

Alfamart's Image Repair Strategies on Chocolate Theft Incident in the News of detik.com and kompas.com

Mayta Sabila^{1,*}, Dian Purworini²

^{1,2} Faculty of Communication and Information, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS), Surakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to identify how Alfamart's image repair strategy is applied to the crisis that is published in Detik.com and Kompas.com.

Methodology: This study applies a descriptive quantitative approach with content analysis techniques. The population in this research is all the news in Detik.com and Kompas.com related to the crisis experienced by Alfamart. The sample is determined by purposive sampling, and the data analysis was carried out with an independent t-test.

Results: The results of the study mention that there is no significant difference between the two online media in reporting the Alfamart case. Alfamart has repair its image through corrective action, denial, bolstering, good intentions, and compensation.

Applications/Originality/Value: This study seeks to compare the coverage in online media regarding the Alfamart case controversy. The differences in this study include research objects, measuring instrument, literature, theory, and research results.

Introduction Section

Background of Study

A crisis is a condition that comes unexpectedly and cannot be avoided by the company. Company stability can be impacted because a crisis can threaten operational, financial, and company reputation. Organizations must choose the right strategy to restore their reputation and regain public trust ([Meng, 2010a](#)). A crisis response strategy is needed to restore their reputation and regain public trust. Public Relations plays a role in conveying the company's interests to internal and external parties. In reputation recovery, communication is essential to managing a crisis ([Seeger & Padgett, 2010a](#)). Through communication, messages can be conveyed to create the same understanding to achieve the organization's goals.

Every company must have experienced a crisis; Alfamart also experienced this. In August 2022, Alfamart faced a situation that could threaten its reputation. As comprised in detik.com, this incident began when a female consumer was found to have taken some chocolate on Saturday, August 13, 2022, at Alfamart Sampora, Cisauk District, South Tangerang. The cashier who caught the woman then recorded it while asking her to confess and pay for the chocolate that had been taken. The woman provided information that she did not know how chocolate could be found in her bag ([Mutiarasari, 2022](#)).

Afterward, the video went viral on social media. As she felt aggrieved, the woman approached the Alfamart cashier and demanded an explanation for the viral video. Accompanied by a lawyer, the woman also asked the Alfamart cashier to explain. Through clarification on the video, the Alfamart cashier said that the incident was a misunderstanding and apologized to the woman he had caught. In addition, the cashier was also threatened with the Electronic Information and Transaction Law because he was allegedly defamed through the viral video. After she took the clarification on the video spread on social media, many regretted the consumer's behavior. Knowing this incident, Alfamart immediately took action. The incident continued with Alfamart turning to report the woman on charges of theft and threats against Alfamart employees ([Ma'arif, 2022](#)).

* Corresponding author: dp151@ums.ac.id

Alfamart is a leading minimarket retail company owned by PT Sumber Alfaria Trijaya Tbk, founded in 1989. This company is growing and has received many awards, including Top Brand 2019, Indonesia Most Innovative Business Award 2018, Service Quality Awards 2017, and many others. This achievement proves that Alfamart has a good reputation and image in front of the public. However, Alfamart's reputation as a retail company is at stake because it is considered incapable of protecting employees mistreated. This is a crisis, the emergence of a problem that creates a bad reputation in the public eye. As a result of this event, the public can forget about the reputation that Alfamart has built and only remember the bad treatment received by Alfamart employees.

The case involving Alfamart is also widely discussed by the public on a national scale. Even on social media Twitter, the incident also became a trending issue. Coverage in online mass media also took place massively. Online media can make the crisis even bigger ([Pang et al., 2014](#)). The media has a significant role in reporting a case because the media can shape public opinion. A report can impact the creation of public opinion, leading to the company's reputation. When a crisis hits a company and becomes a major issue in online media coverage, it can cause public issues that affect the view of the company's reputation in a negative tendency. Meanwhile, companies can also take advantage of online media to convey messages related to the crisis response. The existence of a rapid flow of information in online media makes companies must be able to adapt themselves quickly in taking action so that public opinion can be controlled and that their reputation is not threatened.

