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The Effect of Boycott Issue Management Related to the Palestine–Israel Conflict on the Reputation of Pizza Hut Indonesia: A Survey of 2022 Students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of issue management concerning the boycott of products associated with the Palestine–Israel conflict on the corporate reputation of Pizza Hut Indonesia among 2022 students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta. The study employed a quantitative approach within a positivist paradigm using an explanatory survey design. The population consisted of 346 students, from which 186 respondents were selected using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error and a non-probability purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured four-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 through descriptive analysis, a linearity test, simple linear regression, the coefficient of determination, and a t-test. The results show that issue management was rated at a high level, with a mean score of 3.19, while the corporate reputation of Pizza Hut Indonesia also received a high mean score of 3.25. The regression equation was Y = 4.673 + 0.717X, with a correlation coefficient of 0.903 and a coefficient of determination of 0.816. The calculated t-value of 28.548 exceeded the critical value of 1.973, with a significance level below 0.001. These findings indicate that issue management has a positive and significant effect on Pizza Hut Indonesia's corporate reputation and explains 81.6% of the variation in reputation within the observed population. The findings confirm the strategic role of issue identification, issue analysis, strategy formulation, program implementation, and evaluation in maintaining corporate reputation during boycott pressure associated with geopolitical conflict.

Keywords: *Product Boycott; Palestine–Israel Conflict; Issue Management; Pizza Hut Indonesia; Corporate Reputation.*

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INTRODUCTION

The escalation of the Palestine–Israel conflict since October 2023 has extended beyond the geopolitical and humanitarian sphere into consumer markets, corporate communication, and the reputational environment of multinational and internationally affiliated brands. Consumer boycotts have increasingly functioned as a form of political and ethical consumption in which purchasing decisions are used to express moral judgment, religious solidarity, political preference, and opposition to perceived corporate alignment with contested actors or policies (Becheri et al., 2022; Ramadhan & Aisyah, 2022; Wibowo et al., 2024). Digital communication has intensified this process by accelerating the circulation of boycott lists, political narratives, user-generated interpretations, and calls for collective action, particularly among younger consumers whose media consumption is closely connected with expressive participation and political discussion (Kelm, 2024; Mady et al., 2025). The phenomenon has acquired particular salience in Indonesia, where public responses to brands associated with Israel have been shaped by religious commitment, humanitarian concern, consumer activism, and the growing legitimacy of substituting targeted brands with domestic alternatives (Haikal et al., 2024; Herman & Salehudin, 2026; Herani, 2025). Comparable patterns have also appeared outside Indonesia, indicating that hostility toward products associated with Israel can be mediated by ideological, cultural, and economic attitudes toward the conflict (Hino, 2024). The

implications extend to firms listed in capital markets and to consumer sectors exposed to rapid preference shifts, as boycott movements may affect sales, investor perceptions, consumption patterns, and corporate performance under geopolitical pressure (Pramesta et al., 2025; Riyadi et al., 2025). For fast-food companies, the issue is especially sensitive because brand choice is frequent, highly visible, and easily substituted, while reputational evaluations can be altered by the interaction between public communication, social pressure, and perceived corporate conduct. Public relations therefore assumes a strategic function not only in disseminating information but also in identifying, interpreting, and responding to issues before negative public interpretation becomes institutionally embedded (Adawiyah, 2020; Ayuni et al., 2024; Kartika et al., 2024).

Recent scholarship has developed a substantial body of knowledge on consumer boycotts, political consumerism, brand activism, antibrand behavior, and corporate responses to sociopolitical controversy. One stream of research explains boycott participation through consumer animosity, moral intensity, cognitive dissonance, perceived efficacy, self-congruence, and emotional responses to corporate conduct, indicating that withdrawal from consumption is often the result of a structured evaluative process rather than an incidental purchasing decision (Bravo, 2024; Jedicke et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2022). Another stream focuses on brand activism and corporate social advocacy, showing that corporate engagement with contested social or political issues can generate favorable responses when audiences perceive congruence, legitimacy, authenticity, and credible message framing, but can also trigger resistance when corporate statements are judged inconsistent, opportunistic, or symbolically performative (Ahmad et al., 2022; Ahmad et al., 2024; Alharbi et al., 2022; Cammarota et al., 2023; Coman et al., 2022; Mirzaei et al., 2022; Zhang & Borden, 2024). Research on antibrand responses further demonstrates that negative moral evaluation may move beyond temporary dissatisfaction toward brand hate, boycott communication, and organized opposition when consumers interpret firms as socially irresponsible or normatively incompatible with their values (Akrout & Mrad, 2023; Pöyry & Laaksonen, 2022; Woodside et al., 2023; Yadav & Chakrabarti, 2022; Zhong & Kim, 2025). A related body of work indicates that brand communication itself can modify these responses because the structure, framing, and interpersonal orientation of advocacy messages influence support, purchase intention, and perceived legitimacy (Miguel & Miranda, 2023; Thürridl & Mattison Thompson, 2023; Wannow et al., 2024; Xie et al., 2024). Digital engagement also connects corporate political positioning with political consumerism, while online boycotts and buycotts may translate into observable market consequences rather than remaining limited to symbolic expression (Liaukonytė et al., 2023; You & Hon, 2022). Studies of younger populations reinforce the importance of this segment because political consumerism among youth reflects an interaction between identity, social participation, and consumption choices that is particularly responsive to digital communication environments (Kyroglou & Henn, 2022).

