a digital era characterized by the rapid flow of information, public sentiment becomes a crucial element in shaping the discourse of corporate crises, especially in the context of boycotts as a form of collective protest. Social media X, as a dynamic discourse space, reflects the public response to the Aqua boycott issue, which is triggered by complex geopolitical linkages. Through digital interactions ranging from comments, retweets, to the use of hashtags, the public not only articulates their opinions, but also builds narratives that can influence brand perception and legitimacy in the public sphere. Therefore, analyzing public sentiment in this discourse is fundamental to understanding communication patterns, the company's strategy in handling the crisis, as well as the effectiveness of the response given by Aqua in an effort to reduce the reputational impact caused [13].

Table 1. Public Sentiment towards the Aqua Boycott Issue

User	Release Date	Sentiment	Tweets (translated from Bahasa)	Description
@valenagi	August 27, 2024	Negative	Sorry min, I boycotted Aqua as a family. Ente supports israel anyway	The user stated that he had boycotted Aqua as a family because he thought the company supported Israel.
@suryolaksono97	August 2, 2024	Negative	Danone products affiliated with Israel, hiding with camouflage sponsoring sports... cheap trick 🤔🤔🤔	Accusing Danone of being affiliated with Israel and criticizing the sports sponsorship strategy as camouflage.
@masasigess	21 Indonesia 2024	Negative	AQUADULU❌ AQUA IN BOYCOTT✅👍	A clarion call to boycott Aqua.
@BranieBranddy	21 Indonesia 2024	Negative	I support the national team, but not with aqua because I'm pro zionees.	Supporting the national team but rejecting Aqua because it is considered pro-Zionist.
@sitijuarai65	21 Indonesia	Negative	Including Aqua, the temptation is	Considering Aqua as a product

	2024		because it is one of the boycotters affiliated with Israel.	worth boycotting due to its affiliation with Israel.
@AndreFare	29 Indonesia 2024	Negative	Boycott and don't give space to Jewish-affiliated products.	Calls for a continued boycott of products deemed affiliated with Indonesia.
@sofyanhamdani77	November 16, 2024	Positive	totally agree, aqua pro-palestine's firm stance should be emulated, continued success 🙌	Providing support for Aqua's pro-Palestine stance and giving appreciation.
@recehtapisayang	November 16, 2024	Positive	Here, there is a real action like this! Come on, let's all brands hopefully more like aqua yaah 🤍	Invite other brands to follow Danone/Aqua's steps against Israeli aggression and support Palestine.
@icaaamir	November 17, 2024	Positive	Tuuh who yesterday consumed the hoax hayooo .. Read this news so you know which one is valid	Reminding others not to fall for hoaxes related to Danone affiliation, encouraging them to seek valid information.
@__inijasmine	November 17, 2024	Positive	In the midst of this political crisis, salute Danone's courage to oppose military aggression to support humanity.	Appreciate Danone's courage to oppose Israeli military aggression in support of humanity.
@isohadi608	November 16, 2024	Positive	Now you all believe me that Danone is pro-Palestine.	Convince the audience that Danone is in favor of Palestine after the clarification of information.

The public discourse surrounding Aqua's alleged affiliation with the Israel-Palestine geopolitical conflict reflects the heightened sensitivity of Indonesian society toward global humanitarian issues. Sharp polarization on social media, particularly on the X (formerly Twitter) platform, reveals that the majority of netizens initially formed negative assumptions about Danone. Users such as @valenagi and @suryolaksono97 explicitly called for a boycott of Aqua, which they viewed as supporting Israeli political interests. This narrative serves as a form of consumer resistance grounded in solidarity with Palestine and positions the issue as a moral benchmark for product consumption [14].

This perspective was reinforced by other users like @masasigess, @BranieBranddy, and @sitjuarai65, who perceived the consumption of Aqua products as indirect support for Zionist agendas. This communication pattern illustrates the emergence of public opinion rooted in collective identity and strong ideological values, in which the Palestinian issue is viewed as an extension of Indonesian society's moral responsibility. It highlights how value-based considerations can shape market segmentation and influence purchasing decisions beyond mere product quality preferences.

