

Between Trust and Crisis: SCCT in Local Indonesian Beauty Brands Response Overclaim

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Abstract

Purpose: This study analyst the crisis communication strategies implemented by two major local Indonesian beauty brands, Azarine and The Originote, as both represent significant cases of overclaim crisis with a large digital audience base. The study primarily focuses on the application Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) to understand crisis communication responses chosen by each brand. Additionally, the study seeks to determine the effectiveness of this approach in maintaining public trust.

Methods: This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach with content analysis methods. Data was collected from official brand posts on Instagram and TikTok during the crisis period. Crisis communication strategies were classified based on the SCCT model. The coding process was carried out manually by two experts to ensure the accuracy of the categorization.

Findings: Azarine tends to minimize attribution of responsibility through a combination of denial, justification, compensation, and ingratiation. Meanwhile, The Originote emphasizes acknowledgment of mistakes and commitment to improvement through justification, compensation, ingratiation, and apology. The analysis results indicate that Azarine strategy is more effective in maintaining brand reputation stability and preserving public trust during the early stages of a crisis, while The Originote strategy has a greater impact on long-term image recovery through a more open and accommodating approach.

Originality: This study expands SCCT by applying to overclaim crises in the Indonesian beauty industry within the context of marketing communication. This context remains under-researched, and the study examines its implications for recovering public trust in digital environments.

Keywords: Crisis Communication, SCCT, Overclaim, Brand Reputation, Beauty Brand.

Introduction

In the domain of digital marketing communication, crises are no longer regarded as mere technical or managerial events. Instead, they are increasingly understood as intricate and evolving communication phenomena (Coombs, 2023). This phenomenon is particularly salient in the context of social media, where the rapid dissemination of public perception regarding a crisis can profoundly influence brand reputation and loyalty. Social media platforms function as both conduits for information and as forums for the formation of opinions, thereby influencing public perception on a broad scale. This has led to an increase in the complexity of crisis management on social media, which is characterized by the need for rapid response, transparency, and the implementation of adaptive communication strategies (Cheng, 2018). The overclaim phenomenon experienced by the Azarine and The Originote brands is an example of a crisis stemming from communication deemed misleading to the public. This phenomenon has significant implications for the decline of consumer trust and the potential deterioration of brand reputation. Overclaim can be defined as a practice by brands that make exaggerated,

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inaccurate, or untrue claims or statements about their products. The phenomenon of overclaiming has also been shown to raise concerns among consumers. This is due to the fact that overclaiming can be misleading and can damage consumer trust in a product (Cheng, 2018; Ozdemir et al., 2020; W. Wu et al., 2021). The beauty industry in Indonesia has witnessed an escalation in incidents of overclaiming, particularly among the younger demographic with a high consumption of skincare products. This demographic group is often identified as the primary target due to its susceptibility to trends that emerge on social media platforms, including recommendations disseminated by influencers or prominent figures (Fitriati & Siwi, 2023; Hassan et al., 2021). In this context, brands frequently employ exaggerated or scientifically unverified claims to garner market attention. Consequently, concerns have emerged regarding product information transparency and the escalating potential for a trust crisis between consumers and companies (Abu-Rahme et al., 2025; Román et al., 2023).

The phenomenon of skincare overclaim has become a serious concern among the public, especially after a well-known cosmetic doctor on social media, known as dokter detektif, openly criticized several local brands for making excessive claims not supported by sufficient scientific evidence (Djamzuri & Mulyana, 2024). These posts rapidly disseminated, inciting extensive discourse across various digital platforms and prompting consumers to adopt a more discerning approach in evaluating the components and efficacy of the skincare products they utilize (Adil et al., 2024; Komari, 2023). The findings from Kompas.id in October 2024 serve to further substantiate the tangible impact of this issue. The report indicates that brands found to have made overclaims experienced a drastic decline in sales, up to 82%. Conversely, brands that were regarded as more transparent and honest with consumers, such as Hanasui, experienced a substantial sales surge of 252%. In the contemporary consumer landscape, purchasing decisions are no longer solely influenced by marketing claims. Instead, consumers increasingly consider the credibility of the brand and the scientific validity of its claims. This underscores the significance of implementing an effective and agile crisis communication strategy, especially in the context of addressing public criticism on social media platforms (Khoirina et al., 2025; Kim & Oh, 2020).