The strategy adopted by the company in dealing with a crisis determines success in managing the crisis. A crisis's impact depends on how the company reacts ([Primasari, 2018](#)). The crisis is not always in a negative impression, as in the case of Alfamart, the crisis can be managed in a positive impression. This can be seen in the support primarily aimed at Alfamart employees. In addition, the value of Alfamart's shares also increased after this case arose ([Maghiszha, 2022](#)). This is inseparable from the response strategy implemented by Alfamart. The company's strategy in managing the crisis is important to study because it can improve its image and return to conditions before the crisis even experienced an increase.

Many studies on reputation recovery have been carried out. Research conducted by [Benoit \(2018\)](#) regarding the United Airlines case found that the emphasis on mortification and corrective action strategies directed at offensive actions and social media played a role in changing the crisis. Another study in the publication of [Harlow \(2011\)](#), the strategy carried out by British Petroleum, focuses on steps taken to fix the problem (corrective action) and provide compensation (compensation) to the victims. This literature is beneficial for future study because of similarities in topics, theories, and research aims, specifically the strategy of restoring corporate image in coping with crises presented in the media. Meanwhile, the difference with previous studies lies in the research subjects and the methods used. The subject to be studied is Alfamart, which uses quantitative content analysis methods.

This research needs to be done because the image is a very important commodity because it contributes to self-image and can create a reassuring impression ([Benoit & Nill, 1998](#)). If the company feels its image is threatened, it will try to maintain its positive image; there is motivation to provide explanations, defenses, or reasons for the behavior being carried out. When a company has a good reputation, it can run supported by the stakeholders' trust. Therefore, it is important to see how the response given by a company is to be able to maintain a positive image when hit by a crisis.

Improper crisis management can have an impact on threatening the company's reputation. When a crisis occurs, companies need to use appropriate crisis response strategies to minimize the impact of the crisis and protect the company's reputation ([Kiambi & Shafer, 2016](#)). Managing crises was identified as an important set of management skills ([Coombs, 2007](#)). Suppose a company fails to manage a crisis. In that case, it can have implications for the sustainability of the company, namely damage to credibility so that the company can lose public trust (social capital) and reputation (symbolic capital) that has been built. In the context of crisis communication, the response to a crisis is a factor that determines a company's reputation. Applying the right crisis response strategy can result in a better post-crisis reputation. This makes this research necessary because of the importance of proper crisis communication to reduce the negative impact that can arise from a crisis. Hence, it is important to examine how the efforts made by Alfamart in responding to the crisis in order to able to maintain its reputation so that Alfamart can survive and regain public trust.

This study focuses on the strategies implemented by Alfamart when responding to crises which are analyzed using Image Repair Theory. In this study, the problem formulation is "What is the Alfamart image restoration strategy in overcoming the crisis contained in the news on Detik.com and Kompas.com?". This study aims to find out the image repair strategy implemented by Alfamart in facing the crisis, which is contained in Detik.com and Kompas.com. This study employed Image Repair Theory to measure what strategy Alfamart used to overcome the crisis.

Literature Review

Image Repair Theory

William L. Benoit initiated Image Repair Theory presents efforts that can be made in recovering, repairing, and restoring a bad reputation or image amid a crisis. In image repair, the emphasis is on saving the image of the accused party. This theory can be used to identify organizational responses in dealing with crises ([Len-Ríos & Benoit, 2004](#)). Benoit has also researched the application of this theory in the corporate context. When a company has lost its positive image, it can turn to a restorative strategy to repair a damaged reputation ([Compton, 2016](#)).

Image Repair Theory in ([Kriyantono, 2014](#)) assumes two basic things, namely communication functions to achieve specific goals and maintaining a positive reputation or image is the main goal of communication. From these assumptions, it can be understood that a relationship exists between communication and reputation. Reputation as a form of recognition of the organization's existence by stakeholders needs to be built through communication, not only from other activities carried out by the organization, such as marketing and finance ([Purworini, 2017](#)). Communication is an important basic thing to maintain a good reputation in the public eye.

Rather than describing crises, this theory focuses on choosing communication messages used in crisis response. Messages are developed and delivered to restore and maintain a positive image. Image Repair Theory by Benoit plays a vital role in image repair when facing a crisis ([Low et al., 2011](#)). All crises have a high chance of occurring, and professional communication plays a central role in responding to these affairs ([Seeger & Padgett, 2010b](#)).