Shift in public opinion occurred after Danone released an official statement through mainstream media expressing support for Palestinian independence and opposition to all forms of Israeli military aggression. Tweets from users such as @sofyanhamdani77 and @recehtapisayang reflected a positive shift in sentiment. This demonstrates that the Indonesian public is highly responsive to clarifying information, especially when delivered through credible media outlets. Timely and data-driven information interventions have proven effective in reversing dominant narratives that were previously damaging to the brand's image [15].

Further analysis indicates that social media serves as a powerful discursive space that shapes public perception. The early spread of misinformation, as highlighted by user @icaaamir, established a dominant stream of information before it was corrected by official media reports. Meanwhile, support from users like @__inijasmine and @isohadi608 underscored the importance of corporate moral positioning. Danone's ethical response was viewed not merely as a communication strategy, but as a demonstration of the company's authentic commitment to humanitarian values. This suggests that Indonesian consumers now evaluate corporations not only based on commercial factors, but also on their ethical stance regarding global issues [16].

The resulting polarization illustrates how crises of this nature present significant reputational challenges for multinational corporations such as Danone. Without prompt and appropriate communication strategies, such crises may escalate into long-term reputational and economic losses. Within the framework of crisis communication theory and agenda-setting, those who control the narrative early on hold significant influence over public opinion. The Aqua case demonstrates that delayed

clarification creates a vacuum for misinformation to shape negative perceptions at scale. Therefore, companies operating in Indonesia must recognize the importance of fast, transparent, and ethical communication when responding to crises involving humanitarian issues.

Table 2. Communicative Phenomena in the Aqua Boycott Discourse

No.	Communication Phenomena	Description
1	Polarization of Public Opinion	There was a split in opinion between the group that supported the Danone/Aqua boycott and the group that supported the company after the clarification of information.
2	Crisis Communication	Danone faced a crisis of public confidence due to assumptions of affiliation with Israel, which was then responded to through official clarification to reduce negative sentiment.
3	Spread of Disinformation	The public was consumed by inaccurate information about Danone's affiliation, thus reinforcing the boycott narrative without prior confirmation.
4	Clarification of Information	Clarifications from the mainstream media and Danone's official statement were able to turn the public's negative perception into a positive one, creating a shift in sentiment.
5	Moral-based Consumer Resistance	The decision to boycott Aqua was driven by solidarity with Palestine and the humanitarian values that consumers hold dear.
6	Brand Reputation Management	Danone's communication strategy is important in maintaining consumer confidence, especially in the midst of an information crisis that has the potential to damage the brand image.

The public communication phenomenon surrounding the alleged affiliation of Danone's brand, particularly Aqua, with the Israel-Palestine conflict reflects the complexity of crisis communication dynamics in the digital age. The sharp polarization that emerged on the X platform (formerly Twitter) demonstrates that Indonesian society is highly responsive to global humanitarian issues, especially those related to solidarity with Palestine. The initial spread of negative assumptions, amplified by boycott calls from users such as @valenagi and @suryolaksono97, illustrates that social media is no longer merely a space for interpersonal communication but has evolved into a primary arena for shaping public discourse that directly impacts consumer behavior [17].

In the context of crisis communication, Danone faced a significant challenge in managing public trust due to its delayed clarification. The early information vacuum allowed disinformation and speculative narratives to spread, reinforcing negative sentiment toward Aqua. Numerous boycott calls—though not always based on verified facts—created perceptual bias aligned with the collective values of pro-Palestinian communities. This underscores the importance of speed and accuracy in crisis response, while also highlighting the urgent need for enhanced digital literacy to reduce the impact of hoaxes in public opinion formation.

A shift in public opinion began to emerge after mainstream media outlets published Danone's official statement declaring its opposition to Israeli military aggression and support for Palestinian independence. This clarification triggered a shift in sentiment, as reflected in tweets by users like @sofyanhamdani77 and @rechehtapisayang, who began to express appreciation for Danone's stance. These findings suggest that while the public may be quick to react emotionally to sensitive issues, they are also receptive to clarification—provided it is delivered transparently and through credible sources. Value-driven communication strategies thus play a critical role in restoring public trust that has been previously undermined [18].

One of the most significant dimensions of this case is the moral and political value-based consumer resistance. The boycott of Aqua is not merely a rejection of a product, but rather a form of political expression, highlighting that today's consumers also act as social agents. In this context, global corporations like Danone are expected to maintain a consistent and ethical stance on humanitarian issues. Brand reputation is no longer defined solely by product quality but also by the value alignment that the public interprets as a company's moral commitment to social justice.