The trend of overclaim in the beauty industry is becoming increasingly common as consumption of skincare products rises, particularly among younger generations. Generation Z, as consumers who grew up in the digital age, are most vulnerable to this practice due to their high exposure to social media, influencers, and online ads that often make enticing claims without strong scientific evidence (Fitriati & Siwi, 2023). This statement is supported by findings from the ZAP Beauty Index 2024, which shows that 54.6% of Gen Z respondents consider product claims to be one of the most important factors in choosing beauty products, and 43.7% even consider them to be very important. This data indicates that the majority of Gen Z consumers prioritize product claims as the primary source of trust in a brand. However, this trust can be a double-edged sword if brands fail to integrate transparency or honesty into their communication narratives.

Two prominent local beauty brands in Indonesia, Azarine and The Originote, have been subject to public scrutiny due to allegations of exaggerating the ingredients in their products. The case came to light after a cosmetic doctor known as 'Doctor Detective' published laboratory test results on TikTok, which showed discrepancies between the claimed product composition and the actual ingredients detected. Azarine asserts that its 'Retinol Smooth Glowing Serum' contains 1% encapsulated retinol, as explicitly indicated on the product's packaging. However, laboratory test results indicated that the detected retinol content was found to be minimal, measuring at only 0.00096%, which is

significantly below the claimed amount. A comparable circumstance transpired with The Originote 'Retinol B3 Serum,' which was formerly alleged to contain Retinol, Hydroxypinacolone Retinoate, and Retinal. However, laboratory testing failed to detect any traces of these ingredients.

This finding elicited a substantial public reaction, particularly on social media platforms, giving rise to inquiries regarding the brand's credibility and integrity in its communication of product information. The issue escalated into a significant reputation crisis, as the public felt deceived by unfounded claims (Mamun et al., 2023). This case exemplifies the repercussions of overclaim practices, which not only transgress marketing communication ethics but also have the potential to erode consumer trust in the brand over time. Beyond its role in instigating a reputational crisis, the overclaim case also initiated a significant discourse on the pressing need for transparency and accountability within the beauty industry, particularly in the context of elevated consumer expectations concerning product authenticity and efficacy (Lee et al., 2023; Moses et al., 2023). In the digital context, consumers now have broad access to information and the capacity to verify it independently, even organizing public opinion through social media channels (Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2025; Hochstein et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2024).

In order to address these challenges, it is essential to develop a comprehensive understanding of how brands should respond to crises strategically. This phenomenon is of growing importance in the realm of digital marketing communications, where each public interaction has the potential to exert a substantial influence on brand value (Halima et al., 2021; Nadeau et al., 2020; Robson & Farquhar, 2021). A multitude of studies underscore the pivotal role that a brand's capacity to select a communication approach commensurate with the nature and perception of the crisis it confronts plays in determining its efficacy in managing such situations (Domschat et al., 2023; Marynissen & Lauder, 2020; Nuortimo et al., 2024). Consequently, it is imperative to examine crisis situations not solely as operational failures but also as communication challenges that must be addressed with structured, theory-based strategies. In this context, Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) assumes particular significance in the development of crisis communication strategies that are precise and effective.

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is a strategic framework in the field of Public Relations. It is designed to help communication practitioners choose the most appropriate response when facing a crisis. The aim of this framework is to minimize reputational damage and maintain good relations with the public. The present theory was first introduced by W. Timothy Coombs in 1995 through an initial publication discussing attribution-based crisis communication. As it evolved, SCCT was refined and gained widespread attention in the early 2000s, particularly after the publication of Coombs' book *Ongoing Crisis Communication: The process of planning, management, and response* is of paramount importance. This theory is grounded in Attribution Theory, which explains how individuals interpret events by assigning causality and responsibility. Public reactions to an organization during a crisis are shaped by perceptions of what caused the event and who is accountable (Coombs, 2023).

According to this theory, each crisis possesses unique characteristics that influence public response. This categorization is predicated on the level of responsibility attributed, which is divided into three primary categories: the Victim Cluster, characterized as the victim of the crisis with a low level of responsibility. The Accidental Cluster, attributed to unintentional errors with a moderate level of responsibility. The Preventable Cluster, crises that could have been averted due to organizational negligence or errors with a high level of responsibility (Coombs, 2023). The comprehension of these crisis categories facilitates the selection of suitable communication strategies by brands, thereby

mitigating potential adverse impacts on their image. Furthermore, SCCT underscores the pivotal role of organizational responses in shaping public trust levels. The magnitude of responsibility attributed to the brand directly correlates with the severity of the threat to its reputation. Consequently, the implementation of proactive, accountable, and trust-recovery-focused strategies becomes imperative (Fatma & Khan, 2023; S.-H. Lee & Jeong, 2022; Y. Zhao et al., 2021).