Attacks, crises, and threats are defined as things that can damage the image. [Benoit \(1997\)](#) argues that things that can damage the image contain two elements: actions that are not expected to occur, and you are responsible for acting. So image restoration is a real effort that can be done in dealing with a crisis so as not to fall deeper. A company feels its reputation is threatened when the public perceives it poorly ([Susilawati, 2019](#)).

The image attachment affects the credibility of the company. When the image is in peril, it takes great effort to regain it ([Brinson & Benoit, 1999](#)). Benoit formulated five strategies for image restoration: corrective action, denial, evasion of responsibility, mortification, and reducing offensiveness ([Benoit, 1997](#)).

Denial or denial strategy attempts to deal with a crisis by denying the allegations leveled at the company regarding adverse events. Denial is carried out either in a simple denial, namely in the form of refusal to take responsibility, or shifting the blame, namely blaming the other party by accusing that the other party should be responsible ([Benoit, 1997](#)).

Evasion of Responsibility is a strategy to minimize the losses suffered due to a crisis. Evasion of responsibility can be done through (1) provocation, namely the steps taken by the company as a reaction to the actions taken by other parties, (2) defeasibility, namely the crisis occurs due to the company's lack of information so that the situation is out of control, (3) accident, namely the presence of an element of accident, and (4) good intention, namely the company has tried its best but the results obtained were not able to satisfy all parties ([Benoit, 1997](#)).

Reducing the offensiveness is an effort to improve the decline in the positive image. Six ways can be done, (1) bolstering, namely displaying the condition of the company before the crisis occurred, which has played a significant role in public welfare, (2) minimization, the crisis that occurred did not have a major impact, (3) differentiation, i.e., comparing with other greater crises, (4) transcendence, i.e., saying that behind the crisis there are big things that benefit behind it, (5) attacking one's accuser, i.e., attacking other parties by questioning their credibility, (6) compensation, it provides compensation in the form of money or other to those who feel they have been affected ([Benoit, 1997](#)).

Another strategy, corrective action, is a step made by the company to solve the situation and try to avoid a future crisis. Furthermore, the mortification strategy is the company's attempt to convey an apology and is willing to take responsibility for the crisis it is experiencing ([Benoit, 1997](#)).

Of the five strategies, corrective action and mortification are considered more effective and appropriate than other strategies. While bolstering, minimization, provocation, and denial are considered to have the lowest level of effectiveness ([Benoit & Drew, 1997](#)). This aligns with Pang's statement that mortification is more accommodative, particularly in overcoming stakeholder problems. At the same time, denial and evading responsibility are more advocacy, namely, trying to protect the organization. A study by [Lee \(2004\)](#) on image restoration in Hong Kong found that a crisis that is ignored without any response or effort to overcome it can destroy the corporate reputation. In addition, a long-term strategy is needed to restore this image ([Lee, 2004](#)). For the people themselves, what causes the crisis and how to respond to it have the same urgency before it spreads. The organization finds it difficult to restore the company's reputation.

Crisis Communications

A crisis is a situation that can happen to institutions, organizations, or companies, but when it cannot be predicted and cannot be avoided. A crisis is an unfavorable situation that causes company instability. A crisis can put a company at the center of attention but in a negative context, both from stakeholders and the media. Coombs also conveyed a similar opinion. A crisis is considered a circumstance that can threaten stakeholders and impact organizational performance ([Coombs & Holladay, 2010](#)).

Crises place companies and stakeholders at significant risk of loss ([Coombs, 2004](#)). To anticipate it, a company needs a crisis management strategy. The right crisis management can improve the company's image. On the other hand, bad crisis management can make a crisis even more out of control and worsen the company's image. Crises are not always in a negative direction. Crises can be used for positive purposes by applying suitable communication depending on how Public Relations reacts and deals with the crisis.

Crisis communication is an essential part of crisis management. It is anticipated to not only suppress crises but also to improve reputation such that it is better than before the crisis happened. Coombs added that crisis communication is an integrated message and an important element of general crisis management, including prevention, preparation, performance, and learning ([Holmes, 2011](#)). Crisis communication aims to reduce the negative effects that arise and convey the situation to the public in a crisis. In dealing with a crisis, the company tries to reduce the bad consequences or losses that may be incurred, so an appropriate crisis communication strategy is needed to maintain its reputation.

