



## TRAVELOKA PR CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN DEALING WITH CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS REGARDING REFUND PERIOD APRIL 2020 – DECEMBER 2020

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### ABSTRACT

A crisis in an organization is a common thing. Preparedness and strategies are needed in dealing with crises so that the reputation of the organization does not deteriorate in the eyes of the public. The PSBB (Large scale social restrictions) faced by Indonesia in 2020 greatly affects the tourism industry. Traveloka is facing a crisis where the refund process is very slow. Traveloka responds to customer complaints on Instagram and Twitter using a statement template. This slow refund process was reported by the mass media. This study uses Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) as a reference.

**Keywords:** *communication crisis, crisis management, public relations, corporate communications, digital media*

### INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic that has occurred in the world since 2020 has caused panic all over the world. On March 2, 2020, Indonesian President Mr. Joko Widodo announced the first case of Covid-19 in Indonesia. Then, as the days went by, the cases of Covid-19 increased and caused panic among the public. Many people have asked President Joko Widodo to impose a lockdown in Indonesia. On April 6, 2020, President Joko Widodo imposed Large Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) in Jakarta in response to the increasing number of Covid-19 cases. As a result of the implementation of the PSBB by the Indonesian government, the tourism industry has had a tremendous impact. The PSBB policy has resulted in people who have bought plane tickets, booked hotels canceling tickets, and applied for refunds to airlines, hotels, and, tourism agents.

Online travel agents (OTA) that provide ticket and hotel booking services have also re-

ceived many requests for cancellation and refund of tickets by consumers. One of the online travel agents (OTA) is Traveloka. Indeed, this is a crisis that has never been faced before, it requires the readiness of the system and human resources to manage all refund requests and all complaints received by the company.

Public relations practices have now developed very rapidly, from those who use traditional methods such as distributing brochures, banners, etc., to now utilizing digital media, in this case, social media. Traveloka tries to build relationships with audiences through social media. Carrie Morgan (2013) describes Digital PR as “all about combining traditional PR with content marketing, social media and search: transforming static news into conversations and bypassing media to speak directly to your target audience online.” Traveloka through Instagram, Twitter, and the website is proof that Traveloka uses digital media to build relationships with audiences as initiated by Morgan (2013).

The use of digital media allows Traveloka and its customers to obtain information about products and submit complaints to customers. Then, if we look at the Official Traveloka Instagram account @traveloka in 2020, in every Traveloka post in the comment column, customer complaints regarding the length of the refund application process.



**Picture 1.1. Comments on Traveloka Instagram**

As we see Traveloka’s response in the two screenshots, it can be seen that Traveloka uses a statement template to respond to customer complaints. The statement template looks like it has been designed by Traveloka’s crisis management team with the format; greetings, apologies, explanations of answers to complaints, suggestions, and thanks. As we know that the use of statement templates makes it easier for Traveloka to increase response times and increase productivity. As reported from taptalk.io, statement templates have many benefits for customer service officers, such as:

1. Consistent communication. The use of statement templates makes customer interactions in line with brand values and increases the consistency of answers.
2. Quick and relevant response. Staff can use pre-designed answers to shorten response times and remain contextually relevant.
3. Reduce the need for staff training. The availability of templates can guide customer service officers without the need to provide intensive training.
4. Increase self-confidence in customer service officers. Customer service officers

will be more confident if they have templates as a guide. This is because every type of question they frequently encounter can be answered using the template guide.

Indeed, the use of statement templates can make it easier for a company to answer all complaints quickly and reach all consumers. If we look at how the statement template is well designed, the statement template framework contains an explanation of the problems faced by consumers so they can answer consumer questions. However, if we pay attention to the responses of other customers, we can see that customers are disappointed with the very slow refund process. This customer disappointment caused a crisis.

