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Investigating the Nexus between Crisis Communication and Brand Reputation Management of FMCGs in Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract

Brand reputation is an important asset for consumer-oriented companies, especially in highly competitive markets like Nigeria. Crisis events can have a dramatic impact on the trust, loyalty, and overall perception of consumers if organisations do not communicate effectively. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between crisis communication strategies, communication channels and customer perception on the brand reputation of Indomie Noodles in Southwest Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted and the target population was the consumers of Indomie Noodles in Southwest Nigeria. Using the purposive sampling method, a total of 384 respondents were selected and 382 valid responses were obtained to ensure reliability in the statistical analysis. Structured questionnaires were used to gather data to measure the communication strategies, channels, customer perception and the brand reputation with a four-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and ANOVA were performed using version 27 of the statistical software programme, the Statistical Package and the Data Analysis Programme (SPSS), to test the hypotheses and to analyse the relationships between the variables. The results show that crisis communication strategies and customer perception have a significant effect on brand reputation whereas communication channels had a negative but significant effect. Effective strategies that create transparency and responsiveness enhance consumer trust, and poorly managed channels can limit the perceptions of corporate credibility. Organizations are faced with the challenge of prioritizing the need for strategic communication during crises, and of optimizing communication channels while actively monitoring customer perceptions to preserve and enhance brand reputation.

Keywords: Crisis Communication; Brand Reputation; Customer Perception; Communication Channels; Consumer Trust

1. Introduction

Crisis communication has emerged as one of the most important aspects of modern corporate reputation management, especially in a time when digital technologies allow information to be disseminated instantly and people to be judged more quickly. Empirical and theoretical research demonstrates that effective crisis communication is essential in order to protect brand reputation, rehabilitate the confidence of stakeholders,

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and ensure organisational resilience in the long term (Jung et al., 2025; Kumar & Neelu, 2025; Tulcanaza-Prieto et al., 2022). In an era of high velocity information in which misinformation and emotive storytelling can spread like wildfire on social media, the capacity to manage crisis discourse effectively has become a fundamental ability for competitive sustainability.

Scholars have stressed that organisations that are proactive and transparent in crisis management are better positioned to manage the public's perception and reduce the uncertainty and the possibility of significant reputational decline (Bupu et al., 2023; Amoako et al., 2025). Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is a leading theoretical lens that argues a correlation between the choice of communication strategy (denial, diminishment, rebuilding or bolstering) and crisis type, attribution of responsibility and stakeholder expectations. Recent extensions of SCCT include highlighting the importance of digital engagement, real-time responsiveness and credibility cues as moderators of stakeholder reactions (Zilnicki, 2021; Amoako et al., 2025). Studies indicate that organizations that implement corrective actions, demonstrate empathy and provide consistent updates are more likely to have a lesser negative sentiment, preserve trust in the brands, and boost post-crisis faster recovery (Mgbe-Ordinma & Aríjeníwà, 2024; Amoako et al., 2025).

Crisis communication research reports communication strategies as key determinants of stakeholder response and outcomes in terms of brand reputation in the face of organisational crises. Communication strategies refer to the specific rhetorical and managerial strategies that organisations use to cope with crisis - from denial, justification, and diminishment, to corrective action, apology, and bolstering strategies as detailed in the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (Coombs, 2007; Coombs, 2022). Empirical evidence has shown that strategic decisions such as transparency, empathy and timely disclosure of information strongly affect public trust, credibility and the degree of reputational damage (Chitraju, 2025; Amoako et al., 2025). Closely related are communication channels, which include the platforms that organisations use to spread crisis messages, ranging from traditional media to press statements and corporate websites and now social media platforms. Studies show that the effectiveness of crisis response often relies on the appropriateness, speed, and interactivity of the selected means of communication, as digital channels allow for real time communication and generate public opinion more quickly than traditional media (Citrawijaya et al., 2024; Sikder & Harvey, 2023). Customer perception, another important variable, is an expression of how the stakeholders perceive the response of an organisation in terms of honesty, responsibility, competence, and concern. Research has consistently shown that positive customer perceptions (stemming from clarity, consistency and responsiveness of crisis messages) are important for alleviating negative emotions, blame attribution, and promoting forgiveness (Amoako et al., 2025). Ultimately, brand reputation is the aggregate assessment of an organisation's character, credibility and reliability over time based on stakeholder experiences and interactions. Studies confirm the power of good crisis communication strategies and channels that boost brand reputation by reinforcing trust, showing accountability, and signalling organisational integrity (Umoh, 2025). Taken together, these variables interact with each other to determine to what extent an organization will be successful in navigating crises and maintaining public confidence, and preserving long-term reputational capital.