Coombs explains the fundamental concepts of crisis communication, including fast communication, consistency, and transparency. The quick notice will enable stakeholders to learn about current affairs. Slow messages allow other parties to speculate or make assumptions about unconfirmed information. Consistency in the delivery of messages is also required. There is no disagreement since those who speak on behalf of the corporation speak in agreement. At the same time, openness entails delivering information as a whole while considering each stakeholder's interests.

Studies on crisis communication strategies have been carried out by ([Selvina et al., 2017](#)). The result is a Public Relations strategy that greatly contributed when restoring the image of Rumah Makan Kawan Baru through online and printed media to express regrets and gain public sympathy. This is in line with research ([Salma, 2018](#)) that the Internet can function at every crisis stage. Its use is not limited to tools or media but must also be followed by improvements in communication and principles adapted to the progress of the Internet. Huang also shared that crisis communication strategies include culture and media coverage as additional factors influencing image improvement strategies ([Huang, 2006](#)). The Internet can support crisis communication activities in the digital era.

Method

This research is classified as quantitative descriptive research that applies content analysis, which is used to study the phenomena that occur and describe the characteristics of the object under study. The quantitative content analysis identifies the content in a text published by the media.

The researcher collected the data from the Detik.com and Kompas.com news portals in August 2022. Thus, the population in this study is all the news published on Detik.com and Kompas.com online news portals regarding the chocolate theft case at Alfamart in the August 2022 period. The total number of news articles is 71, with details of 34 from the Detik.com news portal and 37 from the Kompas.com news portal. Meanwhile, the sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, particularly the withdrawal of research samples in a certain period based on scientific considerations. The sampling method is based on the time frame of the conflict, specifically from 15 August 2022 to 22 August 2022, given that the case became widely publicized in the media.

The two news portals were chosen because, according to the Digital News Report 2022 report by the Reuters Institute, Detik.com, and Kompas.com occupy the top 10 media Indonesians consume most. Reporting on the Detik.com news portal is more about the chronology of events and developments in cases that have occurred. Meanwhile, the news on Kompas.com emphasizes the story's point of view, both from the side of Alfamart employees and chocolate takers. So the researchers considered that the two news portals were an appropriate combination in presenting information about the conflict experienced by Alfamart.

Furthermore, the researcher used the unit of analysis to record thematic unit types. The unit of record relates to the part of the content in a text that is to be recorded, counted, and analyzed. The thematic unit is used in this study because it aims to analyze messages in a text conveyed by the media nationally.

The validity of the gathered observations will be verified to determine the instrument's accuracy for measurement. Validity is useful for ensuring the validity of measuring instruments and guaranteeing the findings obtained. The researcher used a content validity test to conduct the analysis using several strategy indicators, which refer to the Image Repair theory by [Benoit \(1997\)](#), namely strategies of denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification. Furthermore, the reliability test used is the reliability between coders. Reliability is a measure of the stability and consistency of measuring instruments. The reliability value will be calculated based on the Holsti formula.

The different test statistical technique that will be used when processing data is the independent t-test. The t-test is useful for analyzing the differences between the two groups of news portals where the data is in the form of an interval or ratio scale. In presenting the data, descriptive statistical techniques were utilized to describe and summarize the conclusions of the content analysis. Furthermore, the results of the data findings are presented in the frequency table, crosstabulation, t-test through SPSS version 21, and diagrams.

Result and Discussion

Research Results

At this stage, data from the content analysis results are presented regarding Alfamart's response strategy in the chocolate theft incident published on Detik.com and Kompas.com in August 2022. The analysis results are presented as a frequency distribution table to make it easier to understand the research data. The indicators used in this study are based on Benoit's Image Repair Theory. This theory was chosen because it has been widely used in research on crisis communication. Therefore, in this study, a categorization refers to Image Repair Theory.

Data Description

The first step in the data analysis stage is to describe the findings descriptively using descriptive statistical analysis. The validity and reliability test results are presented in a frequency distribution table to make it easier to understand the data. Following are the findings of 62 news articles, with details of 29 articles from Detik.com and 33 from Kompas.com, which have been categorized according to five strategies in Benoit's Image Repair Theory.

Table 1. The Frequency Distribution of Detik.com

Response Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Denial</i>	6	21%
<i>Evasion of Responsibility</i>	5	17%
<i>Reducing Offensiveness</i>	5	17%
<i>Corrective Action</i>	13	45%
<i>Mortification</i>	0	0%
Total	29	100%

In Table 1, 6 articles contain the Denial strategy with a percentage of 21%. Then the Evasion of Responsibility and Reducing Offensiveness strategies have the same percentage of 17% with five articles each. Furthermore, as many as 13 articles included Corrective Action strategies and had the largest percentage, 45%. Moreover, there is no Mortification strategy contained in the Detik.com news articles.

