

# Crisis PR in the New Media Era: the Impact on the Reputation of Chinese New Energy Businesses

Zhuoxin Lin<sup>1</sup>, Yumin Chen<sup>2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ustinov College, Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup> Moray House School of Education and Sport, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

<sup>3</sup> Dongguan Senior High School (Group) Qingxi Middle School, Qingxi Town, Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, China

Correspondence: Chen Yu min, Senior High School (Group) Qingxi Middle School, Qingxi Town, Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, China

Received: August 19, 2024

Accepted: September 20, 2024

Online Published: October 15, 2024

doi:10.11114/bms.v10i2.7268

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/bms.v10i2.7268>

## Abstract

The self-transformation of new media presents unprecedented challenges for crisis PR. In recent years, the rapid development of new energy vehicles in China has often led to widespread criticism when facing crisis Public Relations (PR) issues. This study takes Tesla, NIO, and Li Auto, three companies developing new energy vehicles in China. It compares their crisis PR strategies in the new media era, exploring their impact on corporate reputation. By collecting the quantity of cognitive and emotional assessments of positive, neutral, and negative nature, and calculating the conversion between evaluations of different natures, this research finds that incorrect response strategies lead to a decrease in both emotional and cognitive reputations, while successful response strategies primarily enhance cognitive reputation. Successful strategies may involve subjective proactive measures, characterized by swift or preemptive PR, positive emotional attitudes, and sustained responsiveness. This study provides empirical insights into understanding and addressing the challenges of crisis PR in the new media era, offering references for companies to formulate crisis management strategies.

**Keywords:** new media, Chinese new energy, crisis Public Relations, reputation,

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

On August 28, 2023, China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) released the 52nd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, which showed that as of June 2023, the scale of China's Internet users has reached 1.079 billion, an increase of 11.09 million compared with that of December 2022, and the Internet penetration rate has reached 76.4%. Among them, the user scale of online video and short video reached 1.044 billion and 1.026 billion respectively, with a user utilization rate of 96.8% and 95.2%. Media platforms continue to push forward and transform themselves, bringing far-reaching impacts on society, such as the strong traction of major platforms such as TikTok, WeChat, Weibo, etc. Recent developments in media technologies have raised age-old questions about the nature of the public, its role in community decision-making, and whether PR can use mediated forms of communication to play a meaningful role in public dialog (Self, 2010, p. 78).

Energy safety is another major factor responsible for the popularity of EVs in China and one of the top priorities for China's national security. Since China's dependence on oil imports in 2016 reached 65%, much higher than the 50% international security threshold, China must develop new energy vehicles (Peng et al., 2019). Furthermore, according to a report by the China Association of Automotive Manufacturers (CAAM), the production and sales of new energy vehicles will complete between 9,587,000 and 9,495,000 respectively in 2023, representing year-on-year growth of 35.8% and 37.9%, the market share will reach 31.6%. At the same time, fierce market competition, and insufficient information or confidence in market consumers make the relevant enterprises extremely vulnerable to a large number of widespread criticisms once the crisis PR issue arises

### *1.2 Research Purpose*

Understanding and studying the crisis communication strategy of the new energy automotive industry is of great significance in the context of the rapid dissemination of new media information. This study is a comparative analysis and research on the PR approaches and effects of different organizations in the same industry, which means this study may assess the impact of various crisis response strategies, including reticence, passive response, negative justification, and proactive response. By mitigating industry-specific differences, the study seeks to evaluate how these strategies influence public perception and trust in companies facing crises. Additionally, the research investigates the influence of response speed on public trust and credibility, the effects of PR attitudes during crises on corporate reputation, the role of prior emotional connections between companies and the public in shaping crisis response perceptions, and the repercussions of incorrect PR responses on public trust and loyalty towards renewable energy companies. By addressing these dimensions, the study aims to provide insights into effective crisis management strategies for companies in the renewable energy sector.

### *1.3 Research Significance*

PR practitioners favored aspects of the internet that made it easier for them to do traditional jobs and often rejected features that required a new way to look at PR, like chat rooms and instant messaging (Fjeld, & Molesworth, 2006, p. 392). This brings unprecedented challenges for enterprises and industries when facing crisis PR, so it is crucial to have an in-depth understanding of the research on crisis PR strategies in the new era of the energy automotive industry. As Rindova et al. (2007) said, reputation refers to the regard that stakeholders hold a firm based on expectations that it can deliver value along key dimensions of performance (p. 33). However, this industry faces quality and safety challenges now as a PR crisis challenge is difficult for companies to avoid. By studying crisis cases, we may gain a deep understanding of the importance of crisis PR to the overall reputation of the emerging industry. Furthermore, the uniqueness of this study is that it focuses on the comparative analysis of the crisis communication approaches and the effects of different organizations in the same industry, which may help to eliminate the effects of industry differences and provide more specific and practical guidance for the development of crisis communication strategies.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 PR Crises in the New Media Era*

#### *2.1.1 New Media Era*

The concept of new media is relative to traditional media, and most scholars at home and abroad believe that it is the result of the universal application of digital network technology (Liao, 2008, p. 121); however, today's social media has brought many changes to the way communication management professionals work with content producers. The loss of the traditional media's influence had forced the industry to adapt its communication strategies to the new digital environment, ceding a significant portion of the relationship with their stakeholders to 'new agents' located in the margins of the field (Navarro et al., 2020). This change breaks the past pattern of single downward disseminators of information and eliminates the boundaries between traditional media, which gives users dual identities of disseminators and receivers in the new media era, realizing the two-way communication, and makes the boundaries between the disseminators and the recipients more and more blurred, which allows more and more users to become both disseminators and reviewers.

#### *2.1.2 PR Crisis*

Van et al. (2014) viewed the PR crisis as a vicious event of unexpected events on the company's reputation, due to the negative events of the company's brand image being seriously distorted. The duration of the crisis, the degree of severity, the degree of damage to the relevant stakeholders, etc., will cause different degrees of malignant impact on the company. Under the new media era, the impact of PR crises on a company's reputation has also become more prominent (p. 751).

### *2.2 Classification of Assessments*

#### *2.2.1 Cognitive Assessment and Emotional Assessment*

Maslow (1943) believed that crises could stimulate stakeholders and trigger a series of reactions, including threat perception, cognition, emotional processing, and attitudes and feelings toward the threat. (p. 83) These reactions can be summarized as cognitive assessment and emotional assessment. Cognitive and emotional assessments together form stakeholders' overall assessment of a crisis event, which in turn affects their attitudes and behaviors towards the company.

Firstly, cognitive assessment, which relies on rational and objective facts, involves the objective description and analysis of events. This assessment primarily focuses on corporate behavior as the basis for evaluation, mostly based on the enterprise's actual behavior, such as product quality, service level, and social responsibility. Secondly, emotional

assessment, based on emotions, subjective feelings, and personal preferences, focuses on the assessor's emotional response and subjective likes or dislikes towards the event. The primary basis for emotional assessment is the emotional connection between the assessor and the company.

### 2.2.2 Positive, Negative, and Neutral Assessments

Kim and Hovy (2004) argued that assessments always involve the Holder's emotions or desires and may be present explicitly or implicitly, and they always can be categorized into three types: positive, negative, and Neutral (p. 1368).

The neutral category falls somewhere in between; for instance, the positive word 'good' has synonyms like 'virtuous, honorable, righteous', and antonyms such as 'evil, disreputable, unrighteous'. Antonyms of negative words are included in the positive list and synonyms in the negative list. However, a neutral attitude is always implicitly considered, hence it usually needs to be categorized by analyzing its meaning; sentences consistently involve noncommittal, dispassionate, and unbiased attitudes, such as 'I'm here for the show.' or merely describing ongoing events or attempting deduction."