In the modern digital landscape, communicating in a crisis situation becomes a challenge due to the velocity, circulation, and participation of online platforms. Social media algorithms boost emotionally charged content, which means that delayed or uncoordinated communication can result in misinformation taking hold (Yin, 2024; Bakir & McStay, 2022). Therefore, organisations need to balance the communication speed with accuracy, transparency, and message consistency. Poor handling of crises may turn into long-term damage to the organisation's reputation, loss of customers, and loss of corporate legitimacy, particularly in markets where there is high sensitivity among the public and distrust of institutions.

Although global research has determined strong linkages between crisis communication and the subsequent outcomes of brand reputation, critical gaps exist - especially in emerging markets such as

Nigeria. The findings of previous related studies indicate that effective crisis communication plays a significant role in protecting an organization's reputation during and immediately after a crisis. However, existing empirical evidence has largely concentrated on short-term outcomes, such as crisis response effectiveness and stakeholder perceptions, with limited attention to long-term brand reputation indicators. Specifically, studies by Omenugha (2019) and Amoako et al. (2025) suggest that there is still insufficient empirical evidence on how crisis communication strategies influence enduring outcomes such as consumer trust, brand equity, and customer loyalty. This gap highlights the need for further research to examine the sustained impact of crisis communication on long-term brand reputation.

Secondly, Nigerian consumers exhibit peculiar patterns of behaviour which is influenced by their socio-cultural expectations, scepticism towards corporate institutions, and active dependence on social media narratives (Igwe-Nmaju & Anadozie, 2022). These peculiarities within the context mean that crisis communication models developed in the West may not fully explain consumer perceptions in Nigeria. The crisis of Indomie Noodles which originated from global discussions on food safety and consumer protection induced a great deal of reputational pressure on the brand, thus providing a perfect context for empirical study. While Indomie continues to dominate the Nigerian market as one of the leading fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands, the perceptions of public sentiments during and after crisis demonstrate variance in the perception of trust levels, perceived brand credibility and loyalty. Understanding the ways in which Indomie's crisis communication strategies shape these perceptions within the Southwest Nigeria consumer market is both pertinent to the study from a scholarly perspective and also holds relevance from a practical point of view.

Despite the documented importance of crisis communication many Nigerian brands, including leading FMCGs are struggling to recover reputationally after crises. Delayed responses, lack of consistent messaging and lack of structured communication protocols often leads to negative media framing, spread of misinformation and diminution of customer loyalty (Mgbe-Ordinma & Aríjeníwà, 2024; Coombs, 2022). Crisis-induced damage is especially severe in industries of consumer goods, where quality, safety and trust are key drivers of brand equity. For Indomie, public responses to food safety controversies reflect how easily consumer trust can be lost when crisis communication is felt to be slow, defensive or inadequate in terms of transparency. Geographically, the study is centred on Southwest Nigeria because of the high rates of Indomie consumption and social media usage.

This study measures consumers' perceptions of the success of the communication of the crisis by Indomie and its effects towards brand reputation. The broad objective of this study is to examine the impact of crisis communication on brand reputation. Specifically, the study aims to:

- examine the relationship between communication strategies and brand reputation.
- determine the impact of communication channels on brand reputation.
- evaluate the effect of customer perception on brand reputation.