On July 1, 2020, *mediaindonesia.com* published news with the title "About Refund, Traveloka Asks to Wait for Confirmation, Netizens: What The...". The news reported several customer complaints related to the slow process of refunds. Examples of comments reported by *mediaindonesia.com* are as follows:

"@tiatia account commented, "hello...please help refund my flight ticket. I have been refunded since the beginning of March but until now the status of the refund is just waiting. Where do I have to complain about it? Please help."

Admin @traveloka replied: Hello @tiatia We apologize for the inconvenience. Can you tell us your order number via DM so we can help check? Thank you. -SD."

@tiatia account replied, "@traveloka I got it but I have been waiting for 3 months, the call center can't be called, so I've filled it in the refund column. Until now the status is still waiting."

After that, admin @traveloka commented back, "Hello @tiatia. For further confirmation, please wait for our reply via DM. Thank you -SD"

The conversation was then commented on by @anakebaya. "@tiatia, try checking with the airline. I also refunded at Traveloka the status was just waiting for approval, even though when I checked with Garuda Indonesia, their process was complete. But yeah, Traveloka only answered with the same template. My refund was from March also."

After that, the @indahhh\_hp account also added a comment. "@tiatia just signed the petition demanding a refund from the consumer. I also have 115 days but the process hasn't been completed yet."

The comment was answered by admin @traveloka, "Hellow @restian\_eliawaty, sorry for the inconvenience. Currently, the entire refund process will take a little longer due to the high number of incoming request processes where the refund process can take up to 90 days or more, depending on the speed of the process from the airline partner's side. But don't worry, we continue to coordinate intensively with airline partners to make arrangements for your refund as much as possible. Thank you." Source: <https://mediaindonesia.com/humaniora/324508/soal-refund-traveloka-minta-tunggu-konfirmasi-netizen-halu>

Based on the quote above, it is clear that there are issues with late refunds and the issue of using statement templates that will affect Traveloka's reputation. The public relations division has a big task to manage communication in an organization, including crisis management. Actions taken by public relations focus on crisis preparation as a strategy to minimize damage to the company's reputation.

When a crisis occurs, a public relations officer must have the right and careful strategy. When a crisis occurs, it is necessary to respond as quickly as possible, including informing the public about all actions taken by the organization to deal with the crisis so that it looks transparent (Wulan & Rino, 2020). Traveloka's move to send a statement to [mediaindonesia.com](http://mediaindonesia.com) is in line with what was initiated by Coombs & Holladay (2010); "Media is an important thing that can be used when an organization is experiencing a crisis. Companies should appoint a trusted spokesperson to meet with the media in the early stages of a crisis to disseminate information and participate in framing the crisis. Media inquiries must be answered quickly, accurately, openly, and consistently."

The communication practices carried out by Traveloka in responding to customer complaints are a form of the essence of digital PR where management builds communication with the public through their official social media accounts. Social media has a wide reach, a very high speed of information, and can build interactive communication. Traveloka makes full use of its social media accounts in responding to customer complaints. Traveloka also provides information regarding refund requests through its official website as a form of information disclosure to the public.

According to Newson, Vanslyke, and Kruckeberg (1996) in Ita (2018), when a crisis occurs, it must be handled immediately. Because if not, the crisis will destroy the company's business and the bad image of the company, especially in the eyes of the public. To deepen the handling of the crisis given at the crisis stage, it will be analyzed in depth using the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) was first put forward by W. Timothy Coombs in 1995. Coombs & Holladay (2010) explained that the conclusion of this theory is based on crisis events that harm the organization and the stakeholders concerned so responsibility is needed to overcome it. Coombs & Holladay (2010) explain that in situational crisis communication theory, they divide the Crisis Response Strategy into four strategies, namely deny, diminish, rebuild, and reinforce (Wulan & Rino, 2020).

