

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION DURING A REPUTATION
CRISIS
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF LEBANESE FOOD
ESTABLISHMENTS' CRISIS RESPONSE

by
DIALA JIHAD DAOUD

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
August 16, 2018

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION DURING A REPUTATION
CRISIS

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF LEBANESE FOOD
ESTABLISHMENTS' CRISIS RESPONSE


by
DIALA JIHAD DAOUD

Approved by:



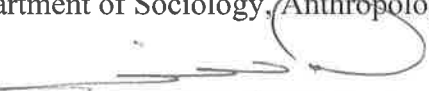
Dr. Nadine Yehya, Assistant Professor
Suliman S. Olayan School of Business

Advisor



Dr. Nabil Dajani, Professor
Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies

Member of Committee



Dr. Imad Baalbaki, Vice President of Advancement
Suliman S. Olayan School of Business

Member of Committee

Date of thesis defense: August 16, 2018

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THESIS, DISSERTATION, PROJECT RELEASE FORM

Student Name: Daoud Diala Jihad
Last First Middle

Master's Thesis Master's Project Doctoral Dissertation

I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

I authorize the American University of Beirut, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes

after:

One ---- year from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.

Two ---- years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.

Three ---- years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.



Signature

20/8/2018

Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

After months of hard work, I am thrilled to see this thesis come to light. This thesis with its research and writing would have never been able to see light without the guidance of my thesis advisor. Now, I would like to take a moment to thank her for standing there by my side and for guiding me throughout the whole process. I want to also thank my other thesis committee members who were of great support. Another major pillar to this thesis were the interviewees. I cannot but thank each one of them for their insight that was of an added value to the research. On a personal level, I would like to extend my recognition and gratitude to my family members who have always been there for me, giving me all the love and support, and helping me get where I am today. Last but not least, I should not cease to thank my dear cousin Dana B. Daoud and partner Tamim N. Daoud for their massive support, help, and backing even in my worst times and tempers.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Diala Jihad Daoud for Master of Arts
Major: Media Studies

Title: Corporate Communication During a Reputation Crisis: A Critical Analysis of Lebanese Food Establishments' Crisis Response

The Lebanese food industry, especially restaurants and food vendors, witnessed an unprecedented reputational risk in 2014. The Ministry of Health headed by Mr. Wael Abou Faour initiated a food safety national campaign that would name and shame all establishments that do not meet the food safety guidelines. This campaign created an uproar and a national scare. It resulted in food vendor closures and in tarnished reputation of many famous brands. This thesis investigates this phenomenon by looking at the impact it had on businesses and on their level of preparedness to face reputational crises. This work is anchored in Situational Crisis Communication Theory and it relied on crisis management literature and multiple research methods to understand (1) the different online social media communication strategies Lebanese food establishments followed during the 2014 crisis, (2) how different stakeholders construct the crisis strategies followed by Lebanese food establishments, (3) and the role the media played, specifically the press, in projecting different voices, in covering, and in framing this crisis. Towards these aims, I conducted a qualitative content analysis of the social media posts of three famous Lebanese brands affected by the 2014 food safety campaign; Roadster Diner, Kababji, and Crepaway. The content analysis entailed Facebook posts and Instagram images shared by the chosen three food establishments. This analysis uncovered how shy the social media communication was of these three establishments, which signals lack of honesty and openness, how the three establishments were not consistent nor adequately communicating with their publics throughout the crisis, and how some took too long to communicate with their concerned publics. I also conducted personal interviews with key stakeholders. A total of 18 participants were interviewed from both the public and private sectors. Lastly, I conducted thematic analysis of 288 Lebanese press articles published between the 3rd of October, 2014 and the 31st of January, 2015. Using thematic analysis, I identified five main themes, namely attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality. This thesis holds great contribution to the literature on crisis communication and what we know about the Lebanese media coverage of food safety crises. The originality and value of this study is in it (1) tapping on one of the topics scarcely researched in the middle east and the Arab region and in (2) presenting a comprehensive overview of the 2014 crisis communication and the different stakeholders' perspectives and expectations of this crisis and its handling. The thesis is an attempt to bring Lebanese establishments a research-based crisis communication approach they can use as a future resource in handling any unforeseen crisis and a humble attempt to help improve the general Lebanese corporate communications scene.