## 2.3 Crisis Public Response Strategies and Periods

### 2.3.1 Crisis Public Response Strategies

Crisis response strategies are the essence of crisis communication, designed to reduce or minimize reputational damage to an organization (Fearn-Banks, 2016). Claeys and Cauberghe (2012) pointed out that accommodative strategies are useful when crisis responsibility is strong and defensive strategies are effective when crisis responsibility is perceived as minimal.

Jaywant et al. (2019) classified the PR strategies into three degrees denial, partial acknowledgment, and complete acknowledgment and reconstruction according to the nature of the PR crisis. Siomkos et al (2015) made a distinction by degree, moving up gradually from four levels: denial, passive response, active response, and proactive response.

Summarizing the above analytical criteria, we can find that most of these restorative strategies have four strategies: reticence, passive response, negative justification, and proactive response. Reticence refers to keeping silent regardless of the current public opinion. Passive response manifests itself as a forced assumption of responsibility for the relevant vicious outbreaks, including a relatively passive response attitude, response speed, and repair of consumer rights and interests. On the contrary, the proactive response is embodied in the positive and proactive assumption of the relevant responsibility, with faster response speed, comprehensive consideration of consumer interests, and other characteristics, specifically embodied in two directions - active clarification and active reconciliation (Fang et al., 2010, p. 105). The negative defense is to deny the existence of the problem and try hard to excuse the problem. In this paper, we will explore in depth the impact of the above four strategies on corporate reputation repair at different stages of different reputation repair and analyze the performance of three different companies in this process.

### 2.3.2 The Periods of Restoring Organizational Reputation

Van Der Meer et al. (2014b) divided the PR crisis into three parts. First, in the initial phase of the crisis, the framing varied across the domains. In the next crisis phase, after initial communication, the domains' initially produced frames interacted. Third, in the final phase of the crisis, after mutual sensemaking of the crisis, the crisis framing by the PR, news media, and the public was no longer aligned (p. 760).

In addition to this, Fink (1989) proposed four stages in the life of crisis management: the initial stage is the early warning period, which is a sign that there may be a potential occurrence of a crisis; the second stage is the outbreak period, in which a devastating event occurs and triggers a crisis; the third stage is the continuous period, in which the impact of the crisis persists, as well as an attempt to eliminate the crisis; the last stage is the recovery period, which indicates that a crisis has occurred.

All in all, the study about the phases of crisis has been very clear. On this basis, this study of reputation repair is divided into four stages: crisis outbreak period, crisis management period, crisis continuation period, and crisis recovery period.

## 3. Theoretical Foundations

In the contemporary new energy automotive sector, consumer decision-making processes regarding new energy vehicle purchases remain largely opaque, akin to a "black box" (Xiao & Lu, 2016, p. 1680). The industry is characterized by high costs, low market demand, high risk, and a general lack of consumer awareness, typical of emerging products. The market demand for new energy vehicles is slow to ignite, with consumers expressing concerns over price, driving range, charging convenience, and overall product performance (Xiong & Chen, 2016, p. 133). The advent of the Internet has revolutionized the nature of crisis communication, enabling rapid and global dissemination of information by online journalists and media outlets (Hill & White, 2000).

Media attention, serving as a form of spontaneous and cost-free external supervision, is intricately linked to how

corporations invest in their reputation (Xiong et al., 2022). Research by Dyck (2004) indicates that media outlets tend to focus on and expose negative events within enterprises, a tendency particularly evident in the new energy automotive industry. The dynamics of new media, with its multi-directional communication channels, diversified subjects, fragmented modes, and complex environment, add a layer of unpredictability to reputation management (Bao, 2017). Despite strong governmental support, the emergence of PR crises in new energy companies can swiftly incite public outcry, necessitating a robust response strategy.

This study employs a substantial dataset of internet comments as its research base, aiming to analyze the impact of PR crisis strategies on corporate reputation within the new energy automotive industry. The approach involves the collection of assessments from various internet platforms during different crisis periods, reflecting the distinct reputation management strategies employed by companies to rebuild their image.

Furthermore, the study is grounded in two principal theories: Reputation Theory and Stakeholder Theory (ST). Reputation Theory posits that a corporation's concern for its reputation influences the structure of its sales organization and its strategic actions to enhance or sustain its reputational standing (Allen et al., 1999). Stakeholder Theory, a concept in business ethics and organizational management, suggests that organizations should aim to create value for a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including civil societies, communities, customers, employees, governments, shareholders, and suppliers (Freeman, 2015; Schaltegger et al., 2019).

The corporate response and the reaction of stakeholders during the process of reputation repair are measured by evaluating assessments on new media platforms. This analysis seeks to understand the role and influence mechanism of these responses in the context of PR crisis management (Chao et al., 2015, p. 1678). The study examines how different strategies adopted by four enterprises within the same industry affect their reputational outcomes during various crisis periods. By structuring the text in this manner, we provide a clear overview of the theoretical underpinnings and the research methodology, setting the stage for a detailed exploration of PR crisis strategies in the new energy automotive industry.

## **4. Methodology**

### *4.1 Comparative Analysis Approach*

This thesis aims to improve the persuasiveness of the research by comparing and analyzing the PR crisis strategies adopted by different enterprises within the same industry. Based on the definitions of passive and active strategies, different repair strategies adopted by three enterprises are selected and comprehensively analyzed based on theories related to crisis management. The study will focus on the four stages of PR, including (1) the crisis outbreak period, (2) the crisis management period, (3) the crisis continuation period, and (4) the crisis recovery period. Through an in-depth study of the comparative analysis of these four PR phases, we will have a more comprehensive understanding of the performance of passive and active strategies of enterprises in the process of crisis management, which will provide stronger support for the conclusions of the paper.

In addition, this paper takes qualitative data and quantitative data to provide data support for the comparative research object. Quantitative data will be taken from major social media or platforms, and a total of 150 assessments will be collected at each stage and each time. The assessments will first be analyzed qualitatively, starting from the major social media reports or user assessments, differentiated based on cognitive assessments and perceptual assessments, and then divided into three types positive, moderate, and negative based on support, no support, or opposition, and opposition. After that, quantitative collection is carried out to count the number. Combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods, it provides a comparative analysis and statistics for comparative research to study the changes and development of different corporate reputations.

### *4.2 Data Collection Methods*

In this study, this study insists on ensuring objectivity and authenticity in the process of data collection, especially in obtaining new media assessment information, to eliminate the interference of negative PR, we have implemented three rigorous strategies.

#### **4.2.1 Sources of Data**

New media assessment information is collected through multiple channels to maximize the objectivity of the data results, and the major social media mainly include (1) the relative reports of the three search engines Baidu, Google, and Bing on the PR crises of the three companies. (2) Relevant assessments can be collected on six domestic platforms, which are TikTok, Bilibili, Zhihu, Weibo, Little Red Book, and WeChat Videos. (3) Collect assessments by visiting the automotive home or any video or assessment related to the automotive blogger.

#### 4.2.2 Random Sampling

A random sampling method is adopted for the screening assessments, so that each assessment has an equal chance to be selected into the sample, in addition to helping myself and another helper to eliminate the corresponding bias.

#### 4.2.3 Ensuring Data Objectivity

Due to the development of big data technology, different media platforms filter assessments based on various factors such as gender, personal preference, occupation, etc. to form the best platform experience for each user. To eliminate the unfairness caused by technology, my assistant and I created four different accounts with different occupational information and personal preferences to facilitate the most objective selection of assessments.