As previously outlined, a crisis refers to the perceived occurrence of an unexpected event that threatens the essential relationships between an organization and its stakeholders (Pharaoh & Visser, 2024). This suggests that the presence of a crisis is not solely determined by the occurrence itself, but also by the manner in which the organization conveys the situation to the public (Coombs, 2023). In such circumstances, a brand's failure to provide an adequate response can serve to exacerbate the crisis, as negative public perceptions will intensify if not managed with an effective communication strategy. This is of particular importance because a response that does not align with public expectations or emotions can actually exacerbate the organization's image. Recognizing this, Coombs (2023) proposed a set of communication strategies that organizations can use to respond to crises appropriately. These strategies are derived from the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), which aligns response selection with the level of responsibility attributed to the organization by the public, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of trust restoration and the maintenance of long-term stakeholder relationships. This strategy is then divided into three main parts, namely reminding, ingratiation, and victimization, with the aim that the crisis response does not only focus on factual or technical aspects. However, it also touches on the emotional and reputational dimensions so that it can create a stronger emotional bond between the organization and the public (Coombs, 2023).

This theory delineates the relationship between the nature of the crisis, its historical antecedents, and the organizational responsibility that is incumbent upon the entity in question, thereby providing a framework for the determination of an optimal crisis communication strategy. However, the implementation of SCCT in the context of marketing communication, particularly in the realm of local Indonesian brands, has remained relatively under-researched. Nevertheless, social media has emerged as the predominant platform for interaction between brands and consumers, necessitating that crisis communication strategies be both expeditious and targeted in order to influence public perception. A preliminary investigation of SCCT in the context of public relations has been conducted. However, there is a paucity of studies that have explicitly situated SCCT within marketing communication strategies that are oriented towards the recovery of long-term brand reputation (Akcan & Merdin, 2025; X. Zhao et al., 2020). Therefore, the objective of this study is to address this lacuna by analyzing how the crisis communication strategies implemented by Azarine and The Originote are mapped within the SCCT framework. Furthermore, this study proposes a context specific crisis communication model for social media that aligns with the characteristics and expectations of contemporary digital audiences. The integration of SCCT with the dynamics of social media interaction is a key objective of this study, with the aim of providing a theory based and practically applicable framework for managing brand trust and brand reputation recovery after a crisis.

Methods

This study employs a descriptive quantitative approach with quantitative content analysis to evaluate the crisis communication strategies employed by Azarine and The Originote in addressing overclaim issues on Instagram and Tiktok official account. The

data was collected through the documentation of official account posts relevant to the overclaim issue during the crisis period. The coding process was executed by two independent coders based on a coding book developed from the SCCT theory. The evaluation process employed a dichotomous scale (1=agree/strategy appears, 0=disagree/strategy does not appear) to assess the implementation of crisis communication strategies. These strategies were categorized based on the three SCCT strategy clusters: deny, diminish, and rebuild. The subsequent analysis of the data employed quantitative descriptive analysis, which is expressed as the percentage of occurrence of each strategy for each brand. The inter-coder validity of the data was assessed through the implementation of the Percentage Agreement reliability test.

The present study employed a unit of analysis consisting of five social media posts from each brand's official Instagram and TikTok account. The posts were selected from Azarine and The Originote, which directly responded to the issue of overclaiming after public criticism. The selection of posts was made purposively, with the objective of identifying content that demonstrated a high degree of relevance to the ongoing crisis. The coding process was conducted by two independent coders to ensure the objectivity of the assessment of the crisis communication strategies implemented. The coded data was subsequently processed using Microsoft Excel to facilitate frequency tabulation and percentage calculations of the strategies occurrence within the SCCT clusters. The results of this analysis form the foundation for evaluating the trends in crisis communication approaches employed by each brand in strategically responding to public pressure.