Each strategy has its explanation. The deny strategy is carried out by organizations that assume that they are not experiencing a crisis. Diminish seeks to reduce crises, but enhances organizational perception by explaining reasons and justifications for what happened. Reinforcing strategies try to add positive information about the organization. Rebuild is an accommodative action taken by the organization to improve the perception it has. Actions that can be taken by the organization are to apologize and compensate victims and take full responsibility for the problems that occur. Reinforcement is a strategy of strengthening by trying to add positive information about the organization, especially from other parties. One of them is by reminding people of the good work that has been done in the past (Wulan & Rino, 2020).

Sourced from the explanation of the problem, background, and news exposure. This study focuses on finding out Traveloka's crisis communication strategy and how Traveloka's digital PR practices deal with customer complaints regarding refunds.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a constructivist paradigm with a qualitative approach because it wants to explain the phenomenon as deeply as possible by collecting data as deeply as possible to show the depth and detail of the data studied. Then, for the type of method used, namely content analysis. The data collection technique used is through document analysis from the

news in the mass media. The document analysis method is related to content analysis. The way to analyze the contents of the document is to systematically examine the documents in the forms of communication that are written in the form of documents objectively (Natalina, 2014). Meanwhile, Guba and Lincoln quoted from Natalina that content study is a research technique to objectively, systematically, and quantitatively describe the manifestation of communication.

The data analysis technique used in this study refers to the Filling System concept by Wimmer & Dominick (2000) in Kriyantono (2006), namely, data collection, data categorization, and data interpretation. Then, to test the credibility of the data, triangulation was checked. Triangulation is the idea of looking at things from various points of view, to improve data accuracy (West & Turner, 2010). The researcher analyzes the news content and then categorizes the crisis cluster and response strategy based on SCCT. Coombs (2010) describes at least three categories of crisis clusters and each type has its own strategy.

Crisis Cluster	Crisis type	Description
Victim Cluster	Natural Disaster	The crisis which is caused by natural disasters like earthquakes makes trouble for an organization
	Rumour	The fake information that is developed in public damages reputation of the organization
	Criminality/violence in the office	The ex-employee who attacks the new employee who works in the organization
	The damages of products caused by extern party, sabotage, and terrorism	The damage caused by the extern party causes financial loss for the organization
Accident cluster	challenges	Stakeholder claims that the operation of the organization is not based on the operational standard
	Technology error	The technology error that caused product defects such as the withdrawal of products due to containing toxic and hazardous substances
	Technology failure	The technology failure or accident caused by technology error
Intentional cluster/preventable cluster	The accident happened by human error	The accident happened because of human errors factor
	Human errors that caused product damages	The damage to the product due to human errors factor that caused the organization/industry to withdraw the released products
	Violation of the law	The organization a violation of the rules or the law committed by the organization: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. with no injuries, a stakeholder lied but did not cause any injured victim</li> <li>2. management misconduct, a violation of rules committed by management</li> <li>3. with injuries, the stakeholder is in a position of danger as a result of actions taken by management and resulting victims.</li> </ol>

For the crisis response category, the researcher uses the formulation of SCCT (Coombs,

2010).

Strategies	Description	Sub-strategies
Deny	The organization denies or rejects any statement/opinion which has relevance to the organization as a cause of the crisis.	Denial, in this strategy the organization is focused on explaining to the public that there was no crisis. This strategy can be used when the organization is experiencing a crisis caused by negative rumors
		Scapegoat, the organization blames the parties outside the organization as a cause of the crisis. This strategy is used when an organization experienced violence/crime in the workplace, product damage by external parties, and sabotage, terrorism
		Attack the accuser, and confront someone who claims that the organization is guilty. Included in the category of crisis response is the crisis caused by natural disasters
Diminish	Strategy to reduce the effects of the crisis. A statement by an organization for the public aims to ensure that the crisis was not as bad as perceived by the public.	Excuse strategy (reason), is an organizational statement which is explaining that the organization does not have to be responsible for the crisis and not caused by the fault of the organization. This strategy is used when the organization is in a crisis caused by allegations (challenges)
		Justification, is to convince the public that the effects of the crisis are not alarming. This strategy can be used on the type of crisis caused by the accident because of a technical error, a problem in the product due to a technical error
Rebuild	Strategy is used by the organization to rebuild its image.	Compensation, the organization offers compensation to the public as a form of organizational responsibility. If this strategy is applied, it requires a large fee
		Apology, the stated that it would fully bear the losses caused by the crisis

