

# SURVIVING A CRISIS: META SYNTHESIS OF CRISIS COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS (B2B) ENTERPRISE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

<sup>1</sup>Alfridho Yuliananda, <sup>2</sup>Ummanah

<sup>1,2</sup> Magister Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Esa Unggul, Indonesia

---

## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords :

*business communication,  
crisis communication;  
marketing communications;  
B2B.*

### E- mail :

[alfridhoyuliananda@gmail.com](mailto:alfridhoyuliananda@gmail.com)  
[ummanah@esaunggul.ac.id](mailto:ummanah@esaunggul.ac.id)

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to determine the most effective crisis communication and marketing communication strategies for B2B companies dealing with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The post-positivism paradigm was used in this study using the aggregation meta-synthesis method. According to the findings of this meta-synthesis study, the power of social networks, collaboration and partnerships, and the beginning of a transition to a digital communication system becomes an effective means of carrying out crisis management in uncertain conditions. B2B companies that are already capable of implementing this crisis communication strategy can concurrently or gradually begin implementing a marketing communication strategy through online marketing, virtual/online exhibitions, social media marketing, and price discounting or price reductions. All of these processes must be carried out due to the limitations of social meetings/interactions between individuals in the Covid-19 crisis situation.

Copyright © 2023 Economics Journal. All rights reserved.

is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License \(CC BY-NC 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In essence, a business organization in all fields of business has the aim of obtaining profits or being profit-oriented. So that a business organization is managed to provide consumers on all fronts, namely individual and group consumers or consumers of organizations, both government and other companies. This is done in order to obtain satisfaction from all its consumers so as to generate trust and continuous business. Therefore, each company forms a business network between one another to increase its excisions. With a demonstrable existence, the company can be said to have a strong structure in its business network in the consumer community and supplier and distribution networks.

According to Philip Kotler (2010), network marketing is distinguished by 2 (two) categories, namely Business-to-Consumer or commonly referred to as (B2C) and Business-to-Business or commonly referred to as (B2B). The B2C network focuses more on meeting the needs of end users (end consumers or direct consumers), but in practice this business involves marketing channels. Kotler (2010) explains that in general B2C has a characteristic that states that in B2C the end consumer is the consumer, B2C companies are usually retail companies, B2C companies usually offer consumer products, the B2C sales cycle is shorter because it sells to direct end-user consumers and consumers are encouraged to buy products immediately.

In contrast to B2C, B2B based on the opinion of Kotler & Keller in Bhattacharjee & Uddin (2022), B2B is an organization that acquires goods and services used in the production of other products or services that are sold, leased, or supplied to other parties. In other words, according to Rayport and Bernard, B2B is a company that has trade interactions between business people, namely the buyer of the product sold by the seller is not the end consumer but the fabrication or individual business where the purchased product will be processed again or sold directly to the end consumer (Jonathan, 2012). According to Francis Buttle (2007:127), a customer in the B2B context is an organization of a company (manufacturer or reseller) or an institution (non-profit or governmental body).

B2B company customers can become direct users or distributors for their business network internally. Nevertheless, for companies both models can still be considered as corporate purchases that each acquire rebates or promotions and the like. The B2B category tends to be overlooked by many companies even though its role is very strategic in building advanced marketing networks. In a business transaction, a supply chain occurs that involves several businesses, for example a company buys raw materials to be used in the manufacturing process to form a finished product. The finished product can then

be sold to individuals through business with consumer transactions. A reliable marketing network is part of the distribution chain that is dominant in market expansion. The development of marketing networks provides opportunities for manufacturing companies or service companies to have a wider market segment. The numerous network indicates that the company is utilizing other institutions as partners in order to expand its market area.

When the Covid-19 pandemic emerged from the end of 2019 until now, many companies in Indonesia and even around the world were affected by their business. This happened because of policies that emerged as an effort made to break the chain of Covid-19. Based on a survey from the Employment Planning and Development Agency, 40.6% stated that their company was very losing money due to the pandemic, 47.4% answered that it was losing money, and 11% of respondents answered that it was not affected at all due to the pandemic. Meanwhile, 0.8% of respondents said their company was profitable and 0.1% said it was very profitable (Rahmadi, 2020). From the results of the survey, it can be concluded with certainty that most companies in Indonesia have suffered losses due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Strategy is planning that involves rational determination in setting a goal for survival (Burgelman, 2002:4). Therefore, strategies are needed in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic so that companies can continue to carry out their activities efficiently in seeking profits in order to maintain the company. One of the important strategies for companies to have in determining effective activities for profit is marketing communication. This is based on the opinion of Kotler and Armstrong (2013) who stated that in practice, the business activity that most requires business practitioners to deal with customers is marketing. Marketing communication is an element that companies need to inform, persuade, and remind target customers in order to create their interest and awareness to know more or the existence of the product and where to get it (Karpenko & Ivannikova, 2020:36). With marketing communications, companies can encourage potential buyers to buy the products offered, thus affecting the increase in company revenue. A marketing communication strategy is a plan that helps an organization to communicate with customers and other stakeholders and focuses on reaching the target audience with the media based on several decision-making steps (Egan, 2019:19). In its application, each company has a marketing communication strategy that is different from each other. This is because each company operates in a variety of different contexts so companies need to select and apply techniques that suit their context (Ranchhod & Marandi, 2007).

In March 2020, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) declared that the global economy had entered a recession and the outcome could be worse than the effects of the global financial crisis of 2009 (BBC, 2020). Although a considerable recovery is projected in 2021 by the IMF, this unprecedented crisis has brought repercussions to many B2B companies of different sizes and in various industries (Cortez and Johnston, 2020).