Table 2. The Frequency Distribution of Kompas.com

Response Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Denial</i>	10	30%
<i>Evading of Responsibility</i>	9	27%
<i>Reducing Offensiveness</i>	3	9%
<i>Corrective Action</i>	11	33%
<i>Mortification</i>	0	0%
Total	33	100%

According to Table 2, there were ten news articles worth 30% containing the Denial strategy. Meanwhile, the researcher found the Evading of Responsibility strategy in 9 articles, or 27%, and the Reducing Offensiveness strategy in 3 articles, or the equivalent of 9%. Then the largest percentage is 33%, with 11 news articles containing the Corrective Action strategy. Moreover, no Mortification strategy was found contained in Kompas.com news articles.

Validity

The researcher displays the results of the validity test from the data findings by using a predetermined measuring instrument, which is useful to determine whether the instrument used is valid. Thus, the validity of the type of content validity is applied, in which the measurement wants to compare measuring instruments based on standards usually used by the scientific community, for example, books and journals ([Eriyanto, 2011](#)).

Measurement indicators are used based on the Image Repair Theory by Benoit in the book "The Handbook of Crisis Communication" by Finn Fransen and Winni Johansen 2020. Measurements based on Image Repair Theory have been used by [William L. Benoit \(2018\)](#) in his research on the crisis of United Airlines ([Benoit, 2018a](#)). In addition, [Lauzen \(2016\)](#) also uses this theory to analyze response strategies in the Cannes Film Festival crisis ([Lauzen, 2016](#)). The measurements based on Image Repair Theory can be considered valid because there are already journals and books on its use.

Reliability

Data that has been considered valid is then tested for reliability, which aims to analyze whether using measuring instruments finds similar results when testing is carried out by other people ([Eriyanto, 2011](#)). The reliability used was the intercoder, with the first coder being the researcher, then the second coder was Nurul Setyowati (Communication Science Student Batch 2019, University of Muhammadiyah Surakarta).

As many as five news articles from the total representatives were tested for reliability so that all data was not required to be tested. The following are the findings based on the reliability test:

Table 3. Reliability Test

Number	Date	Title of the News	IRT Strategy		Agree/ Disagree
			Code r 1	Code r 2	
1.	15th August 2022	"Went Viral; An Employee Apologizes to the Mercy-Women who Stole Chocolate, Alfamart Has Clarified"	1	3	D
2.	15th August 2022	"Alfamart Officially Collaborates with Hotman Paris in the Case of Employees vs. Chocolate Stealers"	4	4	A
3.	15th August 2022	"Arief Muhammad Eagers to Help Alfamart Employees Vs. Chocolate Stealers Woman"	2	2	A
4.	15th August 2022	"Hotman Paris: Alfamart Employees who Spread the Video of Chocolate Stealers Woman in Office Groups, Cannot Be Charged Under Electronic Information and Transactions Law."	1	1	A
5.	16th August 2022	"Chocolate Theft Case at Tangerang Alfamart Ends Peacefully, Police: This Woman Has a Disorder"	2	2	A
Total			A = 4 D = 1		

$$\text{CR Crisis Response} = 2M/(N1+N2) = 2(4)/(5+5) = 0,80 (80\%)$$

Based on the reliability test results using the Holsti formula, a result of 0.80 or (80%) was obtained. Meanwhile, data must meet the minimum limit of the Holsti formula to be declared reliable, which is 0.70 (70%) (Eriyanto, 2011). Thus, the measuring instrument is reliable because it has met the requirements, namely, exceeding the minimum limit of the Holsti formula.