In this study, the researchers found three pieces of news that were related to the problems in this study. The news reported customer complaints regarding refunds and reported how Traveloka responded after the negative news was published. Then, the researcher analyzes the content of the news, which then categorizes the news whether the Traveloka statement in the news is included in the category mentioned in SCCT. After doing the categorization, the researcher interprets the data, then the results and conclusions of the study are obtained.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Crisis management is divided into three stages, namely pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis. The pre-crisis stage is the phase before the crisis occurs, at this stage, an organization should have a strategy to deal with the crisis, including choosing someone who can be trusted as a spokesperson (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). Furthermore, Coombs said if an organization fails to determine the type of crisis, it will be difficult for an organization to overcome the

crisis. If a company is in the victim cluster, the company can use a defense strategy such as denial, attack the accuser, or scapegoat as a crisis response strategy. When the organization has minimum level attribution (accidental cluster), the strategies of crisis response that can be used are excuse and justification (it is also called a moderate defensive strategy), and when the crisis attribution is on high or strong level (intentional cluster), the organization should use an accommodative strategy such as apology or compensation to deal with the crisis (Coombs, by Kriyantono 2019).

The temporary research results were obtained from the analysis of news coverage in the mass media. The researcher cites news published by several mass media regarding Traveloka's response to refund complaints, then the researcher analyzes the content of the news so that conclusions are obtained regarding the causes of the crisis and how Traveloka responds in dealing with the crisis. Then, the researcher concludes the results of the news analysis so that Traveloka has crisis management regarding refund complaints.

## News 1

On March 26, 2020, Traveloka's Chief Marketing Officer, Dionisius Nathaniel, gave an official statement to liputan6.com. In the news, Dionisius gave the following statement.

"We would like to apologize to users for the inconvenience experienced when requesting assistance from Traveloka. Currently, we are strengthening customer service so that we can serve users better," said Dionisius Nathaniel as Chief Marketing Officer of Traveloka.

Dionisius conveyed that cooperation from various parties was needed to avoid potential discrepancies in the information received by users. "We can say that we continue to coordinate intensively with all partners regarding the latest policies for the COVID-19 situation," he said.

"However, we also ask the user's willingness to send written information from the airline or hotel if the information received is different from what we conveyed, so that we can escalate the situation and discuss it further," continued Dionisius.

"This additional information also allows us to work more effectively and faster in meeting user requests," he said.

In addition to strengthening customer service, Traveloka has also improved the back-end system to make it easier for users to submit requests for refunds or rescheduling which can be done through My Booking in the application.

Users can choose the order they want to reschedule or refund and select Manage Booking to continue the process. If there is other information needed, the user can access the Inbox and select the Ask Our Team menu.

Traveloka also provides detailed information on the official Instagram account regarding various questions regarding refund or rescheduling problems that are often submitted by users.

Provision of a special landing page <https://www.traveloka.com/en/coronavirus-information> is also provided so that users can access the latest information on the Terms & Conditions imposed by partners.

Source: <https://www.liputan6.com/lifestyle/read/4210779/kata-traveloka-soal-reschedule-atau-refund-tiket-pesawat-dan-hotel>

Based on the news published by liputan6.com, it can be seen that Traveloka seems to want to tell consumers that Traveloka has tried everything and explained that the refund process is also caused by partners, so the researcher categorizes Traveloka as a victim clus-

ter, then in the following sentence:

Dionisius conveyed that cooperation from various parties was needed to avoid potential discrepancies in the information received by users. "We can say that we continue to coordinate intensively with all partners regarding the latest policies for the COVID-19 situation," he said.