Keywords: food safety, product-harm, reputation crisis, crisis communication, Lebanon.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
A. Putting Things in Action: How to Handle a Crisis?.....	8
1. Coombs and Weiner’s Model 2007	8
a. Pre-crisis phase	8
b. Management plan/crisis response phase	10
c. Post-crisis phase	11
2. Hiltz, Diaz, & Mark’s Model	12
B. How to Communicate a Crisis?	12
1. Media Relations and Channels	14
2. Other Means of Communication	16
C. Connecting the Dots	18
D. Theoretical Framework	19
1. Image Repair Theory (IRT)	19
2. Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)	21
3. Attribution Theory	23
4. Media Framing Theory	24
III. METHODOLOGY	26

A. Design	26
1. Personal Interviews	26
2. Thematic Analysis of Media coverage	28
3. Content Analysis of Social Media Communication	29
B. Procedure	29
1. Personal Interviews	29
2. Thematic Analysis of Media coverage	30
3. Content Analysis of Social Media Communication	32
IV. FINDINGS	33
A. Interviews' Findings	33
1. Crisis in perspective	33
2. How do various stakeholders define a crisis?	34
3. How important, serious, & personally relevant was the witnessed crisis?	36
4. Who is to be held responsible?	39
5. Lebanese corporate communications scene	41
6. Relationship with the media	41
7. Crisis communication handling, education, and preparedness	43
8. How to better handle a crisis? - from stakeholders' point of view	49
9. Can a crisis be perceived as an opportunity?	54
B. Thematic Press Articles Analysis' Findings	56
1. Attribution of responsibility	56
2. Conflict	60
3. Human Interest	64
4. Economic Consequences	66
5. Morality	67
C. Social Media Text Content Analysis' Findings	69
V. DISCUSSION	75
A. Interviews' Findings	75
B. Thematic Press Articles Analysis' Findings	77
1. Attribution of responsibility	77
2. Conflict	78
3. Human interest, economic consequences and morality	79

C. Social Media Text Content Analysis' Findings	80
VI. CONCLUSION	85
Appendix	
I. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	88
II. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL WITH FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS	90
III. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL WITH CUSTOMERS	93
IV. CONSENT DOCUMENT	95
V. PACKET FOR ROADSTER DINER FACEBOOK	99
VI. PACKET FOR ROADSTER DINER INSTAGRAM	107
VII. PACKET FOR KABABJI FACEBOOK	112
VIII. PACKET FOR KABABJI INSTAGRAM.....	113
IX. PACKET FOR CREPAWAY FACEBOOK.....	114
X. PACKET FOR CREPAWAY INSTAGRAM	116
REFERENCES	117

TABLES

Table	Page
List of all interviewed stakeholders	28
How important, serious, and personally relevant was the witnessed crisis?	38

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The year 2014 was not an ordinary year for Lebanese food establishments. For the first time in Lebanese history, the Ministry of Health detonated a bomb – “*Fajjarat Qnbola*” – as the Lebanese press reported (Annahar, 2014). On November 11, the ministry announced a set of rules and procedures it requested all Lebanese food establishments to abide by (Ghanem, 2015). The announcement included specifications the ministry promised to regularly inspect in terms of water supply networks, wastewater removal methods, solid waste elimination, pest control practices, cleanness of bathrooms and their situation in regards to the kitchens, composition of equipment and utensils used, conditions for delivering and storing raw materials, and conditions for freezing and refrigerating food products (Ghanem, 2015). Based on these specifications, Lebanese food establishments got labeled by the ministry as “conforming” or “nonconforming.” Simultaneously, a name and shame approach was followed as the assigned labels and lists were widely circulated by the ministry and media outlets throughout the whole country.