2. Literature Review

Crisis Communication

Crisis communication is the ways of controlling how things are perceived in the press, preventing reputational damage and knowing what to say on behalf of an organisation. According to Coombs (2022), crisis communication is "the collection, processing, and dissemination of information needed to deal with a crisis situation." This definition underlines the role of communication in the management of crisis, including the need for clear, accurate and timely information. Likewise, Mgbe-Ordinma and Aríjeníwà (2024) have defined the existence of crisis communication as the strategic use of messages by organisations to protect and defend its reputation, to maintain the confidence of its stakeholders and to ensure the continuity of the organisation in the face of unexpected events. This definition highlights the proactive and strategic approach of crisis communication in protecting the credibility of an organisation. Also, Citrawijaya et al. (2024) define crisis communication as the provision of relevant and timely information to stakeholders during a crisis to enable them make informed decisions, reduce uncertainty and manage risk perceptions.

Crisis communication as used in this study is defined as the planned and strategic distribution of information to an organisation's stakeholders before, during and after a disruptive event with the aim of reducing damage, uncertainty and maintaining brand reputation. It is about making messages that are clear, transparent, and empathetic, and deal with the nature of the crisis, explain organisational responsibility, fight misinformation, and describe corrective actions. This research adopts the point of view that effective crisis communication is not only reactive but a continuous process of relationship management developed to maintain public trust and, affect customer perceptions and protect the long-term reputation of the brand especially in situations, where the consumer-facing companies such as Indomie, must respond quickly to the public's concerns which are often amplified through the digital and social media environment.

Brand Reputation

Brand reputation is the composite perception held by stakeholders of a company about the company based on its past actions, communication behaviour and overall presence in the market. It is the sum of the judgement of consumers on the credibility, reliability, and integrity of the brand. As Yin (2024) argue, brand reputation is developed gradually over time and is based on the constant ability of the organisation to deliver its promises. When a brand delivers reliable performance and acts in an ethical manner, there is a high chance of high customer satisfaction, on the contrary, when a brand fails to meet expectations, it can lead to a quick loss of reputation. Jung et al. (2025) further emphasise that the reputation of a brand develops from the exchange of communication between the company and its brand and what consumers interpret from the behaviour of the firm. This led to the conclusion that it is not only the quality of product but also the clarity, transparency and consistency with which the messages are conveyed to the audience by the brand that influence reputation. Trust is therefore, a basic ingredient as the consumer considers whether the brand is trustful and able to deliver what it claims (Sangal et al., 2025). In today's markets - and particularly those that are affected by quick information flows and social media dynamics - brand reputation becomes even more sensitive to the way organisations respond to crises and manage stakeholder expectations.

In the context of this study, brand reputation is evaluated on the overall public assessment of the credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability of Indomie as shaped by the crisis communication actions during and after the occurrence of crisis events in Southwest Nigeria. It reflects the way consumers perceive the brand's honesty, competence, responsibility and concern for the stakeholders based on the brand's responses to such public concerns and its capacity of managing misinformation. Within this research, brand reputation reflects the consumer's level of trust, belief, and loyalty in the long term as a result of how well Indomie is in terms of communication, explains the problem, and maintains the public image in a crisis situation.

Communication Strategies and Brand Reputation

Crisis communication is the ways and means organisations use to communicate to stakeholders during and after a crisis. Good communication strategies focus on clarity, transparency and responsiveness, especially in times of uncertainty. To Coombs (2007), strategic communication during crisis is what can help organisation communicate accurate and timely information that helps reduce ambiguity and strengthen the trust of the public. This is consistent with the more general perspective that communication strategies are not only operational devices but processes through which organisations create stakeholder expectations and maintain legitimacy (Umoh, 2025). Empirically, as a research subject, organizations that have a proactive and consistent communication approach have shown to maintain higher rates of trust from their audiences. For example, research conducted by Citrawijaya et al. (2024) shows that organisations which exhibit responsiveness, openness and consistency in their message across media platforms are viewed more favourably by stakeholders in times of crisis, and thus, the importance of communication strategy in affecting the perception of others.