#### 4.3 Steps of Categorizing Assessments

Firstly, in organizing the cognitive assessment (Ca) and emotional assessment (Ea) of the company, an assistant and I will meticulously select assessments based on corresponding keywords. The initial categorization of comments is based on their characteristics, including adjectives, mood words, data, and the overall tendency of the comments. These assessments are then categorized into support, neutrality, or opposition. CA primarily involves the perception of the company and its behavior, necessitating logical judgments or rational assessments based on the arguments presented. In contrast, EA focuses on the different emotional responses to the company. To ensure the objectivity and accuracy of the entire assessment system, we engage in thorough discussions to reconcile any discrepancies and strive to reach a consensus. If consensus is unattainable, the entries are deemed invalid and are subsequently deleted.

Next, categorizing all assessments after Ca and Ea classification involves manually assembling a small set of seed words or seed sentences, categorized by polarity into three lists—positive, negative, and neutral. These lists are then expanded by incorporating words obtained from WordNet (Miller et al., 1990). We assume that synonyms of positive words are predominantly positive, while antonyms are predominantly negative, and neutral words are between them.

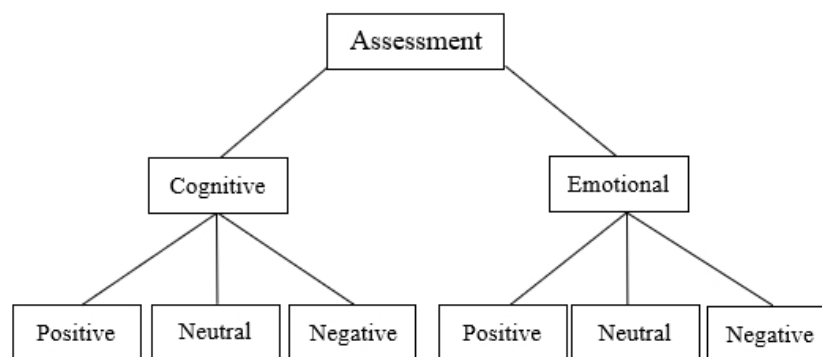


Figure 1. Assessment Handling Process

As Figure 1 shows, both qualitative and quantitative research are involved in the data collection process. All the comments are collected and analyzed based on these classifications for further analysis and research.

#### 4.4 The Calculation of the Interconversion of Ea and Ca

If the number of emotional assessments rises and the number of negative emotional assessments rises, it means that the emotional reputation of the company has been damaged, and if the number of changes in cognitive assessments is positive, it means that there are cognitive assessments that have been converted to emotional assessments. If the number of cognitive assessments changes  $<$  or  $=$  the number of negative emotional changes, it means that the number of cognitive assessments changes are all shifted to the number of negative emotional assessments, then there is the following formula: the number of cognitive assessments changes / the sum of the number of cognitive assessments in the previous period. If the number of cognitive assessment changes  $>$  the number of negative emotional changes, it means that the number of cognitive assessment changes is partially converted to the number of non-negative emotional assessments, then there is the following formula: the number of negative emotional assessment changes / the sum of cognitive assessments of the previous period.

If the number of cognitive assessments rises and the number of negative cognitive assessments rises, it means that the cognitive assessment of the enterprise is damaged, and if the number of changes in emotional assessments is positive, it

means that there is a shift from emotional assessments to cognitive assessments. If the number of emotional assessments changes  $<$  or  $=$  the number of negative cognitive changes, it means that the number of emotional assessments changes are all converted to negative cognitive assessments, then there is the following formula: the number of emotional assessments changes / the sum of the number of emotional assessments of the previous period. If the number of changes in emotional assessments  $>$  the number of changes in negative cognitions, it means that the number of changes in emotional assessments is partially transformed into non-negative cognitive assessments, and the following formula: the number of negative cognitive assessments changes / the sum of emotional assessments of the previous period.

#### 4.5 Sample Description

About the Tesla crisis, it was on April 19th, 2021, at the Shanghai Auto Show, two women wearing T-shirts with “Brake Failure” appeared at the Tesla booth, one of them climbed on top of the car and shouted, “Tesla Brake Failure”, after which the owner of the car was dragged away by the staffs.

Secondly, an accident happened in the Shanghai NIO Building on the afternoon of June 22, 2022, some media revealed that a crash occurred at the headquarters of NIO Motors in the Shanghai Innovation Port. According to reports, a car known as the test vehicle ET7 ran out of the building and crashed, resulting in people being trapped inside. After the accident, one person died tragically after failing to be rescued, and another passed away in the early morning hours of the 23rd after surgery with poor results.

Thirdly, it was “Li Auto L7 Qingyuan Accident”, on the evening of December 21st, a major traffic accident of Li Auto L7 occurred in Qingyuan, Guangdong Province, the vehicle was seriously damaged, and two people died. On December 22nd, Li Auto Automotive responded to the accident for the first time through Weibo, saying that it would cooperate with the police to provide all the necessary data and information.

### 5. Data Presentation and Description

#### 5.1 Crisis Onset Period-Crisis Outbreak Period

In the first period, the PR crisis of the enterprise is like a whale falling into the water, which explodes in the online media, attracting countless traffic, and the related assessments grow like a well, and the enterprise is forced to stand in the center of the spotlight at this moment. Table 1 and Table 2 will display the initial public response to the event outbreak during the first phase of online sentiment.

Table 1. Crisis Outbreak Period: Impact of Public Crisis on Corp Reputation

Corporation	Typical event	Assessments	Negative	Medium	Positive
Tesla	Shanghai International Auto Show Protest	EA	80	18	5
		CA	26	12	9
NIO	Shanghai NIO Test Car Falls from Building	EA	41	4	1
		CA	82	15	7
Li Auto	Li Auto L7 Qingyuan Accident	EA	29	9	1
		CA	47	20	44

Table 2. Crisis Outbreak Period: The Typical Assessment Sentences

Corporation	Typical Event	Typical Assessments
Tesla	Shanghai International Auto Show Protest	Tesla's brakes don't work. I'm not surprised.
		You call this a persuasion to leave the scene?
NIO	Shanghai NIO Test Car Falls from Building	Why not test on flat ground?
		NIO has no future.
Li Auto	Li Auto L7 Qingyuan Accident	In Chaozhou, the Tesla was 198km/h, and the A-pillar was not deformed.

At the annual Shanghai Auto Show in 2021, a woman wearing a T-shirt with the words “Brake Failure” stood on the roof of a Tesla at the Tesla booth and was then dragged away from the booth by security guards who were trying to maintain order, and while she was being dragged away, the woman shouted, “I’m pregnant!”. The video caused an uproar on the internet, on the one hand, praising the female owner’s courage in defending her rights or being surprised by her crazy behavior, on the other hand bringing up the previous negative scandals related to Tesla again, and feeling very resentful towards the security guards’ practice. At this time, the negative assessments of Tesla reached 70.6%.

In 2022, it was rumored that a car crashed from the 5th floor of the NIO headquarters, killing one and injuring another. The public was confused by the NIO’s high-rise test, which led to many negative perceptions of the car. In addition to this, due to the NIO’s previous negative PR news, most of the assessments directly criticized the NIO, saying that it was not unusual for the NIO to be in such a situation. NIO chose to remain silent during the crisis and didn’t make any statements. The public’s opinion remained agitated, leading to an 82% proportion of negative assessments.