Despite the maturity of research on boycott intention, political consumerism, brand activism, and crisis communication, several unresolved limitations remain when these literatures are applied to Pizza Hut Indonesia. Existing Indonesian studies concerning Pizza Hut tend to examine brand image, product quality, promotion, purchase decisions, loyalty, brand trust, or brand switching, which provide evidence about consumer behavior during or around boycott periods but do not directly test issue management as an antecedent of corporate reputation (Arifiana et al., 2025; Azhari & Wardhana, 2025; Sabilla et al., 2025; Sunaryanto & Noviyanti, 2025). Earlier research specifically involving Pizza Hut Indonesia addressed public relations strategy in food-safety issue management, demonstrating the organizational relevance of structured issue handling, yet it concerned a different type of reputational threat and preceded the current geopolitical boycott environment (Kustiawati et al., 2019). Indonesian studies of boycott-related crises in fast-food companies have largely emphasized crisis response, public communication, or case-based descriptions, offering important insight into how firms react to external pressure but providing limited causal evidence about the extent to which issue-management processes shape reputation among a defined audience (Ayuni et al., 2024; Kartika et al., 2024). Research on boycott consequences has also concentrated more heavily on consumer image, trust, religious motivation, switching behavior, and purchase intention than on the full managerial sequence through which a corporation identifies an issue, analyzes its development, formulates a response, implements communication and organizational action, and evaluates the outcome (Handayani & Fauzi, 2023; Haikal et al., 2024; Kusumawati & Ishamiyya, 2025). Crisis communication research confirms that organizational response strategies can affect reputation, yet

much of this evidence is derived from institutional settings and crisis classifications that are not identical to consumer boycotts rooted in transnational conflict (Dominic et al., 2022). A methodological gap consequently remains because the relationship between issue management and corporate reputation in this specific boycott setting has rarely been tested through an explanatory quantitative survey that treats both constructs as measurable variables within a single model; such a design is methodologically compatible with established quantitative research procedures but has not been sufficiently applied to this object and population (Sugiyono, 2022).

Leaving this gap unresolved would constrain both public relations theory and corporate practice because boycott crises differ from conventional product, service, or operational crises in the origin of reputational pressure. The source of controversy may lie outside the direct operational control of the local company, yet consumers can still assign moral or symbolic responsibility to the brand based on perceived affiliation, ownership narratives, transnational identity, or public silence. This characteristic makes issue management central to reputational resilience because the organization must interpret external political developments while simultaneously managing stakeholder expectations, information asymmetry, emotional reactions, and demands for moral positioning. Consumer research shows that boycott behavior can intensify when individuals perceive moral inconsistency, social irresponsibility, or identity conflict, while effective corporate communication depends on perceived authenticity and legitimacy rather than message volume alone (Ahmad et al., 2024; Akrout & Mrad, 2023; Bravo, 2024; Mirzaei et al., 2022). The practical consequences are equally significant for Pizza Hut Indonesia because negative evaluations may influence purchasing continuity, brand switching, trust, and willingness to maintain a relationship with the brand during sustained controversy (Azhari & Wardhana, 2025; Sabilla et al., 2025; Sunaryanto & Noviyanti, 2025). Evidence that social-media-based boycott activity can generate market effects also means that reputational risk cannot be treated as a purely perceptual or communication-related outcome disconnected from organizational performance (Liaukonytė et al., 2023). For public relations practice, the unresolved question is no longer whether boycott narratives matter, but whether the quality of issue identification, analysis, strategic formulation, program implementation, and evaluation is associated with a stronger corporate reputation under political and moral pressure. Empirical clarification of this relationship is necessary for distinguishing substantive issue-management capacity from short-term reactive messaging.