Traveloka uses a diminish strategy by justifying the slow refund process and providing positive information about the company so that customers are expected to understand the situation.

## News 2

On June 9, 2020, Kompas.com reported reports of complaints about the slowness of the refund process. In the news, on June 8, 2020, there is a Twitter account @fildzaamalia wrote a complaint as follows:

"@traveloka hello, why hasn't my refund status been up to now? Even though I already applied for a refund from March 17, 2020..."

Responding to customer complaints reported by Kompas.com, Andhini Putri, Head of Marketing, Transport, Traveloka gave an official statement to Kompas.com, which was published on June 9, 2020.

Through an official statement received by Kompas.com on (9/6/2020), Traveloka acknowledged that there was a very high volume of requests for assistance and it was not only accepted by Traveloka but also received by their partners. This causes a longer waiting time compared to normal situations. To overcome this situation, Traveloka has made various efforts, such as mobilizing almost half of its employees to help the Customer Care team and also continuing to carry out an intensive follow-up with partners.

"We understand that currently there are still users whose refund processes have been approved and are still waiting for a refund. However, we need to emphasize that the refund policy that we convey to users always refers to partner procedures, including the form of refunds, returned (such as Travel Vouchers), length of time for refunds, and so on," said Andhini Putri, Head of Marketing, Transport, Traveloka.

Andhini said that the journey for refunds to users is quite long and involves many parties. In addition, the refund mechanism used, especially for the air transportation sector, does not involve the exchange of cash which can be easily transferred from one party to another.

Another challenge that must be faced during the Covid-19 pandemic is very minimal or almost non-existent income. However, daily operational costs are still being paid, so it has an impact on the cash flow of each partner and Traveloka, which of course also affects consumer refunds.

*"For this reason, currently the maximum effort we can do is to coordinate consistently with partners, at the same time also continue to resolve user requests which are still our priority and main focus," said Andhini.*  
source: <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2020/06/09/092700265/proses-refund-dikeluhkan-lama-berikut-penjelasan-dari-traveloka-?page=all>.

In the news, it can be seen that Traveloka is very fast in responding to news and carrying out a diminish strategy where Traveloka through the Head of Marketing, Transport explains the situation that has occurred and justifies the existence of us-



ers whose refund process has not yet been completed. The statement letter sent by Traveloka also implies that Traveloka is a victim. So it can be ascertained from this news that Traveloka is a victim cluster.

### News 3

Then there was news on July 1, 2020, mediaindonesia.com reported news containing quotes about customer complaints regarding refunds. The report contains excerpts of the complaint as follows:

"@bintaafida\_r reply "@traveloka please read my DM."

"The request was later responded to by @jasminekaran. "@bintaafida\_r it's useless They just copy and paste their statement template to reply to your complaint."

Source: <https://mediaindonesia.com/humaniora/324508/soal-refund-traveloka-minta-tunggu-konfirmasi-netizen-halu>

Based on the quote, it can be seen that customers also feel that the response made by Traveloka is a copy-pasted sentence. This proves that the statement template is part of Traveloka's PR strategy in dealing with customer complaints. Then, Traveloka always responds to customer complaints quickly. This is in line with the results of research by Jessica & Ilfandi (2018) that public relations activities play an important role in handling crises because if they are not handled quickly, they can form public opinion that is not following the facts on the ground.

Then, on July 2, 2020, in the face of negative news published by mediaindonesia.com, the Head of Marketing, Transport Traveloka gave an official statement regarding the news regarding the delay in refunds.