On December 24th, 2023, an L7 car had a major accident in Qingyuan, Guangdong Province, and the video of the tragic situation went viral on the Internet. Most of the assessments focused on the product’s problem, “the Li Auto AB pillar did not play a protective role”, and there were a lot of discussions, and therefore the negative perception of the assessments accounted for 61.8% of the negative assessments. Some quoted the results of related automotive accidents for comparison, and some reintroduced the label of poor quality of national products. However, Li Auto published the accident data for the first time and adopted a positive and subjective response strategy during the crisis outbreak period, pointing out that the accident car was seriously over the traffic regulation speed, implying that the main reason was not the problem of their products, which reduced a lot of PR pressure for Li Auto in the later stage. At this stage, the proportion of negative assessments reached 51%.

### 5.2 Crisis Second Period- Crisis Management Period

In the second stage of PR, enterprises often take active or passive PR measures, which include the remarks of the relevant person in charge of the enterprise, statements released by official accounts, as well as relevant data and video materials. PR initiatives during this period are extremely critical and are considered the most crucial period for reputation recovery, where the words and actions displayed by a company will gradually evolve into a representation of subsequent PR activities and the future corporate image. Tables 3 and 4 depict the reactions of netizens during the second phase.

Table 3. Crisis Management Period: Impact of Public Crisis on Corp Reputation

Corporation	Typical Event	Assessments	Negative	Medium	Positive
Tesla	Shanghai International Auto Show	EA	105	10	8
	Protest	CA	15	9	3
NIO	Shanghai NIO Test Car Falls from Building	EA	118	9	2
		CA	9	13	1
Li Auto	Li Auto L7 Qingyuan Accident	EA	9	45	3
		CA	8	81	4

Table 4. Crisis Management Period: The Typical Assessment Sentences

Corporation	Typical Event	Typical Assessments
Tesla	Shanghai International Auto Show Protest	The VP responded like this and there is no one dared to buy it....
NIO	Shanghai NIO Test Car Falls from Building	This statement truly penetrates the cold-bloodedness of capital
Li Auto	Li Auto L7 Qingyuan Accident	You’re going 180 on a road like this. You’re killing yourself

Tesla adopted a PR strategy of denial and defense at this stage, with a very tough attitude. Tesla's vice president, Tao Lin, responded by accusing that the recent negative public opinion was mainly caused by specific individuals. She expressed the company's steadfastness in its inability to compromise and cited its research, which stated that 90% of its customers would be willing to choose Tesla again. This statement provoked more negative publicity and sparked a public outcry. In response to the criticism from the official state media, Tesla released an official statement late at night, saying that it would fully cooperate with the national third-party organization's comprehensive testing. The statement made it clear that if it is a Tesla product problem, the company will be firmly responsible for it, including compensation and acceptance of penalties. However, Tesla also made it clear that it would not compromise on unreasonable claims. Tesla has always maintained a tough attitude to make Chinese consumers feel very angry, Tesla in this phase reputation has not been repaired, the data show that more negative cognitive assessments turned to negative emotional assessments tirades, and the negative assessments accounted for as high as 80%, an increase of 10% compared to the first phase.

In the face of huge public opinion, NIO was forced to carry out PR, at this time the crisis has been more than 28 hours, NIO through official microblogging released a response on the Shanghai crash, mentioning “no relationship with the vehicle itself” expression, many netizens have accused NIO of responding to the incident looks too cold-blooded, lack of sufficient concern and responsible for the incident. Many people accused NIO of being too cold-blooded in its response and lacking sufficient concern and a responsible attitude towards the incident. After about half an hour, NIO suddenly deleted the tweet and re-released a revised version, which was changed to “not caused by the vehicle”. The change sparked more concern and skepticism, with assessments pointing out that the revised response did not fundamentally change the situation. NIO's reputation repair at this stage was very poor, with 58% of the negative cognitive assessments turning into negative emotional assessments of abuse, and the percentage of negative assessments was as high as 84.6%.

On the afternoon of the second day after the accident, Li Auto then blogged a second proactive response to a relevant Car Log video. In the response, Li Auto made it clear that “the final facts and responsibility of the traffic accident are subject to the determination of the traffic police department”, emphasizing the importance of determining responsibility according to the law. Although Li Auto later officially deleted the videos, they are still visible on other platforms. The disclosure of a large amount of data has led to a lively public discussion on driving safety. Social media users were discussing the cause of the accident and the division of responsibility, making the impact of the incident further expand. Li Auto's reputation repair was effective at this stage, turning a large number of negative assessments into neutral or positive ones, with a 40% reduction in negative assessments, pointing the finger at safe driving itself rather than the Li Auto product itself.

### 5.3 Crisis Third Period-Crisis Continuation Period

Crisis duration stage, generally after the first formal PR of the enterprise, the PR crisis event vein gradually clears or the reputation repair effect is revealed stage, but by the first stage of the crisis outbreak period the first time to respond to the measures and the second stage of the enterprise PR way to influence very heavy. Table 5 and Table 6 demonstrate the performance during the Continuation Period.

Table 5. Crisis Continuation Period: Impact of Public Crisis on Corp Reputation

Corporation	Typical Event	Assessments	Negative	Medium	Positive
Tesla	Shanghai International Auto Show Protest	EA	57	10	19
		CA	49	15	4
NIO	Shanghai NIO Test Car Falls from Building	EA	110	6	4
		CA	15	14	1
Li Auto	Li Auto L7 Qingyuan Accident	EA	46	9	13
		CA	20	38	24



Table 6. Crisis Continuation Period: The Typical Assessment Sentences

Corporation	Typical Event	Typical Assessments
Tesla	Shanghai International Auto Show Protest	It's because you couldn't stop the car, not because it's all your fault.
NIO	Shanghai NIO Test Car Falls from Building	Maybe the company culture is like that. There's a kind of arrogance in the bones.
Li Auto	Li Auto L7 Qingyuan Accident	Posting private videos without consent has no bottom line at all.

In the third stage, Tesla took the initiative to respond to the PR strategy, should the Zhengzhou Municipal Bureau of Supervision requirements to provide driving data, full cooperation, and publish the vehicle accident before the minute of data, although its owners and their husbands on the publication of the data does not recognize that the infringement of personal privacy, and subsequently, said Tesla published is not the original data. But at the same time, Tesla also adopted a defense strategy at this stage, Tesla published the “whole process” of Ms. Zhang's rights in February 2021, saying that Ms. Zhang's husband had explicitly said that there was a “team” to assist. As Tesla, the female owner, and government agencies demanded that the story be clarified, the assessments showed a cooling down process and began to analyze the law, break data, and the female owner's behavior rationally, with cognitive assessments increasing by 150% compared to the second phase, and 45% compared to the first phase. However, due to the tough attitude of Tesla officials and their related personnel during the crisis outbreak and crisis management period, many consumers still have very negative feelings towards Tesla, with 70% of negative assessments.

NIO did not do a good job in the internal management of the company's PR department at this stage, and the behavior of NIO's PR director Ma Lin's “plagiarized” statement and his assessment that “the water army can't get me down” exploded on various media platforms, which made a lot of negative assessments again. This has led to a large number of negative emotional assessments again. NIO remained silent and did not explain or apologize for their relevant remarks, which contributed to 83.3% of negative assessments.

Li Auto's crisis lasted for some time after the traffic police issued an accident announcement at a later stage. Some people pointed out that Li Auto sent out the car recorder before the traffic police announcement and sent out the video without the cooperation of the traffic police officials or family members, which infringed on the personal privacy of the car owner and triggered a certain degree of heat. Li Auto didn't respond to the accusation of “invasion of privacy” and practiced a strategy of silence. However, due to the specificity of the accident, most of the assessments remained neutral or positive. Negative assessments increased by 33% compared to the crisis management phase.