The present study is positioned at the intersection of issue management, corporate reputation, political consumerism, and boycott research by testing a relationship that has received limited direct empirical examination in the Indonesian fast-food sector. Its novelty lies first in treating boycott management as an integrated managerial process rather than reducing corporate response to a single communication message, crisis statement, promotional action, or corporate social responsibility activity. The model operationalizes issue management through issue identification, issue analysis, strategy formulation, program implementation, and outcome evaluation, while corporate reputation is examined through credibility, trust, reliability, and social responsibility. This structure moves beyond prior research that has primarily emphasized boycott intention, religious motivation, consumer animosity, brand image, purchase intention, loyalty, or switching behavior as the principal outcomes of geopolitical consumer activism (Herman & Salehudin, 2026; Herani, 2025; Kim et al., 2022; Kusumawati & Ishamiyya, 2025). The study also differs from research on general brand activism and corporate social advocacy because the focal issue is not a voluntarily initiated political position adopted by the company, but a reputational challenge arising from public attribution of geopolitical association (Cammarota et al., 2023; Coman et al., 2022; You & Hon, 2022). Second, the research concentrates on Pizza Hut Indonesia, an established fast-food brand with prior experience in issue management but facing a qualitatively different reputational environment under the Palestine–Israel boycott discourse (Kustiawati et al., 2019). Third, the population consists of 2022 students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, a segment that is analytically relevant because youth political consumerism is closely connected with social-media exposure, political discussion, moral evaluation, and identity-based consumption (Kelm, 2024; Kyroglou & Henn, 2022). This design converts the identified research gap into a testable contribution by examining whether systematic issue management is associated with corporate reputation within a specific geopolitical, organizational, and demographic setting.

This study aims to examine the influence of issue management concerning the boycott of products associated with the Palestine–Israel conflict on the corporate reputation of Pizza Hut

Indonesia among 2022 students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta. The study specifically seeks to assess respondents' evaluations of Pizza Hut Indonesia's issue-management process, measure the company's corporate reputation within the selected population, and determine the magnitude and direction of the relationship between the two constructs. The theoretical contribution lies in extending issue-management research into a boycott setting generated by geopolitical and moral pressure rather than by a conventional operational crisis, while the empirical contribution lies in testing issue management and corporate reputation within a single explanatory model. The study also provides a contextual contribution by examining a young Indonesian audience that is closely exposed to digital political communication and boycott discourse. From a practical standpoint, the findings are expected to support corporate communication and public relations practitioners in evaluating whether structured issue identification, analysis, response formulation, implementation, and evaluation are associated with stronger reputational outcomes during politically sensitive consumer crises.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach within a positivist paradigm using an explanatory survey design to examine the effect of boycott issue management related to the Palestine–Israel conflict on the corporate reputation of Pizza Hut Indonesia. The independent variable was issue management, while corporate reputation served as the dependent variable. The study population consisted of 346 active students from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, class of 2022. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 186 respondents. Respondents were selected through non-probability purposive sampling based on the criteria specified in the original study: active FISIP UMJ students from the 2022 cohort, aged 17–25 years, knowledgeable about the product-boycott issue, and having consumed Pizza Hut Indonesia products. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. All items were measured using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Issue management was operationalized through five dimensions comprising issue identification, issue analysis, strategy formulation, program implementation, and outcome evaluation. Corporate reputation was measured through credibility, trust, reliability, and social responsibility.

The research instrument was tested before administration to the main sample using 30 respondents who were excluded from the principal survey. Item validity was assessed using Pearson Product Moment correlation. The correlation coefficients for the issue-management variable ranged from 0.412 to 0.848, while those for the corporate-reputation variable ranged from 0.599 to 0.869; all values exceeded the reference coefficient of 0.361. Instrument reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha, producing coefficients of 0.932 for issue management and 0.943 for corporate reputation, indicating high internal consistency. After completion of the instrument testing procedure, the main survey data were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' assessments of each research variable, followed by a linearity test to assess the form of the relationship between the variables. Simple linear regression was then applied to estimate the influence of issue management on corporate reputation. The coefficient of determination was used to quantify the proportion of variation in corporate reputation explained by issue management, while the t-test was used to evaluate the statistical significance of the regression coefficient. This analytical sequence was aligned with the study objectives of measuring issue-management practices, assessing Pizza Hut Indonesia's corporate reputation, and testing the effect of issue management on corporate reputation among the selected student population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Issue Management of the Boycott Related to the Palestine–Israel Conflict

