

## Crisis Communication Model in Relational Conflicts Between Corporations and Local Communities

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### Abstract

The rejection of PT Indofon’s new factory construction in Taruban Kulon Hamlet reflects a relational crisis triggered by the lack of early socialization and community involvement during the project planning phase. This study aims to analyze and formulate a relevant and applicable crisis communication model for Indofon to strategically and sustainably prevent, respond to, and restore social relations with the local community. The model refers to Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) and Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT). This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study method. The findings reveal that during the crisis phase, Indofon undertook several efforts to mitigate tensions, including internal communication coordination, formation of a crisis communication team, appointment of a spokesperson, crisis message delivery, strategic meetings with village officials, participatory dialogue (discussion), public commitments and implementation, and evaluation. Based on SCCT, Indofon adopted a rebuild strategy by offering a formal apology (apology strategy) and providing both written and unwritten compensation (compensation strategy). Furthermore, although categorized within the intentional cluster, Indofon also applied an attack the accuser strategy typically found in the victim cluster by confronting parties making negative claims. This study contributes a crisis communication model based on community expectation mapping, consisting of five stages: crisis preparedness, stakeholder mapping, crisis diagnosis, announcement and implementation, and evaluation with contingency planning.

### Keywords

Crisis communication, SCCT, EVT, Relational conflict, Issue and crisis management

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

PT. Indonesia Plafon Semesta (PT. Indofon), or commonly known as Indofon, is a PVC (polyvinyl chloride) ceiling product company located in Indonesia and headquartered in Kulonprogo, Yogyakarta. Established in 2018, Indofon has successfully reached an average of 2,868 projects annually and has served more than 2,609 consumers/clients to date (indofon.com, accessed on September 29, 2024). From this, it can be seen that Indofon has become a company with rapid



development considering its age is still under ten years; nevertheless, like companies in general, Indofofon certainly experiences both internal and external problems. One such issue is a relational conflict due to local community rejection in August 2023. It began with the installation of the foundation for Indofofon's third factory in Tuksono Village, Sentolo District, Kulonprogo Regency.

At this point, rejection began to emerge from the community of Taruban Kulon Hamlet. The rejection occurred when there was mobilization of materials such as stones and sand transported by trucks passing through the village roads. The local community began to show symbols of rejection by installing a portal on the access road leading to the new factory. This portal was built with pipes planted on two sides and another pipe placed on top, resembling a gate, but the portal was made small so that trucks carrying materials for the factory construction could not pass through. This rejection conflict resulted in the obstruction of factory construction operational activities for approximately two weeks; this conflict clearly created an operational crisis for Indofofon. Regarding permits, Indofofon had actually fulfilled the legal permits related to building construction, which had previously been processed through an electronic or online based system designed for risk based business licensing, as regulated in the Investment Coordinating Board Regulation No. 3 of 2021.

This research provides something new to previous studies regarding the integration between crisis communication and expectancy violation, namely: First, the research conducted by (Cho et al., 2021) "When An Organization Violates Public Expectations: A Comparative Analysis Of Sustainability Communication For Corporate And Nonprofit Organizations." The existence of expectancy violations committed by corporate and non profit organizations can influence public perceptions and responses toward the sustainability communication they convey. In this study, there are similarities with the theory used by the researcher, namely the EVT theory and its application to organizations/companies. This study supports the research conducted by the researcher, as the results show the importance of implementing sustainable communication when an organization, especially a corporate organization, commits an expectancy violation. However, unfortunately, this study does not show in detail how sustainable communication should be carried out. Thus, the research conducted by the researcher adds how organizations must conduct sustainable communication through expectation management.

Second, "The DPR RI Crisis Communication Strategy Using Instagram Facing the Rejection of Job Creation Bill" conducted by (Iskandar et al., 2021). This research was conducted due to community rejection that led to negative speech attacks directed at the DPR RI's social media following the ratification of the Job Creation Bill (RUU Cipta Kerja) into Law (UU); this conflict impacted the reputation crisis of the DPR RI. There are similarities between this research and the one conducted by the researcher regarding community rejection that leads to a crisis in the company and the use of the SCCT theory to support the findings. This study shows the results of how companies

respond to their crisis communication; however, unfortunately, this study only looks at it from the company's side without involving the community's perspective. Furthermore, the results of this study only stop at the short term response when the crisis is at its peak without providing a long term strategy response. Therefore, the researcher has provided not only one perspective the company but also from the community side as well as the long term response by implementing expectation management from the subjects chosen by the researcher with the help of supporting theory, namely EVT theory.

This research aims to analyze how PT. Indofon implements crisis communication in handling relational conflicts with the local community, and to find PT. Indofon's crisis communication model in handling local community rejection of the establishment of a new factory in Taruban Kulon Hamlet in order to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship sustainability.

## 2. METHODS

The researcher uses a qualitative research type and a case study research method. This begins with identifying a specific case; it is used to understand an issue or problem; demonstrating a deep understanding of the case; involving a description of the case; and conclusions are formed by the researcher regarding the overall meaning derived from the case (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the researcher has described the crisis communication carried out by PT. Indofon in facing community rejection between PT. Indofon and the local community, as well as PT. Indofon's efforts in maintaining or managing the relational relationship with the local community so that it continues to function well, thereby minimizing recurring conflicts, considering that in every relationship there are always contradictions and differences within it.

The research problem lies within the object studied in the research subject. The object in this research is the crisis communication in the local community rejection of Taruban Kulon Hamlet against the establishment of a new factory. The subjects of this research are PT. Indonesia Plafon Semesta, located in Tuksono Village, Sentolo District, Kulonprogo Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, and the actors involved from the beginning to the resolution of the conflict. In this study, the researcher divides the data sources into two sources: primary and secondary. In obtaining primary data, the researcher uses purposive sampling, while in obtaining secondary data, the researcher uses a literature study.