Results

Azarine and The Originote Crisis Communication Strategy in Responding to the Overclaim Issue

Table 1. Distribution of Azarine and The Originote Crisis Communication Strategy

Strategies	Azarine						The Originote			
	1		1		2		3		4	
	P1	P1	P2	P1	P2	P1	P2	P1	P1	P2
Deny Strategies										
Denial	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Attack The Accuser	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scapegoating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diminish Strategies										
Excuse	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Justification	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Rebuild Strategies										
Compensation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Apology	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Bolstering Strategies										
Reminder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ingratiation	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Victimage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: 1=Post 1, 2=Post 2, 3=Post 3, P1=Coder 1, P2=Coder 2, 1=agree/strategy appears, 0=disagree/strategy does not appears

Table 1 shows that distribution of Azarine and The Originote Crisis Communication Strategy based on the analysis conducted by two expert coders. The strategies used by Azarine were Denial, Justification, Compensation, and Ingratiation. These findings indicate that Azarine tends to combine denial, justification, reputation restoration, and public relations strengthening strategies in its crisis response. This pattern indicates that Azarine not only seeks to minimize the perception of error through denial and justification but also strives to restore public trust through compensation and an emotional approach that fosters closeness. Other strategies were not identified at all by either coder. The consistency of these results indicates a high level of agreement between coders regarding the patterns of crisis communication strategies employed by Azarine, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings.

The employment of denial and justification strategies indicates an effort on Azarine part to mitigate public accountability by offering clarifications and rationalizations. This step is intended to mitigate direct pressure on its reputation while preserving its image as a credible brand. In its denial strategy, Azarine explicitly denies allegations of overclaiming by asserting that its product claims are in accordance with applicable regulations and supported by scientific evidence. This assertion is further substantiated by official social media disclosures, which appear to be part of a broader initiative to shape public perception of the developing issue, presenting it as inaccurate. This strategy has been demonstrated to facilitate a shift in public focus from the allegations to the company's perspective, thereby mitigating the potential for reputational damage. In addition, within the Justification strategy, Azarine offers a rationale by elucidating the context surrounding the product claims, encompassing ingredients, laboratory test results, and BPOM safety standards. This approach encompasses not only the factual aspects but also the construction of a logical explanation, thereby enabling the public to discern the background and considerations that underpin the company's decisions.

Meanwhile, compensation strategy implicitly acknowledges consumer dissatisfaction or loss, thereby ensuring that Azarine persists in delivering tangible solutions. This strategy has been demonstrated to foster customer loyalty while mitigating the risk of crisis escalation. Public responses to this combination of strategies vary; some audiences accept the clarification as evidence of responsibility, while others remain sceptical, viewing the explanation as defensive. However, the implementation of this strategy has been demonstrated to assist in maintaining brand credibility during a crisis by fortifying narrative control in the public sphere. Furthermore, Azarine has implemented an Ingratiation strategy, which places emphasis on fostering emotional closeness and reinforcing positive past experiences, with the objective of rebuilding public trust. This strategy entails the utilization of narratives that highlight the company's past achievements, thereby reinforcing its positive image in the minds of consumers. Despite its relative obscurity, stemming from its integration with product promotion elements, the strategy maintains its pertinence within the paradigm of evolving communication trends in the digital age. These trends necessitate that crisis messages be meticulously designed to be both persuasive and informative (Clementson, 2020; T. Wu & Yu, 2024; Xu, 2020). In the context of a crisis, this narrative serves to reinforce a positive image and affirm the brand's commitment to quality, making this strategy an effective complement that strengthens the main strategy (Lu & Navas, 2021; Rew et al., 2024; Šerić et al., 2024).

A thorough examination of Azarine crisis communication strategy reveals a general adherence to the principles of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)

framework. This strategic approach is indicative of an adaptive mode of operation, a hallmark of effective crisis management. The combination of denial, justification, compensation, and integration strategies is not merely a defensive reaction but a systematic attempt to hinder the determination of responsibility in the public eye while simultaneously attempting to restore consumer confidence. Azarine approach entails a strategic prioritization of a narrative that achieves a balanced synthesis of factual clarification and positive image reinforcement. This balanced approach is instrumental in maintaining credibility by addressing the emotional needs of its audience. This approach serves to establish the brand as a responsive entity, demonstrating its capacity to understand and navigate the complex dynamics of public perception in the midst of a reputation crisis. Nevertheless, the long-term efficacy of this strategy is contingent upon the uniform implementation of post-crisis measures, particularly the maintenance of transparency, the enhancement of product quality, and the cultivation of sustained engagement with consumers. Therefore, crises are not only a challenge to reputation, but also a strategic opportunity to strengthen a brand's position in an increasingly competitive industry landscape.

