

# Crisis Communication of Bigo Live Indonesia in Facing the Threat of Blocking: A Situational Crisis Communication Theory Analysis

Wuri Valenza Wijaya <sup>1\*</sup> Ratih Kurnia Hidayati <sup>2</sup> Ni Putu Limarandani <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1\*, 2, 3</sup>, LSPR Institute of Communication and Business, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Email: [24173190051@lspr.edu](mailto:24173190051@lspr.edu)

## ARTICLE HISTORY

**Submitted** : May 21, 2026  
**Reviewed** : May 24, 2026  
**Revised** : May 27, 2026  
**Accepted** : May 29, 2026  
**Published** : June 02, 2026

## Conflict of Interest Statement:

The author(s) declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study examines the situational factors that escalated Bigo Live Indonesia's reputational crisis in 2024 and describes the crisis communication strategies the platform deployed in response to the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo) 's threat to block.

**Research Method:** A qualitative intrinsic case study was conducted using Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). Data comprised Bigo Live's official press release and eleven online news articles (CNNIndonesia.com, Detik.com, Kompas.com) published between August and September 2024, analyzed using NVivo 12 and verified through source triangulation.

**Results and Discussion:** The crisis was preventable and was compounded by a history of recurring violations (a 2016 block and a 2024 non-compliance) and a poor reputation for relations. Bigo Live relied mainly on a rebuild strategy through compensation, supported by implicit deny-scapegoat, bolstering, and ethics-based tactics.

**Implications:** The absence of an apology and the use of scapegoating weakened the response, suggesting that platforms facing regulatory sanction should pair technical compensation with explicit accountability.

**Originality:** This study applies SCCT to a crisis on a live-streaming platform, driven simultaneously by regulatory pressure and a blocking threat. This multilayered context has rarely been examined in prior crisis communication research.

**Keywords:** bigo live; crisis communication; situational crisis communication theory; crisis management; organizational reputation.

## 1. Introduction

Bigo Live, a Singapore-based multinational under JOYY Inc., has grown since its 2016 launch into a global live-streaming platform operating in more than 150 countries. However, global reach does not exempt a digital platform from national jurisdiction. India blocked Bigo Live in 2020, alongside 58 other Chinese applications, on security grounds, and Pakistan's telecommunications authority restricted it for content deemed indecent. In Indonesia, the platform's continued operation depends on compliance with the authority of the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo). These cases illustrate a recurring tension between the commercial logic of global digital platforms and the regulatory sovereignty of the states in which they operate.



This tension came to a head in Indonesia in 2024. On 21 August 2024, Kominfo issued a Second Warning Letter (SP2) to Bigo Live, accompanied by an explicit threat to block the platform. The warning followed cyber-patrol findings of 121 accounts linked to online gambling (26 May–8 August 2024) and 32 accounts containing pornographic material (15–18 August 2024), both of which are prohibited under Law No. 1 of 2024 on Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE). An earlier First Warning Letter (SP1) on 16 July 2024 had demanded the removal of illegal content and improved moderation, but Kominfo found no significant improvement. For a platform whose viability depends on regulatory tolerance and public trust, the threat of blocking posed an existential risk: failure to respond effectively could result in forced closure, user loss, and lasting reputational damage. Bigo Live, therefore, needed a crisis communication strategy capable of restoring trust with both the regulator and the public.

Crisis communication offers a strategic lens for understanding such situations. Coombs (2015) frames crisis communication as the combination of information management, which conveys facts and instructions, and meaning management, which shapes a narrative to reduce negative perceptions. The most influential framework in this tradition is Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), developed by Coombs (2007), which links the appropriate crisis response to the level of crisis responsibility that stakeholders attribute to the organization.

A growing body of research has demonstrated SCCT's value across sectors. Chang *et al.*, (2023) showed that crisis-response strategies combined with corporate social responsibility can reduce negative effects and enhance organizational attractiveness after a crisis. Park & Park (2020) found, in the Samsung Galaxy Note 7 recall, that silence and delayed responses fuelled negative sentiment, whereas rectification, comprising apology, compensation, and preventive action, improved brand loyalty. Gupta *et al.*, (2023) used SCCT to show how attributions of responsibility eroded the World Health Organization's reputation among Indian public-health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the importance of transparency, speed, and consistency.