The researcher carries out two stages, namely observation and interviews, in the data collection technique. A longer duration to deepen this case is necessary to allow the researcher to capture the changes or dynamics occurring in the research subject. The researcher decided on a duration of one to two months to conduct in depth interviews and field observations, as well as to analyze the data

gradually. This duration allows the researcher to collect data from various parties: local community members; company representatives; and other stakeholders, as well as to transcribe and analyze the results. The researcher uses the Miles and Huberman data analysis, which consists of data collection (observation, in depth interviews, and documentation); data reduction (data analysis); data display (tables and brief descriptions); and conclusion drawing or verification. Triangulation is a way of checking the validity of data that utilizes something else outside of the data intended for checking purposes or can also be used as a guide toward that data (Sutopo, 2006). In this current study, the researcher uses source triangulation.

### **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1. Contextualizing the Onset of Conflict between the Company and the Local Community**

Before establishing the factory, Indofon processed the necessary permits to avoid issues related to lawsuits or legal violations in the future. Consequently, Indofon processed its licensing through the OSS (Online Single Submission) system, which is required for risk based business licensing. Having fulfilled the state level legal requirements, Indofon's next step was to seek informal permission from the surrounding community of Taruban Kulon Hamlet. The field team moved to convey information regarding the factory construction on that land to the Head of the Hamlet (Kepala Dukuh), as he was considered the representative of the community. The Head of the Hamlet received this information well and stated that he would pass this information on to the community.

Feeling that they had fulfilled both formal and informal licensing requirements, Indofon began the construction process starting with the mobilization of materials, such as stones and sand, transported by trucks passing through village roads in early August 2023. Residents who discovered this were quite surprised because there had been no prior notice or information that there would be construction on that land. While Indofon expected the information to have reached the community through the Head of the Hamlet, in reality, the information had not reached the residents' ears, signifying a communication failure. Seeing this, rumors began to emerge that the village road would be damaged due to Indofon's material trucks passing through on a large scale and repeatedly, considering that the road is a village road and its capacity is not as strong as a main road. These circulating issues and community anxieties stemmed from the residents' fear that the road would be damaged by the factory construction materials. This fear and concern grew further because the community harbored feelings of trauma; they were afraid Indofon would not repair it because a company established before Indofon had also made several promises and commitments that were ultimately unfulfilled or not fully realized. Therefore, the community did not want the establishment of Indofon to result in the same experience.

The community felt traumatized because, prior to Indofon, there were other factories around Taruban Kulon Hamlet that gave promises and commitments but failed to fulfill them optimally, with some remaining entirely unfulfilled. This led to a fear that if the road were to be damaged later, Indofon would only give false promises to repair it. Thus, before the road was even damaged, the community felt the need to act so that construction could be halted. This sense of disappointment was compounded by the fact that the community was unaware of the planned factory construction, making them feel excluded from the process.

The emergence of relational problems between Indofon and the community of Taruban Kulon Hamlet was rooted in a misalignment of expectations, traumatic feelings, and one sided communication since the factory planning phase. This occurred because Indofon initiated the factory project on land adjacent to residential areas without involving the community in the initial socialization process. Furthermore, during the mobilization of factory materials through village roads, Indofon did not include a direct communication mechanism for the entire community, causing residents to fear the road would be damaged by heavy materials. The conflict peaked when the community realized that the information received through their representative had not been passed on, and it occurred as the factory began to take physical shape, even though it was not yet fully operational. The onset of these relational problems took place in the area surrounding the construction site, which directly borders the residences of citizens impacted by the plan. The failure of expectation management occurred because of the assumption that providing information through a representative was sufficient, whereas the community's expectation was to receive information directly. This limited communication process (only to the Head of the Hamlet) marked the beginning of the relational problems between the company and the community, as community expectations were not met from the early stages.

### **3.2. Rejection of Factory Establishment: The Emergence of a Crisis**

Issues that were neglected due to a mismatch between the community environment or expectations and Indofon eventually grew and culminated in rejection, leading to the emergence of a crisis. The local community began to show a symbol of rejection by installing a portal on the access road to the factory. The limited space or media for the community to express their disappointment resulted in the steps taken by the community in the form of non verbal symbolic action, namely blocking the factory access road. This step was taken because the community's expectations were not met by Indofon. This road closure certainly disrupted the operational construction of the Indofon factory for approximately two weeks. Eventually, through its representatives, Indofon met with community nodes, both cultural and structural nodes. Structural nodes in this case include the Head

of the Hamlet (Kepala Dukuh), while cultural nodes consist of individuals considered elders in the area. These meetings proved to be less effective because, during the installation of the portal, information was obtained from the Head of the Hamlet that the residents insisted on installing the portal, which the Head of the Hamlet could not prevent despite having suggested that the matter be discussed properly with the company.

From this point, Indofon decided that a meeting between both parties was necessary. Indofon requested a meeting with the community through the Village Head (Kepala Lurah) because the Head of the Hamlet had not yet been able to facilitate it. The Village Head welcomed the request, and it was eventually decided that the meeting would be held at the house of the Head of the Hamlet. Based on the meeting between the community and the company, several community expectations prior to the conflict were identified as follows: (1) Socialization regarding the construction of the Indofon factory; (2) Job opportunities for the local community; (3) Commitment to economic empowerment.

