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Government Public Relations: Indonesia's Crisis Communication Strategy in Responding to the Energy Security Impacts of the 2026 Iran Conflict

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Abstract

In this globalization era, the world's unstable geopolitical condition could have a significant impact on a nation's resilience. This paper reflected on how Indonesian government communicates the energy related issues recently happens in Indonesia due to conflict among Iran-United States- Israel publicly through digital media. Digital media is used due to the increase of internet and social media users in communal activities. This research aimed to analyze the substance of the content, and the messages conveyed. Crisis communication strategy in government public relations is used as the research scope and limitation. This research is used a descriptive qualitative approach that focuses on analyzing the use of Instagram social media by related ministries and government agencies in Indonesia. This method aimed to provide a comprehensive picture of government digital activities implementing the crisis communication strategy. The research results showed how related ministries and government agencies respond to the crisis aiming to gain public trust. The results of this research suggested that the government can improve the substance of the digital media content so that it can more optimally convey information while maintaining a conducive situation during the crisis.

Keywords: *Crisis communication, Government public relations, Political communication*

INTRODUCTION

The 2026 conflict involving Iran has generated substantial disruption to regional and global energy markets, particularly through the prolonged instability surrounding the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait is a critical energy transportation corridor, and its disruption has affected the movement of crude oil and liquefied natural gas as well as shipping costs and global energy prices. The conflict indirectly affecting Indonesia's domestic fuel costs and broader economic conditions such as transportation costs, logistics, electricity generation, industrial production, household expenditure, inflation, the balance of payments, and government fiscal policy [1]. The energy dimension of the crisis therefore creates a significant communication challenge for the Indonesian Government.

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Therefore, through Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) verified Instagram accounts, the Indonesian government actively produces post containing narratives that serve as the government's response to the global energy crisis. In the context of Government Public Relations (GPR), social media is utilized as a means of public communication during the transformation of the digital era [2]. The emergence of social media has created greater opportunities for governments to develop communication practices that are more transparent, responsive, and accountable. Social media has become a strategic instrument in government public relations, particularly in supporting public services and crisis management through enhanced transparency, interactive communication, and the rapid distribution of information [3], [4]. In addition, social media enables government institutions to broaden the scope of their communication and engage with segments of the public that may have been less accessible through conventional media channels [3], [5]. However, even though social media can enable government to communicate rapidly and directly with citizens, unfortunately it also can simultaneously facilitate the rapid dissemination of inaccurate information [6].

Studies on government communication in crisis situations related to the impact of the Iran 2026 conflict have developed into several main focuses. First, research has focused solely on press releases [7]. Second, research on social media has not addressed geopolitical energy crises [8]. Third, research does not resolve how governments should communicate uncertainty about energy supply [9].

Meanwhile, Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) developed by W. Timothy Coombs [10] is most frequently applied in the context of organizational crisis communication and reputation management, particularly when an organization faces a crisis that may affect how stakeholders perceive its responsibility and reputation. The theory is rooted in Attribution Theory by Bernard Weiner [11], [12], which examines how individuals interpret the causes of events, particularly adverse events, and attribute responsibility for their occurrence. Thus, there remain limitations in research integrating the SCCT perspective into GPR studies, particularly regarding how governments construct communication narratives during energy crises triggered by global geopolitical dynamics.

This research addresses that gap by exploring the forms and functions of SCCT within the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources' crisis communication narratives—analyzing posts from the Ministry of ESDM's official social media accounts—using a descriptive qualitative approach Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). Consequently, this study aims to expand the application of the SCCT framework to the field of GPR while offering a fresh perspective on understanding government communication strategies during geopolitical crisis situations characterized by uncertainty.