Within the framework of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), Danone's response to this crisis can be categorized as the application of a *rebuild posture* strategy. Although Danone is not

directly involved in the conflict, public perception places the company in the *preventable cluster*—where the organization is assumed to have control over its business affiliations. Therefore, strategies such as clarifying with credible data, communicating humanitarian values, and collaborating with mainstream media are appropriate measures for regaining public trust. This approach confirms the importance of aligning crisis response strategies with the type of crisis faced, in order to minimize long-term reputational damage to the organization [19].

Crisis Communication Strategy of @SehatAqua X account in Responding to Boycott Issue

Crisis communication strategy is a crucial element in managing reputation and public trust, especially for multinational corporations facing social pressure due to global geopolitical issues. The official X account @SehatAqua, as a digital representation of the Aqua brand under Danone Indonesia, demonstrated a structured strategic response in dealing with the reputation crisis triggered by the boycott issue related to allegations of affiliation with Israel. In this context, @SehatAqua not only functions as an information channel, but also as a crisis management instrument that actively builds counter narratives, straightens disinformation, and strengthens the company's position in line with the official stance of the Indonesian government in supporting Palestinian independence. Through a systematic and transparency-based approach, the account implements various communication strategies, including public clarification, assertion of the company's political independence, and the presentation of credible data to confirm their commitment to humanitarian values. This chapter will analytically describe how @SehatAqua managed crisis communication amidst the polarization of public opinion and the intensity of disinformation spread on social media [20].

Table 3. Aqua's Communication Strategy

Strategy	Excerpt	Description
Clarification through official social media	"In line with the Indonesian Government's stance, AQUA opposes all forms of aggression including Israeli aggression in Palestine and supports the Indonesian government's efforts in fighting for Palestinian independence with concrete actions."	Aqua publicly expressed its support for Palestine and opposition to Israeli aggression, in line with government policy, in an effort to reduce negative opinions and restore public trust.
Assertion of company independence	"As a private entity, Danone has no affiliation with politics anywhere." - Arif Mujahidin, Corporate Communication Director Danone Indonesia	Danone emphasized its position as a private company with no political affiliation, dismissing allegations of ties to Israel that sparked a boycott campaign on social media.
Debunking disinformation using valid data	"This data also refutes the disinformation circulating which states that Danone is included in companies that support the Israeli occupation of Palestine." - Arif Mujahidin	The company refers to the UN Human Rights Commission data as a credible reference to deny Danone's involvement in supporting Israel, as a step to strengthen the credibility of their claims.
Positioning through mainstream media	"Danone is not included in the list of companies supporting Israel. Danone has actually carried out a series of initiatives to oppose all forms of Israeli military aggression and support Palestinian independence." - Tempo	Danone uses mainstream media such as Tempo to expand the reach of official clarifications, while building positive perceptions and reducing boycotts that develop wildly in the community.
Educate the public on the risks of hoaxes	"If it is not critical and wrongly targeted, it will cause new problems such as hoaxes that say Danone is an Israeli product." - Tempo	Danone and the media warned the public to be more selective in receiving information, emphasizing the importance of information literacy to avoid the spread of hoaxes and unnecessary negative impacts on the company.

The crisis communication strategy implemented by the official @SehatAqua account in responding to the boycott issue shows a systematic and planned handling pattern. The crisis faced by Aqua stems from allegations of Danone's affiliation, Aqua's parent company, with Israel, which sparked public outrage and gave birth to boycott calls on various social media platforms. In this context, @SehatAqua took a position as a proactive crisis communication actor by utilizing social media as the main channel for clarification. The first step they took was to issue an official statement emphasizing the company's stance against Israeli aggression in Palestine, in line with the Indonesian Government's foreign policy. This statement was prominently displayed in the @SehatAqua account upload, demonstrating the company's commitment to humanitarian values while building a narrative that supported their position in the eyes of the Indonesian public.

Furthermore, @SehatAqua also implements a strategy of affirming the company's independence to distance itself from all forms of political affiliation, both with Israel and other entities. In various official statements delivered by Arif Mujahidin, as Corporate Communication Director of Danone Indonesia, the company explicitly clarified that Danone is a private entity that has no political attachment. This statement aims to ease public unrest by emphasizing that Danone's business decisions are not based on certain geopolitical affiliations. This strategy is important in the context of crisis management because it is able to reduce public perception that consumption of Aqua products is an indirect form of support for politically criticized entities.