Independent t-test

- (i) H₀: There is no significant average difference between reporting on the online media Detik.com and Kompas.com in reporting on stealing Alfamart chocolate.
H₁: There is a significant difference in average between reporting on the online media Detik.com and Kompas.com in reporting on stealing Alfamart chocolate.
- (ii) The following are the results of independent t-test calculations performed with SPSS statistics 21:

Tabel 4. Independent Samples Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means
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	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tail ed)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
I R T Equal variances assumed	.474	.511	-. 26 7	8	.79 6	-.800	3.000	-7.718	6.118
Equal variances not assumed			-. 26 7	7.9 90	.79 6	-.800	3.000	-7.720	6.120

(Source : SPSS Statistics 21 Results)

- (iii) Conclusion: According to the results, a significance value of > 0.05 , namely 0.796, is obtained. It can be concluded that H_0 is accepted, there is no significant difference between news portals Detik.com and Kompas.com when reporting on the Alfamart case controversy. The reporting on the two portals is similar and without highlighting a particular strategy.

Strategi Image Repair

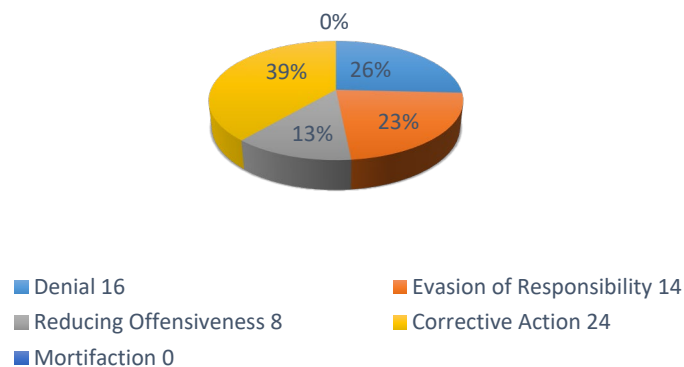


Figure 1. Detik.com and Kompas.com Strategy Diagram

Discussion

A woman's chocolate stealing at Alfamart is widely discussed on social media. Furthermore, the development of these events even continued to be highlighted by the national media. This situation involving Alfamart employees compelled the company to intervene to resolve it. Alfamart must be able to stop spreading issues that do not impact the company's reputation. The action shows the importance of choosing the correct response strategy so the crisis does not spread.

William L. Benoit offers an image recovery strategy called the Image Repair Theory. Image Repair Theory is useful for overcoming crises by restoring or repairing a company's reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 2009). This theory focuses on regaining a company's impacted positive reputation by carefully picking communication messages used in crisis response. This step was taken to restore the positive image built in front of the public so that the company can maintain its existence and continue the corporation.

This research utilizes the online media Detik.com and Kompas.com as media in identifying Alfamart's response in facing a crisis related to the chocolate stealing incident, which threatens Alfamart's reputation. This study examines how the media reports the response given by Alfamart by implementing an image repair strategy in reporting on Detik.com and Kompas.com for August 2022. Furthermore, the findings will be analyzed using the Image Repair Theory as follows:

Denial category through simple denial and shifting the blame

Alfamart's first step to overcoming the crisis was denial. In this category, Alfamart conducts crisis-related denial involving its employees. Denial is the second most strategy carried out by Alfamart. A total of 16 articles, 6 of which were sourced from Detik.com and ten from Kompas.com, included a denial strategy. The following is Alfamart's statement when making denials.

"...can not be charged under the Electronic Information and Transactions Law...the information is factual" ([Ernes, 2022a](#)).

The crisis experienced by Alfamart was due to one of the employees being threatened with the Electronic Information and Transactions Law by a consumer. Through its attorney, Hotman Paris, Alfamart rejected the accusation and emphasized that the content in the video recorded by the employee is a reality. Alfamart's straightforward denial technique prevents charges since the company believes it has done nothing wrong. A similar situation is found in research conducted by [Len-Ríos \(2010\)](#) regarding the crisis at Duke University's lacrosse team. Simple denial is used to refute accusations leveled at lacrosse players by denying the players' involvement in the cases that occurred ([Len-Ríos, 2010](#)).

Alfamart again made another denial through the statement, "... Alfamart employees should not apologize for things that are not their fault" ([Ulu, 2022](#)). It is understandable that Alfamart completely denies the accusations. Alfamart prohibits employees from apologizing for things that are not their responsibility. The company refuses to apologize and believes their party is not responsible. The Alfamart strategy does not incorrect, according to [Benoit's statement \(1995\)](#), that denial can be effective when the accused party does not make a mistake ([Benoit, 1995](#)).