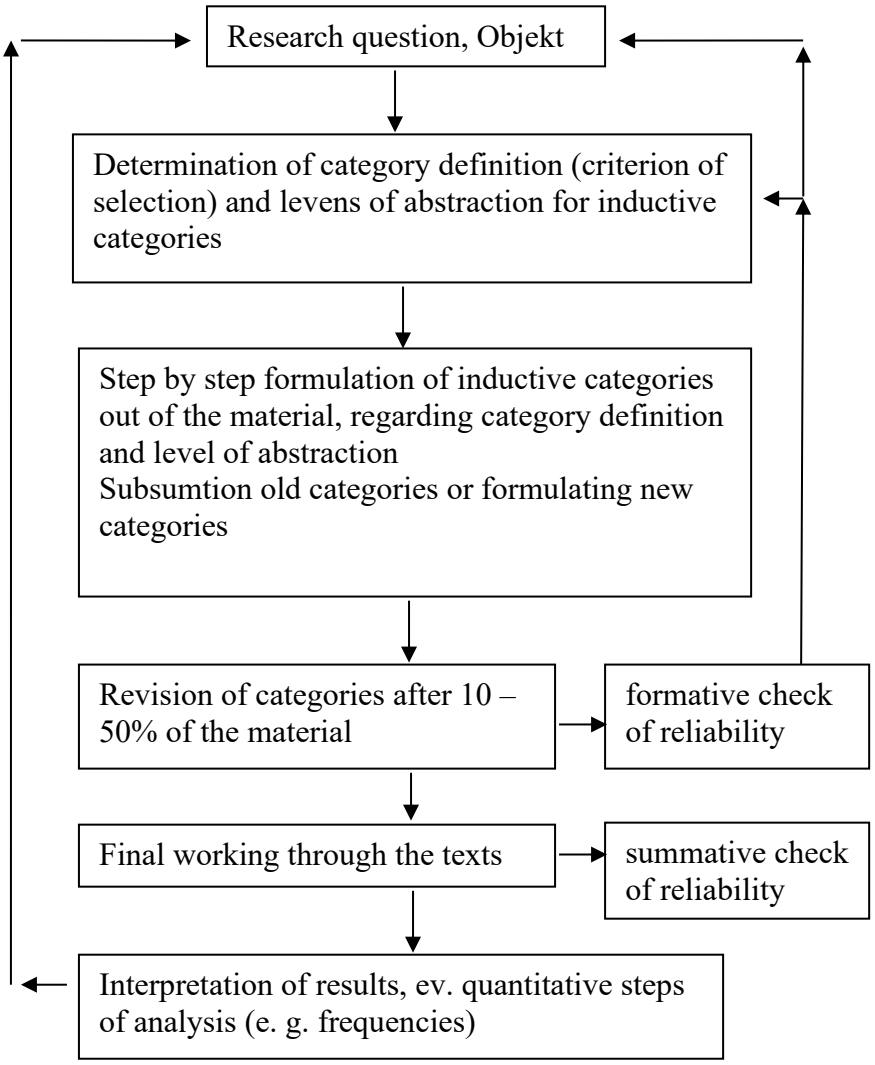
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According to the framework, this study aims to explore how the energy crisis narrative is constructed within the Ministry of ESDM's GPR communications, addressing two research questions: (1) What are the forms of situational crisis communication strategies within the Ministry of ESDM's communication narratives? and (2) What is the function of situational crisis communication strategy within the Ministry of ESDM's crisis communication? To answer these questions, the researcher employs a qualitative method using a Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) approach.

METHOD

This study adopts a constructivist paradigm and applies Philipp Mayring's Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) as its analytical method. QCA was chosen because it provides a systematic, structured, and transparent framework for examining textual data through a clearly defined categorization process. The method incorporates two complementary analytical approaches, namely inductive and deductive analysis. The inductive approach follows a bottom-up process, whereby analytical categories are developed from empirical data by identifying recurring patterns, themes, and meanings that emerge during the analysis. This approach is particularly useful for generating new concepts or categories grounded in the empirical findings [13]. The inductive analytical process is conducted through the following stages:



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Figure 1. Model of the Inductive Approach in Qualitative Content Analysis
(source Mayring, 2004)

Meanwhile, the deductive approach adopts a top-down analytical process, in which the analytical categories are established in advance based on the theoretical framework guiding the study. This approach facilitates a focused, systematic, and structured examination of the empirical data by providing clear theoretical parameters for the coding and interpretation process [13], as illustrated below:

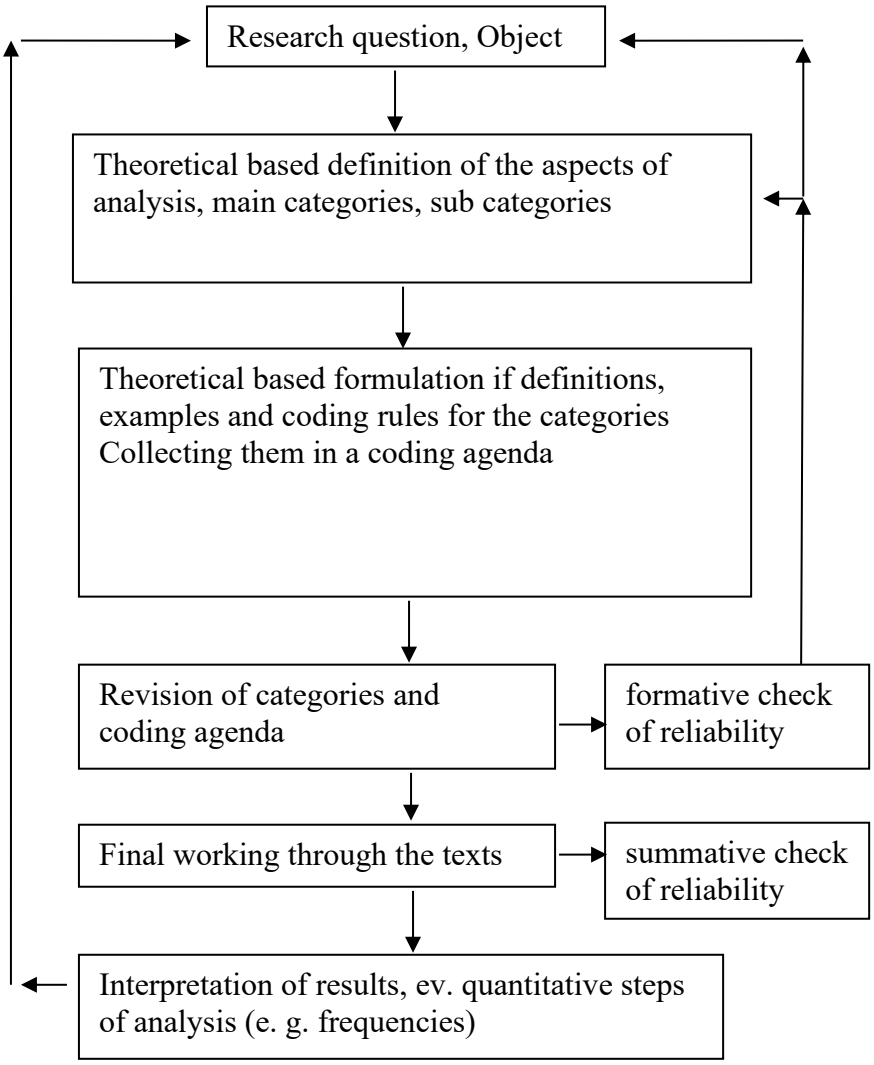


Figure 2. Model of the Deductive Approach in Qualitative Content Analysis
(source Mayring, 2004)

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The research data comprise thirteen Instagram posts published by the Ministry of ESDM's verified Instagram accounts concerning the global energy crisis associated with the 2026 Iran conflict, posted between March 2026 - June 2026. The data were examined using Mayring's [13] deductive Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), with concepts from Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) serving as the foundation for developing the analytical categories. The coding process was undertaken systematically through several stages, including the identification of relevant units of analysis, the assignment of codes according to predetermined categories derived from SCCT, and a subsequent review of the coded material to ensure consistency and coherence in the application of categories across all posts [14].

Data validity is enhanced through theoretical triangulation, whereby the interpretation of the findings is informed not only by Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) but also by its theoretical foundation in Weiner's Attribution Theory. Integrating these complementary theoretical perspectives strengthens the analytical interpretation and helps reduce potential researcher bias throughout the coding and analysis processes. Consequently, the findings are supported by a broader and more coherent theoretical basis, thereby enhancing the credibility and robustness of the research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This subsection presents research findings regarding the forms of situational crisis communication strategies identified in thirteen Instagram posts—serving as the units of analysis—from the Ministry of ESDM verified account. The classification of these situational crisis communication forms was conducted using a deductive approach within Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), utilizing pre-determined analytical categories based on the SCCT framework [15]: crisis responsibility, deny, diminish, rebuild, bolster, and crisis information.

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Moreover, the deductive analysis indicates that ESDM's Instagram communication employs three principal SCCT-related dimensions: crisis attribution, crisis-response strategies, and crisis information. References to global oil-price movements, geopolitical developments, international uncertainty, and global energy dynamics primarily construct the crisis as originating from external circumstances. These references are therefore more appropriately associated with the victim cluster, rather than the accidental or preventable clusters. By contrast, statements concerning energy diplomacy, bilateral cooperation, policy adjustment, energy transition, and efforts to maintain national energy security represent governmental actions intended to address or mitigate the effects of the crisis. Such messages are best categorized as rebuild strategies, particularly the dimensions of commitment and corrective action. However, the presence of government action should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that the crisis itself is preventable. In SCCT, crisis clusters concern the perceived attribution of responsibility, whereas response strategies refer to how an organization responds to the crisis and seeks to restore confidence.