Regarding the expectations and actions before the conflict between Indofon and the community, it can be said that Indofon did not intentionally intend to commit an expectancy violation; if traced back, this problem actually occurred due to miscommunication or a failure to communicate effectively. While Indofon's field team had provided notification to the Head of the Hamlet, unfortunately, the message was not well conveyed to the community. Additionally, Indofon learned from the previous factory, specifically during the establishment of the second factory in Sukoreno, which is not far from the third factory's location, that Indofon only needed to obtain permits from the OSS system. Meanwhile, the regulation known to the community was the Nuisance Permit or *Hinder Ordonantie* (HO) as stated in the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation (Permendagri) No. 27 of 2009 concerning Guidelines for Determining Nuisance Permits. However, currently, the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 27 of 2009 is an old regulatory policy that is actually no longer valid; this is stated in the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 19 of 2017 concerning the Revocation of Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 27 of 2009 concerning Guidelines for Determining Nuisance Permits in Regions, which declares that the regulation is no longer in force.

### **3.3. Crisis Communication Stages of PT. Indofon**

Indofon's initial intention to accelerate the production and distribution of products by establishing a third factory was instead hindered by this relational conflict. Indofon, which had scheduled the progress stages that needed to be completed for the factory establishment, was forced to shift its target objectives. This indicates that Indofon exhibited signs of a crisis based on the definition of a crisis according to (Devlin, 2006): "a crisis is an unstable time for an organization, with a distinct possibility for an undesirable [outcome]," which means a crisis is an unstable event for a company that can

potentially yield unexpected results, namely:

1. Operational Disruption: The factory construction process was hampered due to the conflict lasting for approximately 2 weeks. This resulted in project delays and increased operational costs.
2. Reputational Decline: The local community viewed Indofon as an exclusive company that ignored the presence of the community. This impacted the loss of public trust, and the company's image was tarnished at both local and regional levels, as well as creating distrust among consumers and partners.
3. Communication Crisis: The failure of two way communication led to misinformation or miscommunication and negative rumors. This resulted in the community becoming increasingly resistant, dialogues becoming unproductive, and an escalation of the conflict.

The researcher classifies PT. Indofon's crisis communication process in resolving the relational conflict with the community of Taruban Kulon Hamlet into several phases: Pre crisis; Crisis; and Post crisis, as follows:

1. Pre crisis

Crisis communication at this stage focuses on preventive measures, how the company prepares itself before a conflict occurs, as well as risk identification by analyzing potential conflicts or crises that might emerge (Prayudi, 2021). In this pre crisis stage, the researcher also includes the history regarding similar crises that occurred at Indofon previously. A similar crisis resulting from community rejection or resistance actually occurred during the construction of the second factory. However, the source of the conflict at the second factory was slightly different from what occurred at the third factory, and the level of crisis experienced during the second factory was not as significant as at the third factory. This problem also began during the factory construction process, specifically at the second factory in Sukoreno. Based on the history of the previous crisis at the second factory, during the establishment of the third factory located not far from the second factory, approximately 1.2 KM away Indofon assumed that information regarding the changed regulations (that socialization or signatures from residents were no longer required) had already spread to Taruban Kulon Hamlet. Therefore, Indofon felt it was no longer necessary to hold socialization in Taruban Kulon Hamlet because it was still within the same industrial zone.

This assumption led Indofon to only build a relationship and convey information regarding the construction planning in Taruban Kulon Hamlet to the Head of the Hamlet. However, keeping the history of past crises in mind, Indofon still made an offer to conduct socialization for the Taruban Kulon community. However, the Head of the Hamlet stated that communication to the community

would be passed on through him only. This statement by the Head of the Hamlet led Indofon to decide against direct communication or socialization with the community. This decision not to conduct socialization turned out to be an unexpected source of threat for Indofon. The unfulfilled socialization resulted in an expectancy violation.

## 2. Crisis

At this crisis stage, crisis communication is viewed through how the company communicates while the crisis is occurring and its impact on the company (Prayudi, 2021). The failure to identify risk analysis in analyzing potential conflicts namely the potential for community rejection ended up happening suddenly without warning signs, resulting in a temporary halt of factory construction. Upon seeing the portal on the factory access road, the field team immediately contacted the President Director (Dirut) of Indofon. Following the report from the field team, the President Director assigned the legal team.

The legal team requested the President Director to map out the planning for that location as a form of identification and inventory of the issues that had emerged. After the legal team identified the problems based on information from the President Director and the field team, without delaying too long, the legal team immediately met with the Head of the Hamlet, who had been the primary communication gate for the community from the beginning. Unfortunately, the meeting between the Indofon team and the Head of the Hamlet was ineffective, and the Head of the Hamlet suggested that Indofon seek assistance from the Village Head (Kepala Lurah). The team then requested the Village Head to facilitate a meeting with the residents, community leaders, religious leaders, youth, and community nodes considered representative of the entire community in the Taruban Kulon Hamlet area.

## 3. Post crisis

The company began to restore construction operations to normal and address the impacts or effects arising from the conflict (Prayudi, 2021). At this stage, policy changes and several commitments emerged. The following are Indofon's commitments to the community of Taruban Kulon Hamlet:

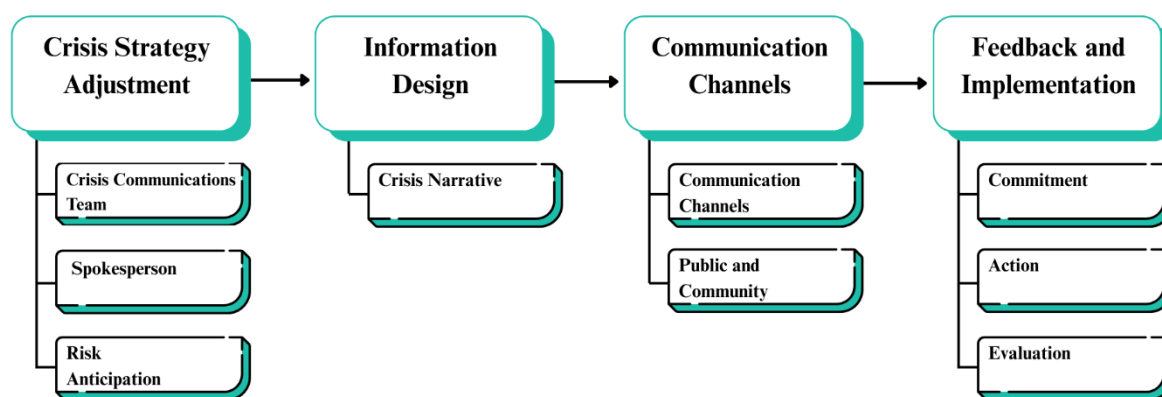
- a. Taking responsibility for road damage caused by the mobilization of factory construction materials. The form of implementation is repair or compensation for road infrastructure if damage occurs; the status/affirmation of this commitment is written and agreed upon in the deliberation results.
- b. Recruitment of local labor from the residents of Taruban Hamlet. The form of implementation is providing job opportunities for local residents while considering skills and work readiness; the

status/affirmation of this commitment is unwritten and flexible according to operational needs.

c. Community empowerment through support for activities and the utilization of residents' businesses. The form of implementation is providing sponsorship, supporting social activities, and using residents' business services (e.g., catering); the status/affirmation of this commitment is unwritten, situational, and implemented gradually.

### 3.4. Findings of PT. Indofofon's Crisis Communication Model

The impact that Indofofon received from this conflict was not on physical assets, but rather on intangible assets, which in this case are perception, image, and reputation in the eyes of stakeholders. For a company, reputation is something vital and must be maintained. Therefore, Indofofon's own crisis communication steps in managing the crisis included: (1) Formation of a crisis communication team; (2) Selection of a spokesperson; (3) Drafting of crisis messages; (4) Selection of crisis communication channels; (5) Immediate response; (6) Reputation repair and relationship recovery; (7) Evaluation of the crisis. Indofofon's crisis communication was built based on an in depth analysis of interview data and existing documentation. This sequence describes the process from the pre crisis stage, when communication failure became the starting point of the conflict, through the crisis phase, and finally to the recovery phase through concrete recovery commitments. The researcher discovered a design for a crisis communication model. Figure 1 represents the findings of the relational crisis communication model as follows:



**Figure 1.** Findings of Indofofon's Relational Crisis Communication Model

In the initial stage, Indofofon begins with "crisis strategy adjustment"; this stage describes Indofofon's role as the initial driver of the crisis communication strategy. In Indofofon's context, this stage is crucial to ensure that Indofofon's internal parties are ready to face the crisis in a coordinated manner. The crisis adjustment stage here applies a crisis strategy design; considering that Indofofon's attribution of responsibility is high because it falls within the intentional cluster, a crisis communication team must

be formed immediately. In forming this crisis communication team, several individual qualifications are required: (1) Understanding of the local language (Javanese); (2) Corporate communication skills; (3) Strong problem solving abilities. This adjustment stage also involves the selection of a spokesperson, with required qualifications including: (1) Public speaking skills; (2) An adaptive attitude, as crisis situations are often dynamic and unpredictable. The spokesperson must also possess high credibility, meaning a good reputation and being trustworthy in the eyes of the public. Furthermore, risk anticipation is conducted to identify potential threats and estimate their impacts. Seeing the resistance from the community, Indofon took steps by preparing adequate data and support materials.

The next stage is the "information design." At this stage, Indofon focuses on the design of the crisis communication content. Indofon tailors the message to the level of crisis sensitivity, organizational identity, and public expectations. Within the information design, the crisis narrative is formulated. The success of delivering a crisis message certainly requires an effective communication channel. This stage falls under "communication distributor," which is the phase of selecting and using the most appropriate communication channels to reach the target audience and maintain reputation. Indofon decided to avoid mass media or social media in its selection of communication channels, as these were deemed ineffective and unsuitable for the current crisis situation, particularly for the community of Taruban Kulon Hamlet; thus, direct meetings were chosen as the communication channel. The selection of communication channels naturally involves a target audience; at this stage, the public and community targets are the residents of Taruban Kulon Hamlet.

In the final stage, after all steps have been executed, it is important to conduct a thorough evaluation of the crisis communication's effectiveness; public feedback serves as the basis for learning and future improvement. Indofon enters the "announcement and implementation" stage; after a long participatory dialogue and negotiation, Indofon and the community finally agreed on the commitments offered by Indofon. The agreement on these commitments began to be implemented by Indofon through concrete activities, ranging from recruiting local labor, providing sponsorships, issuing damage compensation statements, and supporting community activities. This is followed by routine monthly evaluations with field reports regarding the community's response. From this, it can be said that based on the research results, the crisis response carried out by Indofon was quite effective, as evidenced by the successful continuation of the factory construction and serving as a sign that the community has accepted Indofon's presence and the factory establishment, culminating in the official grand opening on May 6, 2025, which community members and village government officials attended.

Based on the research results presented, the researcher provides a discussion and analysis of these findings, stating that the relational conflict between Indofon and the community has categorized as a crisis for Indofon. This is because, in principle, a crisis is any unstable situation that can bring about change, where desired changes can provide good results and undesired changes can yield poor outcomes (Fink, 1986). Given this crisis, Indofon, as both a company and a producer, must design strategies to overcome issues intersecting with its business to ensure operations return to a smooth state.