The following section presents the findings of The Originote brand analysis. The findings of the analysis performed by two expert coders on The Originote clarification posts, which were uploaded to their official Instagram and TikTok accounts, are presented. In the initial publication, the following strategies were employed: justification, compensation, ingratiation, and apology. The findings suggest that The Originote adopted a divergent approach from Azarine, indicating that The Originote did not pursue a confrontational strategy that could lead to escalation of conflicts or deterioration of public perception. In the context of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), the employment of avoidance of denial strategies has been observed in instances where organizations recognize relatively high attribution of responsibility or when the accuser's supporting evidence is sufficiently strong (Hirschfeld & Thielsch, 2022; Sun & Li, 2024). This approach entails a strategic realignment of brand communication, wherein the primary objective shifts from engaging in debates about the core issues to the process of restoring public trust.

In the Diminish Strategies category, Justification is employed solely as a means to offer an explanation, thereby placing the issue within a specific perspective to mitigate the perceived severity of public perception. However, slight variations in perception among coders regarding the existence of this strategy suggest that the intensity of Justification in brand messages is relatively moderate. This discrepancy in interpretation may stem from the indistinct boundary between fact clarification and justification, which is often determined by the audience's interpretation of the tone and word choice employed in the message. As evidenced by its publications, The Originote addresses this issue with a certain levity, suggesting that the assertions made remain within the bounds of acceptability. The serum in question has been the subject of a recent study, the results of which suggest that its benefits have been enhanced. The Rebuild Strategies category is a prime example of this strategy's dominance, particularly in the context of Compensation. There is a consensus among coders that The Originote provides compensation to consumers, thereby demonstrating the brand commitment to assuming responsibility and implementing recovery measures. This strategy is demonstrated through information about the new benefits of the serum they have improved, which provides additional advantages for consumers compared to the previous conditions.

Furthermore, through Ingratiation the brand fosters emotional closeness with its audience by inviting them to participate in the journey of product improvement and development. This approach aligns with the tenets of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), which advocates for a dual strategy encompassing defensive and accommodative measures. This integrated approach is designed to safeguard brand credibility while fostering strengthened relationships with consumers. The interplay among Justification, Compensation, and Ingratiation in the initial post suggests that The Originote employs a crisis management strategy that places a premium on image rehabilitation and sustaining its public relations. This strategy is consistent with the recommendations of the SCCT for crisis situations that are typically accidental or preventable with low risk, wherein organizations are required to provide explanations, offer solutions, and emphasize positive engagement with stakeholders (Liu et al., 2025; X. Zhao et al., 2020).

In the *second* post, The Originote specifically highlights the refinement and transformation of two main serum products: Retinol Serum and Niacinamide 10% Serum. This statement reflects the application of the Justification strategy within the framework of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), in which the brand seeks to reduce negative perceptions by explaining improvements in product quality. This strategy effectively shifts public attention to the current conditions, which are widely regarded as an improvement over previous conditions. As a result, the public is guided to view that the issues that arose have been addressed in a constructive manner. Additionally, the calltoaction phrase "*Are you ready to see the real results?*" contains an implied compensatory element, as it suggests the added value and benefits consumers will gain after the formula change. This approach has the potential to strengthen audience trust by highlighting the company's commitment to delivering more satisfying results, while shifting the focus from the crisis toward a more positive new value proposition.

In the *third* post, the crisis communication strategy implemented by The Originote demonstrates a combination of four response categories within the framework of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT): Justification, Compensation, Apology, and Ingratiation. The aforementioned statement, "*We genuinely take those lessons to learn and grow better just for you,*" serves as a justification by placing the crisis event in the context of a learning experience that fosters enhancement in company performance. Additionally, the strategy of apology is characterized by an implicit acknowledgment of errors, accompanied by a commitment to implement improvements for the benefit of consumers. The compensation strategy is reflected in the expression of intent to provide greater benefits to consumers as a form of relationship restoration. Concurrently, the expression "*We are thankful for your genuine support and loyalty, so we can overcome this together*" constitutes a form of ingratiation, defined as an effort to cultivate emotional intimacy through the appreciation of the audience's support during challenging periods.