#### 5.4 Crisis Fourth Period-Crisis Recovery Period

In the crisis reputation recovery stage, some companies still adopt the strategy to conduct PR, while the pulse of the crisis event is clear. Table 7 and Table 8 demonstrate the final performance of various companies following their PR crises.

Table 7. Crisis Recovery Period: Impact of Public Crisis on Corp Reputation

Corporation	Typical Event	Assessments	Negative	Medium	Positive
Tesla	Shanghai International Auto Show Protest	EA	68	15	21
		CA	10	22	14
NIO	Shanghai NIO Test Car Falls from Building	EA	125	8	2
		CA	3	10	2
Li Auto	Li Auto L7 Qingyuan Accident	EA	34	20	7
		CA	30	39	20

Table 8. Crisis Recovery Period: The Typical Assessment Sentences

Corporation	Typical Event	Typical Assessments
Tesla	Shanghai International Auto Show Protest	It's the responsible thing to do. Toyota has had its share of recalls.
NIO	Shanghai NIO Test Car Falls from Building	In the face of capital, talking about technical accumulation is of little significance; as long as one can deceive the laymen.
Li Auto	Li Auto L7 Qingyuan Accident	Sending out the data is no problem at all. Naturally, accidents happen when you rush into things on your own.

In the fourth stage, Tesla adopted a Proactive Strategy. First of all, Tesla responded positively to the female owner's lawsuit, according to the law. Moreover, one month later, Tesla suddenly recalled vehicles with active cruise control problems within a certain time frame. Overall, Tesla is still actively fulfilling its social responsibility by responding to the lawsuit and recalling the problematic vehicles. In addition, the female owner and her husband have been refusing to hand over the relevant data to the relevant authorities for inspection. Therefore, Tesla's negative assessments have decreased, with a 19% decrease in Stage 1 and Stage 3 and a 30% decrease in Stage 2 compared to the same period last year.

NIO continued to adopt a strategy of silence, and a certain number of media began to analyze and assess various aspects of “why NIO test drove in a high building”, “NIO's PR”, and “NIO's previous poor PR”, making the majority of the public opinion analyze and assessment on these aspects. The majority of opinions remained negative, accounting for more than 90% of the total.

Li Auto also adopted a silent strategy at this stage, but at the same time, the “Ningxia Li Auto Accident” broke out, with the cause and circumstances of the accident similar to the “Qingyuan Accident”, which once again aroused people's concern about product safety and quality, and brought about certain cognitive negative assessments, coupled with the fact that Li Auto had previously been analyzed and assessment on by various parties. In addition, society was dissatisfied with Li Auto's private leakage of the car recorder in the third phase, and Li Auto didn't have much PR reply or data and video disclosure for the “Ningxia accident”, which made people's assessments of Li Auto drop. However, thanks to the disclosure of the video data of the Qingyuan accident in the first and second phases, and the detailed analysis of related automotive media people in the fourth phase, which helped Li Auto reduced the negative assessments to a certain extent, and the related neutral and positive cognitive assessments still accounted for 57%.

#### 5.5 Calculated Results for Transformed Comments

As can be seen from Table 9, after a failed PR strategy, the nature of the comment changes periodically, generally in two stages: Negative emotional assessments rise, and then negative cognitive assessment rises.

Table 9. Periodic Changes: The Result of the Calculation of the Interconversion

	Crisis Management Period	Crisis Continue Period	Crisis Recovery Period
Tesla	<b>100% converted to emotional negative assessments.</b>	<b>91.9% converted to cognitive negative assessments</b>	50% converted to emotionally negative assessments
NIO	<b>91.9% converted to negative emotional assessments</b>	<b>78.2% converted to cognitive negative assessments</b>	100% converted to emotional negative assessments
Li Auto	100% converted to cognitive non-negative assessments	100% converted to emotional negative assessments	<b>100% converted to cognitive negative assessments</b>

Note. Areas where the pattern is particularly pounced.

It can be observed that when enterprises use the wrong crisis strategies at corresponding stages, they will first cause emotional damage, followed by cognitive damage.

## 6. Analysis and Discussion

### 6.1 *The Importance of Swift Responses: Timely Communication Matters*

The asymmetry of information often leads to the formation of large misunderstandings about the company (Yao et al., 2018, p. 22), which is due to the inability of the company to provide crisis-related information promptly as people actively engage in information seeking via social media in crises (Austin et al., 2012). Although information on social media is often viewed as untrustworthy and inaccurate due to the prevalence of unconfirmed rumors and non-relevant messages, social media are gaining prominence as information sources. Moreover, the environment of online communication based on many-to-many channels of communication requires crisis communication managers to use social media in different ways than the traditional paradigm suggests.

Therefore, it is particularly important to provide effective information in a short period, i.e., before the negative news about the company is widely disseminated or before society forms a public opinion field to become the role of a social arbiter (Wiesenfeld et al., 2008, p. 241), and it is generally recommended that organizations caught in a crisis should take PR as early as possible to proactively and quickly disclose the relevant information - i.e., the crisis response time should be minimized or Early Crisis PR (later referred to as Stealing Thunder Strategy).

New energy vehicles as function-led products, for function-led PR research, have been developed before, Tao and Wei (2016) directly pointed out in the research results of the function-led crisis, the enterprise is better to use the stealing thunder strategy than not using the strategy repair, that is, the early disclosure of the crisis can help the enterprise to recover a certain degree of reputation (p. 85). The idea was the first to announce the cause of the accident as well as the data at noon on the second day of the accident before public opinion festered. Ideal declared that when the collision occurred, the vehicle triggered the onboard emergency alarm call system, and after calling the user several times without feedback, the staff rushed to the scene the first time to support. Combined with the preliminary analysis of the vehicle background data, the vehicle did not open the auxiliary driving function during the driving process, 3 seconds before the collision, the speed of the vehicle reached 178km / h, the driver to take braking measures, and ultimately at a speed of 96km / h rear-end the truck in front of the truck, drilled into the truck underneath the truck and then rushed out of the road. This provides relevant information for social media and the platforms of a self-media initiative to analyze the relevant video and data and output a large number of second-hand news as the public is also more likely to accept crisis information about the organization experiencing a crisis when they hear about the crisis from a third party via social media (Liu et al., 2011). Much second-hand news about "ideal speeding crash", "Qingyuan ideal speeding crash", "Qingyuan ideal speeding crash", and the word speeding appeared many times, which shifted the audience's attention to the driver's problem, not the problem of the ideal product, and to a certain extent, maintained the reputation of the ideal product. The PR method of early disclosure and timely provision of effective information helped Ideal maintain its basic reputation and laid a certain foundation for later PR.

On the other hand, 29 hours after the incident, after the exposure of many media, after the fermentation of public opinion had reached its peak (specifically manifested in the top three microblogging hot searches), NIO was pressured to issue an official statement, and only said that "preliminary confirmation that this is an accident and has nothing to do with the vehicle itself". For the functionality of the leading product companies, this extreme lack of information to respond to the slow PR approach is extremely wrong. Its specific performance is that public opinion quickly set off a question and abuse of NIO's products and product testing methods, and have accused NIO of cold-bloodedness, skimming off the responsibility, no human touch, coupled with the lack of relevant data or information.