Alfamart also commits denial by shifting the blame, known as blaming other parties. This strategy eliminates blame for offensive actions ([Carroll & Benoit, 2013](#)). [Carmack \(2020\)](#), in his research, also found the use of shifting the blame by CoxHealth in dealing with cases of brain over-radiation. CoxHealth tries to shift the blame by stating that there was a human error in running the system caused by one person and not the entire structure ([Carmack, 2020](#)). A similar situation was found in this study, where Alfamart, as the accused party, also shifted the blame to another party, the woman who stole the chocolate.

"... Mariana's party claimed there was no intimidation...Alfamart stated that its employees were under pressure" ([Ihsanuddin, 2022b](#)).

According to the statement, Alfamart also provides a credible release instead of just a simple release. Alfamart highlighted Mariana's actions which were believed to have pressured employees. Alfamart shifted the blame to Mariana's side to protect employees who were initially accused of violating the Electronic Information and Transactions Law. Shifting the blame can work effectively when the company is not at fault for the crisis ([Erickson et al., 2013](#)).

Evasion of responsibility category through good intention

Evasion of responsibility is a strategy to avoid responsibility ([Frandsen & Johansen, 2020](#)). The company limits responsibility because the crisis occurred not purely at the company's fault. According to the analysis, as many as 14 news articles fall into the category of evasion of responsibility. Where five articles come from Detik.com, and nine articles come from Kompas.com.

Benoit formulated four strategies included in the evasion of responsibility. One that Alfamart uses is a good intention. The company uses this strategy to convey that it has good intentions. However, the actions taken cannot satisfy all parties. Through this good intention, Alfamart shows good intentions to resolve cases by bringing them to legal channels. The good intention strategy is seen in the following statements:

"... there is no element of intention to report suspected perpetrators... Alfamart staffs want to be respected for implementing Standard Operating Procedures." ([Siregar, 2022](#)).

Alfamart is committed to protecting its employees. Alfamart's report seeks to protect employees who have been unfairly accused. Alfamart's good intentions are a form of responsibility to protect employees. Furthermore, through his lawyer, Alfamart emphasized that the legal process that was being pursued would continue even though Mariana had paid for the chocolate. "... Mariana's paying for chocolate will not stop the legal process..." ([Ernes, 2022b](#)).

Alfamart's good intentions to resolve cases legally can only satisfy some parties. Alfamart employees withdrew the report and decided to make peace. "The reporting party is willing to withdraw the report...not proceed with legal action" ([Huda, 2022b](#)). This step was taken to provide a deterrent effect.

The use of good intention in responding to crises is similar to [Woldearegay's \(2021\)](#) findings in his research on Washington Post journalist Jemal Kashoggi. The government of Saudi Arabia uses a good intention strategy to convey that there has been a policy to open dialogue ([Woldearegay, 2021](#)). This action seeks to reduce responsibility for the occurrence of a crisis.

The category of reducing offensiveness through bolstering and compensation

The next strategy applied by Alfamart is reducing offensiveness. This strategy seeks to minimize the negative impact arising from the crisis by repairing a declining positive image. The analysis results found nine news articles with the theme of reducing offensiveness. There were five articles from Detik.com news and four from Kompas.com news.

The strategy of reducing offensiveness in online media Detik.com can be seen through bolstering and compensation. Bolstering is an effort made to strengthen the company's positive image. The use of bolstering in responding to crises was also found in [Meng's research \(2010\)](#) regarding the SK-II scandal in China. P&G, the company that houses the brand, is trying to improve its image by emphasizing certification, safety, and product quality ([Meng, 2010b](#)). In this study, bolstering emphasizes Alfamart's commitment to protecting employees from strengthening a positive image.

"... the company fully supports employees... they have carried out their duties according to procedure" ([Damayanti, 2022](#)).

This statement shows the bolstering strategy carried out by Alfamart, which seeks to demonstrate its commitment to protecting employees. Alfamart emphasizes positive attributes by prioritizing employees. As [Benoit \(1995\)](#) mentioned, bolstering refers to discussing the steps taken by the accused party to balance the offensive actions and events that occurred. In this case, Alfamart, as the accused party, tried to build a good impression in the public eye that the company fully supports employees who are believed not to deviate from their duties.

Reporting on the theme of reducing offensiveness in Kompas.com media is also similar. A total of 4 articles contain bolstering strategies or 12% of the total news. The bolstering strategy is shown in the following statements:

"...Alfamart committed of protecting its employees...we already prepared legal steps..." ([Ihsanuddin, 2022a](#)).