SCCT has also proven adaptable to the digital environment, where narratives spread rapidly and defensively oriented tactics are common. It has been applied to public-sector crises (Liu *et al.*, 2018; Sisco, 2012), education-sector data breaches (Ortiz & Arenas, 2024), aviation disasters (Othman & Yusoff, 2020; Rahmawati *et al.*, 2024), the hospitality sector (Liu-Lastres *et al.*, 2020), and reputation management under conditions of disinformation (Gasana, 2024). Collectively, these studies confirm that the core SCCT principles of speed, transparency, accountability, and empathy remain decisive, but that the digital era demands proactive narrative management beyond the theory's original prescriptions.

Despite this breadth, SCCT has rarely been applied to the crisis of a live-streaming platform under the dual pressure of regulatory enforcement and an explicit threat of blocking. Most prior studies examine crises in which the principal audience is the consuming public or general stakeholders. The Bigo Live case is distinctive because the decisive stakeholder is a state regulator that holds the legal authority to terminate the platform's operations. The platform, therefore, faced two simultaneous tasks: restoring declining public trust while satisfying a regulator's demands to avoid sanctions. This multilayered configuration, combining reputational damage, regulatory pressure, and the need to rebuild public confidence at once, has not been examined comprehensively in the existing literature.

Accordingly, this study addresses two research questions: (1) How did situational factors contribute to the escalation of Bigo Live Indonesia's reputational crisis that triggered Kominfo's strong warning in 2024? Moreover, (2) What crisis communication strategies did Bigo Live Indonesia implement, based on SCCT, in facing the threat of blocking? The objectives are to identify the situational

factors driving the crisis and to describe the crisis communication strategies the platform adopted. The novelty of the study lies in its application of SCCT to a crisis on a digital live-streaming platform, in which reputational recovery and regulatory compliance are inseparable, offering insight into how crisis communication can mediate between commercial survival and national regulatory authority.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The next section reviews the literature on crisis and crisis communication and develops the SCCT framework and the study's guiding propositions. The third section describes the research method. The fourth section presents the analysis results and discusses them in light of SCCT and prior studies. The final section offers conclusions, recommendations, and the study's limitations.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review. Section 3 presents the research method. Section 4 provides the results and discussion. Section 5 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1 Crisis and Crisis Communication

Coombs (2007) defines a crisis as a sudden, unexpected event perceived by stakeholders as a threat to important expectations, with consequences for an organization's operations and reputation. Crucially, a crisis is socially constructed: stakeholder perception, rather than objective fact, determines whether an event becomes a crisis (Coombs, 2015; Tachkova & Coombs, 2022). Coombs (2015) distinguishes organizational crises, which are direct threats arising from internal failure or ethical breaches, from disasters, which are large-scale, sudden disruptions. The crisis examined here is organizational: it stems from the platform's internal failure to enforce its own content-moderation policies.

Crisis communication occupies a central position within public relations, managing the relationship between an organization and its publics in critical situations (Anderson-Meli & Koshy, 2020). Coombs (2015) conceptualizes it as the integration of information management, which delivers facts, instructions, and clarifications transparently, and meaning management, which constructs a narrative to alter negative perceptions, for instance, through an apology accompanied by concrete commitments. Coordination among stakeholders is essential to ensure message consistency. In the present case, the primary message recipient is the Indonesian government, specifically Kominfo, the regulator empowered to impose sanctions or policies that directly affect the platform's operations. This regulatory centrality differentiates the case from crises in which the consuming public is the principal audience.