A crisis is an unforeseen, negative and serious event or a process that threatens the physical and/or immaterial value of an organization. If a company is held responsible for a crisis, its reputation may be damaged and/or the customer's view of the company in question may change radically. Seeing these conditions, efficient communication can compensate for negative feelings towards the company and reduce the number of unwanted messages in the network (Coombs et al., 2010: 338). Coombs (2007) states that perhaps the biggest threat of all is the breakdown of customer relationships. In this case the condition of a B2B company that loses a long-term strategic customer can be a big blow because it will cause it to lose all the investments that have been made (Ford et al., 2003). This has the potential to create conflicts between customer and company relationships. Therefore conflict management in communication that is closely related to customer relationships becomes an important part to understand (Holmlund-Rytko"nen and Strandvik, 2005).

Market challenges along with the threat of the spread of COVID-19 and job insecurity, have had a negative impact on salespeople in the B2B context (Cortez & Johnston, 2020). To address this issue, salespeople need to develop resilience, defined as an individual's capacity to adapt effectively and rebuild balance when faced with severe adversity (Cooke, Cooper, Bartram, Wang, & May, 2019). Salesperson resilience is reportedly associated with improved sales performance as well as customer service behavior especially during disruptions such as COVID-19. Therefore when a crisis hits, one of the tactical responses that organizations must begin involves communication (Pedersen, Ritter, & Di Benedetto, 2020).

One of the important strategies needed by B2B companies in terms of business is a marketing communication strategy. According to Cornelissen in Rizomyliotis, Konstantoulaki, & Kostopoulos (2017:5) B2B marketing communication strategy is a set of channel planning and direct or indirect relationships to customers related to the process of interaction between the marketing system and the external environment with the aim of informing the audience about the product and its properties. *Business-to-*

*business* marketing communication strategies are used in consistent messaging so that they can attract the attention of targets and help companies to achieve their goals (Brennan, Canning, & McDowell, 2011: 171). With a *B2B* marketing communication strategy, companies can create a set of network planning and relationships with customers in informing effective messages in order to encourage the sales process and increase the amount of revenue so that the company can survive in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The significance (advantage) of this study compared to other or similar topics is that researchers focus on the perspective of *B2B* companies in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic using the meta-synthesis method using analysis conducted in previous studies. Corporate communication strategies in surviving the Covid-19 pandemic are a general discussion presented in this study. This is suspected by one of the purposes of communication as mentioned by Littlejohn and Fos (2009) is the formation of a relationship or relations. Relational marketing sees the importance of the meaning of relationships that are formed, developed, and maintained on an ongoing basis in any kind of economic condition. Wut, Xu, and Wong (2021) in crisis management research underscore the importance of crisis communication and Hartmann, Weiss, Newman, and Hoegl's (2020) review of resilience in the workplace underscores the role of communication in maintaining resilience, the role of crisis communication managers in promoting salesperson resilience in times of crisis such as COVID-19 is hardly studied. So in this study, the role of crisis communication in the time of COVID-19 will be raised and the mechanisms underlying such relationships. Based on this, crisis communication strategies and marketing communication, especially when facing the Covid-19 pandemic, became a special study in this study.

## 2. METHOD

### Research Design

The research design carried out by the researcher is by using a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is commonly used because this approach is one of the research procedures that produces description data in speech, writing, and observation. In addition to using a qualitative approach to fulfill research. The method used in the research also uses a literature study method called meta-synthetic.

### Data Collection Techniques

The steps in the meta-synthesis collection technique according to Sardin, (2020), are as follows:

1. Formulating the review question
2. Conducting a systematic literature search
3. Screening and selecting appropriate research articles
4. Analyzing and synthesizing qualitative findings
5. Enforcing quality control
6. Prepare the final report (presenting findings)

### Data Validity Test

Data Validity Test in this study using triangulation. In this literature research research using data source triangulation. Triangulation of data sources is to explore the truth of certain information through various methods and sources of data acquisition. For example, in addition to interviews and observations, researchers can use participant observation, written documents, certificates, historical documents, official records, personal notes or writings and pictures or photos. In this study, data analysis techniques refer to the analytical concepts used are data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data Analysis

#### Crisis Communication Strategies

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it had a lot of impact on the sustainability of the company. If they want to survive the hard struggle in this era of globalization, the crisis must be managed properly. Crises tend to affect the image of the organization, especially crises that give rise to disasters that have a great impact on society. An organization's reputation can decline dramatically during a crisis and can be the target of ridicule. Negative results will occur, such as a decline in sales, stocks, profits, and confidence (Burnett, 1998; Coombs, 2007a). However, crises can also produce positive results, including positive changes, new regulations, and strategic planning (Burnett, 1998).

Borodzics (2005) says that a crisis is more than just an emergency situation. Compared to crises, emergencies can usually be resolved with normal procedures and mechanisms, although both concepts have the same obligations (rapid and structured reactions and dangerous situations).

Figure 1 – Mind Mapping Crisis Communication Strategies in NVivo12

Based on the picture above, it can be seen that the main problems are how the crisis communication strategy that should be implemented by Business-to-Business (B2B) companies in dealing with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic includes, (1) Using a digital transformation strategy; (2) strengthen the network; (3) collaborate. So that if it is described per sub-topic, a detailed answer will be seen from each key informant.