The descriptive analysis indicates that Pizza Hut Indonesia's issue-management performance was perceived at a high level by the 186 respondents, with a mean score of 3.19 on a four-point scale. This score reflects a generally favorable assessment of the company's capacity to recognize, interpret, and respond to the boycott issue associated with the Palestine–Israel conflict. Such an assessment is relevant because issue management in a politically sensitive environment requires more than conventional message distribution; it depends on the organization's ability to detect reputational

threats before negative interpretations become consolidated among stakeholders (Adawiyah, 2020). The result also corresponds with evidence that fast-food companies facing boycott pressure require structured crisis communication and organizational responsiveness rather than isolated promotional responses (Ayuni et al., 2024).

Issue identification and issue analysis recorded the highest mean scores among the five dimensions, each reaching 3.25. The relatively strong assessment of these dimensions suggests that respondents perceived Pizza Hut Indonesia as sufficiently capable of recognizing emerging boycott narratives and interpreting their potential implications before developing a formal response. Early issue recognition is particularly important in digitally mediated controversies because consumer judgments may be formed rapidly through social-media exposure, political discussion, and repeated circulation of brand-related claims (Kelm, 2024). Research on political consumerism also indicates that consumer action can move from attitudinal expression to market behavior when online narratives gain sufficient visibility and collective reinforcement (Liaukonytė et al., 2023).

The highest item-level mean within the issue-identification dimension was 3.34, referring to the company's ability to recognize the emergence of the boycott issue through social media at an early stage. This result suggests that respondents viewed digital monitoring as one of the more visible elements of Pizza Hut Indonesia's response to the controversy. Social media has become a primary environment in which boycott narratives are produced, amplified, and converted into behavioral pressure, particularly when animosity, perceived efficacy, and collective identity are present (Mady et al., 2025). The finding is also consistent with research showing that corporate political and social issues are increasingly evaluated through digital engagement, where organizational silence or delayed response may influence stakeholder interpretation (You & Hon, 2022).

Differences among the five dimensions remain analytically important despite the high category assigned to each dimension. Strategy formulation produced a mean of 3.13, program implementation 3.18, and outcome evaluation 3.14, placing these dimensions below issue identification and issue analysis. This pattern indicates that the company was assessed more positively for recognizing and interpreting the issue than for translating that recognition into strategic response and post-response evaluation. Similar concerns appear in brand-activism research, where communication effectiveness depends not only on awareness of a controversial issue but also on the consistency, legitimacy, and perceived authenticity of the subsequent corporate response (Cammarota et al., 2023; Zhang & Borden, 2024).

Table 1. Mean Scores of Boycott Issue-Management Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	Category
Issue Identification	3.25	High
Issue Analysis	3.25	High
Strategy Formulation	3.13	High
Program Implementation	3.18	High
Outcome Evaluation	3.14	High

The distribution presented in Table 1 shows a relatively narrow range of scores, from 3.13 to 3.25, indicating that respondents did not perceive a severe imbalance among the stages of issue management. The lower score for strategy formulation, however, identifies a point at which early issue awareness may not have been fully matched by the perceived precision of the strategic response. Corporate communication research has shown that message framing can influence consumer evaluations when firms address contested sociopolitical matters, particularly when the message is expected to demonstrate consistency between organizational claims and observable conduct (Xie et al., 2024). The result also aligns with evidence that activist positioning or crisis communication can produce adverse reactions when audiences perceive a gap between corporate statements and substantive action (Ahmad et al., 2024).

Program implementation obtained a mean score of 3.18, while the item concerning the company's official clarification that it was not involved in or supportive of the party targeted by the boycott reached 3.27. Respondents therefore appeared to recognize the communicative value of formal clarification, including information concerning the company's local legal status under the

Sriboga Group and the involvement of domestic employees. Studies of corporate social advocacy show that audience response is affected by perceived congruence between organizational identity, communicated claims, and stakeholder expectations (Alharbi et al., 2022). The same principle is relevant to boycott-related communication because consumers may evaluate not only what a company states but also whether the information appears credible and consistent with the organization's actual position.