Brand reputation (cumulative judgement of stakeholders through branding) is strongly shaped by the way in which communication is handled as it provides the credibility, reliability, and past behaviour of the organisation. Brand reputation is created over time by positive interactions, credible messaging and the delivery of brand promises (Senyapar, 2024). Effective communication strategies help contribute to this process by reinforcing the brand's values and showing its commitment to stakeholder interests. Empirical evidence supports this perspective: organizations that practice transparent, empathic and timely communications during times of crisis are often less damaged in their reputations and have greater amounts of support from their stakeholders (Coombs 2007). This is because the effective communication strategies will help manage stakeholder emotions, reduce the spread of misinformation, and enhance the perceived organisational integrity. Collectively, the literature indicates that communication strategies play a decisive role in determining how they evaluate the brand of the organisation, particularly during turbulent times, placing communication as a central factor in determining the organisational brand reputation. Based on the conceptual and empirical synthesis above, the following hypotheses are put forward:

Hi_1: Communication strategies have a positive and significant relationship with brand reputation.

Communication Channels and Brand Reputation

Communication channels refer to the different media and platforms through which organisations communicate with information to their stakeholders, such as traditional media, corporate websites, email, social media platforms, and face-to-face communication. The choice and effectiveness of channels of communication determines how quickly, accurately and persuasively messages from are received and interpreted by the public. According to Kumar and Neelu (2025), organisations must communicate through channels that facilitate communication transparency, accessibility and engagement in real-time especially in the time of crisis. The effectiveness of these channels is based on the ability to reach diverse stakeholder groups, to allow for two-way communication and to encourage clarity and responsiveness. As digital transformation keeps on changing the way organisational communication is conducted, scholars have argued that strategic channel selection is essential for managing public expectations and strengthening relationships (Amoako et al., 2025).

Communication channels have been found important in constructing brand reputation especially in high pressure situations. Research conducted by Umoh (2025) shows stakeholders are increasingly using social media channels to obtain immediate updates on crises and organisations that are active in social media tend to have better reputations. Their study goes on to show that interactive channels, i.e., those that enable monitoring, feedback, and dialogue, increase trust and limit the spread of misinformation to protect the public image of the brand. Additionally, Coombs (2007) found that communication channels which emphasise speed, consistency, such as digital platforms and direct public statements, assist organisations to manage stakeholder emotions and prevent the escalation of the reputation. These findings suggest that organisations that use the right communication channels, depending on the context and urgency of the situation they are in, are better positioned to maintain their credibility, foster trust, and protect their brand reputation.

Hi_2: Communication channels have a significant positive effect on the brand reputation.

Customer Perception and Brand Reputation

Customer perception is the process by which stakeholders hold opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about an organisation based on its actions, communications, products, and services. Brand reputation is inextricably coupled with customer perception, in that it is virtually co-constructed by stakeholders through interpretation of the organisation's behaviours and communications over time (Bupu et al., 2023; Igwe-Nmaju & Anadozie, 2022). Positive customer perceptions are built when organisations consistently deliver on promises and

provide reliability and transparency in their engagements with their audience. Sikder & Harvey (2023) emphasise that customer perceptions are formed not only based on direct interaction with the brand, but also on the communicated image of the organisation, including advertising, public relations, and crisis management efforts. This view emphasises the fact that reputation is not only about performance as much as it is about effective messaging and consistent brand behaviour. Empirically, research has shown that customer perceptions play an important role in brand reputation. Bupu et al. (2023) show that the assessment of organisational empathy and responsiveness by stakeholders during crisis has a strong impact on how they perceive the brand, which can influence the overall result in terms of reputation. Similarly, Citrawijaya et al. (2024) found that clear and well structured communication during times of critical event leads to positive customer perceptions that fosters trust and loyalty. These results highlight that customer perception serves as a lens through which organisational actions are interpreted and a determinant of the extent of reputational capital, and thus is an important consideration in strategic communication and brand management.
H3: Customer perception has a significant positive impact on brand reputation