Table 1. Classification of SCCT Strategies in Ministry of ESDM Instagram Posts

No.	Instagram Post Title	Text Unit	Main Textual Emphasis	Deductive Category		Coding Interpretation
				Crisis Attribution	SCCT Response Strategy / Crisis Information	
1.	Subsidized Fuel Prices Are Not Rising!! (Bahasa: *Harga BBM Subsidi Tidak Naik!!*) Release date: 13 June 2026	"maintain people's purchasing power" "maintain national energy security and availability"	Maintaining public purchasing power and national energy availability.	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Adjusting information; Rebuild (commitment)	The post reassures citizens about fuel-price stability and presents the government as committed to protecting purchasing power and national energy availability.
2.	It Is Normal for Non-Subsidized Fuel Prices to Fluctuate!! (Bahasa: *BBM Non Subsidi Wajar Naik Turun!!*) Release date: 30 April 2026	"following the global oil prices, geopolitical conditions, and the rupiah exchange rate" "those who can afford it must use non-subsidized	Non-subsidized fuel prices responding to global oil prices, geopolitics, and the rupiah exchange	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Instructing information	Global market and geopolitical conditions are presented as external causes, while citizens are instructed to use non-subsidized fuel when financially able in

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No.	Instagram Post Title	Text Unit	Main Textual Emphasis	Deductive Category		Coding Interpretation
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		fuel so that subsidies remain targeted at the right people"	rate.			order to support targeted subsidies.
3.	Maintaining Presidential Mandate, Government Ensures National Energy Stability Is Maintained (Bahasa: *Jaga Mandat Presiden, Pemerintah Pastikan Stabilitas Energi Nasional Terjaga*) Release date: 28 April 2026	"maintaining national energy stability amidst global geopolitical dynamics"	Maintaining energy stability amid global geopolitical dynamics; securing supply and meeting public needs.	Victim cluster (external-crisis framing)	Rebuild (commitment); Adjusting information	The post combines recognition of external uncertainty with assurances that the government is taking responsibility for maintaining energy stability and meeting public energy needs.
		"ensure the national energy supply remains secure"				
		"government commitment to maintaining energy security"				
		"ensure the public energy needs continue to be met"				
4.	Energy Stability Maintained; Subsidized Fuel Prices Confirmed to Remain Unchanged! (Bahasa: *Stabilitas Energi Terjaga, Harga BBM Subsidi Dipastikan Tetap!*) Release date: 17 April 2026	"subsidized fuel prices will not increase through the end of the year"	Stable subsidized-fuel prices, sufficient stocks, and purchasing-power protection.	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Adjusting information; Rebuild (commitment)	Price and supply assurances reduce public anxiety, while the government's commitment to maintaining purchasing power is presented as a stabilizing measure.
		"national fuel stocks are secure and above minimum standards"				
		"maintaining public purchasing power"				
		"providing certainty amidst global energy				

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No.	Instagram Post Title	Text Unit	Main Textual Emphasis	Deductive Category		Coding Interpretation
				Crisis Attribution	SCCT Response Strategy / Crisis Information	
		dynamics”				
5.	Indonesia–Russia Energy Diplomacy Maintains Domestic Energy Stability (Bahasa: *Diplomasi Energi Indonesia – Rusia Jaga Stabilitas Pasokan Energi Domestik*) Release date: 14 April 2026	“strengthening energy diplomacy”	Energy diplomacy and cooperation with Russia to maintain domestic energy stability.	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Rebuild (corrective action and commitment)	Energy diplomacy is presented as a concrete governmental response intended to strengthen supply security and sustain domestic energy availability.
		“maintaining national energy security amidst global uncertainty”				
		“ensuring the availability of safe, stable, and sustainable energy to meet domestic needs”				
6.	Departure of Minister Bahlil Accompanying President of the Republic of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto on a Visit to Moscow (Bahasa: *Keberangkatan Menteri Bahlil Mendampingi Presiden RI Prabowo Subianto dalam Kunjungan ke Moscow*) Release date: 13 April 2026	“strengthening Indonesia–Russia partnership particularly in the energy sector”	Indonesia–Russia partnership, cross-border collaboration, and energy-sector development.	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Rebuild (commitment and corrective action)	International cooperation is framed as a strategic response to global uncertainty and as a means of strengthening long-term energy resilience.
		“amidst global dynamics and uncertainty, cross-border collaboration serves as a solution for energy resilience”				
		“ensuring national energy security remains maintained and sustainable”				
		“opening up opportunities for the development of the energy				