The mean score of 3.01 for the item concerning the appropriateness of the company's response strategy was the lowest recorded indicator within the issue-management variable. This value does not place the response in a negative category, but it indicates that a segment of respondents considered the initial response insufficiently optimal or relatively reactive compared with other dimensions. Research on brand activism has shown that response timing, authenticity, and message coherence influence whether corporate communication is interpreted as legitimate or opportunistic (Mirzaei et al., 2022). A reactive appearance can also increase skepticism when consumers have already formed moral judgments or participated in antibrand discourse before the company's response becomes visible (Pöyry & Laaksonen, 2022).

The pattern of responses is particularly relevant because boycott behavior associated with the Palestine–Israel conflict is not driven solely by conventional dissatisfaction with product quality or service performance. Previous studies show that moral reasoning, self-congruence, religious commitment, and consumer animosity can shape boycott intention and transform political attitudes into consumption decisions (Bravo, 2024; Haikal et al., 2024; Jedicke et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2022). Indonesian consumers have also demonstrated a tendency to connect boycott participation with religious and humanitarian considerations, while younger consumers may redirect purchasing preferences toward local alternatives when geopolitical concerns become salient (Herman & Salehudin, 2026; Herani, 2025). These characteristics increase the complexity of issue management because corporate responses are assessed within an environment where product attributes and moral evaluations operate simultaneously.

The mean of 3.14 for outcome evaluation suggests that respondents recognized the presence of follow-up assessment, although this dimension remained lower than issue identification and issue analysis. Evaluation is a critical stage because reputational recovery cannot be inferred solely from the publication of clarification statements or the execution of communication programs; it requires evidence that stakeholder perceptions have been reassessed after intervention. Crisis-response studies indicate that organizational reputation is affected by the relationship between crisis characteristics, response strategy, and subsequent stakeholder evaluation rather than by response activity in isolation (Dominic et al., 2022). The finding also resonates with research on boycott-related brand behavior showing that unfavorable evaluations can persist when consumers interpret corporate action as socially irresponsible or inconsistent with previously formed expectations (Woodside et al., 2023).

The descriptive evidence positions Pizza Hut Indonesia's issue management as relatively strong but not uniformly developed across all stages. Respondents gave the highest evaluations to the company's capacity to identify and analyze the boycott issue, while strategy formulation and outcome evaluation received comparatively lower assessments. This pattern is consistent with prior research on Pizza Hut Indonesia showing that issue management has long been relevant to the company's public-relations function, although earlier work concentrated on food-safety issues rather than geopolitical boycott pressure (Kustiawati et al., 2019). The present data extend that line of inquiry by indicating that, under a politically and morally charged boycott environment, the quality of corporate response is evaluated not only through issue recognition but also through the perceived adequacy, credibility, and follow-through of the strategic actions that follow.

Corporate Reputation of Pizza Hut Indonesia

The descriptive results indicate that Pizza Hut Indonesia's corporate reputation was perceived positively by the 186 respondents, with a mean score of 3.25 on a four-point scale. This result shows that the boycott issue did not eliminate favorable evaluations of the company among FISIP UMJ students from the 2022 cohort, although the brand was exposed to sustained political and moral scrutiny. Corporate reputation in such circumstances reflects accumulated judgments concerning credibility, trust, reliability, and social responsibility rather than a single reaction to a specific corporate message. Research on brand image and consumer trust during boycott periods similarly

suggests that reputational evaluations remain linked to consumers' prior experiences and their assessment of corporate conduct under pressure (Handayani & Fauzi, 2023).

Credibility obtained the highest dimensional mean at 3.28, indicating that respondents continued to perceive Pizza Hut Indonesia as professionally credible despite the controversy surrounding brands associated with the Palestine–Israel conflict. The strongest item within this dimension was the consistency of professional service at outlets, which reached a mean of 3.39. This result suggests that direct consumer experience remained an important source of reputational judgment even when political narratives surrounding the brand were highly salient. Studies of purchase behavior toward Pizza Hut also indicate that perceived product and service quality contribute to consumer evaluation of the brand beyond promotional exposure alone (Arifiana et al., 2025).

Reliability recorded a mean score of 3.27, placing it slightly below credibility but above trust and social responsibility. Respondents therefore appeared to assess the company not only through symbolic communication but also through its capacity to maintain operational consistency during a period of reputational pressure. The item concerning consistency of product quality reached a mean of 3.32, indicating that respondents continued to associate the brand with dependable product performance. This pattern is relevant because consumer decisions during boycott periods may still be moderated by prior brand attachment, perceived quality, and established consumption routines even when social pressure encourages avoidance (Azhari & Wardhana, 2025).