Underpinning Theory

This study has been anchored on Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) proposed by Coombs (2007), and Image Repair Theory (IRT) developed by Benoit (1995, 1997). SCCT emphasises that the effectiveness of crisis communication will be dependent on the nature of the crisis, the extent to which responsibility is allocated to the organisation and its pre-crisis reputation. Organisations that have the right communication strategies implemented can counteract the damage to the reputation and recover stakeholder trust through denouncement, diminishing and rebuilding strategies (Coombs, 2007). Empirical research has demonstrated that the effectiveness of message framing to the specific situation of a crisis leads to the increase of the confidence of the stakeholders and positively affects the brand's reputation. This theory ties in well with the focus of this study in that communication strategies and channels are shown to play an important role in how organisations are perceived within the organisation, emphasising the need for strategic, timely, and audience sensitive messaging.

Complementing SCCT, Image Repair Theory (IRT) offers an approach for understanding the capacity of organizations to maintain or recover credibility after a reputational threat. Benoit (1997) identifies strategies of denial, evasion of responsibility, corrective action and mortification emphasising selection of which path to take should come from the nature of the crisis and expectations of the stakeholders. IRT emphasises on the importance of customer perception on the reputation outcomes, wherein the stakeholders review the transparency, responsiveness and ethical nature of the organisation while making their perception towards the brand. There is empirical evidence that this is true as empathetic, transparent and corrective communications promote forgiveness and strengthen organisational reputation during times of crisis. In addition, there is the Sensemaking Theory (Weick & Weick, 1995) which helps to understand how stakeholders make sense of organisational communications in times of crisis. It holds that individuals are actively involved in constructing meaning from information based on their prior experiences, social cues and emotional response which finally influence the way they perceive the organisation. By the combination of SCCT, IRT and Sensemaking Theory, this study provides an overall framework to study the response of communication strategies, communication channels and the customer perception, and how they affect the brand reputation, focusing on the fact that both strategic messaging and stakeholder interpretation are key in crisis management.

3. Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional research design and the consumers of Indomie Noodles in the Southwest Nigeria as the focus. The cross-sectional approach is used by gathering data at one point in time, this gives a snapshot of what the consumer perceive about the way the brand handles the crisis and also what those perceptions impact the brand's reputation. This design is appropriate because it can help in determining the relationship between variables and does not require long observation over time which is suitable in order to obtain the immediate impact of crisis communication on consumer perception (Creswell et al., 2014).

The target population for this study comprised all consumers of Indomie Noodles residing in Southwest Nigeria who had purchased, consumed, or interacted with the brand and had been exposed to its crisis communication messages during or following a brand-related crisis. Specifically, the population included individual consumers, wholesalers, retailers, distributors, and social media users who were familiar with the brand and had experienced or observed its crisis communication efforts. These categories of respondents were considered appropriate because they represent key stakeholders whose perceptions and evaluations are essential for assessing the effectiveness of crisis communication on brand reputation. The population was regarded as infinite because the total number of Indomie Noodles consumers in Southwest Nigeria cannot be accurately determined. The brand is widely distributed across the six states of the region, serves a large and continually changing consumer base, and attracts new consumers on an ongoing basis. Consequently, there is no comprehensive sampling frame from which the exact number of consumers can be identified. In line with sampling theory, populations whose size is unknown, indeterminate, or constantly changing are treated as infinite for the purpose of sample size determination.

A purposive sampling technique was used, targeting consumers who actively interact with Indomie and its communication channels during the crises. This method ensures that respondents have relevant experience and exposure to the relevant brand crisis communication strategies which in turn is critical for obtaining valid and meaningful data. The sample size for this study was determined using the Cochran (1977) formula for an infinite population. The formula is widely recommended for studies involving very large or unknown populations because it provides an adequate sample size that ensures representativeness at a specified confidence level and margin of error.