### 2.2 Situational Crisis Communication Theory

SCCT is grounded in attribution theory, which holds that stakeholders naturally search for the cause of a negative event and attribute responsibility to the organization, thereby generating emotional and behavioral responses such as anger or boycotts (Coombs, 2006, 2007). SCCT operationalizes this insight by predicting the level of reputational threat from three situational factors: the crisis type, the organization's prior crisis history, and its pre-crisis relational reputation (Coombs, 2006, 2007; Sisco, 2012; Tachkova & Coombs, 2022). Crisis types fall into three clusters: victim (the organization is a victim, as in a natural disaster), accidental (an unintentional technical or operational failure), and preventable (negligence or violation). A prior history of similar crises and a poor relational reputation both heighten attributed responsibility, making reputational recovery more difficult.

From these situational factors, SCCT recommends crisis-response strategies grouped into primary and secondary categories (Coombs, 2007, 2015, 2020; Tachkova & Coombs, 2022). Primary strategies comprise deny (attack the accuser, denial, and scapegoat), diminish (excuse and justification), and rebuild (compensation and apology). For preventable crises, where the degree of attributed responsibility is high, SCCT prescribes rebuilding strategies, particularly compensation and apology, to repair relationships with stakeholders. Secondary strategies, grouped under bolstering (reminder, ingratiation, and victimage), reinforce a positive image during the crisis. Coombs (2020) further adds an ethics-based response, which prioritizes instructing and adjusting information to protect and reassure stakeholders over reputational concerns. The fit between the crisis type and the chosen response strategy determines the effectiveness of the organization's reputational recovery.

### 2.3. Prior Empirical Studies and Proposition Development

Prior empirical work clarifies what constitutes effective and ineffective applications of SCCT. Studies of aviation crises, such as Othman and Yusoff (2020) on MH370 and Rahmawati *et al.*, (2024) on Sriwijaya Air SJ182, show that delayed responses and excuse strategies deepen a crisis and erode stakeholder trust. Ortiz and Arenas (2024) find that organizations in the education sector that experience data breaches often resort to scapegoating. This approach contradicts SCCT's emphasis on transparency and is poorly suited to preventable crises in which the public demands accountability. Liu-Lastres *et al.*, (2020) document the dominance of bolstering in hotel responses to health crises, while Gasana (2024) argues that, in an era of disinformation, ethical leadership and proactive narrative management are essential to mitigating reputational harm. Two themes emerge from this body of work: the core SCCT principles of speed, transparency, and accountability remain decisive, yet defensive tactics such as scapegoating frequently undermine them, particularly in preventable crises.

## 3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative intrinsic case study design (Creswell, 2016; Yin, 2018). An intrinsic case study focuses on a case for its own uniqueness rather than to generalize to other contexts, which suits the distinctive situation of Bigo Live's reputational recovery under the threat of blocking. The bounded case is the platform's effort to repair its reputation following Kominfo's SP2 of 21 August 2024; the subject of analysis is the body of online news coverage and the company's official communication during August–September 2024, relevant to that case.

Data were drawn from secondary textual sources: Bigo Live Indonesia's official press release, distributed through Media Outreach Newswire, and online news articles published by CNNIndonesia.com, Detik.com, and Kompas.com. These three outlets were selected because they are among Indonesia's most credible and widely read media, they provided the most extensive coverage of the case, and their date-filtered search functions allowed systematic retrieval within the study period. Articles were searched on 3 March 2025 using the keyword "Bigo" and were retained if they (a) were published between August and September 2024, (b) took the form of written articles rather than video, (c) addressed SP2 and the blocking threat, Bigo's response, or its reputational recovery, and (d) were informative rather than opinion or advertising, except for the company press release. The search yielded 18 items, of which 12 met the criteria for analysis: one press release and eleven news articles (six from Detik.com, two from CNNIndonesia.com, and three from Kompas.com).



Consistent with qualitative inquiry, the researcher served as the primary instrument (Creswell, 2016) and was guided by an analytical framework derived from SCCT. The framework directed coding toward the three situational factors and toward the primary and secondary response strategies, as summarized in Table 1.