According to Fearn Banks, crisis communication itself is a dialogue that occurs before, during, and after a crisis between an organization and its publics. This dialogue consists of tactics and strategies planned to minimize reputational damage to the organization (Aziz & Wicaksono, 2020). Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is one of the theories proposed by Coombs regarding a company's response and strategy in facing a crisis. The core of SCCT is that crisis responsibility starts from how the crisis is responded to until how it is handled. This theory aims to determine how companies maintain their reputation amidst a communication crisis (Nurulhuda et al., 2022).

Regarding the characteristics of the crisis at Indofon, communication failure and the lack of involvement of the Taruban Kulon Hamlet community were the sources of the crisis, specifically by not conveying complete information regarding the factory construction directly to the community. This failure was clearly not caused by natural disasters or unexpected technical/operational errors. In terms of the crisis anatomy, Indofon was in the acute crisis stage because damage began to appear, reactions emerged, and issues began to spread more widely and confusingly (Prayudi, 2016). Meanwhile, in the SCCT framework, when a company is able to prevent the impact of a crisis but ignores it, the public will attribute high responsibility to the company, posing a significant threat to its reputation (Kriyantono, 2015). Indofon clearly had the capacity and authority to design an inclusive communication strategy from the beginning, before the crisis occurred (pre crisis). It can be said that the crisis cluster occurring at Indofon falls into the intentional cluster.

In accordance with SCCT, which places companies in the intentional cluster to perform a rebuild strategy, Indofon carries a large responsibility. Indofon took action by issuing an apology (apology strategy) to the community of Taruban Kulon Hamlet during the meeting, showing awareness and concern for the crisis's impact. In the meeting between both parties, through its representatives, Indofon apologized for not conducting the socialization understood by the community as "kulo nuwun" (asking permission) in the area, and for the lack of community involvement during the factory planning phase. The next strategy taken by Indofon was compensation (compensation strategy), where Indofon provided written compensation to the

residents of Taruban Kulon Hamlet. The content of this compensation included full responsibility if, during the construction process, the village roads used by Indofon were damaged by heavy factory materials. By providing compensation and an apology, Indofon helped reduce negative perceptions and strengthened its reputation.

These findings are consistent with research by (Amalia & Hermansah, 2023), which suggests that when a company is in the intentional cluster, the action to be taken is an apology strategy as a form of organizational awareness and concern toward the crisis. However, this strategy needs to be accompanied by concrete actions. By taking full responsibility, a compensation strategy is necessary to reduce negative attributions toward the company while proving that compensation is not merely a sanction. Indofon's stance in issuing an apology can be considered appropriate because, under the Ministry of Investment and Downstreaming/BKPM, the OSS system examines environmental provisions and documents required by business actors based on the type of business activity (KBLI) and relevant environmental parameters. Every business plan or activity with the potential to impact the environment is required to have environmental documents, such as: Environmental Impact Analysis (Amdal); Environmental Management and Monitoring Efforts (UKL-UPL); and Environmental Management Statement (SPPL). According to Regulation No. 22 of 2021 concerning the Implementation of Environmental Protection and Management, community participation affected by the project is crucial in the process of drafting an AMDAL (Restyadi, 2021).

The compensation strategy chosen by Indofon is also appropriate, given that the construction project is located within a residential area, so impacts such as infrastructure damage, pollution, loss of farmland, and others can be addressed, as compensation can increase community trust. There was also an additional strategy used by Indofon; despite being in the intentional cluster, Indofon utilized a strategy of attacking the party making negative claims (attack the accuser), which in SCCT falls under the victim cluster. This strategy was employed because of rumors that Indofon was the same as other companies that only gave false promises. Indofon responded by denying the rumors, emphasizing that Indofon was a newcomer to the Taruban Kulon Hamlet area and thus could not yet be labeled a company that breaks its promises.

This finding aligns with research by (Iskandar et al., 2021), which suggests that when a company faces rumors, the attack the accuser strategy can be used to counter negative narratives. Although the company is in an intentional cluster, strategies from other clusters can be utilized if the company experiences such cases. In SCCT, the attack the accuser strategy is part of the victim cluster in categories of crises caused by rumors. However, this also indicates a discrepancy between SCCT theory and real world practice. It confirms that a deny strategy with "attack the accuser" can be used by companies facing high reputational threats, even though a rebuild strategy (compensation &

apology) is theoretically more accommodative and effective in restoring trust.

What happened at Indofon illustrates the lack of structure in a company's existence when legal and formal government requirements are met, while those legal formal aspects fail to reach cultural dimensions. This causes the company to bear a heavier burden as it must confront social pillars not considered in its operations. The shift in regulations from the former Nuisance Permit (HO) involving the surrounding community to risk based licensing via the OSS system came as a surprise to the community, who were accustomed to being involved in development planning. Changes without adequate communication can be perceived as an expectancy violation. This conflict issue was also directly addressed by (Rendy, 2016), a researcher from the Center of Reform on Economic (CORE), who stated that the abolition of the HO has the potential to trigger environmental and social problems, as seen in the sand construction case in Lumajang, East Java, which sparked conflict between the local community and the company.

Expectancy Violations Theory (EVT) discusses how individuals react to violations of expectations in social interactions (Littlejohn & Foss, 2010). In the context of regulatory changes, ideally, Indofon should have still involved the community from the beginning to reduce responsibility attribution and the perception of expectancy violations. Transparency and clear communication are also vital; information related to business plans and their impacts must be conveyed openly, including through systems at Indofon accessible to the public. Because this conflict originated from an expectancy violation, the community felt Indofon had violated their expectation of being involved and informed. According to this theory, expectations are defined as thoughts held by one party (A) in a relationship with another (B) regarding the expected behavior of B (Stiegert et al., 2021).