Tesla, as a function-led enterprise, has not announced the fact that the female owner refused the relevant data to assist in the investigation or relevant information before the public opinion fermentation of the rights event or the first time of the incident, even if the later investigation of the relevant data and information to support the female owner of the car behind the possible existence of the operation team or the automotive accidents for man-made reasons rather than for product reasons, the lack of information and data is not triggered by the Tesla again. The lack of information and data has once again triggered the fermentation of negative comments about Tesla's "brake failure". Tesla responded with a strong attitude on the same afternoon, such as "the recent negativity is all contributed by her", "there is no way for us to compromise.....", mainly subjective narrative PR, without providing effective objective information to support, such as the driver's wrong use of the brake pedal and so on. The issue of strong asymmetric information instantly ignited the court of public opinion, most of which believed that Tesla's brakes still had not been improved, such as "Tesla's brakes don't work. I'm not surprised.". This was extremely damaging to the Tesla product.

To sum up, before the fermentation of public opinion or the first time of the event, enterprises should timely through a self-disclosure PR crisis, provide effective information or data, repair asymmetric problems, and stop the spread of related rumors or negative public opinion.

### 6.2 Response Attitudes-Remaining Positive

PR plays a crucial role in building a bridge between consumers and products. A positive brand attitude can help establish good PR, which in turn can promote customer understanding and perception of the overall brand attitude and additional activities (KyuJin & Sung-Uh, 2016, p. 69).

During the Crisis Continuation Period, Tesla released data from the minute before a vehicle accident occurred, expressing its willingness to fully cooperate with the regulatory authorities' investigation and actively assume corresponding social responsibilities. Finally, in the Crisis Recovery Period, Tesla proactively recalled some of the imported Model 3 electric cars produced between January 12, 2019, and November 27, 2019, fulfilling its social responsibilities. These positive actions have gained some understanding and support from consumers to a certain extent, as shown in the data chart, and Tesla's reputation has recovered to a certain degree.

In addition, Li Auto's active communication and transparent response to the public's concerns were widely praised in the early stages. However, Li Auto's PR strategy changed dramatically in the later stages. He maintained a silent attitude and even deleted some netizens' comments, which led to a sharp decline in his reputation. The release of the driving recorder data in the third and fourth stages also raised some concerns about privacy security, causing some netizens to question Li Auto's motives. For example, some netizens said, "I want to know, does the car company have the right to release specific figures before the police have announced it?" and "I feel a little scared to buy your car after you released such details. Maybe the police should announce it." Li Auto's silence in the later stages and his deletion of netizens' comments further exacerbated the negative public opinion, leading to a reversal of his reputation from recovery to destruction.

In the Crisis Management Period, NIO's two PR responses only mentioned that the accident was "not related to the vehicle itself" and did not offer any compensation to the families of the deceased or show any due corporate care. This statement was criticized by many netizens, who pointed out that NIO's response was too cold-blooded and showed a lack of concern and responsibility for the incident. In the Crisis Continuation Period, NIO's PR director, Ma Lin, made a wrong PR statement in the car owner circle - "The navy can't bring me down". His wrong attitude once again triggered discussions among netizens and the downward trend of communication that had already appeared fluctuated again. Under NIO's wrong PR attitude, its reputation continued to deteriorate.

As Chung et al. (2013) said brand attitudes positively and strongly relate to customers' activity toward a brand, and brand attitudes are likely to be a strong precursor of customer activity. Business relationship is not a weaker, but the stronger predictor of brand attitudes and customer activity (p. 433). These overall suggest we should maintain a positive attitude.

### 6.3 Prior PR Connections: The Catalyst for Reputation Revival

As Wang and Chao (2015) stated, it is not a company's emergency PR response during a crisis that affects consumer attitudes, but rather the cumulative impact of various activities that the company has undertaken to fulfill its social responsibility obligations before the crisis occurs - the degree of emotional connection between the company and the public (p. 104). This means that if a company has had a crisis scandal or negative label in the past, it is likely to exacerbate the public's negative emotions towards the company when a new crisis breaks out. The public will associate past negative events and negative impacts with the current situation.

In the Tesla Shanghai female car owner's rights protection incident, the public criticized Tesla's previous scandal events, leaving these comments, example, "Tesla often loses control and burns spontaneously. "So many accidents have happened and why so many people buy it? ", or "Tesla has caught fire, and why so many people still buy it?"

In the NIO Shanghai test car falling from the building incident, the public made negative comments based on the previous scandals of "That is the boss who did not return the departing fuel vehicles ", "This is the brand said gasoline cars have no future...", and "The entrepreneur who drove NIO died before, have you forgotten?"

After the Ideal Qingyuan accident, the public used the negative label "big TV" to mock Ideal Motors, such as "the TV is still on after the ideal accident", "the refrigerator and TV are still on", and "the big sofa is usable" The public used the negative label "big TV" to mock Ideal Motors because the Ideal One SUV has a large central screen that is similar to a TV. The public's comments reflect their dissatisfaction with Ideal Motors' design and safety issues.

Weiting (2018) pointed out in the study that enterprises that have formed a positive image in the minds of the public tend to believe the views of enterprises when a crisis breaks out and have a strong buffering effect (p. 830). On the contrary, enterprises that the public has doubts about will immediately turn to a negative attitude when a crisis breaks out. Therefore, when enterprises are in daily operation and dealing with crisis events, they should consider from a long-term perspective, establish a positive corporate image, form a good buffer zone, establish good feelings with the public, and try to eliminate the impact of negative label events on future business activities.

#### 6.4 A Cyclical Change Assessments after Failed Strategies

From Table 10, after a failed PR strategy, the nature of the comment changes periodically, it can be reversed that the crisis management stage of corporate PR can be divided into two steps: Emotional reputation decline to cognitive reputation decline.

Table 10. Periodic Changes: The Result of the Calculation of the Interconversion

	<b>Crisis Management Period</b>	<b>Crisis Continue Period</b>	<b>Crisis Recovery Period</b>
Tesla	<b>100% converted to emotional negative assessments.</b>	<b>91.9% converted to cognitive negative assessments</b>	50% converted to emotionally negative assessments
NIO	<b>91.9% converted to emotional assessments</b>	<b>78.2% converted to cognitive negative assessments</b>	100% converted to emotional negative assessments
Li Auto	100% converted to cognitive non-negative assessments	100% converted to emotional negative assessments	<b>100% converted to cognitive negative assessments</b>

Note. Areas where the pattern is particularly pounced.

According to Quattrone's (1982) anchor adjustment model, people will quickly form preliminary judgments based on partial information and constantly make corrections and/or additional explanations as information is continuously supplemented (p. 100). This process is a way of shifting from emotional to cognitive processing. This feature means that the public's evaluation of the initial crisis information may be an emotional response, and this emotional response will be followed by a certain cognitive process, which will continue to interact with the emotional response (Lu & Huang, 2018, p. ). This is consistent with the cyclical changes found in this study. The four discrete emotions of anger, fear, anxiety, and sadness will immediately appear after a failed PR strategy. As companies and the media continue to disclose relevant information, people's cognitive assessments will increase to a certain extent when they make judgments based on the information they have learned. However, Lu & Huang pointed out that the public's emotional experience is often affected by the framing effect of the initial crisis information. Therefore, once the initial crisis response fails, the negative impact will continue, and even if the information gap is continuously filled, the converted evaluation will still be mainly negative.