The next feature that can be analyzed through Nvivo12 is the Chart Hierarchy. Hierarchy chart is a diagram that can show rectangular hierarchy data of various sizes and can also see the chart hierarchy in the form of rectangles, From these various sizes are determined by showing the number of examples of the amount of coding on nodes or the number of references from the coding entered according to the content of the article found by the researcher.

The hierarchy of the best scale chart corresponds to the available space so that the size of the rectangle must be considered by relation to one another, not in the form of absolute numbers. The widest area is displayed at the top left of the chart, while the smallest area is displayed at the bottom right of the chart. The visualization form per sub topic can be seen in figure 4.5.

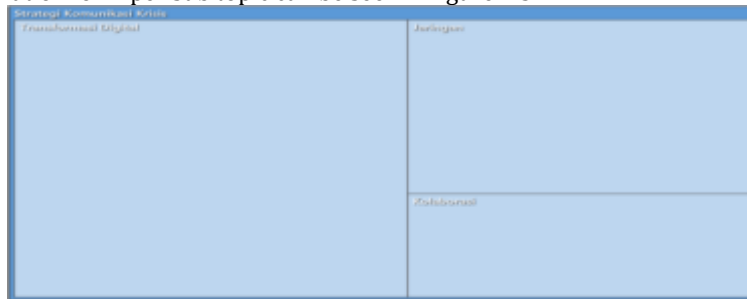


Figure 2 – Visualization of the Crisis Communication Strategy Chart Hierarchy on NVivo12

The next step is the data analysis process by comparing the three themes related to crisis communication during the Covid-19 pandemic. Stages in analyzing data using matrix coding queries on N-Vivo 12. The analyzed data is data per topic that has been created, so in this case there are 3 matrixcoding queries as in graph 3

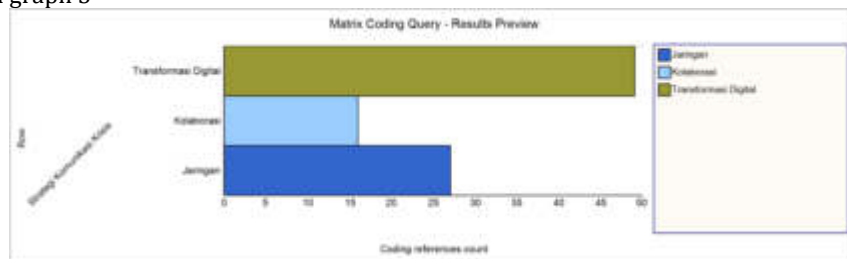


Figure 3 – Matrix Coding Crisis Communication Strategy on NVivo12

Based on the results of the analysis of article data related to crisis communication strategies that should be applied by Business-to-Business (B2B) companies in dealing with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the words that most often appear using Nvivo software on the word cloud include Transformation, Digital, Networking, Collaboration, Strategy, and so on. The image below shows the Word Cloud used in this research source.



Figure 4 – Word Cloud Results of Crisis Communication Strategy Analysis on NVivo12

#### 4.3.2 Marketing Communication Strategy

Marketing communications include advertising, promotion, sales, branding, campaigns, events, and online promotions. The process allows the public to know or understand a brand and get a clear picture of what the brand has to offer. Brand awareness is the first stage, then the brand's preference over its competitors is the desired result.

With the development of technology and engineering, direct participation of customers is carried out. This is done by including their ideas and creations, in product development and brand promotion. Successful branding involves a target audience that values the organization's mission and vision, business value and marketing programs.

#### 4.3.3 Marketing Communications, Social Media, Online Cast, Discounts

Figure 5 – Mind Mapping Marketing Communication Strategy in NVivo12

Based on the picture above, it can be seen that the main problems are how the marketing communication strategy that should be implemented by Business-to-Business (B2B) companies in dealing with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic includes, (1) Using online marketing methods; (2) Using social Media; (3) Using online exhibition strategies; (4) and use a rebate strategy. So that if it is described per sub-topic, a detailed answer will be seen from each key informant.

The next feature that can be analyzed through Nvivo12 is the Chart Hierarchy. Hierarchy chart is a diagram that can show rectangular hierarchy data of various sizes and can also see the chart hierarchy in the form of rectangles, From these various sizes are determined by showing the number of examples of the amount of coding on nodes or the number of references from the coding entered according to the content of the article found by the researcher.

The hierarchy of the best scale chart corresponds to the available space so that the size of the rectangle must be considered by relation to one another, not in the form of absolute numbers. The widest area is displayed at the top left of the chart, while the smallest area is displayed at the bottom right of the chart. The visualization form per sub-topic can be seen in figure 4.2.

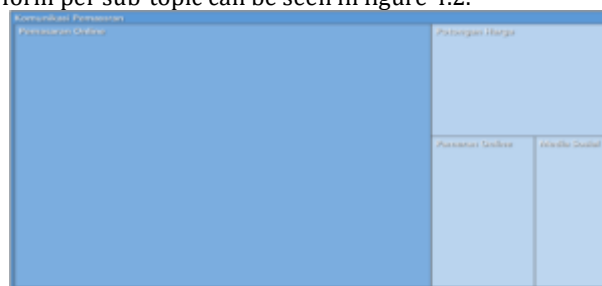


Figure 6 - Visualization of Marketing Communication Strategy Chart Hierarchy on NVivo12

The next step is the data analysis process by comparing the four themes related to marketing communication during the Covid 19 pandemic. Stages in analyzing data using matrix coding queries in NVivo 12. The analyzed data is data per topic that has been created, so in this case there are 4 matrixcoding queries as in graph 4.1.