Alfamart is consistent in prioritizing employees. From the quotation above, the reports made by Alfamart are for the benefit of employees. Commitment to protecting employees can be seen in Alfamart's willingness to take this case to court. Bolstering is used to confirm that the company has committed no violations. Using bolstering in response to a crisis is appropriate because Alfamart is presented as a victim ([Bruce & Tini, 2008](#)). Besides that, the company already has a good image and has received support from the public ([Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009](#)).

Another step taken by Alfamart to reduce the public's harsh response is to do compensation. Compensation is giving money or other things to the aggrieved party as a form of compensation ([Benoit, 1997](#)). The aggrieved party is Alfamart's employees because they have been unilaterally accused and threatened.

Through the statement "... we promoted the staff to become the Head of Alfamart Store ..." ([Indraini, 2022](#)), it is known that Alfamart provides compensation to its employees through promotion. Alfamart offers compensation as a form of appreciation to employees who have dedicated themselves to the company. This step was taken to strengthen a positive image by showing concern for victims. The compensation strategy is also found in [Harlow's research \(2013\)](#) when responding to the crisis experienced by British Petroleum. The company provides compensation as a form of responsibility to the oil spill victims ([Harlow & Harlow, 2013](#)).

Corrective action category

The most dominant strategy is corrective action. From the results of the analysis, it was found that there were 24 news articles included in the corrective action, 13 articles from Detik.com media, and 11 articles from

Kompas.com media. With this strategy, the company tries to improve the situation and promises to prevent the crisis from happening again. Corrective action strategies for responding to crises were also found by [Benoit \(2014\)](#) in his research on Barack Obama's response to HealthCare.gov health care. Obama said he would take action to fix the problems that occurred with ObamaCare. This action succeeded in growing new beliefs from the public ([Benoit, 2014](#)). Corrective action attempts to restore the image by taking corrective action.

In this study, the form of corrective action taken by Alfamart was to appoint Hotman Paris as a lawyer swiftly. "Alfamart Management announced that it has partnered with Hotman Paris to take legal steps..." ([Ihsanuddin, 2022c](#)). Hotman Paris is a lawyer with a big name and is competent in his field. Hotman Paris was appointed to be the lawyer due to his competent skill. Moreover, this case has been discussed nationally, so the selection of lawyers is important to determine how this case can be resolved.

As stated by Benoit, the accused party tried to reverse the situation by acting reactively. Alfamart said it would take this case to legal channels in another statement. "...will take legal action...will be reported on suspicion of theft" ([Huda, 2022a](#)). This is in line with Benoit's statement that corrective action has the potential to be successful if it is carried out quickly ([Benoit, 2018b](#)). Alfamart's actions to recover the situation by lawfully resolving the issues. This step is intended to give justice under the law.

Apart from restoring the situation, Alfamart is improving its basic facilities. "...optimizing CCTV to anticipate similar incidents..." ([Fadilah, 2022](#)). Through this statement, Alfamart is trying to maximize CCTV in each outlet. This is a precautionary measure to prevent the same incident from happening again. This finding is similar to the results of [Mairescu \(2016\)](#), which shows the use of corrective action by Deutsche Telekom. Upon learning of a spying scandal, the company immediately requested an investigation and stated that to anticipate similar incidents occurring in the future, the company had taken specific steps ([Mairescu, 2016](#)). The disciplinary action strategy is the right strategy ([Purworini, 2017](#)) because it can resolve the negative impacts of the crisis and anticipate the same crisis happening again in the future ([Lauzen, 2016](#)).

Conclusion

According to the findings, the use of the most dominant strategy, corrective action, was 39%. Followed by a denial strategy of 26%, evasion of responsibility of 23%, and reducing offensiveness of 13%. Meanwhile, the mortification strategy was not found in any news articles. Mortification is a strategy of apologizing and admitting that the company has taken an offensive action. Alfamart did not employ this method because the issue was not its responsibility.

Alfamart committed no violations. Hence the company did not responsible for the situation and did not apologize. In response to the crisis, Alfamart focused more on improving the situation and preventing it from happening again. This step is believed to restore the situation by taking actions to improve the threatened reputation. Corrective action is considered a more effective strategy compared to others. When a company undergoes a crisis, it can take corrective action to resolve the negative impacts and prevent the recurrence of the same case

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