The Cochran formula is expressed as:

$$n0 = \frac{Z^2pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

n0 = Required sample size for an infinite population

Z = Standard normal deviate corresponding to the desired confidence level (1.96 for a 95% confidence level)

p = Estimated proportion of the population possessing the characteristic of interest (0.50)

q = 1−p = 0.50

e = Desired margin of error (0.05)

The value of 0.50 was adopted for p because no previous empirical estimate of the proportion of Indomie consumers exposed to crisis communication was available. According to Cochran (1977), using 0.50 produces the maximum variability and therefore yields the largest and most conservative sample size.

Substituting the values into the formula gives:

$$n0 = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.50)(0.50)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n0 = (1.96)^2 = 3.8416$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 384.16$$

The calculated sample size was therefore 384 respondents after rounding to the nearest whole number. Data collection was carried out through structured survey questionnaires, which were designed in order to understand quantitative data on consumer perceptions on the crisis communications strategies and how they influenced the brand reputation. Questionnaires were administered via the internet channels of social media platforms and consumer forums as well as offline by visiting supermarkets, retail outlets and markets where Indomie products are frequently purchased. This dual approach ensures broad coverage and inclusiveness and reaches participants with varying levels of access to technology. Clear instructions and follow-up reminders were offered to increase response rates, and data collection assistants were hired to assist in the field in response completion and answer respondent questions. This multi-channel administration enables a reduction in non-response bias as well as ensuring a representative sample of the consumer population. The study used descriptive statistics. To test the study hypotheses, inferential statistics, specifically multiple linear regression analysis (MLRA), were employed to examine the effect of crisis communication strategy, communication channel, and customer perception on brand reputation. All analyses were conducted in the form of version 27.0 of the statistical software package Statistical Package and System (SPSS), which offers powerful tools for validating relationships between variables to ensure that the results of the study are reliable and generalizable.

4. Results And Discussion

A total of 384 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to consumers of Indomie Noodles in South-West Nigeria and 382 valid responses were retrieved, which represent a 99.2% response rate. The high response rate shows that the data gathered are reliable and adequate for statistical analysis to make sure that the results are representative of the target population (Creswell et al., 2014). The validated responses indicate the opinions of consumers who have experienced or associated with the crisis communication strategies of the brand, so it is suitable to study the relationship between crisis communication and brand reputation in this research.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variables	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
Communication Strategies	4	4.10	0.67
Communication Channels	4	3.95	0.72
Customer Perception	4	4.08	0.70
Brand Reputation	4	4.18	0.66

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The descriptive statistics for the study variables can be seen in Table 4.1. From the results, Brand Reputation has the highest mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.66), indicating that respondents' perceptions of the brand are generally positive. Communication Strategies followed closely with a mean of 4.10 (SD = 0.67) suggesting that the brand's crisis communication approaches are considered effective by the consumers. Customer Perception had a mean of 4.08 (SD = 0.70) revealed that consumers had favourable views about the brand, while Communication Channels had a relatively low mean of 3.95 (SD = 0.72) implying that it had moderate effectiveness in terms of the platforms used in reaching stakeholders. Hence, the relatively low standard deviations across all variables suggest that respondents' views were fairly consistent, which supports the reliability of the survey data. 382 responses can be considered a valid representation of consumer perceptions for the study.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 4.2: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.597[a]	.356	.351	.778
a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Perception, Communication Channels, Communication Strategies				

Table 4.2 provides the model summary for the relationship between the predictors that is Communication Strategies, Communication Channels and Customer Perception and Brand Reputation. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.597 shows that there is a moderate positive relationship between the predictors and the brand reputation. The R2 value of 0.356 implies that around 35.6% of variance in brand reputation can be explained using these three variables. The adjusted R^2 of 0.351 explains the number of the predictors and confirms the explanatory power of the model. The standard error of 0.778 gives an average deviation of observed values from the predicted values. Overall, the model shows a meaningful predictive relationship, thus indicating that effective communication strategies, channels and positive customer perception are regarded as an important factors for increasing brand reputation.