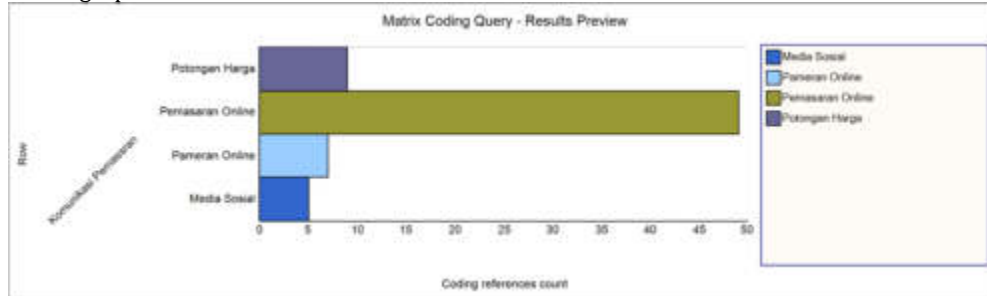


Figure 7 – Matrix Coding Marketing Communication Strategy on NVivo12

Based on the results of the analysis of article data related to marketing communication strategies that should be applied by Business-to-Business (B2B) companies in dealing with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the words that most often appear using Nvivo software on the word cloud include Online, Platform, Price, Social media, Exhibition, digital, and so on. The image below shows the Word Cloud used in this research source.



Figure 8 – Word Cloud Marketing Communication Strategy Analysis Results on NVivo12

#### 4.4 Discussion

##### Crisis Communication Strategy

Based on the results of the analysis using Nvivo 12, it was found that the crisis communication strategies carried out by B2B companies during the Covid-19 pandemic included digital transformation, collaboration and network expansion. This suggests that the COVID-19 crisis seems to provide a glimpse into the world of the future, where digital technology has become the core of every interaction, forcing organizations and individuals to climb further onto the adoption curve almost overnight. In the case of the new world situation due to COVID-19, digital transformation is considered very vital (Hartmann & Lussier 2020).

##### Digital Transformation

Today's world is characterized by the dominance of customer interaction through digital channels and increased productivity through automated processes. It also demands that the company's way of working become more flexible, transparent, and stable to keep up with the constant changes in customer behavior. It is supported Hofacker, Golgeci, Pillai, and Gligor (2020) conducted a review in which they examined relevant literature on digital marketing and B2B relationships. Li (2020b) conducted a systematic literature review to examine how digital technology facilitates business model innovation in the creative industries, while Knudsen (2020) conducted a systematic literature review focused on digitization in accounting.

Several studies have begun to explore how B2B companies can overcome the crisis by using effective strategies. An example of this is Cortez and Johnston (2020) who advise B2B companies to focus on four areas of digital transformation, decision-making processes, leadership, emotions and stress.

Chierici, Tortora, Del Giudice, and Quacquarelli (2021) evaluate how digital change, including digital cooperation, joint efforts with internal and external partners to achieve common goals, and the use of digital tools that support these practices, affect social capital innovation in the context of innovative small businesses. It is generally known that digital transformation plays an important role in improving company performance.

One interesting example of digital transformation is the banking sector. Digital transformation within the banking sector has been a significant change in the 21st century, which is an important factor to ensure sustainability and competitiveness for banks in the digital economy, as demonstrated in several studies (Guinan et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2011; and Vial, 2019). Based on an in-depth case study of digital transformation undertaken by China's largest construction machinery manufacturer, Du, Pan, and Huang (2016) found a four-phase process model of redeployment of slack assisted by information technology to provide advice for CIOs. Eden, Burton-Jones, Casey and Draheim (2019) examined large Australian healthcare services, identifying three work transformation practices of stretching, deepening and revitalising, all of which appear to facilitate digital/interrelated work transformation, and in turn help address the significant challenges involved with them.

Mattias Blomkvist and Anton Eling (2021) found that the pandemic has accelerated the process of change that is taking place in B2B companies in terms of implementing digital technology because the interaction between internal parties and external partners has increased and is getting closer.

With this condition, digital transformation has become important during the Covid-19 crisis for B2B (business-to-business) companies as it helps them overcome the challenges faced. With physical distancing and changes in the way consumers and businesses interact, B2B companies must find ways to stay connected with their customers and partners. Digital transformation can help B2B companies do so by providing a platform for efficient communication and collaboration, as well as improving the efficiency of operations and decision making. It also helps companies to optimize marketing and sales digitally, as well as improve customer experience. Therefore, digital transformation is very important for B2B companies to survive and thrive during the Covid-19 crisis.

### **Collaboration**

In addition to making the transition from traditional to digital, one of the ways that has long been known as a way to overcome crisis communication is collaboration. Researchers have found that crisis management is increasingly professional, which places managers in the role of facilitators, intermediaries, and controllers of various formal and informal joint efforts to improve skills in crisis coping (McGuire, 2009; McGuire et al., 2010).

Severe and aggressive crises (e.g., the sudden Coronavirus pandemic) require increased collaborative ties and the establishment of integrative mechanisms between organizations (Hwang & Lichthall, 2000).

Roberto Mora Cortez and Wesley J. Johnston (2020) also added that crisis management prioritizes adaptability, collaboration, and community participation resulting from conflict situations full of uncertainty and ignorance. From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, it takes the negotiation of relational rules and norms formed between the company and the employee to protect the company's long-term goals.