During the management of the crisis, Tesla's vice president's strong denial attitude caused public opinion to ferment. A total of 25 cognitive comments turned into emotional comments, and all the transformed comments were 100% negative emotional assessments. The emotional comments all contained strong emotions of dissatisfaction, such as "Get out of China" or "Is this Tesla's attitude towards handling things?". Although Tesla released relevant data and pointed out that there was a team operating behind the female car owner during the Crisis Continue Period, it still failed to reverse 91.9% of the transformed comments into cognitive negative evaluations and failed to become effective non-negative evaluations.

After the public opinion was fermented, in the crisis management stage, NIO only issued a statement and announcement, and the announcement contained the cold-blooded statement that "this accident has nothing to do with the product", which caused strong anger among netizens. Its failure to fulfill its social responsibilities led to 77 cognitive assessments turning into emotional negative evaluations, accounting for 92% of the transformed evaluations. Later, even in the transition from the Crisis Management Period to the Crisis Continue Period, some media disclosed that the tragedy was caused by driver error, but even after people learned the relevant information, 78.2% of the new comments given to NIO were still cognitive negative evaluations in the Crisis Continue Period.

Li Auto adopted a silent strategy when public opinion was fermented about the "privacy leak". It allowed the wrong information frame to form on its own, resulting in all 11 cognitive comments turning into 100% negative emotional comments. The related keywords were "whoever buys Li Auto has no privacy". In the Crisis Recovery Period, it continued to maintain the wrong way of silence. Even though some of the public calmly made excuses for Li Auto, 100% of the transformed comments were still negative.

It can be seen from this that the wrong PR response method will immediately cause a strong negative emotional reaction. In this context, with the development of time and events, and the continuous supplementation of information, the number of cognitive assessments will increase, but the negative ones will still be the main ones.

## 7. Conclusion

### 7.1 Major Findings

The three companies had different strategies in each of the four reputation repair phases, with that there are four major findings.

Firstly, a timely respond is crucial for the respond speed. Secondly, when a corporation face a crisis, remaining a positive attitude is essential. Thirdly, the prior PR connection effect the process of reputation rebuilding. Fourthly, the cyclical change after failed strategies deeply tighten the reputation rebuilding process, the cyclical change is from Emotional reputation decline to cognitive reputation decline.

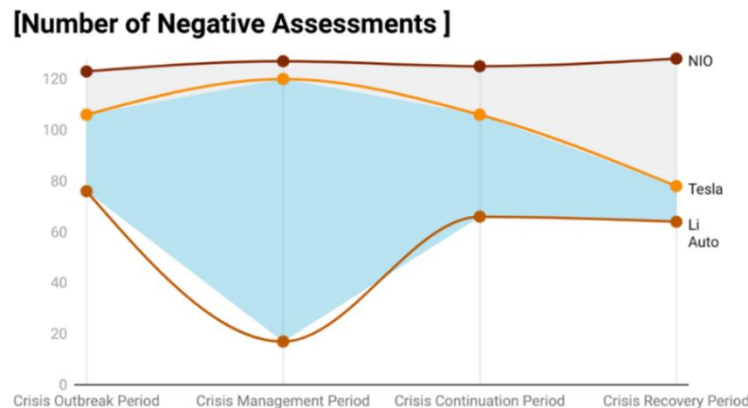


Figure 2. The Status of Corporate Reputation Repair at Four Periods

Description: Number of Negative Assessments=Extent of Corporate Reputation Damage

In summary, enterprises in the face of a PR crisis, at all stages, should maintain a positive proactive strategy. The Proactive Strategy can be viewed from two perspectives.

In the short term, before public opinion ferments or at the beginning of a crisis, companies should respond as soon as possible or make a PR response in advance (stealing thunder strategy) to shorten the information gap and alleviate negative emotions such as public anxiety. In addition, companies should also take a positive attitude, show empathy and humane care, and be a warm-hearted company.

In addition, in a long-term process. Companies should actively fulfill their corresponding social responsibilities in their daily operations and when dealing with crisis events, build a good emotional buffer zone, and minimize the impact of possible future crisis events on corporate reputation.

### 7.2 Limitations

This study has some notable limitations that may affect its comprehensiveness and reliability.

First, the sample size is significantly insufficient. We chose a relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the research results. Diversity is essential in the new media environment, hence a larger sample size may lead to higher research significance.

Second, my sample cases already had a poor reputation before the crisis. There is a lack of companies with a good reputation for comparison. This limitation may lead to bias in the research results because we failed to fully consider the differences between companies with different reputation levels, which limits our comprehensive understanding of the overall industry situation.

## 8. Future Prospects

Future research could be conducted in several directions to deepen the understanding of crisis communication in the new energy industry.

First, Despite the existence of relatively mature PR methods or suggestions both domestically and internationally, many companies still make obvious mistakes when responding to PR crises. The reasons and motivations behind this are worth studying. Whether PR costs and corporate brand image are the main factors, and whether we can learn about the pain points of corporate PR from this, can help companies improve PR efficiency and reduce the impact of crisis outbreaks.

Second, the phenomenon that cognitive assessment is highly susceptible to shift to negative emotional assessment after a PR failure deserves further study. By digging deeper into the mechanism of the shift from cognitive assessment to negative emotional assessment, the study can focus on the formation process of emotional assessment to reveal the correlation between PR failure on cognition and affect.

Finally, a study of the effectiveness of the Stealing Thunder strategy in the new energy industry will help to understand whether strategies that emphasize positive corporate crisis facing can produce positive results in a complex and uncertain industry environment. The in-depth analysis of successful cases can provide new energy companies with targeted suggestions to enhance their crisis communication capabilities in times of crisis.

### **Acknowledgments**

Not applicable.

### **Authors contributions**

Mr. Lin and Mr. Chen were responsible for study design and revising. Mr. Lin drafted the manuscript and Mr. Chen revised it. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

### **Funding**

Not applicable.

### **Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

### **Informed consent**

Obtained.

### **Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Redfame Publishing.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