In the *latest* post, The Originote has presented a synthesis of three distinct categories of responses: Three concepts Justification, Compensation, and Ingratiation are discussed. The slogan "*Say goodbye to B3 serum and welcome the real 0.2% retinol serum*" reflects the company's stance on product changes, presented as progressive improvements without explicitly acknowledging previous shortcomings. This change also includes an element of compensation, as it introduces a new product that implicitly offers quality or formulation more aligned with consumer expectations, thereby providing added value as a form of restoring trust. The element of consolation is evident in the communication style

that encourages the audience to emotionally engage in the product transition process, creating the impression that this change is a positive step taken for the mutual benefit of the brand and consumers. From an SCCT perspective, this combination of strategies can help shift public focus from crisis issues toward narratives of innovation and quality improvement, while maintaining the positive relationship with consumers that has been established previously.

A thorough examination of The Originote crisis communication strategy reveals a multifaceted approach that integrates the diminish, rebuild, and bolster strategies within the overarching framework of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). The diminish strategy is evident in the emphasis on justification, which is an effort to provide rational explanations to reduce the perception of error and place the crisis in a more controlled context. Concurrently, the brand's commitment to responsibility is evident in its provision of concrete solutions that benefit consumers, including product repairs. This approach functions not only as a corrective response but also as a signal of the company's commitment to maintaining quality and public trust. In addition, the implementation of a strengthening strategy through ingratiation demonstrates The Originote efforts to build emotional closeness with its audience. This is exemplified by expressions of gratitude, acknowledgment of support, and the reaffirmation of its commitment to "learn and grow" from the crisis situation. This combination of strategies exemplifies the company's adaptive nature, as it does not merely implement defensive measures to mitigate negative impacts. Instead, it utilizes the crisis as a catalyst for enhancing its positive image and reaffirming its commitment to innovation, continuous improvement, and customer satisfaction.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to analyze the crisis communication strategies implemented by two local beauty brands in Indonesia, Azarine and The Originote, in dealing with excessive claims on social media. Using the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) framework, the content analysis in this study explains the dynamics of inconsistency in communication demonstrated by both brands. The discussion focuses on the relationship between the chosen strategies and public response, measured through online sentiment, with particular attention to its relevance to SCCT principles. This theory emphasizes the importance of aligning strategies with the level of responsibility attribution. The analysis results show that Azarine tends to adopt a combination of denial, justification, compensation, and consolation strategies in responding to excessive claim issues. This multi-strategy approach has proven to have a positive impact on public sentiment. Further analysis shows that the public response to the clarification is mostly positive or neutral, indicating the brand's effectiveness in managing negative perceptions (Sun & Li, 2024).

A comparative analysis of extant studies reveals that denial, justification, compensation, and ingratiation strategies are regarded as efficacious when the crisis falls within the victim or accidental cluster categories in the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) framework, where public attribution of responsibility is comparatively low (Chaskar & Upadhyay, 2023; Zizka & Chen, 2024). In this context, the public tends to be more receptive to the explanations and justifications provided by the company, as long as the narrative is accompanied by clear and relevant supporting evidence. A substantial body of research has emerged on the subject of reputational management in the context of organizational crises. According to the findings of Alias et al. (2025) and

Fannes & Claeys (2023), the judicious integration of denial strategies with justification has been demonstrated to be an effective approach to mitigating reputational damage. This strategy is predicated on the premise that organizations can effectively redirect public attention away from alleged missteps while concurrently reinforcing their established positive values. In Azarine's case, the implementation of this strategy can be observed through systematic clarification efforts, beginning with the assertion that the information circulating is not entirely accurate (denial), followed by the presentation of logical and fact-based reasons related to product claims (justification), and concluding with the offer of solutions to restore trust through quality assurance and emotional promotion (ingratiation). Concurrently, the company has initiated a program to address consumer dissatisfaction with the product, offering concrete solutions to address these concerns. However, Azarine has demonstrated an ability to enhance this effectiveness by integrating a range of strategies, thereby ensuring a response that is not only defensive but also proactive.

This approach can be regarded as a tactical innovation in the application of SCCT in the cosmetics industry in Indonesia. However, the efficacy of this strategy is not without limitations; responses that depend on clarification and rationalization may become less effective if future evidence emerges that undermines the organization's claims (MacKay et al., 2022; Su et al., 2022). Consequently, the credibility of a brand over an extended period necessitates the implementation of consistent, tangible actions that serve to substantiate these claims. Such actions may include the refinement of product information validation procedures or the engagement of independent third parties in the verification process (Dominic et al., 2024; Šerić et al., 2024). Furthermore, while ingratiation strategies have been shown to be effective in reinforcing positive perceptions, overreliance on past reputations may reduce the urgency for future innovation. The public has become increasingly critical of promotions that are perceived as diverting attention from the substance of issues. To this end, a balance must be maintained between emotional narratives and factual transparency.