*"Through this letter, we would like to submit an official statement in the hope of rectifying the situation regarding the news entitled Refund Problem, Traveloka Asks to Wait for Confirmation, Netizens: What the.., which was published on MediaIndonesia.com on July 1, 2020. As we all know, the volume of requests is very high assistance is received not only by Traveloka but also by our partners, this is what causes the waiting time to be longer than normal situations. We have also made various efforts to overcome this situation, such as deploying almost half of Traveloka's employees as additional assistance for the Customer Care Team to conducting intensive follow-ups with partners. We understand that currently there are still users whose refund process has been approved and who are still waiting for a refund. However, we need to emphasize, that the refund policy that we convey to users always refers to the partner's procedures, including the form of refunds returned (such as travel vouchers), the length of time for refunds, and so on. The journey for refunds to users is quite long and involves many parties. We can also convey that the refund mechanism used, especially for the air transportation sector, does not involve the exchange of cash which can be easily transferred from one party to another. In addition to the time-consuming process and refund mechanism with this separate system, another challenge faced during the COVID-19 pandemic is very minimal or almost non-existent income, while daily operational costs are still being paid, which has an impact on the cash flow of each partner and the company. Traveloka, which of course also affects consumer refunds. The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis that has never been faced by Traveloka, its partners, or other industry players. The economic impact caused by this disaster is also very massive, especially for the tourism sector, where almost all operations in this sector have stopped since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. For this reason, currently the maximum effort we can do is to coordinate consistently with partners, at the same time also continue to resolve user requests which are still our priority and main focus. Head of Marketing, Transport, Traveloka Andhini Putri."*

Source: <https://mediaindonesia.com/surat-pembaca/324911/pernyataan-resmi-traveloka-soal-refund-tiket>

Based on one of the reports quoted from [mediaindonesia.com](http://mediaindonesia.com), proves that Traveloka is facing a PR crisis. According to H. Fanyo in Melly "One of the targets of Public Relations activities is to face a crisis. Handling complaints and dealing with crises and Public Relations recovery of an image in charge of repairing lost image and damage. Every company should form a crisis management team to deal with crises that occur in the organization. A PR must have the ability to anticipate, deal with or deal with a crisis of trust and loss of image that occurs, then restore recovery of image the public to the company's trust. In this case, Traveloka's Public Relations readiness in handling all complaints is needed and has an important role in helping the company overcome a deteriorating corporate image. The task of PR in crisis management is to convey effective communication messages so that it can show the public that a company can go through and resolve the crisis well and is expected to minimize losses that occur due to the crisis both from the company and customers.

In the official statement, it is known that there are sentences that prove that Traveloka uses a diminish strategy, namely:

*"As we all know, the volume of requests is very high assistance is received not only by Traveloka but also by our partners, this is what causes the waiting time to be longer than normal situations. We have also made various efforts to overcome this situation, such as deploying almost half of Traveloka's employees as additional assistance for the Customer Care Team to conducting intensive follow-ups with partners."*

The quote from the statement proves that Traveloka uses a diminish strategy by justifying the slowness of the refund process. Traveloka also explained the situation and tried to provide positive information by stating that Traveloka mobilized almost half of Traveloka's employees to help the Customer Care Team. At this stage, Traveloka's quick response to the news on [mediaindonesia.com](http://mediaindonesia.com) is the right step so it can reduce negative public opinions.

Based on the three reports presented, it can be seen that Traveloka's crisis problems and strategies are as follows:

No	News Title	News Content	Cluster	Strategy
1	Traveloka Says About Rescheduling or Refunding Flight and Hotel Tickets ( <a href="http://liputan6.com">liputan6.com</a> , March 25, 2020)	An official statement was presented by the Chief Marketing Officer, Dionisius Nathaniel, explaining the apology for the problems felt. Dionisius also explained that Traveloka continues to coordinate intensively with all partners regarding the latest policies for the COVID-19 situation. Dionisius also asks about the user's willingness to send written information from the airline or hotel if there is different information. Dionisius explained that currently, Traveloka is improving the back-end system to make it easier for users to request a refund or reschedule.	Victim	Diminish