Trust received a mean score of 3.24, reflecting a positive but comparatively more cautious evaluation than credibility and reliability. Trust is particularly vulnerable in politically sensitive crises because consumers assess not only the factual accuracy of corporate statements but also the perceived sincerity of the organization's motives and affiliations. Research on American fast-food brands during boycott phenomena has shown that brand trust can mediate the relationship between brand image and purchase intention, making trust a central element in the continuation or withdrawal of consumer support (Sunaryanto & Noviyanti, 2025). The present score suggests that respondents retained a favorable level of trust, although the value remained lower than evaluations based on direct operational experience.

Table 2. Mean Scores of Corporate Reputation Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	Category
Credibility	3.28	High
Trust	3.24	High
Reliability	3.27	High
Social Responsibility	3.22	High

Table 2 shows that all four dimensions were classified in the high category, with only a narrow range between 3.22 and 3.28. The close distribution suggests that respondents' reputational judgments were multidimensional rather than concentrated in a single favorable attribute. Credibility and reliability were evaluated slightly more positively than trust and social responsibility, indicating that observable service and product performance may have provided a stronger basis for judgment than more interpretive assessments of corporate intent. Comparable research on boycott-related brand switching shows that consumers frequently weigh practical brand attributes against moral and social pressures before abandoning an established brand relationship (Sabilla et al., 2025).

Social responsibility produced the lowest dimensional mean at 3.22, although it remained within the high category. The result indicates that respondents generally recognized the company's social initiatives but evaluated them more cautiously than its operational credibility and reliability. The company's humanitarian assistance of Rp1 billion distributed through the Indonesian Red Cross and the development of the "Ristorante" concept received a mean score of 3.28, showing that visible corporate actions contributed to the evaluation of social responsibility. Research on corporate advocacy suggests that stakeholder acceptance depends on whether social actions are perceived as substantively aligned with the issue rather than merely reputational or promotional responses (Miguel & Miranda, 2023; Thürridl & Mattison Thompson, 2023).

The relatively positive reputation scores also need to be read against the moral intensity of the boycott environment. Boycott behavior can emerge from religious identification, humanitarian concern, political solidarity, and perceived responsibility of brands associated with contested geopolitical actors (Haikal et al., 2024; Herman & Salehudin, 2026). Such conditions can increase the likelihood that consumers interpret corporate behavior through moral rather than purely economic criteria. The persistence of a mean reputation score above 3.00 across all dimensions suggests that respondents did not reduce their assessment of Pizza Hut Indonesia to the boycott label alone.

Reputational resilience may also be associated with the distinction respondents made between the local operating entity and the geopolitical narratives attached to the global brand. Consumer activism research shows that evaluations of internationally affiliated brands are influenced by the extent to which consumers perceive a credible connection between the corporation, the contested political actor, and the moral claims circulating in public discourse (Hino, 2024; Kusumawati & Ishamiyya, 2025). When affiliation is ambiguous or contested, corporate clarification and visible local economic contribution may affect how responsibility is attributed. The favorable scores for credibility and reliability imply that respondents continued to recognize organizational characteristics that were separable from the political controversy surrounding the brand.

The findings also illustrate that reputation during a boycott cannot be treated as a direct equivalent of purchase intention. Consumers may preserve favorable evaluations of service quality, reliability, or professionalism while simultaneously participating in or supporting a boycott for moral or political reasons. Political consumerism research has demonstrated that consumption decisions can function as expressions of civic or ethical positioning even when consumers retain prior familiarity with the targeted brand (Becheri et al., 2022; Kyroglou & Henn, 2022). This distinction is particularly relevant for young consumers, whose political discussions and social-media activity may intensify issue-based consumption without necessarily erasing established perceptions of corporate competence.

The pattern of results indicates that Pizza Hut Indonesia's reputation among the respondents remained strongest in dimensions associated with observable performance and slightly weaker in dimensions that depend more heavily on interpretations of corporate motives and social positioning. Credibility, service professionalism, reliability, and product consistency were assessed more favorably than social responsibility, suggesting that operational performance remained a stabilizing component of reputation during the boycott period. Research on crisis response supports the view that reputation is shaped by the interaction between established organizational performance and the appropriateness of the response adopted when controversy emerges (Dominic et al., 2022). The measured reputation profile therefore provides an empirical basis for examining whether the quality of issue management is statistically associated with the preservation of favorable corporate evaluations under sustained geopolitical pressure.