A comprehensive evaluation of the available findings shows that Azarine successfully managed the crisis by implementing various adaptive strategies in line with changes in public sentiment. The integration of fact clarification, logical defense, consumer education, and emotional image reinforcement proved capable of suppressing the escalation of the problem while maintaining brand trust. The broader implication is that Azarine has positioned itself not only as a protector of its reputation but also as a brand responsive to the emotional and practical needs of its consumers. This approach aligns with the SCCT principle emphasizing a balance between maintaining credibility and rebuilding relationships. However, long term success remains dependent on the consistent implementation of concrete post crisis measures (Cornelis et al., 2022; Holland et al., 2021). However, long term success depends on the consistent implementation of information transparency, responsiveness to feedback, and ongoing corrective actions (Huang et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, The Originote places significant emphasis on strategies of justification, compensation, acknowledgment, and apology, thereby demonstrating recognition of mistakes and a commitment to making improvements openly. Originote provides detailed explanations regarding the basis of its product claims by referring to the formulation and sources of raw materials used (justification), enabling the public to understand the context behind statements that had previously been criticized. However, the brand has also issued an explicit apology to consumers and the general public for the inconvenience caused.

This demonstrates acknowledgment of the potential negative impact on reputation and emotions. The Originote is a concrete manifestation of the company's responsibility to provide product compensation to consumers who feel wronged or dissatisfied with previous products. This step not only reduces the likelihood of public outrage but also conveys the company's readiness to take concrete action, rather than merely issuing empty statements. Instead, the integration is manifested through expressions of gratitude for the feedback provided by consumers and critics. This demonstrates the brand openness to dialogue and public participation.

In light of extant research, the integration of justification, compensation, integration, and apology strategies as employed by The Originote is regarded as efficacious within the context of crises that possess the potential to inflict substantial damage to public trust. In the context of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), strategies incorporating acknowledgment of missteps (apology) and the presentation of tangible solutions (compensation) have been shown to be more efficacious in mitigating public outrage and expediting reputation rehabilitation, particularly when the organization is perceived by the public as exhibiting a high degree of responsibility (Coombs, 2023). Research by Domschat et al. (2023) states that, in crises with a high level of responsibility attribution, the combination of apology and compensation is considered most appropriate by the public and significantly improves brand image after the crisis, compared to other strategies such as justification or excuse. This assertion is further substantiated by the findings of Youk & Park (2023) which demonstrate that apologies accompanied by compensation are more efficacious in restoring reputation and are regarded as more appropriate by the public than apologies coupled with scapegoating. In the context of The Originote, this strategy appears relevant because the public perceives claims about problematic products as issues that touch on aspects of trust in the brand safety and integrity.

Furthermore, the ingratiation strategy evidenced by the appreciation of public input is consistent with findings that the use of ingratiation can increase audience acceptance and engagement, especially when executed with sincerity and emphasizing appreciation for public contributions or support (Miftha et al., 2023; Santos et al., 2023). Consequently, The Originote approach encompasses both defensive and proactive measures in its long-term relationship management with its audience. This approach engenders an impression of The Originote as a responsive, humble, and reform-ready brand, consistent with the rebuild strategy principle in SCCT, which underscores the restoration of trust through acknowledgement of mistakes and the provision of solutions. In contrast to Azarine, which places a strong emphasis on safeguarding its reputation, The Originote strategy places a premium on restoring and nurturing relationships with consumers. This approach, when implemented effectively, has the potential to engender long-term loyalty and positively impact the company's image following a crisis.

From a theoretical standpoint, the two brands exemplify the implementation of disparate SCCT strategies, a choice dictated by their distinct crisis framing. The Originote perspective positions the crisis as a preventable crisis that necessitates a maximally accommodative approach, while Azarine positions the crisis as a victim cluster or at least a low attribution crisis. This latter position allows for the use of a defensive strategy that includes additional relationship strengthening. This discrepancy contributes to the SCCT literature by demonstrating that crisis framing exerts a substantial influence on communication strategy selection. This finding is consistent with the findings of comparative studies between Sweden and Denmark, which indicate that leaders in both

countries strategically employ framing in crisis communication to construct narratives that support their respective policies. Consequently, crisis framing emerges as a political instrument that exerts influence on the legitimation and selection of communication strategies (Sørensen & Evensen, 2023). Furthermore, an analysis of third sector organizations in six countries identified that media framing of crises (e.g., criticism, damage, or victim frames) plays a significant role in shaping public evaluations and the response strategies chosen by organizations (Schwarz & Diers-Lawson, 2024). This finding adds to the SCCT literature by confirming that crisis framing not only influences public perception, but also directly shapes the choices and effectiveness of communication strategies adopted by organizations.