2	The Refund Process Takes Long, Here's an Explanation from Traveloka (Kompas.com, 9 June 2020).	There is a Twitter account @fildzaamalia that complained about the refund status that had not been developed since March 17, 2020. Then, Traveloka through the Head of Marketing, Transport, Andhini Putri gave an official statement containing Traveloka confirming the delay in the refund process, but Andhini also explained that the refund process always refers to the partner's procedure which results in a long refund time. Andhini also explained about the minimal income due to the pandemic, then explained that Traveloka consistently works with partners to request refunds.	Victim	Diminish
3	Traveloka Official Statement Regarding Ticket Refunds (mediaindonesia.com, 2 July 2020)	In this news, it was reported about Traveloka's official statement letter. Traveloka confirmed the delay in the refund process and provided information that Traveloka was slow in the refund process due to referring to partner procedures. Mechanisms that do not involve the exchange of cash can easily be transferred from one party to another. In addition to the time-consuming process and the refund mechanism with this separate system, another challenge faced is the lack of income while operating costs continue to be paid.	Victim	Diminish

**Source: research results (2022)**

When referring to the table, it is known that all strategies used by Traveloka are diminish. Coombs (2010) states that the diminish strategy consists of excuses and justifications. In the excuse strategy, PR minimizes the responsibility of the organization by denying that the organization is not likely to intentionally cause a crisis or that the crisis occurs beyond the control of the organization. In the justification strategy, PR minimizes the perception of the damage caused by the crisis. In an official statement published by liputan6.com, Kompas.com, and mediaindonesia.com, it is known that Traveloka is using a diminish strategy by stating that the slow refund process is due to referring to the refund process that occurs at the partner. Then, this different refund system is the cause of the slow refund process. In addition, it is also known that Traveloka implies that Traveloka is also a victim. This is certainly different from what is stated in SCCT, if a company categorizes itself as a victim then Traveloka should use the deny strategy sub-strategies scapegoat as self-defense.

However, Traveloka prefers a diminish strategy. This strategy in line with the findings of Kriyantono (2019) who found that Air Asia did not use any defensive strategies even though Air Asia was a victim cluster. Adopting Mohammed and Sharipudin (2017) on Kriyantono (2019) by not having a denial strategy, public relations is seen as an important part of an organization in helping to bridge the gap with its public so that rapport can be established. Quoted from Kriyantono (2019), never using a denial response strategy as official communication, relays the quality of information given to the public company.

By determining the crisis cluster, this means that Traveloka is able to understand the crisis so that it can avoid public anger. This is in line with (Toth, 2002), controlling the environment is one of the domains (area/scope) within the scope of normal public relations practice. However, it can be understood that Traveloka is a third party in providing tickets, so of course, if there are obstacles on the first side, Traveloka will also become a victim.

However, if we look at the comments written by customers on every @traveloka Instagram upload, there are still complaints from customers but negative news about the slow refund in the mass media is no longer there.

In addition, Traveloka responded quickly to negative news published by the mass media by sending a statement letter to the mass media. This is in line with what Ita & Sagiyanto (2018) found, that an organization must respond quickly to every crisis that occurs.

## CONCLUSION

This study found, through official statements published by the media, Traveloka always positions itself as a victim cluster by explaining the refund process which also depends on partners. This study also finds that Traveloka uses a diminish strategy as the main strategy. So that it can be said, even though an organization is in the victim cluster category, it does not mean that it must use a denial strategy. The use of diminish strategy can show the quality of the public relations officer in a company. This study has limitations in data collection because it only uses news in the mass media. Therefore, the researcher recommends further research to conduct in-depth interviews with Traveloka in order to obtain broader results than this research. Finally, it is better to conduct research with a quantitative approach to measure the effectiveness of Traveloka's responses in responding to customer complaints regarding refunds.

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