In crisis situations, good communication can share correct information, improve individual perceptions and thinking, reduce the adverse effects of the crisis, and encourage appropriate behavior. Through communication from leaders during a crisis, employees can gain a clear understanding of crisis-related company policies, as well as gain the attention and support of leaders (Spialek, Houston, & Worley, 2019).

Therefore, in a crisis situation, B2B companies must collaborate with various parties, including governments, industries, and communities, to address issues and deliver accurate and timely information to the public. Collaboration also helps B2B companies to improve the effectiveness of crisis communication by providing a platform for information sharing and developing a coordinative communication strategy. It also allows B2B companies to harness the strengths of each party and reduce the risk of conflicts or errors in communication.

## Social Networks

Luu Trong Tuan (2022) presented the results of his research related to the crisis communication ability of company leaders to the resilience of their salespeople in selling products using the Leadership-Member Exchange Theory (Leader-Member Exchange Theory) found that LMX relationships through crisis communication can be built with a function as a social resource, where employees can attract support and resources, such as cognitive balance and positive influences for strengthening their psychological capacity and think-action skills (Lianchao & Tingting, 2020; Cooper, Wang, Bartram, & Cooke, 2019; Malik & Garg, 2020).

Luu Trong Tuan (2022) then explains, employees who have sufficient social support tend to engage in network-focused actions, such as coordinating with others and building networks that can support them. Such network-oriented behaviors can contribute to overcoming challenges and developing resilience (Kuntz et al., 2017).

Researchers have also begun examining how collaboration networks affect performance at different levels as they become more complex in terms of the number of partners and activities carried out (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Rogers & Weber, 2010). These studies have identified both positive and negative effects. Broad stakeholder engagement in collaboration networks is likely to ensure access to additional and more diverse information and resources, and can also be a way to build support and commitment to common policy goals (Schalk, 2015). At the same time, as the number of interactions increases, the risk of institutional barriers and cognitive differences will increase that will hinder joint action, which in turn will reduce the benefits of collaboration. Therefore, managerial resources and skills are necessary to maintain collective capacity and avoid deadlocks (Van Bueren, Klijn, & Koppenjan, 2003).

Meanwhile, according to The Relational Activation of Resilience in Mattias Blomkvist and Anton Eling (2021), it is said that leaders can use their relational networks to gather different points of view in shared meaning-making and meaning-making. In organizations, the process of understanding the situation is very important because it affects the employees involved in operations. This process has to do with the way in which employees interpret and understand situations through interaction with other people, which ultimately leads to coordinated actions in the face of the situation. To assist employees in understanding the impact of the crisis on the company, it is necessary to implement an effective understanding process as a support in decision making. In addition, an effective understanding process also means encouraging and assisting employees in reducing the unclear variables of the current situation, aiming to facilitate a quick response in coordination with decision making.

Thus it can be said that social networks play an important role in crisis communication because they can help in disseminating accurate information, reshaping individual thoughts and perceptions, reducing the negative impact of the crisis on them, and encouraging them to behave appropriately. Leaders can also leverage relational networks to gather diverse perspectives in collective meaning-making and assist employees in understanding the impact of the crisis on the company. Social networks can be used as social resources, where workers can attract support and can contribute to sources of resilience, including psychological capacity and thought-action skills.

## Marketing Communication Strategy

### Social Media

Social media is not only effective in helping SME business growth (Dahnil et al., 2014), but also as a consumer medium to easily access new products, services, and SMEs (Dženopoljac et al., 2016). Social media is also a means for people to engage in online activities, market and even become an effective comparison in decision making (Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020). In addition, social media has become a kind of bridge between SMEs and potential consumer communities (Abed et al., 2015). In summary, Tripopsakul (2018) notes that effective use of social media can increase business productivity and revenue.

Online marketing and social media allow companies to achieve their marketing goals at a relatively low cost (Ajina, 2019). Facebook Pages have over 50 million registered businesses and over 88% of businesses use Twitter for their marketing purposes (Lister, 2017). Digital and social media technologies and applications have also been widely used to create awareness of public services and political promotion (Grover et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2018; Kapoor and Dwivedi, 2015; Shareef et al., 2016). People spend more time online looking for information, on products and services, communicating with other consumers about their experiences and engaging with companies. Organizations have responded to this change in consumer behavior by making digital and social media an important and integral component of their business marketing plans (Stephen, 2016).



Based on the findings obtained by Folajimi Ashiru, Emmanuel Adegbite, Franklin Nakpodia, and Nikolina Koporcic (2022), in developing countries such as Nigeria, B2B SME companies affirm the importance of social media and the internet for business exchanges during crises. This is in line with the literature

(Cortez & Johnston, 2020), who argue that social media spreads general information about events during the COVID-19 crisis.

Thus, it can be said that in times of crisis, B2B companies may have difficulty in physically reaching customers, but social media can be used to reach audiences virtually.

Social media can also be used to convey important information about how B2B companies are coping with the crisis and how their products or services can help customers. It also allows B2B companies to collect customer feedback and adjust their marketing strategies according to crisis situations.

### **Online Marketing**

In the field of marketing, digitalization and new technologies not only offer diverse opportunities but are also very important to follow due to the changes in consumer behavior, customer paths, and purchasing processes resulting from global digitalization. As a result, companies must become part of the digital economy, whether willingly or not, but may still be very static and unable to take advantage of new ways to create value for customers (Day, 2011). Nevertheless, it is seen that B2B (business-to-business) companies are less advanced than B2C (business-to-consumer) companies in integrating new digital technologies into their marketing strategies (Dwivedi, Ismagilova, Rana, and Raman, 2021).