Table 4.3: ANOVA regression model

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	126.564	3	42.188	69.677	.000[b]
	Residual	228.873	378	.605		
	Total	355.437	381			
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Reputation						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Perception, Communication Channels, Communication Strategies						

Table 4.3 shows the result of the ANOVA regression model for the effect of Communication Strategies, Communication Channels and Customer Perception on Brand Reputation. The F-value of 69.677 with significance level of 0.000 shows that the overall regression model is statistically significant at 5% level This means that, as far as the three predictor variables are concerned, they are good predictors of variations in brand reputation. The significance F-test demonstrates that it is a better model compared to a model without predictors, so the role of communication practises and customer perception on the brand's reputation is validated.

Table 4.4: Regression Coefficients

Coefficients[a]								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.878	.208		9.028	.000	1.469	2.287
	Communication Strategies	.181	.045	.197	4.002	.000	.092	.269
	Communication Channels	-.091	.035	-.114	-2.572	.010	-.160	-.021
	Customer Perception	.468	.047	.503	10.058	.000	.377	.560
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Reputation								

The regression coefficients in Table 4.4 show the individual effects of Communication Strategies, Communication Channels, and Customer Perception on Brand Reputation. The constant (1.878) represents the expected brand reputation when all predictors are zero. Communication Strategies has a positive and significant effect on brand reputation ($\beta = 0.197$, $t = 4.002$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that better crisis communication strategies are associated with higher brand reputation. Customer Perception also shows a strong positive and significant influence ($\beta = 0.503$, $t = 10.058$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that positive customer perceptions significantly enhance the brand's reputation. Interestingly, Communication Channels has a negative but significant effect ($\beta = -0.114$, $t = -2.572$, $p < 0.05$), implying that some channels may not effectively contribute to brand reputation or may even reduce it if mismanaged. Overall, these results indicate that while strategies and customer perception strengthen brand reputation, the choice and management of communication channels are critical for maintaining a positive brand image.

5. Discussion of Findings

The result of this study has shown that communication strategies, communication channel, and customer perception play an important role in shaping the brand reputation of Indomie Noodles in Southwest Nigeria. The regression analysis showed a significant positive relationship between communication strategies and brand reputation ($\beta = 0.197$, $p < 0.05$) which implies that well-structured and proactive crisis communication enhances consumer trust and the brand's public image. The finding that crisis communication strategy significantly influences brand reputation is consistent with the work of Kumar and Neelu (2025), who highlighted the importance of tailoring crisis communication strategies to organisational and contextual factors to effectively manage negative perceptions and enhance corporate reputation during crises. Similarly, Jung, Park, and Huber (2025) emphasized that transparent communication and reputation management foster stakeholder trust and positively influence consumer decision-making, thereby reinforcing brand reputation. However, unlike these studies, which primarily examined crisis communication from a general corporate or organisational perspective, the present study empirically demonstrates the relative contribution of multiple crisis communication dimensions within the Nigerian fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Specifically, it establishes that, among crisis communication strategy, communication channel, and customer perception, customer perception is the strongest determinant of brand reputation. This finding provides empirical evidence that the effectiveness of crisis communication depends not only on the communication strategies adopted but also on how consumers interpret, evaluate, and internalise those strategies.

Furthermore, customer perception emerged as the strongest predictor of brand reputation ($\beta = 0.503$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that consumers' perceptions, experiences, and satisfaction play the most influential role in shaping brand reputation. This finding corroborates Tulcanaza-Prieto, Aguilar-Rodríguez, and Lee (2022), who reported that positive customer perceptions significantly enhance organisational performance and reputation. It also supports Bupu, Sodikin, and Sanchita (2023), who emphasized the importance of consumer feedback, engagement, and satisfaction in strengthening brand credibility and loyalty. Nevertheless, the present study extends these earlier findings by ranking the relative predictive power of the study variables and demonstrating that customer perception exerts a substantially stronger influence on brand reputation than crisis communication strategy and communication channel. This hierarchical evidence has received limited empirical attention in previous studies, particularly within the Nigerian FMCG industry. Consequently, the study advances existing knowledge by showing that organisations should prioritise shaping favourable customer perceptions alongside implementing effective crisis communication strategies, as consumer interpretation ultimately determines the success of crisis response efforts in protecting brand reputation.