Effect of Boycott Issue Management on the Corporate Reputation of Pizza Hut Indonesia

The simple linear regression analysis demonstrates a positive relationship between boycott issue management and the corporate reputation of Pizza Hut Indonesia. The estimated regression equation was $Y = 4.673 + 0.717X$**,** indicating that every one-unit increase in the issue-management score was associated with an estimated increase of 0.717 units in corporate reputation. The positive regression coefficient confirms that stronger issue-management performance was accompanied by more favorable reputational evaluations among the respondents. This relationship is consistent with crisis-communication research showing that organizational responses to contested issues can shape stakeholder judgments when the strategy is perceived as appropriate and credible (Dominic et al., 2022; Kartika et al., 2024).

The magnitude of the relationship was examined through the correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination. The correlation coefficient reached $R = 0.903$, indicating a very strong positive association between issue management and corporate reputation within the observed sample. This result supports the proposition that reputational evaluation during a politically sensitive boycott cannot be separated from the manner in which an organization identifies, interprets, communicates, and evaluates the issue. Previous studies similarly indicate that corporate communication surrounding contentious social issues can influence consumer engagement, legitimacy judgments, and subsequent brand evaluations (You & Hon, 2022; Zhang & Borden, 2024).

The coefficient of determination reached $R^2 = 0.816$, meaning that issue management accounted for 81.6% of the observed variation in Pizza Hut Indonesia's corporate reputation among the respondents. The remaining 18.4% was associated with factors outside the regression model, which may include consumer preferences for local alternatives, differences in individual ethical considerations, or social influence surrounding boycott participation, as identified in the original study framework. The proportion explained by the model indicates that issue management was a dominant statistical predictor of reputation within the specific population examined. Research on consumer boycotts also suggests that moral reasoning, social influence, and substitution behavior can operate alongside corporate communication in shaping consumer evaluations (Jedicke et al., 2025; Herani, 2025; Sabilla et al., 2025).

The statistical relationship was further examined through the t-test, which produced a value of t = 28.548**,** exceeding the critical value of **1.973** at the 5% significance level. The probability value was below 0.001, providing sufficient statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis concerning the effect of issue management on corporate reputation. These results establish that the relationship identified through regression was not attributable to random variation within the sample. Empirical research on brand communication has also found that corporate responses to sociopolitical issues can generate measurable consequences for consumer attitudes when messages are regarded as credible, relevant, and aligned with stakeholder expectations (Ahmad et al., 2022; Xie et al., 2024).

Table 3. Summary of Simple Linear Regression and Hypothesis Testing

Statistical Indicator	**Value**
Constant	4.673
Regression Coefficient	0.717
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.903
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	0.816
t-value	28.548
Critical t-value	1.973
Significance	< 0.001

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that issue management functioned as a substantial explanatory factor for corporate reputation rather than as a marginal communication variable. The statistical strength of the model corresponds with the descriptive results, where issue management received a mean score of 3.19 and reputation reached 3.25, both classified in the high category. Such alignment suggests that favorable evaluations of issue identification, analysis, strategic response, implementation, and evaluation were accompanied by favorable perceptions of credibility, trust, reliability, and social responsibility. Research on corporate advocacy similarly shows that stakeholder reactions are closely connected to perceptions of organizational consistency, authenticity, and substantive action rather than to communicative visibility alone (Cammarota et al., 2023; Mirzaei et al., 2022).

The strength of the relationship can also be interpreted through the nature of the boycott itself. Consumer resistance associated with the Palestine–Israel conflict is shaped by political identity, religious considerations, moral intensity, and perceptions of organizational responsibility, creating a reputational environment in which corporate responses are subject to intensive normative evaluation (Bravo, 2024; Haikal et al., 2024; Herman & Salehudin, 2026). When consumers perceive a brand as insufficiently responsive to such concerns, negative attitudes may extend beyond temporary purchase avoidance toward distrust, brand rejection, or persistent brand hate (Akrout & Mrad, 2023; Yadav & Chakrabarti, 2022). The strong regression coefficient found in this study indicates that effective issue management may reduce the likelihood that external political controversy is translated directly into enduring reputational deterioration.