Data were analyzed through content analysis (Drisko & Maschi, 2016) following the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Condensation involved selecting and filtering the secondary data by relevance to the case. Coding adapted Saldaña's (2021) two-cycle approach: first-cycle coding applied the SCCT-based categories (situational factors and response strategies) to the texts, and second-cycle coding refined these codes and identified relationships among categories. The condensed data were then displayed as categorization tables grouping the findings by SCCT dimension, after which conclusions were drawn. NVivo 12 was used to support coding, word-frequency analysis, and the mapping of relationships among concepts.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied source triangulation, cross-checking information across the press release and the three news outlets for consistency in dates, quotations, and reported figures. For example, the company's claim to have removed more than 40,000 items of illegal content was verified across outlets to confirm the figure and chronology. Because the corpus consists of secondary media coverage, the analysis acknowledges potential editorial bias and the limits of a two-month window; triangulation mitigates, though it cannot eliminate, these constraints. As an intrinsic case study, the findings are specific to Bigo Live's situation and are not intended to be generalized to other platforms or crisis types.

**Table 1. SCCT Analytical Framework: Situational Factors and Crisis-Response Strategies**

SCCT Dimension	Component	Coding Focus / Indicator
Situational factor	Crisis type	Victim, accidental, or preventable cluster; attribution of responsibility
Situational factor	Crisis history	Prior similar crises or repeated violations
Situational factor	Relational reputation	Pre-crisis trust of the regulator and the public
Primary strategy	Deny	Attack the accuser, denial, scapegoat
Primary strategy	Diminish	Excuse, justification
Primary strategy	Rebuild	Compensation, apology
Secondary strategy	Bolstering	Reminder, ingratiation, victimage
Ethical-base response	Instructing/adjusting information	Protective and reassuring information for stakeholders

**Source:** adapted from Coombs (2006, 2007, 2015, 2020) and Tachkova and Coombs (2022).

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Analysis Results

The analysis is organized around the two research questions: the situational factors that escalated the crisis, and the crisis communication strategies Bigo Live deployed in response. An NVivo word-frequency query identified the most recurrent terms across the corpus: "Bigo" (194), "Live" (177), "content" (124), "Indonesia" (59), and "Kominfo" (57), confirming that the coverage centered on the platform's content problem and its relationship with the regulator. The coded data were then mapped onto the SCCT framework.

4.1.1. Situational Factors of the Crisis

Four interrelated situational factors contributed to the escalation of the crisis. First, regulator action formed the decisive context. Online gambling had become a national priority: transactions reached approximately IDR 100 trillion in the first quarter of 2024, prompting the government to establish a cross-agency Anti-Online-Gambling Task Force comprising Kominfo, the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN), and the financial intelligence unit (PPATK) (Kompas.com, 23 August 2024). Within this enforcement drive, Kominfo's cyber patrols detected 121 gambling-related accounts (26 May–8 August 2024) and 32 pornographic accounts (15–18 August 2024) on Bigo Live, providing the basis for SP1 (16 July 2024) and SP2 (21 August 2024) and an explicit warning of legal action (CNN Indonesia, 23 August 2024; Detik.com, 26 August 2024). Second, the crisis type was preventable. Kominfo judged that Bigo Live had failed to act in good faith, citing its disregard of two warning letters and the recurrence of illegal content (CNN Indonesia, 23 August 2024; Detik.com, 28 August 2024). Although the platform's Community Convention prohibits gambling and pornographic content, the repeated violations pointed to negligent internal enforcement rather than an accidental or external cause; no evidence indicated an accidental or victim cluster. Third, the crisis history was one of recurring violations. Kominfo first blocked Bigo Live in 2016 over pornographic content; CEO David Li and Country Manager Steven Chang then met with the minister and pledged to improve moderation (Detik.com, 24 and 26 August 2024). A 2019 partnership with Kominfo on cyber monitoring briefly signaled cooperation, but the 2024 findings and the disregard of SP1 and SP2 re-established a pattern of non-compliance (Detik.com, 22 August 2024; Kompas.com, 23 August 2024). Fourth, this pattern resulted in a poor reputation for relationships. Kominfo stated explicitly that Bigo Live had "not shown good faith" (Detik.com, 22 August 2024), and the platform's claim of operating a "safe and dignified" environment (Press Release Bigo Live, 26 August 2024) clashed with the regulator's findings, deepening distrust among both the regulator and the public. Together, these four factors elevated the responsibility attributed to Bigo Live and pushed the crisis toward the threat of blocking, as summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2. Situational Factors Driving the Escalation of the Bigo Live Crisis**