Overall, Azarine and The Originote both demonstrated success in sustaining their relationships with consumers. However, the efficacy of their crisis communication strategies was contingent upon the public's initial perceptions and the consistency exhibited in their post-crisis communications. Azarine employed a multifaceted approach, encompassing denial, justification, compensation, and ingratiation, to mitigate the attribution of responsibility. This strategy proved effective among audiences that already had a high level of brand trust. However, it was less successful among those who placed a higher demand for concrete evidence. The Originote employs a multifaceted approach, encompassing justification, compensation, ingratiation, and apology, while placing significant emphasis on transparency and a commitment to continuous improvement. This approach has been demonstrated to be more effective in the reconstruction of trust, particularly among consumers who hold a critical stance towards product claims. The comparison results indicate that the efficacy of crisis communication is contingent not solely on a rapid response, but also on consistency and implementation. The Originote utilizes quantifiable corrective actions to enhance its responsible image, while Azarine upholds a favorable image through consistent storytelling. In the current social media era, the public demands visual evidence and verifiable transparency. The viability of these strategies hinges on their capacity to furnish substantiated outcomes derived from the pledges undertaken. This is a critical factor in maintaining credibility in the highly competitive local skincare market.

This study makes a significant contribution to the development of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) literature in Indonesia, particularly in the context of marketing communication in the beauty industry, which has received little academic attention. The extant literature has predominantly centered on crises in the food, transportation, or public institution sectors. Consequently, this finding addresses a significant gap in the research by offering a novel perspective on product claim-based crises in a highly competitive and sensitive domestic market regarding the authenticity of claims. The research findings emphasize that crisis strategy adaptation cannot rely on a single formula but must consider product characteristics, consumer expectations, and the audience sensitivity to the issues at hand. This approach is not only relevant to the beauty industry but can also be adapted for other sectors facing product claim-based crises, thereby expanding the application of SCCT in more diverse contexts.

Despite the contributions, this study is not without limitations. *First*, it is limited to two local beauty brands, Azarine and The Originote, which may restrict the generalization of findings to other industries or international contexts. *Second*, it relies on content analysis and coding of social media posts, which inherently involves subjectivity in interpretation despite the use of inter-rater reliability measures. *Third*, the emphasis on products in certain types of crises implies that the findings may not fully capture the

nuances of other types of crises, such as ethical scandals or operational failures. Future research could adopt a comparative approach involving different types of crises or use experimental designs to test consumer responses more systematically. In addition, the use of long-term data would facilitate a deeper understanding of the evolution of brand reputation after a crisis.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the crisis communication strategies implemented by Azarine and The Originote show different approaches in responding to overclaim issues. Azarine tends to minimize responsibility attribution through a combination of denial, justification, compensation, and ingratiation. Meanwhile, The Originote emphasizes acknowledgment of mistakes and a commitment to improvement through justification, compensation, ingratiation, and apology. These findings not only provide practical contributions in designing a crisis communication model on social media that is relevant to audience characteristics but also expand the theoretical approach in applying the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) to the context of the local skincare industry in Indonesia. These results open opportunities for developing a more adaptive SCCT framework tailored to the dynamics of digital interactions and consumer perceptions on online platforms. This study recommends further research to test the effectiveness of combining emotional and rational strategies in rebuilding public trust post-crisis across various industrial sectors. The implications of this study are that the crisis communication strategies employed by Azarine and The Originote can serve as a guide for other brands in managing reputation and maintaining consumer trust amid public pressure. Active audience participation in the crisis communication process is also a key factor that can strengthen the relationship between brands and consumers in a sustainable manner.

Conflict of Interest

The author affirms that there is no conflict of interest, whether financial, personal, or otherwise, with any individual or organization related to the material discussed in this paper. This research was conducted entirely independently as part of fulfilling the academic requirements of the Master Program in Communication Science at Universitas Brawijaya. The entire content, findings, and interpretations in this article are the full academic responsibility of the author, without any influence from external funding sources or institutional affiliations.

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