The company's efforts to refute disinformation are also a key pillar in their crisis communication strategy. By referring to data from the UN Human Rights Commission, which is a credible source on geopolitical and human rights issues, Danone strengthens the legitimacy of their claim that the company is not involved in supporting Israel's occupation of Palestine. This data-based approach reflects an evidence-based communication strategy, which is considered more effective in restoring public trust, especially in the context of a digital society that is increasingly critical of information without validation.

On the other hand, conveying the company's position through mainstream media such as Tempo and Detik is the next strategic step. By utilizing the credibility of mainstream media, Danone expands the reach of their message to a wider public outside the social media community. This strategy is not only aimed at spreading clarification, but also forming a new framing that emphasizes the company's alignment with universal human values, namely supporting Palestinian independence and opposing Israeli military aggression. Strengthening the narrative through mainstream media is also proof that the company understands the importance of building public opinion in layers across various communication platforms [21].

Not only that, public education about the dangers of spreading hoaxes is also part of the crisis communication strategy. In a statement published by Tempo, it was emphasized that people need to be critical in receiving information related to the boycott, because if not, it will cause new problems such as the spread of hoaxes that corner parties that are not actually related. This educational strategy shows the company's role not only as a business entity, but also as an actor that contributes to improving people's digital literacy. This approach aims to reduce polarization and create a climate for more rational discussion in the public sphere.

Based on this analysis, it can be seen that all strategies used by @SehatAqua reflect the basic principles of crisis communication management, namely transparency, speed, and accuracy of information. They not only responded to the allegations with denials, but also built alternative narratives that supported the company's positive image. This is important given the characteristics of social media as a space that is fast, massive, and prone to the spread of misinformation [22].

If further analyzed using the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) theory developed by W. Timothy Coombs, this case shows that Danone/Aqua is placed by the public in the preventable cluster. In this category, the company is considered to have control or responsibility for the crisis, although in reality they may be victims of disinformation. In this kind of situation, SCCT recommends a rebuild strategy, which is an action that aims to rebuild public trust through explanation, compensation, or apology. Danone chose the rebuild posture strategy through public clarification, affirmation of company values, and concrete actions in support of Palestine, all designed to reduce the public's negative attribution of the company.

In accordance with the SCCT framework, the rebuild approach taken by Danone through the @SehatAqua account is very appropriate to reduce the level of reputational threats faced. The strategies they apply are oriented towards restoring trust and reconstructing the corporate image by showing commitment to human values. SCCT emphasizes that in cases where the organization is considered responsible for the crisis, the company must show real action, transparency, and empathy, all of which are reflected in Danone/Aqua's strategic communication during this crisis [23].

4. DISCUSSION

The Israeli-Palestinian geopolitical conflict has triggered a wave of global boycotts against companies perceived as supporting Israel's political agenda, including in Indonesia. This phenomenon places multinational corporations such as Danone/Aqua in a complex reputation crisis situation, where communication responses must not only meet local expectations but also consider global sensitivities. The Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) by Coombs (2007) is a relevant framework to analyze Aqua's strategy, as it emphasizes the fit between the type of crisis and the organization's response. In this context, Aqua was faced with a preventable cluster crisis, where the public perceived the company to have moral responsibility despite not being directly involved in the conflict. SCCT recommends rebuilding strategies for situations like this, such as apologies, clarifications and value commitments, which are reflected in Aqua's move to assert political independence and support Palestine.

Globally, companies like Starbucks and McDonald's are facing similar pressures. For example, the study by Fajri Gusnadi et al. (2024) showed that the boycott against Starbucks was triggered by brand hate due to perceived support for Israel, but the study did not examine crisis communication strategies. In contrast to Starbucks, Aqua uses a proactive approach by aligning its stance with Indonesian government policy, creating synergy between national interests and corporate responsibility. This is in line with the findings of Toha et al. (2023) that transparency and coordination with local authorities are key to crisis mitigation. However, Aqua's complexity was higher as it involved geopolitical dimensions that influenced religious identity-based consumer sentiment and transnational solidarity.