### **Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

### **Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

### **Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

### **Open access**

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

### **Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

**References**

- Arpan, L. M., & Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R. (2005). Stealing Thunder: Analysis of the effects of proactive disclosure of crisis information. *PR Review*, 31(3), 425–433. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2005.05.003>
- Bao, T. (2017). Ways of realizing the discourse right of Marxist ideology in the new media era. *Ideological and Political Education Research*, 33(4), 110-113. <https://doi.org/10.15938/j.cnki.iper.2017.04.023>.
- Claeys, A., & Cauberghe, V. (2012). Crisis response and crisis timing strategies are two sides of the same coin. *PR Review*, 38(1), 83–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.09.001>
- Chao, G., Shi, D., Shen, C., & Wang, L. (2015). A Study on the Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Reputation Repair in the New Media Era. *Chinese Journal of Management*, 12(11), 1678. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1672-884x.2015.11.015>.
- Chung, J. Y., Lee, J., & Heath, R. L. (2013). PR aspects of brand attitudes and customer activity. *PR Review*, 39(5), 432–439. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2013.05.001>
- Du, G., Shao, H., & Lu, Y.. (2009). Corporate Crisis Communication Management in the New Media Environment. *Modern Communication: Journal of Communication University of China*, (3), 110-113. <https://doi.org/10.19997/j.cnki.xdcb.2009.03.033>.
- Dyck, A., & Zingales, L. (2004). Private Benefits of Control: an international comparison. *The Journal of Finance*, 59(2), 537–600. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6261.2004.00642.x>
- Fang, F., Jiang, M., Yang, Y., & Li, W. (2010). A Study of the Impact of Product Injury Crisis Response Strategies on Brand Equity - The Moderating Role of Corporate Reputation and Crisis Type. *Management World*, (12), 105-118. <https://doi.org/10.19744/j.cnki.11-1235/f.2010.12.011>.
- Fjeld, K., & Molesworth, M. (2006b). PR practitioners' experiences of, and attitudes towards, the internet's contribution to external crisis communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 11(4), 391–405. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280610713860>
- Fink, S. (1989). *Crisis Management: planning for the inevitable*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB04567812>
- Freeman, R. E. (2015). *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139192675>
- Fearn-Banks, K. (2016) *Crisis Communication: A Casebook Approach* (5th Ed.). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315684857>
- Hatfield, E., Carpenter, M., & Rapson, R. L. (2014). Emotional contagion as a precursor to collective emotions. *Collective emotions: Perspectives from psychology, philosophy, and sociology*, 108-122. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199659180.003.0008>
- Hill, L. N., & White, C. (2000). PR practitioners' perception of the world wide web as a communications tool. *PR Review*, 26(1), 31–51. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0363-8111\(00\)00029-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0363-8111(00)00029-1)
- Jin, M., & Zhan, Y. (2014). Crisis PR Advertising and Public Attitude Change in the KFC Instant Chicken Incident: A Content Analysis Based on Sina Weibo. *Collected Essays on Finance and Economics*, 184(8), 70-77. <https://doi.org/10.13762/j.cnki.cjlc.2014.08.010>.
- Kim, S., & Hovy, E. (2004). Determining the sentiment of opinions. *COLING 2004: Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Computational Linguistics*, 1367–1373. <https://doi.org/10.3115/1220355.1220555>
- Kramer, A. D. I., Guillory, J., & Hancock, J. T. (2014). Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 111(24), 8788–8790. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1320040111>
- Liao, X. (2008). What is New Media?. *Modern Communication: Journal of Communication University of China*, (5), 121-125. <https://doi.org/10.19997/j.cnki.xdcb.2008.05.039>.
- Liu, B.F., Austin, L. and Jin, Y. (2011). 'How publics respond to crisis communication strategies: The interplay of information form and source', *PR Review*, 37(4), 345–353. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.08.004>
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). Conflict, frustration, and the theory of threat. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 38(1), 81–86. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054634>



- Miller, G. A., Beckwith, R., Fellbaum, C., Gross, D., & Miller, K. (1990). Introduction to WordNet: an on-line lexical database\*. *International Journal of Lexicography (Online)/International Journal of Lexicography*, 3(4), 235–244. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijl/3.4.235>
- Navarro, C., Moreno, Á., Molleda, J. C., Khalil, N., & Verhoeven, P. (2020). The challenge of new gatekeepers for PR. A comparative analysis of the role of social media influencers for European and Latin American professionals. *PR Review*, 46(2), 101881. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101881>
- Nagpal, S., & Gupta, G. (2023). Impact of Pandemic Communication on Brand-specific Outcomes: Testing the Moderating Role of Brand Attitude and Product Category. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 18(3), 257-273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09732586211067840>
- Quattrone, G. A. (1982). Overattributing and unit formation: When behavior engulfs the person. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 42(4), 593–607. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.42.4.593>
- Rindova, V. P., Petkova, A. P., & Kotha, S. (2007). Standing out: how new firms in emerging markets build reputation. *Strategic Organization*, 5(1), 31–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127006074389>
- Schaltegger, S., Hörisch, J., & Freeman, R. E. (2017). Business Cases for Sustainability: A Stakeholder Theory Perspective. *Organization & Environment*, 32(3), 191–212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026617722882>
- Self, C. C. (2010b). Hegel, Habermas, and Community: The Public in the new Media era. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 4(2), 78–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15531181003704651>
- Singh, J., & Crisafulli, B. (2020). ‘Corporate image at stake’: The impact of crises and response strategies on consumer perceptions of corporate brand alliances. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 839-849. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.01.014>
- Tao, H., & Wei, H. (2016). A Study on the Impact of Ray Grabbing Strategy on Brand Crisis Repair Effect - Moderating Role of Brand Crisis Type and Brand Reputation. *Nankai Business Review*, 19(3), 77-88. CNKI:SUN:LKGP.0.2016-03-008.
- Siomkos, G. J., Triantafillidou, A., Vassilikopoulou, A., & Tsiamis, I. (2010). Opportunities and threats for competitors in product - harm crises. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 28(6), 770 - 791. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02634501011078156>
- Shim, K., & Yang, S. (2016). The effect of bad reputation: The occurrence of crisis, corporate social responsibility, and perceptions of hypocrisy and attitudes toward a company. *PR Review*, 42(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.11.009>
- Tao, W. (2018). How Consumers’ Pre-Crisis Associations and Attitude Certainty Impact Their Responses addto Different Crises. *Communication Research*, 45(6), 815-839. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650217733361>
- Thelwall, M., & Kappas, A. (2014). *In Collective Emotions* (pp. 375-388). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199659180.003.0025>
- Van Der Meer, T. G., Verhoeven, P., Beentjes, H., & Vliegenthart, R. (2014b). When frames align: The interplay between PR, news media, and the public in times of crisis. *PR Review*, 40(5), 751–761. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.07.008>
- Wang, X., Chao, G., & Wu, J. (2006). Impact of Product Injury Crisis and Its Handling Process on Consumer Consideration Sets. *Management World*, (5), 86-95. <https://doi.org/10.19744/j.cnki.11-1235/f.2006.05.011>.
- Wang, G., & Chao, G. (2015). A Study on the Impact of CSR Behaviour on Consumer Attitudes in Product Crisis Situations. *Modern Management Science*, (11), 103-105. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1007-368X.2015.11.034>.
- Wiesenfeld, B. M., Wurthmann, K., & Hambrick, D. C. (2008). The Stigmatization and Devaluation of Elites Associated with Corporate Failures: A Process Model. *Academy of Management Review*, 33(1), 231–251. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2008.27752771>
- Weiss, A. M., Anderson, E., & MacInnis, D. J. (1999). Reputation management as a motivation for sales structure decisions. *Journal of marketing*, 63(4), 74-89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299906300407>
- Xiao, Y., & Lu, Y. (2016). A Study on the Relationship between Consumer Innovativeness and New Energy Vehicle Adoption Behaviour under the Preference Stratification Perspective. *Science and Technology Management Research*, 36(24), 247-254. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-7695.2016.24.042>.
- Xiong, Y., & Chen, M. (2016). Policy Orientation for Cultivating the Demand Market for New Energy Vehicles: Supply Side or Demand Side. *China Population, Resources and Environment*, (5), 129-137.

<https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-2104.2016.05.016>.

- Xiong, Y., & Zhang, Z. (2023). Political Affiliation Preferences of Chinese New Energy Vehicle Enterprises and Their Impact on Reputational Investment. *Management Review*, 35(1), 222-232. doi:10.14120/j.cnki.cn11-5057/f.2023.01.013.
- Xue, K., Xiong, W., & Yu, M. (2008). Brand Crisis Management Strategies in a Complex Network Environment. *Shenzhen University Journal(Humanities & Social Sciences)*, 25(5), 90-95. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-260X.2008.05.017>.
- Yu, P., Jian, Z., Yang, D., Xiaobin, L., & Xu, T. (2019). The Evolution of China's New Energy Vehicle Industry from the Perspective of a Technology–Market–Policy Framework. *Sustainability*, 11(6), 1711. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11061711>
- Yao, N., Wei, J., Zhu, W., & Bondar, A. (2018). The quicker, the better. The antecedents and consequences of response timing strategy in the aftermath of a corporate crisis. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 14(1), 19–38. <https://doi.org/10.1108/bjm-06-2017-0185>