Each industry may have its own kind of crises. For the food industry, which is the most prone as Mrs. Leila Khauli, a Communication Consultant and a Marketing Lecturer at the Olayan School of Business at the American University of Beirut, affirms the worst crisis lies in confronting an epidemic and/or a food safety crisis (p.c., January 9, 2017). According to the European Food Safety Authority’s (EFSA) identifiers, on the 2014 Lebanese health campaign was one of the worst crises a food establishment can encounter – a food or feed safety incident – for a variety of reasons. For the whole

campaign's period, the word “مطابق,” which refers to the abidance and conformity of establishments to the food safety rules outlined by the Ministry of Health, swiped the Lebanese streets and media platforms. The word was even used out of context throughout the whole country. To add, the campaign entailed a significant public health risk, as Lebanon witnessed food poisoning incidents (Shoufi, 2014) and a large scale of products got affected (Shoufi, 2014).

“Mistakes happen; that is fine as long as they are new mistakes,” said Mr. Martin Asser, the Associate Vice President for Communications at the American University of Beirut (p.c., December 29, 2016). Throughout its operations, an establishment is expected to commit mistakes and this is natural. However, an establishment is not presumably at a good position should it commit the same mistake twice, or else should this mistake catch excessive media and public attention (p.c.). In fact, according to Weiner (2006), what makes any happening get labeled as a crisis is the fact that it drives intense media attention to it (2006). In such cases, the mistake turns into a reputation crisis, and if not properly managed, it can wipe away decades of hard work and company value (Condit, 2014). Not only this, a crisis can harm brand equity (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000), harm stakeholders, cause losses to the establishment, and even bring it to the very end of its existence (Coombs, 2007). Given there was a mistake Lebanese food establishments committed, and given the mistake caught excessive attention that made establishments subjects to public and media scrutiny, it becomes clear how the 2014 food safety campaign turned into a health and reputation crisis for the identified food establishments by the Ministry of Health.

At many instances, the development of an incident into a crisis is way beyond the reach and control of an establishment (Weiner, 2006), which is referred to as an

immediate crisis. At other instances, the risk can still be foreseen (Weiner, 2006), which is referred to as an emerging crisis. Reflecting on the 2014 food or feed safety incident Lebanese food establishments encountered, the Ministry of Health's listings of conforming and nonconforming food establishments was a risk food establishments could have foreseen. Lebanese food establishments could have avoided the listing all in all, should they have abided to fundamental food safety measures in the first place.

Given Lebanese food establishments failed to refrain themselves from falling into the trap of a reputation crisis back in 2014, and given research findings suggest that communication remains the most integral factor in determining the long-term effects of a crisis (Taylor & Perry, 2005, p. 210), there was a need to understand how communication was used by the various stakeholders to start, flare, control, and recover from the crisis. As of 2008, according to Gonzalez-Herrero and Smith (2008), crisis communications became integral in crisis handling. Unfortunately, strategic communication during crisis is still an emerging area of study (Thomas & Stephens, 2015). In fact, there is still a gap in knowledge and literature in terms of crisis communication and strategic communication, specifically in the Middle East and the Arab world (Thomas & Stephens, 2015). At the time literature explores many communication factors, aspects, and strategies, there is still a gap in the literature that local establishments can build on and translate into better crisis handling and communication (Roberts & Pettigrew, 2007).

To fill this gap, I initiated this study in an attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of the 2014 crisis communication, to give Lebanese food establishments a research-based crisis communication resource to use, and to bring improvements to the general Lebanese corporate communications scene. Through this thesis, I aspire to

answer the following research questions: (1) How did various stakeholders construct the crisis response used by Lebanese food establishments during the 2014 reputation crisis? (2) How did the Lebanese press frame the crisis and who were the main players covered by the Lebanese press? (3) Taking three food establishments as case studies, what were the social media communication strategies employed by Lebanese food establishments as they confronted the product-harm crisis in 2014?