Therefore, B2B companies are expected to be able to reconfigure more automated marketing processes during the Covid-19 pandemic. If the company does not do so, the business will be threatened. In research conducted by Nadia Zahoor, Ismail Golgeci, Lauri Haapanen, Imran Ali, Ahmad Arslan (2022), B2B companies in Finland are taking advantage of the changes that have occurred due to the pandemic as a positive opportunity for sales and marketing, and their business networks have also played an important role in remodeling sales and marketing during the pandemic period.

From a semi-structured interview with 14 speakers from five different companies conducted by Miska Jukkola (2021) found that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have caused B2B companies to be more oriented towards digital marketing. He also added that during the crisis, the company's internal functions such as marketing and sales became more integrated and the importance of marketing was recognized at various levels of the organization. Nevertheless, the company is also increasing the use of external partners to address the gap in digital capabilities.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused major changes in the way businesses operate, including in the field of marketing. This has led to B2B (business-to-business) companies having to change their marketing strategies and give priority to online marketing. Online marketing gives B2B companies access to a wider reach of potential customers and can be used to reach customers who may not be reachable in the traditional way. In addition, online marketing can also be used to measure customer response and adjust marketing strategies in real-time. Online marketing also provides the flexibility and efficiency necessary in crisis situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, B2B companies must prioritize online marketing during the Covid-19 pandemic to keep the business running and increase sales opportunities.

### **Online Exhibitions/Conferences**

In the research of Jun Kang and Zihe Diao (2020) revealed, some B2B companies in China faced difficulties in making business contacts and sales offline during the crisis, construction machinery manufacturer XCMG upgraded their own ecommerce platform, namely machmall, to facilitate online customer requests, contract signing, and payment processing. As expected, Canton Fair, China's largest import and export fair, is also taking steps to move into the online world. The fair provides about 25,000 companies to negotiate and trade, all through a platform that provides online multilingual translation support, platform display, cross-border ecommerce functionality, and live streaming marketing.

Correspondingly, Mattias Blomkvist and Anton Eling (2021) revealed Covid-19 made salespeople undergo significant changes, they were banned from going on any business trips except for one important meeting in preparation for the upcoming business year. After that, all interactions between salespeople are carried out online through Microsoft Teams, where not only the business but also the social aspects that are common in conferences, are moved to online meetings to establish and socialize with each other as well as to build and maintain relationships.

Some B2B companies in Finland have also made some adjustments in their business practices due to the impact of COVID-19. Revealed by Nadia Zahoor, Ismail Golgeci, Lauri Haapanen, Imran Ali, Ahmad Arslan (2022), B2B companies in Finland are making many quick transitions to online meetings, holding virtual conferences, as well as communicating constantly with employees and business partners.

Almost all B2B companies researched by researchers in this literature study, carry out the process of sales interaction with business partners, auctions, tenders and other business exploration have begun to be carried out by means of online conferences or online exhibitions.

This shows the importance of online conferencing in selling B2B company products during the Covid-19 pandemic, because online conferences allow companies to stay connected with customers and business partners without having to travel physically. Virtual conferences also allow companies to weave and socialize with each other, build and maintain relationships, and make adjustments in business practices such as a quick shift to online meetings and diversification of business networks.

### **Pricing/Cost**

One of the pillars of any marketing campaign is pricing. The importance of pricing in marketing campaigns, including in price reduction strategies. In wholesale retail, sales promotion is an important element of the marketing mix and rebates and store pamphlet advertising is the most frequently used promotional tool.

In Germany, for example, about a quarter of the sales volume of groceries sold at promotional prices in 2017 (Nielsen, 2018), and store pamphlets accounted for one-third of the retailer's advertising budget (EHI Retail Institute, 2016). These two tools play different roles in the promotional mix: discounts provide incentives to buy the brand, and store pamphlets attract its attention (Zhang, 2006). Both instruments generate a huge increase in sales of promoted brands and can even grow product categories at retailers, as previous research has shown (e.g., Ailawadi et al., 2006, Gedenk, 2018).

In the research of Jun Kang and Zihe Diao (2020), found several B2B companies in China use promotional pricing strategies to encourage customer purchases. For example, EVOC, a high-tech intelligent manufacturing company, decided to rent out its equipment at a monthly rental price that is only 2% of the selling price for some companies that are experiencing financial problems. China's State Railways also decided to lower shipping costs from March to June 2020, which would save their clients around \$54 million.

Cost reductions are also carried out by other B2B companies in Finland. Based on the results of research by Ahmad Arslan, Ismail Golgeci, Zaheer Khan, Petri Ahokangas, Lauri Haapanen (2021) revealed, the COVID-19 situation has affected the company by stopping product development and installation activities at customer factories, as well as making companies pay more attention to costs and seek cost reductions. Luxmet's CEO thinks that they can offer solutions as a service to customers, however this requires customer confidence in the value proposition offered by Luxmet.

By paying attention to the various components of costs that must be incurred and the income to be received, B2B companies must have a pricing strategy that is in accordance with conditions and situations in times of crisis, especially Covid-19.

Price reduction and cost reduction are very important for B2B companies during the Covid-19 pandemic due to the difficult economic situation. Proper pricing can help B2B companies to stay competitive and maintain stable profit margins. Meanwhile, cost reduction can help companies to reduce financial burdens and improve operational efficiency. It also helps companies to stay afloat and maintain business stability in a situation of economic uncertainty brought about by the pandemic.