The bibliometric analysis in Figures 1 confirms that crisis management literature is still focused on operational cases (e.g., plane crashes) or global health (COVID-19), while geopolitical issues such as boycotts are rarely explored. Research by Kh et al. (2024) on the BDS movement in Indonesia highlights the role of religious moderation in boycotts, but does not address corporate strategies. Aqua fills this gap by combining SCCT posture rebuilding and value diplomacy, such as the use of UN data to set the record straight on disinformation. This approach reinforces Novera's (2019) finding that source credibility is a key determinant of successful clarification in the post-truth era.

Comparisons with global cases show similar patterns. When Unilever was faced with a boycott in India due to a political controversy, the company used denial and rectification strategies (Coombs, 2007), but failed because it was perceived as not empathetic. In contrast, Aqua adopted a strategy of mortification (indirect apologizing) by expressing opposition to Israeli aggression, which was in line with the dominant values of Indonesian society. This response demonstrates the adaptation of SCCT in non-Western contexts, where alignment on humanitarian issues becomes a legitimizing tool.

The involvement of mainstream media in Aqua's strategy (Table 3) also reflects the findings of Pratiwi et al. (2022) that multi-channel communication accelerates reputation recovery. However, Aqua went a step further by integrating digital literacy education, an innovation rarely seen in previous research. This step not only reduces hoaxes but also builds the company's image as a literacy agent, which is in line with the concept of corporate social advocacy (CSA) in modern crisis communication.

Nevertheless, theoretical application must be supported by empirical indicators to measure effectiveness. One critical dimension is the observable shift in public sentiment on social media after the company's clarification. Initially, user narratives were predominantly accusatory and emotionally charged, calling for a boycott due to perceived support for Israel. However, after Aqua issued an official statement aligning with the Indonesian government and rejecting Israeli military aggression, a perceptible transformation occurred in the digital discourse.

Several user comments on platform X illustrate this shift. For instance, user @icaaamir wrote:

"Tuuh who yesterday consumed the hoax hayooo .. Read this news so you know which one is valid."

This statement reflects a cognitive shift a transition from misinformation to verified understanding. Similarly, user @__inijasmine tweeted:

"In the midst of this political crisis, salute Danone's courage to oppose military aggression to support humanity."

This indicates affective realignment, where a brand is re-evaluated and supported for its perceived moral stance. Another example comes from @recehtapisayang, who posted:

"Here, there is a real action like this! Come on, let's all brands hopefully more like aqua yaah 🍀 "

This suggests value contagion, in which trust in a brand expands into an aspirational benchmark for others.

These digital responses signify that Aqua's communication strategy was not only heard but internalized and amplified by the public. This aligns with McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda setting theory, which asserts that media framing influences public opinion. In this case, the first narrative (accusation) dominated until Aqua intervened with strategic communication supported by credible data, shifting the discourse in its favor.

This study presents a novelty by integrating the geopolitical dimension into the SCCT framework, which has been mostly applied to domestic operational or reputational crises. The findings show that in the context of a global boycott, the rebuild strategy must be combined with value diplomacy (alignment with state policies), narrative reinforcement (use of mainstream media), and digital literacy advocacy. In addition, this research reveals the role of social media not only as a crisis trigger, but also as a nation-branding arena where multinationals must balance global identity and local sensitivity. This theoretical contribution enriches SCCT by incorporating geopolitical variables and digital activism, while its practical implications offer a glocalization-based crisis communication model for companies in emerging markets.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that Aqua's crisis communication strategy through the X account @SehatAQUA in responding to the boycott issue related to the Israel–Palestine conflict effectively applied the rebuild posture approach from Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). Through transparent clarification, affirmation of political neutrality, the use of credible UN data, and collaboration across social and mainstream media channels, Aqua managed to suppress negative sentiment and reinforce a brand identity rooted in humanitarian values. The implementation of a glocalization strategy that aligned Indonesia's pro-Palestinian position with global human rights advocacy further enhanced emotional resonance and brand legitimacy. These findings enrich SCCT's applicability by incorporating geopolitical dynamics and digital activism as critical dimensions of crisis communication in emerging markets.

However, this study is limited to observations on the X platform and does not account for other communication channels such as Instagram, YouTube, or press releases, which may have provided a more comprehensive picture of Aqua's response. Future research should expand the scope to include multiple platforms and longitudinal analysis to better assess strategy development over time. In practice, this study recommends the importance of real-time sentiment monitoring and training for PR teams in geopolitical sensitivity, enabling companies to respond quickly and accurately in politically charged situations.

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