In pursuit of filling this gap, in the second chapter I start by reviewing related literature to the course of this thesis' study. I mainly focus on Coombs & Weiner's and Hiltz, Diaz, & Mark's models for crisis handling. From there I proceed to tackle practical advice of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for selecting proper means of crisis communication. In terms of theoretical framework, I choose to rely on two main crisis communication theories that are image repair theory and situational crisis communication theory, and on one media framing theory. In the third chapter, I discuss the methodology I followed in this thesis, which relied on personal interviews, thematic analysis of media coverage, and content analysis of social media communication. In the fourth chapter, I tackled the findings I arrived at after employing the three mentioned research methods. Through the conducted interviews and based on the insight I received from my interviewees, I put the crisis in perspective starting by assessing how various stakeholders define a crisis; how important, serious, and personally relevant they considered the 2014 crisis; the party they hold responsible for the crisis; and the general Lebanese corporate communications scene. I end my interviews' findings reflecting on the stakeholders' assessment of the best means to handle a crisis and on whether they think a crisis can be perceived as an opportunity or not. Through the conducted thematic press articles analysis findings, I discuss the

content I analyzed and the way I extracted the five themes from the press articles. Through the conducted social media text content analysis' findings, I reflect on the images and posts the three establishments of this thesis published on their public Facebook and Instagram handles. In my fifth chapter, I discuss the findings I arrived at and relate them to the general Lebanese context. In my sixth chapter, I conclude this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Seeger et al. (1998) defined crises as "specific, unexpected, and non-routine events or series of events," which leave an organization's goal with perceived uncertainty or threat (p. 231). A crisis can have many forms: it can be natural, man-made, technological, confrontational, organizational, managerial, environmental, among others (Weiner, 2006). Taking the word "crisis" back to its Chinese origin (wei ji), the term is a combination of two words that stand for danger and opportunity (Brockner & James, 2008). In spite of the negative implications a crisis can leave establishments with, research and earlier practices suggest that establishments can still perceive a crisis as an opportunity. For sure, having a crisis as opportunity mindset is not given for establishments and executives (Brockner & James). With practice, crisis managers start to agree that a crisis should be considered a learning experience, instead of solely being considered a defeat and burden (Coombs, 2007).

Although a crisis might signal a little beam of opportunity, it remains unexpected and not favored for an establishment to pull itself into a crisis, seizing this opportunity. It is only the establishment that succeeds in weathering a crisis that is to cherish this opportunity (Brockner & James, 2008). The narrower the scope of the crisis and the less the establishment is seen as responsible of the happening, the more the establishment is to perceive the crisis as a learning experience (Brockner & James). As supported by research, a surpassed crisis leaves an establishment with numerous gains; some organizational heroes are to catch the spotlight, changes are to accelerate, latent problems are to be faced, new strategies are to get in action, and early crisis detection

system is to develop (Burnett, 1998). To add, a well-managed crisis usually leaves stakeholders with a positive impression and a strengthened trust in the establishment that confronted the crisis (Brockner & James, 2008).

However; a question prevails here. Once an establishment confronts a crisis, how should it act?

A. Putting Things in Action: How to Handle a Crisis?

In practice, many factors get in play when an establishment proceeds to set its strategies, to handle, and to communicate a confronted crisis. Of the many advised strategies establishments can follow are those of Coombs and Weiner (2007), and Hiltz, Diaz, & Mark (2011).