Rebates can be given to clients of B2B companies during the Covid-19 pandemic to help them overcome the financial difficulties encountered. Discounts can be provided through various means, such as quantity discounts, volume discounts, or special promotional programs. However, companies must take into account the effect of such rebates on the profit margin and financial health of the company. The company must also ensure that the rebates provided do not harm the company as a whole and can be maintained in the long term.

### **Crisis Communication Strategy Model and Business-to-Business (B2B) Corporate Marketing Communication During the COVID-19 Crisis**

Based on the recommendations of the defensive strategy model for Business-to-Business (B2B) companies above, the researcher then formulates steps for each activity carried out in the form of a table, as follows.

Table 1 - Formulation of B2B Corporate Strategy Model Recommendations to Survive in Times of Crisis  
**B2B Corporate Strategy to Survive a Crisis**

Strategy	Activity	Step
Crisis Communication Strategies	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration with various parties such as government, industry, and communities.</li> <li>• Placing managers in the role of facilitators, intermediaries, and controllers.</li> <li>• Formation of integrative mechanisms between organizations.</li> </ul> Negotiate relational rules and norms formed between the company and employees.
	Social Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sufficient social support to employees.</li> <li>• Implement a Leadership-Member Exchange (LMX) relationship through crisis communication can be built with a function as a social resource, where employees can attract support and resources.</li> </ul> Engage all stakeholders to ensure access to additional information and resources that are more diverse.
	Digital Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the way companies work to be more flexible, transparent, and stable to keep up with changing customer behavior.</li> <li>• Implementation of digital technology to maintain and strengthen interactions between internal parties and external partners.</li> </ul> Collaborate on digital transformation with all stakeholders, including external parties.
Marketing Communication Strategy	Online Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconfigure a more automated marketing process.</li> <li>• Integrating new digital technologies into marketing strategies.</li> <li>• Reach a wider range of potential customers.</li> </ul> Measure customer responses and adjust marketing strategies in real-time.
	Online Exhibitions/Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out the process of sales interaction with business partners, auctions, tenders and other business exploration by means of online conferences or online exhibitions.</li> <li>• Transform all business interactions, both internal and external through virtual interactions.</li> </ul> Negotiate and offer products through a platform that provides online multilingual translation support, platform display, cross-border ecommerce functionality, and live streaming marketing.
	Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use it to convey important information about how a B2B company is overcoming a crisis and how a product or service can help customers.</li> <li>• Collect customer feedback and adjust the company's marketing strategy according to the crisis situation.</li> <li>• Engage in online activities to reach the audience virtually.</li> </ul> Find effective comparison elements in decision-making.

The table above can be used as a reference for Business-to-Business (B2B) companies in implementing strategies with activities and steps taken to survive in crisis situations, especially crises that cause limited reach and interaction between people, such as Covid-19.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted by the researchers above, the crisis conditions experienced by various B2B companies in the Covid-19 pandemic situation are different conditions from the monetary or financial crises in previous periods. The Covid-19 pandemic has made B2B companies have to carry out different crisis management and be more adaptive in running their business to stay afloat.

The Coronavirus outbreak presents new challenges for B2B companies compared to the economic crisis. Some of the conclusions of the research obtained by this study to answer "how crisis communication and marketing communication strategies that should be applied by Business-to-Business (B2B) companies in dealing with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic", are as follows: The results of the meta-synthesis that researchers found suggest that this crisis is unique in that its spread is not based on economic or financial factors, but on sociobiological factors that give rise to uncertainty.

Crisis communication strategies that should be carried out by B2B companies during the Covid-19 pandemic include digital transformation, collaboration and network expansion. Marketing communication strategies that affect B2B company marketing communications during the Covid-19 pandemic include online marketing, online exhibitions, social media and discounts. The power of social networking, collaboration and partnerships, and starting to transform towards a digital communication system into an effective means of crisis management in conditions of uncertainty. The role of the three is very important to provide moral and material support for the business for the company.

B2B companies that are already able to carry out the crisis communication strategy can simultaneously or gradually start carrying out marketing communication strategies through online marketing, virtual / online exhibitions or conferences, marketing through social media and pricing by taking into account all cost components during a crisis, and can provide discounts or discounts. Marketing through digital channels also has an impact on the efficiency of managing time and costs for meeting in person, as well as supporting the digital transformation process carried out by the company to remain relevant according to significantly changing customer needs.

## REFERENCE

- [1] Ardial, H. (2022). *Paradigma dan model penelitian komunikasi*. Bumi Aksara.
- [2] Biggemann, S., & Buttle, F. (2007). The effects of previous episodes in business-to-business interaction. *Management Research News*.
- [3] Brennan, R., Canning, L., & McDowell, R. (2020). *Business-to-business marketing*. Sage.
- [4] Burgelman, R. A. (2002). Strategy as vector and the inertia of coevolutionary lock-in. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47(2), 325-357.
- [5] Cooke, F. L., Cooper, B., Bartram, T., Wang, J., & Mei, H. (2019). Mapping the relationships between high-performance work systems, employee resilience and engagement: A study of the banking industry in China. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30(8), 1239-1260.
- [6] Coombs, W. T. (2015). The value of communication during a crisis: Insights from strategic communication research. *Business Horizons*, 58(2), 141-148.
- [7] Cortez, R. M., & Johnston, W. J. (2020). The Coronavirus crisis in B2B settings: Crisis uniqueness and managerial implications based on social exchange theory. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 88, 125-135.
- [8] Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Sage.
- [9] Cutlip, S. M. (2016). *Efektif Public Relations edisi ke 9 [Effective Public Relations 9th edition]*. Jakarta: Prenada Media Group.
- [10] Dahnil, M. I., Marzuki, K. M., Langgat, J., & Fabeil, N. F. (2014). Factors influencing SMEs adoption of social media marketing. *Procedia-social and behavioral sciences*, 148, 119-126.
- [11] Dengler, K., & Matthes, B. (2018). The impacts of digital transformation on the labour market: Substitution potentials of occupations in Germany. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 137, 304-316.
- [12] Denicolai, S., & Previtali, P. (2020). Precision Medicine: Implications for value chains and business models in life sciences. *Technological forecasting and social change*, 151, 119767.
- [13] Denkin, N. K. (2013). Triangulasi dalam penelitian kualitatif. Retrieved November, 25, 2019.
- [14] Dženopoljac, V., Janošević, S., & Bontis, N. (2016). Intellectual capital and financial performance in the Serbian ICT industry. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 17(2), 373-396. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIC-07-2015-0068>
- [15] Eden, R., Burton-Jones, A., Casey, V., & Draheim, M. (2019). Digital transformation requires workforce transformation. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 18(1), 1-17.