Based on EVT, individuals have expectations regarding others' behavior based on social norms and past experiences. At the social level, there are rules, roles, practices, and norms that symbolize society, culture, and context (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). For the community of Taruban Kulon Hamlet, the attitude of "kulo nuwun" is necessary for newcomers "kulo nuwun" literally means "excuse me" or "permission to enter." Applied to Indofon, this expression should have been used when planning the factory as a sign of respect and to ask permission before entering an area. This was the community's expectation, which was unfortunately violated by Indofon.

There are three aspects provided by Burgoon in EVT (Wahyuningsih & Rohimi, 2022): First, "expectancy" social norms lead humans to form expectations about how others should act, verbally or nonverbally, during interactions. The desire for community involvement and socialization is a form of community expectancy. Second, "violation valence," which is the evaluation of the violation; if the received behavior is better than expected, it results in a positive violation. Conversely, if the behavior is worse, it results in a negative expectancy violation. The violation committed by Indofon was

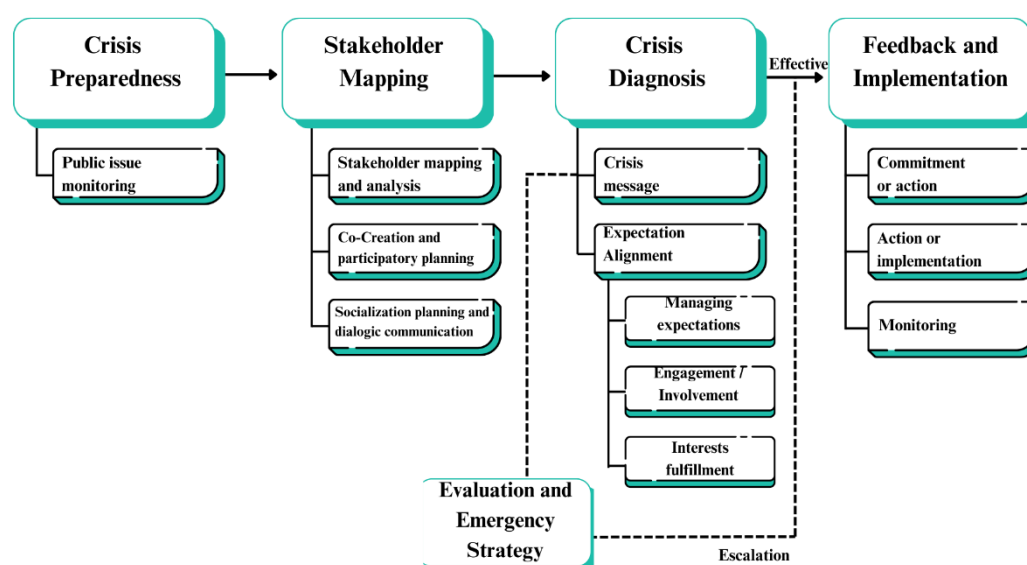
evaluated by the Taruban Kulon community as a negative violation because the situation was unpredictable and deemed unethical. Third, "communicator reward valence," the overall positive or negative attributes of the communicator, including factors related to the rewards, gains, or losses experienced by the receiver.

If the violator is already disliked, the receiver is less likely to appreciate or forgive behavior that deviates from social norms. The traumatic feelings in the community due to previous companies breaking promises made the Taruban Kulon community skeptical of subsequent companies, in this case, Indofon. This negative perception led the community to believe that Indofon's presence would not provide any rewards or benefits.

In line with research by (Saeed et al., 2024), expectancy violations can lead to feelings of betrayal, and the impact of such feelings on behavior often manifests as revenge or complaints. A perceived violation of expectations by the receiver triggers negative emotions and harmful behavior toward the violator. This confirms why the Taruban Kulon community felt angry and disappointed, resulting in negative behavior such as blocking factory access, which delayed construction.

Based on the discussion above, the actions taken by Indofon when the crisis occurred in the intentional cluster were consistent with SCCT theory by choosing a rebuild strategy through apology and compensation. However, because rumors were circulating, Indofon also adopted an additional deny strategy by attacking the accuser. Indofon's conflict triggering actions were judged as a negative expectancy violation by the community, leading to feelings of betrayal and resulting in negative community actions.

From the research results and discussion above, crisis mitigation or the reduction of crisis impacts can be strengthened not only through crisis communication strategies but also through expectation management. In this study, the researcher attaches a new model created from the findings of the Indofon crisis communication model. This model is based not only on Indofon's findings but also on a combination of Situational Crisis Communication Theory and Expectancy Violations Theory, which Indofon can use in the future to implement expectation management in an effort to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship and avoid recurring conflicts. In detail, the crisis communication model based on community expectation mapping can be illustrated as follows:



**Figure 2.** Crisis communication model based on mapping community expectations

Figure 2 illustrates the crisis communication model based on community expectation mapping. Indofon needs to implement "crisis preparedness"; this serves not only as a preventive and preparatory action but also as a handling mechanism when facing a crisis. This stage requires the action of "monitoring public issues," which involves monitoring public sentiment on social media, traditional media, local news, and community forums. Monitoring public issues can provide reports on public sentiment trends from various digital channels; if applied to Indofon, when planning programs, Indofon could examine the history or current public sentiment regarding similar programs to be implemented. Analysis of public issue monitoring can be drawn from monthly public relations reports, grievance hotlines, and short digital surveys when someone visits the Indofon website. If a majority of negative public sentiment is found, it must be followed up by public relations or the crisis communication team to draft responsive FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) and activate local spokespersons. The role of PR at this stage is crucial, considering that PR faces the challenge of implementing a holistic and strategic approach (Junaidi, Sitorus, & Nurhasanah, 2025).