Interestingly, the effect of communication channels was negative and significant on brand reputation ($p < 0.05$, $b = -0.114$). This suggests that although channels are critical in disseminating messages, if they are not appropriately chosen or mismanaged, impact on the effectiveness of the communication efforts may be reduced, possibly reducing the brand perception. This observation is in line with Umoh (2025) and Amoako et al. (2025) who stated that mismanagement of channels such as poor alignment with stakeholder preferences or over-reliance on specific media can undermine communication impact and reduce organizational credibility. As a result, organizations need to thoughtfully consider the channel selection and balance both traditional and digital channels to ensure maximum reach while ensuring clarity, consistency, and stakeholder trust. Overall, the results can be taken as evidence that strategic communication, customer perception, and effective channel management are interlinked drivers of brand reputation. While having strong strategies and positive perception from consumers help to build a good reputation, mismanaging channels of communication can result in the loss of these gains. The research underlines the need for integrated crisis communication strategies that incorporate effective strategy, stakeholder engagement and channel management to preserve and build brand image in dynamic and competitive markets.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study challenges the traditional assumption that more communication is always better during a crisis. By identifying that communication channels had a negative but significant effect on brand reputation, this study suggests a peculiarity in SCCT i.e. the medium itself can become a source of friction if it is perceived as impersonal, intrusive, or misaligned with the cultural context of Southwest Nigeria. Furthermore, the significant positive relationship between customer perception and brand reputation reinforces the sense making theory, proving that in a highly competitive market like Nigeria, the court of public opinion is the ultimate arbiter of brand equity. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting that even with a robust strategy, the choice of channel can inadvertently degrade corporate credibility if not carefully managed.

Practical Implications

For practitioners and brand managers, specifically within the Nigerian FMCG sector, the study serves as a directive to prioritise substance over volume. Since communication channels may negatively impacted reputation, companies like Indomie should move away from broad-spectrum noise and instead focus on high-trust channels that allow for transparency and two-way responsiveness. Practically, this means auditing existing digital and traditional channels to identify which ones are causing skepticism rather than trust. Management must also invest in real-time perception monitoring systems; since customer perception was a primary driver of reputation, the goal should not just be sending a message but actively managing the feedback loop. Organisations must shift their focus from merely surviving a crisis to using strategic, transparent engagement as a tool to actually enhance consumer loyalty.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This work investigated the impact of crisis communication strategies, communication channel and customer perception on the brand reputation of Indomie Noodles in Southwest Nigeria. The study showed that good communication strategies and the positive perception of customers play an important role in enhancing the image of a brand, and the lack of good communication channels can undermine these efforts. The results highlight the critical importance of proactive and communicative transparency and the importance of understanding consumer attitudes in order to maintain and strengthen the brand's public image during crises. Overall, the study validates the fact that an integrated approach that includes strategic planning, customer engagement, and channel optimization is key to ensuring consumer trust, loyalty, and long-term brand reputation in a competitive market environment.

Based on these findings it can be suggested that organizations such as Indomie Noodles should continually assess and update their crisis communication strategies to ensure clarity, consistency and responsiveness to consumer concerns. Attention should be paid to the type of communication channels to be used and their use to effectively reach the target audience without causing confusion or dilution of the message. Furthermore, businesses should also actively monitor customer perceptions by means of feedback mechanisms, social media engagement, and market surveys in order to use this information to make adjustments and ensure positive brand associations. By focusing on strategic communication, effective channel management, and consumer-centric approaches, companies can build their brand reputation and gain greater resilience against potential crises.

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