- [16] Egan, M., Matvos, G., & Seru, A. (2019). The market for financial adviser misconduct. *Journal of Political Economy*, 127(1), 233-295.
- [17] Gedenk, Karen (2018), "Retailer Promotions", in Gielens, Katrijn and Els Gijsbrechts (eds.), *Handbook of Research on Retailing*, Cheltenham, 82-103.
- [18] Grover, P., Kar, A. K., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Janssen, M. (2019). Polarization and acculturation in US Election 2016 outcomes-Can twitter analytics predict changes in voting preferences. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 145, 438-460.
- [19] Hofacker, C., Golgeci, I., Pillai, K. G., & Gligor, D. M. (2020). Digital marketing and business-to-business relationships: a close look at the interface and a roadmap for the future. *European Journal of Marketing*, 54(6), 1161-1179.
- [20] Hossain, M. A., Dwivedi, Y. K., Chan, C., Standing, C., & Olanrewaju, A. S. (2018). Sharing political content in online social media: A planned and unplanned behaviour approach. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 20(3), 485-501.
- [21] Kang, M. Y., & Park, B. (2018). Sustainable corporate social media marketing based on message structural features: Firm size plays a significant role as a moderator. *Sustainability*, 10(4), 1167.
- [22] Kapoor, K. K., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2015). Metamorphosis of Indian electoral campaigns: Modi's social media experiment. *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, 11(4), 496-516.
- [23] Karpenko, N., & Ivannikova, M. (2020). *The consumer decision making process*.
- [24] Knudsen, D. R. (2020). Elusive boundaries, power relations, and knowledge production: A systematic review of the literature on digitalization in accounting. *International Journal of Accounting Information Systems*, 36, 100441.
- [25] Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2013). *Principles of Marketing (16th Global Edition)*.
- [26] Li, W., Zomaya, A., Costa, B. G., Delicato, F., Pires, P., Portocarrero, J. M., & Si, W. (2017). RAMSES: A new reference architecture for self-adaptive middleware in Wireless Sensor Networks.
- [27] Liu, Q., Huang, X., Gong, Q., Du, L., Pan, Y., & Liu, J. (2016). Application and development of hard rock TBM and its prospect in China. *Tunnelling and Underground Space Technology*, 57, 33-46.
- [28] Maresh-Fuehrer, M. M., & Smith, R. (2016). Social media mapping innovations for crisis prevention, response, and evaluation. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 54, 620-629.
- [29] Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2018). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Sage publications.
- [30] Nielsen (2018), "Are We Really Getting Value From Our Promotions?" (accessed December 16, 2019), <https://www.nielsen.com/au/en/insights/article/2018/are-we-really-getting-value-from-our-promotions/>.
- [31] Pedersen, C. L., Ritter, T., & di Benedetto, C. A. (2020). Managing through a crisis: Managerial implications for business-to-business firms. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 88, 314.
- [32] Rėklaitis, K., & Pilelienė, L. (2019). Principle differences between B2B and B2C marketing communication processes. *Organizacijø Vadyba: Sisteminiai Tyrimai*, 81, 73-86.
- [33] Rizomyliotis, I., Konstantoulaki, K., & Kostopoulos, I. (2017). *Business-to-business marketing communications: Value and efficiency considerations in recessionary times*. Springer.
- [34] Rustan, A. S., & Hakki, N. (2017). *Pengantar ilmu komunikasi*. Deepublish.
- [35] Schalk J. (2015). Linking stakeholder involvement to policy performance: Nonlinear effects in Dutch local government policy making. *American Review of Public Administration*. Advance online publication. doi:
- [36] Shareef, M. A., Dwivedi, Y. K., Kumar, V., & Kumar, U. (2016). Reformation of public service to meet citizens' needs as customers: Evaluating SMS as an alternative service delivery channel. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 61, 255-270.
- [37] Taneja, S., & Toombs, L. (2014). Putting a face on small businesses: Visibility, viability, and sustainability the impact of social media on small business marketing. *Academy of marketing studies journal*, 18(1), 249.
- [38] Tripopsakul, S. (2018). Social media adoption as a business platform: an integrated TAM-TOE framework. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 18.
- [39] Zoltners, A. A., Sinha, P. K., Lorimer, S. E., Lilien, G. L., & Grewal, R. (2012). Building a Winning Sales Management Team: A Managerial Perspective. *Handbook on Business to Business Marketing*, Gary L. Lilien and Rajdeep Grewal, Eds. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 521, 38.