From crisis preparedness incorporating prevention, preparation, handling, and risk recovery the process moves to the "stakeholder mapping" stage, which involves identifying all stakeholders (local community, traditional/religious leaders, NGOs, village government) in greater depth. This is done by analyzing and categorizing their interests, concerns, preferred communication channels, and basic expectations of Indofon and its projects/programs. The goal is to build a stakeholder database so that communication is accurately targeted and initial expectations are understood to prevent expectancy violations. Stakeholder mapping can be derived from social network analysis by identifying key figures in the dissemination of public opinion, monthly PR reports, and FGDs with

community leaders or cultural and structural nodes. The results can show high interest groups (directly impacted) or medium power (vocal on social media), while community leaders may show high power (strong influence in the community) or low interest (not yet vocal). From these results, Indofon can follow up with groups that need to be approached through open dialogic communication and involve them as balancers of the public narrative to build social trust.

Building social trust certainly requires community involvement; from here, "co-creation & participatory planning" is conducted, which involves holding open dialogue forums (FGDs, workshops, routine meetings) to explore ideas, expectations, and solutions from various community groups starting from the pre project planning phase. This forum involves community representatives in discussing social/environmental impacts, grievance mechanisms, and joint development plans, explicitly discussing and aligning expectations. The output of these activities will be a participatory action plan, a list of needs, and stakeholder aspirations. These activities are conducted with the aim of building a sense of ownership among the community, increasing transparency, identifying potential problems early, and establishing realistic and mutually agreed upon expectations.

Inputs from the co-creation stage are developed through "socialization planning & dialogic communication," which involves designing a multi channel communication strategy (face to face, traditional media, digital, information centers) focusing on two way communication. The output of these activities will be a comprehensive socialization plan, including communication channels, narratives, visualizations, and target audiences, while establishing responsive feedback loops. This activity aims to ensure accurate information is widely spread, facilitate continuous participation, and build positive relationships before the project begins. It is important to remember that the audience is a determining factor in communication success (Restendy, et al., 2021). Therefore, the measure of success for Indofon's efforts is whether the message conveyed is well received by the audience.

Crisis preparedness actions and stakeholder mapping ranging from monitoring public issues to detect early signs of dissatisfaction so they can be responded to before escalating; stakeholder mapping to identify vulnerable or critical groups that need to be involved more intensively; co-creation and participatory planning to foster a sense of project ownership and reduce resistance; and socialization planning and dialogic communication to reduce misunderstandings and negative speculation are significantly capable of reducing the likelihood of a crisis and potentially preventing one entirely. However, these actions do not guarantee that Indofon will avoid a crisis. This is because there are external and internal factors beyond full control, such as inconsistent strategy implementation, unmanaged or excessively high community expectations, active provocation by opposing groups, or a lack of follow up mechanisms from dialogue results.

If any of these risk factors occur, they can trigger a crisis or issue for Indofon; if ignored,

additional steps must be taken when signs of a crisis/issue emerge by conducting a "crisis diagnosis," which involves rapidly analyzing the cause and nature of the emerging issue/crisis to determine the most appropriate crisis communication response to minimize reputational damage. Crisis diagnosis can be done in two ways: first, through "expectation alignment" by "managing expectations." This action produces an expectation gap map regarding the differences between community expectations and Indofon's plans, along with communication strategy adjustments regarding changes in message language, communication channels, or operational aspects of the program. Thus, Indofon manages community expectations by providing transparent information and building positive expectancy violations. In EVT theory, companies are expected to manage expectancy violations by minimizing negative violations (disappointing surprises) and maximizing positive violations (pleasant surprises). Therefore, Indofon needs to take actions that exceed community expectations, such as providing additional benefits for instance, in this case, by proactively explaining the long term benefits of the construction project.

Second, "involvement (humanizing)": here, the community is not only involved formally but is respected as an equal subject of dialogue. This can be achieved through participation based citizen forums such as community deliberations, local FGDs, house visits, and community narrative documentation (collections of written or recorded testimonials/aspirations), resulting in citizen narrative reports. This is vital because the key to community involvement is engaging the company in building a mutually beneficial relationship with the surrounding or local community (Baba et al., 2021). This is not merely about providing profit for the company but is done for the benefit of both parties, where the company can participate in addressing local community problems (Febrianti & Oktaviani, 2020). Additionally, community involvement can be carried out through public consultations, serving as a medium to convey information and build communication between project executors and the community. Public consultation is also a step in the communication process to ensure transparency and accountability in project planning and implementation for the entitled community (Tejawati et al., 2023).

Third, "fulfillment of interests," which means answering the community's real needs rather than just making symbolic promises. This can be done by conducting a social need assessment, with the resulting output being a priority interest fulfillment action program (labor access, infrastructure, community economy). Following the crisis diagnosis, a "crisis message" can be delivered according to the identified crisis cluster. For example, in this case which falls into the intentional cluster Indofon needs to deliver a crisis message containing an apology, denial, compensation, acknowledgment, and others. The delivery of this crisis message can be done through participatory dialogue. Indofon and

the community meet face to face to resolve the issues and open new communication channels for community input and grievances. Delivering crisis messages through participatory dialogue helps reduce tension and demonstrates a commitment to crisis resolution. At this stage, the communication channels used are direct channels through formal meetings and direct approaches.

Expectation alignment and crisis message delivery can be evaluated based on qualitative or quantitative indicators reflecting the mitigation of crisis/issue signs. This can be observed through non one way communication, where the community provides feedback and Indofon responds responsively; the absence of mass mobilization or protests, meaning the message successfully calmed public emotions and expectation alignment was successful; the existence of a mutual commitment, such as reaching agreements in minutes of meetings, joint statements, or deliberation schedules; and messages aligned with the strategies implemented without negative expectancy violations.