Situational factor	SCCT category	Key evidence
Regulator action	Crisis context	National anti-online-gambling drive (≈IDR 100 trillion, Q1 2024); cross-agency Task Force (Kominfo, BSSN, PPATK); cyber patrols detecting 121 gambling and 32 pornographic accounts; SP1 and SP2.
Crisis type	Preventable cluster	Repeated illegal content despite the platform's own Community Convention; Kominfo found no good-faith compliance after two warnings.
Crisis history	Prior crisis record	2016 block over pornographic content; 2019 cooperation with Kominfo; renewed non-compliance with SP1 and SP2 in 2024.
Relational reputation	Pre-crisis reputation	Regulator's statement that Bigo Live had "not shown good faith"; clash between the platform's "safe and dignified" claim and Kominfo's findings; public and regulator distrust.

**Source:** Adapted from the study's content analysis (CNN Indonesia, Detik.com, Kompas.com, and Press Release Bigo Live, August–September 2024).

4.1.2. Crisis Communication Strategies



Because most news coverage reproduced the company's press release, it served as the primary object of content analysis and was cross-checked against the news articles to verify its accuracy. The analysis shows that Bigo Live combined primary and secondary strategies, with rebuild as the dominant approach (Table 3).

**Table 3. Crisis Communication Strategies Deployed by Bigo Live**

Level	Strategy and tactic	Manifestation in the data
Primary	Deny (scapegoat, implicit)	Press-release framing that sensitive content was "never allowed" and "never tolerated," implying user violation rather than systemic weakness; understated rather than aggressive.
Primary	Rebuild (compensation, dominant)	Application "refresh" with AI-based image, face, and video recognition; moderation team expanded to 300 (24-hour Indonesian-language); >40,000 items and 50,000 accounts removed; investment and university collaboration; direct meeting with Kominfo.
Secondary	Bolstering (reminder)	Recalled the 2019 monitoring partnership with Kominfo and the platform's role during the COVID-19 pandemic as entertainment and alternative income.
Secondary	Ethical base (adjusting information)	Detailed technical reassurance: AI moderation with 99.5% accuracy within 60 seconds, an enlarged team, and progress reports to Kominfo—no explicit apology.

**Source:** Adapted from the study's content analysis (Press Release Bigo Live, CNN Indonesia, Detik.com, Kompas.com, August–September 2024).

At the primary level, Bigo Live used a deny strategy through an implicit scapegoat tactic. Its press release stated that sensitive content was "not allowed and never allowed on our platform" and that the company "never tolerates any sensitive content" (Press Release Bigo Live, 26 August 2024). Without explicitly naming an external party, this framing implied that illegal content originated from user violations rather than from weaknesses in the platform's own systems. The tactic was secondary and understated rather than aggressive.

The more prominent primary strategy was to rebuild through compensation. Bigo Live announced a comprehensive application "refresh" with stricter, AI-based content filtering, including image, face, and video recognition that detects harmful content in real time, and expanded its moderation team to 300 staff, including 24-hour Indonesian-language moderators (Press Release Bigo Live, 26 August 2024). It reported removing more than 40,000 items of indecent content and 50,000 violating accounts since early 2024, and claimed that 99% of illegal content was removed before users saw it. Compensation extended beyond technical fixes: the company committed to increased investment in Indonesia and to a university collaboration that offers internships and digital skills training. These commitments were reinforced through direct engagement with the regulator: in September 2024, JOYY APAC CEO Claude Lee met Kominfo to present a three-part plan involving greater investment, an expanded 300-person moderation team, and the highest moderation standards, stating that the company would "allocate more funds and resources" to meet the ministry's expectations (Kompas.com, 18 September 2024).