The influence of issue management is also supported by the company's combination of clarification, local organizational positioning, operational continuity, and social action. The original data show that respondents positively evaluated the company's clarification concerning its non-involvement with the targeted party, information regarding its local corporate status, and visible

humanitarian activities. Such responses are relevant because stakeholder evaluations of politically sensitive corporate communication are influenced by whether actions are perceived as legitimate and consistent with the claims being communicated (Alharbi et al., 2022; Miguel & Miranda, 2023). Research on brand activism further suggests that symbolic statements without observable supporting action may generate skepticism, whereas concrete and coherent organizational behavior can strengthen perceived authenticity (Ahmad et al., 2024; Thürridl & Mattison Thompson, 2023).

The model nevertheless should not be interpreted as implying that issue management is the sole determinant of reputation under boycott conditions. Consumer behavior toward Pizza Hut during boycott periods has also been associated with brand image, loyalty, trust, product quality, promotion, and switching tendencies, which remain relevant even when issue management is statistically dominant in the present model (Arifiana et al., 2025; Azhari & Wardhana, 2025; Sunaryanto & Noviyanti, 2025). Broader political consumerism research also demonstrates that purchase withdrawal can function as a civic or moral act independent of consumers' prior satisfaction with a brand (Becheri et al., 2022; Kyroglou & Henn, 2022). The unexplained 18.4% of variance is therefore consistent with the multidimensional character of reputational judgment and consumer decision-making under geopolitical pressure.

The findings extend earlier research on issue management at Pizza Hut Indonesia by showing that structured management of a geopolitical boycott is statistically associated with corporate reputation among young consumers, rather than merely documenting communication practices during a specific operational issue (Kustiawati et al., 2019). They also complement evidence that boycott campaigns can influence listed companies, market perceptions, and consumer behavior when political narratives enter routine consumption decisions (Pramesta et al., 2025; Riyadi et al., 2025). The present model adds an empirical link between the managerial process of handling the issue and the reputational outcome perceived by a defined stakeholder group. This relationship supports the treatment of issue management as a strategic public-relations function with measurable reputational consequences during externally generated sociopolitical crises.

The statistical evidence also highlights the strategic importance of maintaining coherence between early issue detection and subsequent organizational action. Strong performance in issue identification will have limited reputational value if strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation are perceived as delayed, inconsistent, or insufficiently responsive to stakeholder concerns. Research on antibrand behavior and consumer opposition shows that unfavorable narratives can intensify when audiences interpret corporate action as socially irresponsible, misleading, or disconnected from their moral expectations (Pöyry & Laaksonen, 2022; Woodside et al., 2023; Zhong & Kim, 2025). The observed effect of issue management on reputation indicates that reputational resilience in boycott situations depends not only on maintaining product and service performance, but also on the organization's capacity to manage politically charged information through credible, consistent, and evaluable responses.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that boycott issue management related to the Palestine–Israel conflict has a positive and significant effect on the corporate reputation of Pizza Hut Indonesia among 2022 students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta. Respondents assessed Pizza Hut Indonesia's issue-management performance at a high level, with an overall mean of 3.19, while corporate reputation was also rated highly, with an overall mean of 3.25. Issue identification and issue analysis received the strongest evaluations among the issue-management dimensions, whereas strategy formulation recorded the lowest mean, indicating that the company was perceived as relatively effective in recognizing and interpreting the boycott issue but still had room to strengthen the formulation of its strategic response. Corporate reputation was supported most strongly by credibility and reliability, while social responsibility received the lowest score among the reputation dimensions despite remaining in the high category. The regression model produced a correlation coefficient of 0.903 and a coefficient of determination of 0.816, showing that issue management explained 81.6% of the variation in corporate reputation within the observed sample. The statistical test further confirmed the significance of this effect, with a t-value of 28.548 exceeding the critical value of 1.973 and a significance level below 0.001. These findings answer the research objectives by confirming that the quality of issue identification, analysis, strategic formulation,

program implementation, and evaluation is closely associated with the credibility, trust, reliability, and social responsibility attributed to Pizza Hut Indonesia. The study contributes empirical evidence to public relations research by demonstrating that issue management can function as a substantial reputational mechanism during a boycott driven by geopolitical and moral pressures. For corporate communication practice, the findings indicate the need to maintain early issue detection while strengthening strategic formulation, response consistency, implementation, and post-response evaluation so that reputational management is supported by coherent organizational action rather than by clarification alone.

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