If the indicators for message delivery and expectation alignment from the crisis diagnosis are deemed effective, the process moves to the "announcement and implementation" step. This is the stage of concrete action plans that are widely communicated and begin to be implemented as a manifestation of the company's commitment to responding to the crisis. Consistently implementing improvement actions and commitments involves the community in monitoring implementation, aiming to prove commitment and build long term credibility. This action also requires monitoring to track the realization of implementation and identify obstacles during the fulfillment of commitments.

The steps differ if the indicators for message delivery and expectation alignment from the crisis diagnosis instead fall into the category of escalation, or the transition from an issue/crisis sign into a full blown, more complex crisis. Escalation occurs when the initial message or approach fails to yield results, and the situation becomes more heated or sensitive. Escalation can be seen in increased emotional reactions from the community after the message is delivered; the emergence of strong counter narratives on social media; stakeholders refusing involvement in meetings or discussions; mass actions or open rejection; and media conveying a crisis narrative beyond Indofon's control. In such cases, "evaluation and emergency strategy" must be conducted.

This involves a comprehensive assessment of what was ineffective and the underlying reasons for the escalation. Evaluation is carried out through a crisis communication audit to trace discrepancies in messages, channels, and timing; a review of stakeholder mapping to identify key actors who were overlooked or ignored; and an evaluation of the spokesperson's role to review errors in communication style or language. From here, an emergency strategy is implemented to regain control of the narrative and prevent wider reputational damage. Actions taken include alliances with key community figures or influential third parties, involving local leaders, religious figures, and environmental activists as mediators, as well as the district/city government. A credible third party

can serve as a bridge of trust between the company and the community and as an independent verifier of the company's good intentions and actions. Indicators for a third party worthy of involvement include neutrality (unbiased and not receiving incentives from the company or protest groups), competence (possessing expertise, experience, or institutional capacity to handle relevant crisis issues), and social legitimacy (accepted and trusted by the target community and the broader public audience).

Roles such as community leaders can convey company messages to the community in culturally understood language; independent academics or researchers can provide academic validation of data, environmental impacts, and proposed solutions; and district/city governments, which possess administrative and social legitimacy, can provide administrative support and secure the dialogue process while acting as local guarantors of the agreement between the company and residents. Repositioning messages and communication channels can also be done by replacing the spokesperson if necessary and building a positive communication campaign through local and community media.

Adding a CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) program as an emergency strategy in crisis communication is also a smart, reconciliatory step for Indofon to rebuild public trust. This strategy aims to compensate for nonmaterial losses due to the crisis and demonstrate Indofon's long term commitment to the affected community. It must be understood that CSR as an emergency strategy should not be viewed as a way to "buy" legitimacy, but rather as a manifestation of a long term commitment to improving social relations and strengthening the socio ecological resilience of the local community. Thus, two way communication must continue during and after CSR implementation. One of the techniques for effective communication mentioned by Brent D. Peterson and M. Dallas Burnett is "techniques for effective communication to establish acceptance" how acceptance is continuously fostered (Huda, Sarinah, & Saputra, 2021). Therefore, when CSR is implemented, program success is evaluated not only during the program but after its completion how the community feels the long term impact and how the program is accepted. If the evaluation and emergency strategy stage is deemed sufficient, the process returns to the crisis message delivery stage, adjusted based on the prior evaluation and emergency strategy. Crisis message delivery can also be enhanced by reviewing expectation alignment to ensure that the provided programs/commitments truly meet community needs and expectations.

The results of this research and discussion have been validated by an academic in the field of public relations involved in the teaching and practice of issue and crisis management. Several key points strengthen and refine the crisis communication model offered in this study. Regarding alternative strategies offered in the crisis communication model, such as third party involvement and

CSR strengthening, the validator assessed that these strategies need to be supplemented with an implementation timeline to ensure their effectiveness and impact can be measured incrementally. Following up on this input, the researcher added time stages to the strategy implementation, consisting of short term (0–3 months), medium term (3–6 months), and long term (6 months–1 year). This time division allows for periodic evaluation of citizen involvement, reduction in escalation, and the effectiveness of the communication channels used by the company.

Additional notes regarding the relevance of the model for replication in other companies experiencing similar crises were provided. Although the model has a systematic and flexible structure, its application must consider three main factors: local social and cultural characteristics; the level of community trust in the institution/company; and the maturity of the organization's communication system. Therefore, this model is adaptive rather than universal and needs to be adjusted to the context of each case. Finally, based on observations and data, the validator assessed that the steps taken by PT. Indofon toward crisis resolution were appropriate and responsive. Although full implementation has not yet occurred as the project is not yet fully operational, the formulated crisis communication model remains relevant to support preventive strategic communication and long term relational recovery.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In this study, the researcher provides findings in the form of a crisis communication model based on community expectation mapping. The offered model integrates the principles of SCCT (Situational Crisis Communication Theory) and EVT (Expectancy Violation Theory) to formulate strategic steps that are not only reactive, but also proactive, adaptive, and oriented toward relational sustainability; this model places community participation at the core of the crisis communication strategy. The model is designed to focus not only on the response during a crisis but also on crisis preparedness actions and the handling of situations where crisis message delivery and expectation alignment instead lead to further escalation. This is achieved by conducting evaluations and emergency strategies as an effort to identify the causes of crisis message failure, improve the crisis communication design, reduce negative impacts on reputation, and build public trust. Indofon needs to implement a two step flow of communication approach by involving KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders), who can be selected from local community figures who hold social and cultural influence. KOLs do not necessarily have to come from professional circles or social media. Instead, they can also be selected from traditional leaders, religious figures, heads of neighborhood/community units (RT/RW), village youth, and community figures who possess high credibility and are frequently consulted by residents in making social decisions. They hold a strategic role as a bridge between the company and the community. This is done by first identifying the KOLs and involving them starting from the planning stage.

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