At the secondary level, Bigo Live applied bolstering through reminders and an ethics-based response by adjusting information. The reminder tactic highlighted the company's prior positive contributions: its 2019 monitoring partnership with Kominfo and its role during the COVID-19 pandemic as a source of entertainment and alternative income for Indonesian creators (Press Release Bigo Live, 26 August 2024). The adjusting-information tactic provided detailed, reassuring technical information, including AI moderation with 99.5% accuracy that removes harmful content within 60 seconds, an enlarged moderation team, and progress reports to Kominfo, to calm both the regulator and the public (Detik.com, 28 August 2024; Kompas.com, 18 September 2024). Notably, the response contained no explicit apology. The regulator's reaction was cautiously positive: Minister Budi Arie welcomed the commitments but warned that promises had to be proven, that monitoring would continue, and that blocking remained an option given Bigo Live's record of non-compliance since 2016 (Detik.com, 17 September 2024).

#### 4.2 Discussion

The findings support Proposition 1: the escalation of Bigo Live's crisis is explained by the convergence of three situational factors that SCCT identifies as raising attributed responsibility (Coombs, 2006, 2007). The crisis belongs to the preventable cluster because it arose from negligent content moderation that stricter oversight could have prevented (Coombs, 2007). A recurring crisis history, namely the 2016 block and the 2024 non-compliance with SP1 and SP2, reinforced the perception of repeated negligence (Tachkova & Coombs, 2022), and a poor relational reputation, marked by the regulator's loss of trust, further heightened attributed responsibility. The combination meant that Kominfo's threat was not merely an administrative sanction but a demand for an evidence-based, collaborative response.

Response speed proved a critical aggravating factor. Bigo Live issued its press release and improvement commitments only after the threat of blocking, despite SCCT's prescription for prompt action upon crisis detection. This finding aligns with Othman and Yusoff (2020), who showed that delayed responses in the MH370 crisis deepened distrust, and with Rahmawati *et al.*, (2024), who found that slow clarification escalated the Sriwijaya Air SJ182 crisis. Gasana (2024) similarly argues that speed is essential to mitigating misinformation; had Bigo Live acted decisively after SP1 on 16 July 2024, the crisis might not have escalated to the SP2 threat. The pattern is consistent with Ortiz and Arenas (2024), who associate slow responses with preventable-cluster classification.

The findings partially support Proposition 2. For a preventable crisis with high attributions of responsibility, SCCT prescribes rebuilding strategies such as compensation and apology (Coombs, 2007). Bigo Live's dominant reliance on rebuilding compensation, achieved through AI-based moderation, an expanded moderation team, and social initiatives, is consistent with this prescription and has helped curb escalation. This echoes Othman and Yusoff (2020) and Gasana (2024) on the value of compensation and transparency for restoring trust. However, Bigo Live's compensation was technical and non-material rather than financial, reflecting the digital context of the crisis. Its proactive transparency, including the meeting with Kominfo and progress reporting, similarly accords with Gasana's (2024) emphasis on proactive communication, and its bolstering through reminder parallels the dominant bolstering Liu-Lastres *et al.*, (2020) observed in hotel crisis responses.

The response nonetheless diverged from SCCT in two consequential ways. First, the absence of an apology weakened the ethical dimension of the response; in the case of preventable crises, acknowledging fault is central to reducing perceived responsibility and rebuilding trust (Coombs, 2007).

Second, the implicit deny-scapegoat tactic, which framed illegal content as user misconduct, was ill-suited to a preventable crisis in which stakeholders demand accountability, a limitation Ortiz and Arenas (2024) identify in comparable cases. The dominance of rebuild-compensation mitigated the damage, but the absence of an apology and the scapegoating constrained the response's effectiveness. This interpretation is consistent with the regulator's stance: Minister Budi Arie appreciated the commitments yet stressed continued monitoring and the persistent possibility of blocking. Overall, Bigo Live's strategy was largely appropriate but only partially aligned with SCCT, leaving the recovery of regulator and public trust incomplete. Table 4 summarizes this alignment.