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No.	Instagram Post Title	Text Unit	Main Textual Emphasis	Deductive Category		Coding Interpretation
				Crisis Attribution	SCCT Response Strategy / Crisis Information	
		sector”				
7.	Strengthening Regional Partnerships, Minister Bahlil Signs Three Agreements with South Korea (Bahasa: *Perkuat Kemitraan Kawasan, Menteri Bahlil Teken Tiga Perjanjian dengan Korea*) Release date: 2 April 2026	“signed three strategic MoUs in the fields of clean energy, CCS, and critical minerals”	Strategic agreements with South Korea involving clean energy, CCS, and critical minerals.	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Rebuild (commitment)	The agreements are presented as proactive measures to strengthen national energy resilience, promote investment, and support sustainable energy development.
		“a concrete step to strengthen national energy resilience amidst global dynamics”				
		“opening up investment opportunities, technological development, and the sustainable energy transition”				
8.	Indonesia–Korea Strategic Collaboration Agrees on Green Energy Business (Bahasa: *Kolaborasi Strategis Indonesia – Korea, Sepakati Bisnis Energi Hijau*) Release date: 1 April 2026	“strengthening clean energy cooperation”	Clean-energy cooperation, energy independence, and energy transition.	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Rebuild (commitment and corrective action)	Bilateral cooperation and energy-transition initiatives function as long-term corrective measures intended to improve energy resilience and independence.
		“towards national energy independence”				
		“accelerate the energy transition for a more sustainable future”				
9.	Fixed Fuel Prices, Use Wisely! (Bahasa: *Harga BBM Tetap, Gunakan dengan Bijak!*)	“national energy security remains maintained amidst global geopolitical dynamics”	Stable prices, sufficient reserves, national energy security, and	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Adjusting and instructing information	Reassuring information is combined with behavioral guidance intended to encourage

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No.	Instagram Post Title	Text Unit	Main Textual Emphasis	Deductive Category		Coding Interpretation
				Crisis Attribution	SCCT Response Strategy / Crisis Information	
	Release date: 1 April 2026	"national fuel reserves are above the minimum standard"	the instruction to use fuel wisely.			responsible fuel consumption.
		"fuel prices are stable"				
		"use fuel wisely"				
10.	Press Conference on National Energy Strategic Policy Amidst Global Geopolitics (Bahasa: *Konferensi Pers Kebijakan Strategis Energi Nasional di Tengah Geopolitik Global*) Release date: 31 March 2026	"national energy security remains maintained amidst global geopolitical dynamics"	Energy security and stable subsidized-fuel prices amid geopolitical uncertainty; fuel-consumption arrangement.	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Adjusting and instructing information; Rebuild (commitment)	The post reduces uncertainty through assurances of energy stability and guides public consumption behavior, while policy adjustment indicates governmental commitment to crisis management.
		"subsidized fuel prices remain stable"				
		"fuel consumption arrangement"				
11.	Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Accompanies the President of the Republic of Indonesia on a Strategic Working Visit to Japan (Bahasa: *Menteri ESDM Dampingi Presiden RI Kunjungan Kerja Strategis Indonesia – Jepang*) Release date: 30 March 2026	"strategic partnership"	Strategic partnership with Japan and sustainable energy development.	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Rebuild (commitment and corrective action)	The strategic partnership is communicated as a forward-looking response designed to strengthen energy security and support sustainable energy development.
		"focus on the energy sector"				
		"attempt to achieve sustainable energy"				
	Joint Coordination	"adjustment of	Coordination	Victim	Rebuild	Interministerial

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No.	Instagram Post Title	Text Unit	Main Textual Emphasis	Deductive Category		Coding Interpretation
				Crisis Attribution	SCCT Response Strategy / Crisis Information	
12.	Meeting with Several Ministers at the Office of the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs (Bahasa: *Rapat Koordinasi Bersama Sejumlah Menteri di Kantor Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian*) Release date: 29 March 2026	strategic policies in the energy sector" "maintaining stability amidst global uncertainty"	among ministries and adjustment of strategic energy policies.	cluster (external-pressure framing)	(corrective action and commitment)	coordination and policy adjustment represent institutional responses intended to manage uncertainty and maintain energy stability.
13.	Subsidized Fuel Prices Unchanged; A Comfortable Eid! (Bahasa: *BBM Subsidi Tidak Naik, Lebaran Nyaman!*) Release date: 4 March 2026	"global oil price dynamics" "subsidized fuel prices remain stable" "supplies are secure"	Global oil-price dynamics, stable subsidized-fuel prices, and secure supplies.	Victim cluster (external-pressure framing)	Adjusting information	External price dynamics are used to contextualize the situation, while price and supply assurances function to reassure citizens and reduce anxiety.

(source: Processed by Author, 2026)

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