**Table 4. Alignment of Bigo Live's Crisis Response with SCCT Prescriptions**

Dimension	Element	Alignment with SCCT
Situational factors	Preventable crisis type, recurring history, poor relational reputation	Consistent: jointly raise attributed responsibility, requiring a high-responsibility response.
Primary strategy	Rebuild (compensation)	Consistent: recommended for preventable crises.
Primary strategy	Deny (scapegoat, implicit)	Inconsistent: SCCT calls for organizational accountability, not blame-shifting.
Secondary strategy	Bolstering (reminder)	Consistent: reinforces a positive image during the crisis.
Secondary strategy	Ethical base (adjusting information)	Consistent: transparent reassurance builds trust.
Key shortcoming	Absence of apology	Inconsistent: weakens the ethical response to a preventable crisis.

**Source:** Authors' analysis based on Coombs (2007, 2015, 2020) and Tachkova and Coombs (2022).

## 5. Concluding Remarks and Recommendation

This study examined how situational factors exacerbated Bigo Live Indonesia's 2024 reputational crisis and what crisis communication strategies the platform adopted in response to Kominfo's threat to block it, using a qualitative intrinsic case study grounded in SCCT and content analysis of the company's press release and 11 news articles. In response to the first research question, the crisis was driven by four interrelated situational factors: assertive regulator action within a national anti-online-gambling drive, a preventable crisis type rooted in negligent content moderation, a recurring crisis history (the 2016 block and the 2024 non-compliance with SP1 and SP2), and a poor relational reputation reflecting lost regulator and public trust. In response to the second question, Bigo Live combined primary and secondary strategies, relying mainly on a rebuild-through-compensation approach comprising 300 moderators, AI-based moderation, special funds, and a university collaboration, supported by an implicit deny-scapegoat tactic, bolstered through reminders, and an ethics-based response by adjusting information. The strategy aligned only partially with SCCT: technical compensation and transparency curbed escalation, but the absence of an apology and scapegoating reduced the response's effectiveness in restoring trust.

Theoretically, the study extends SCCT to a context that has received little attention: a live-streaming platform facing simultaneous regulatory pressure and an existential blocking threat, where the decisive stakeholder is a state regulator rather than the consuming public. It shows that in such a

setting, technical and non-material compensation can substitute for financial compensation but cannot substitute for ethical accountability, particularly an apology, that SCCT prescribes for preventable crises. In practice, the findings offer guidance for multinational digital platforms operating under national content regulation: responding promptly to early warnings, pairing technical remediation with explicit acknowledgment of fault, and engaging the regulator collaboratively are likely to be more effective than a defensive framing. For policymakers, the case illustrates how warning-and-enforcement mechanisms can compel platform compliance while leaving room for negotiated remediation.

This study has several limitations. It relies on secondary textual data, namely the company press release and online news coverage, which may carry editorial bias despite source triangulation, and it is limited to the August–September 2024 window, so crisis dynamics before or after this period are not captured. As an intrinsic case study, its findings are specific to Bigo Live and are not intended for generalization to other platforms or crisis types. Future research could incorporate primary data through interviews with Bigo Live and Kominfo officials, adopt a longer observation period to assess the long-term reputational effects of the chosen strategies, and undertake comparative analysis with other platforms subject to similar regulatory pressure, with Telegram, which received a comparable warning, being a natural candidate.

## Statement of Use of Generative AI

During the preparation of this work, the author used generative artificial intelligence tools to support the scientific writing process. Grammarly was used to check grammar, refine writing style, and improve clarity in scientific writing. All interpretations, analyses, and conclusions presented in this study are the sole responsibility of the author.

## References

- Akbulut E. (2023). The Relationship Between Communicative Actions, Behavioral Intentions, and Corporate Reputation in the Framework of Situational Theory of Problem Solving in a Public Health Crisis. *International journal of public health*, 68, 1606301. <https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2023.1606301>
- Anderson-Meli, L., & Koshy, S. (2020). Public relations crisis communication: A new model. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429287763>
- Bigo Live TV. (2023). BIGO LIVE wiki: What is BIGO LIVE. <https://blog.bigo.tv/faq/what-is-bigo-live/>
- Chang, W. C., Weng, L. C., & Wu, S. B. (2023). CSR and organizational attractiveness: The impacts of crisis and crisis response. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043753>
- CNN Indonesia. (2024). Terancam diblokir Kominfo, Bigo Live lakukan pembaruan total. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/teknologi/20240826154816-192-1137643/terancam-diblokir-kominfo-bigo-live-lakukan-pembaruan-total>
- Coombs, W. T. (2006). The protective powers of crisis response strategies: Managing reputational assets during a crisis. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 12(3–4), 241–260. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J057v12n03\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1300/J057v12n03_13)
- Coombs, W. (2007). Protecting Organization Reputations During a Crisis: The Development and Application of Situational Crisis Communication Theory. *Corp Reputation Rev* 10, 163–176. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550049>
- Coombs, W. T. (2015). Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2010.2046099>
- Coombs, W. T. (2018). Revising situational crisis communication theory: The influences of social media on crisis communication theory and practice. In L. Austin & Y. Jin (Eds.), *Social media and crisis communication* (pp. 21–37). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315749068-3>
- Coombs, W. T. (2020). Situational crisis communication theory: Influences, provenance, evolution, and prospects. In P. J. Schulz & P. Coble (Eds.), *Handbooks of communication science* (pp. 121–140). Walter de Gruyter.
- Coombs, W. T. (2025). Cloaking through crisis communication: Hiding uncomfortable information. In W. T. Coombs (Ed.), *Media and crisis communication* (pp. 222–240). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032619187>



- Coombs, W. T., & Harker, J. L. (2021). Strategic sport communication: Traditional and transmedia strategies for a global sports market. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003031161>
- Creswell, J. W. (2016). Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. SAGE Publications.
- Drisko, J. W., & Maschi, T. (2016). Content analysis. Oxford University Press.
- Gasana, K. (2024). Crisis communication and reputation management in the age of fake news. *Journal of Public Relations*, 3(1), 28–39. <https://doi.org/10.47941/jpr.1773>
- Gupta, S., Pande, N., Arumugam, T., & Sanjeev, M. A. (2023). Reputational impact of Covid-19 pandemic management on World Health Organization among Indian public health professionals. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 23(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2842>
- Liu-Lastres, B., Kim, H., & Ying, T. (2020). Learning from past crises: Evaluating hotels' online crisis responses to health crises. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 20(3), 372–378. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358419857779>
- Liu, W., Lai, C. H., & Xu, W. (2018). Tweeting about emergency: A semantic network analysis of government organizations' social media messaging during Hurricane Harvey. *Public Relations Review*, 44(5), 807–819. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2018.10.009>
- Ortiz, A. P., & Arenas, A. E. (2024). An analysis of data breach notifications in the educational sector: A situational crisis communication theory perspective. 30th Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS 2024), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.21009/COMM.034.01>
- Othman, A. F., & Yusoff, S. Z. (2020). Crisis communication management strategies in MH370 crisis with special references to situational crisis communication theory. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(4), 172–182. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v10-i4/7118>
- Park, S., & Park, H. W. (2020). A webometric network analysis of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) characteristics and machine learning approach to consumer comments during a crisis. *Profesional de la Información*, 29(5), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2020.sep.16>
- Rahmawati, A., Pratiwi, M., & Yusa, M. Y. (2024). Navigating turbulence: Analyzing the crisis response of Sriwijaya Air following the SJ182 plane crash using situational crisis communication theory (SCCT). *CHANNEL: Jurnal Komunikasi*, 12(1), 84–93. <https://doi.org/10.12928/channel.v12i1.366>
- Saldaña, J. (2021). The coding manual for qualitative researchers. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/12085>
- Sisco, H. F. (2012). Nonprofit in crisis: An examination of the applicability of situational crisis communication theory. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 24(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2011.582207>
- Tachkova, E. R., & Coombs, W. T. (2022). Communicating in extreme crises: Lessons from the edge. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003094661>
- Tempo. (2024). Ini alasan Kominfo ancam bakal blokir Bigo Live. <https://www.tempo.co/digital/ini-alasan-kominfo-ancam-bakal-blokir-bigo-live-15833>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

## Corresponding author

Wuri Valenza Wijaya can be contacted at: [24173190051@lspr.edu](mailto:24173190051@lspr.edu)