1. Coombs and Weiner's model 2007

Even before confronting a threatening crisis, Coombs and Weiner advise establishments to effectively act, so to avoid all the possible harm a crisis might cause the establishment. The two researchers suggest three phases for crisis management and communication; *pre-crisis*, *crisis response*, and *post-crisis* phases.

a. Pre-crisis phase

The first phase *Pre-crisis* is the phase of prevention and preparation. During this phase an establishment takes preventive measures before a crisis hits (Coombs, 2007). To start with, an establishment is to never underestimate the possibility of confronting a crisis, regardless how successful the business is running. On the contrary, as part of its *Organization's Risk Management Program*, an establishment needs to anticipate a crisis and take precautions measures. Establishments need to set a crisis management plan (CMP), plan for the worst outcome and hope for the best, pinpoint and train a crisis management team, and test various scenarios and approaches to handle the crisis

(Weiner, 2006). In terms of communication, establishments need to establish a contact log for all media and third parties' inquiries, anticipate likely tough and even offensive media reactions and questions, identify and train spokespersons to speak in one voice as an establishment, and finally test the set plan and establish a monitoring system for both traditional and social media (Weiner, 2006). In terms of the crisis management team, the team is to mainly encompass the establishment's senior executives of public relations practitioners, legal consultants and lawyers, information security specialists, operations managers, finance experts, and human resources personnel (Coombs). In terms of a CMP, according to Coombs, a crisis management plan (CMP) is

Reference tool, not a blueprint. A CMP provides lists of key contact information, reminders of what typically should be done in a crisis, and forms to be used to document the crisis response. A CMP is not a step-by-step guide to how to manage a crisis... updated at least annually... The organization should continue to function as normally as possible, leaving it to the crisis management team to contend with the crisis (Coombs, 2007).

As advised by Weiner (2006), a good CMP is to encompass the following; the level of severity and criticality of the crisis and physical location of the “situation room” from where the crisis is to be managed. As for communication, a CMP is to list all names and contacts of outlined crisis management team and spokespeople to speak in the name of the establishment, dictate the initial response and message to disseminate – in addition to the response templates so to assure consistency of messages, – set monitoring and notifications system to use, and determine means of communication with stakeholders to follow (Weiner). Ideally, one spokesperson is to represent and act as the contact point for the establishment in crisis to insure consistency in the delivered messages (EFSA, 2016). Generally speaking, a spokesperson is an establishment's senior manager, senior scientist or senior communications professional (EFSA, 2016). While still having the management team on board and before any risk hits, an

establishment is to set its succession plan (Condit, 2014). This plan would list all necessary steps an establishment should follow should it find itself no longer able to proceed in business (Condit, 2014).

After setting its CMP, an establishment needs to identify all its internal and external stakeholders, who might be entitled by the crisis and who are definitely expected to be talking about the happening (Bernstein, 2016). Establishment's stakeholders generally include the government and concerned public offices, employees, customers, media, suppliers, and others. In order to better assess their emotional standing and their assessments of the crisis, an establishment is to try to walk through the user journey (Mesibov et al., 2016).

b. Management plan/crisis response phase

During the second phase; the crisis *management plan/crisis response* plan, both operational and communication components must be set. After a crisis hits, and after establishments set their CMP, during this phase, management must actually respond to the incident (Coombs, 2007). In the "initial response" stage, of the many tasks EFSA advises establishments to commit to, are those that directly pertain to establishment's communication approaches. An establishment is to equally communicate internally and externally; it is always a pitfall for establishments should their own employees get updates on a crisis or a happening from the media (Condit, 2014). Research further advises establishments to be the focal and primary point of communication and updates to all stakeholders (Condit, 2014). In order to better communicate with their concerned public, first, establishments need to be honest, open, quick, accurate, consistent, and to communicate all the time with their publics even if they have little updates to share (Coombs, 2007). Establishments need to watch out their tone and to be as sincere and as

direct as possible with all their stakeholders (Mesibov et al., 2016). In this realm, establishments are to issue a holding statement. A holding statement should mainly tackle three main questions: “What happened? How did it happen? And what are you doing about it?” (EFSA, 2016, p. 13). Upon drafting the holding statement, establishments need to share it with major stakeholders, translate it to different languages, circulate it in response to all possible inquiries that might reach the establishment, and regularly review and update it (EFSA, 2016).

Then, establishments should set their key messages. The establishment’s key messages are limited to three or four (EFSA, 2016). In these messages, establishments should not use any cliché or jargons (EFSA). Key messages are expected to be as simple and as practical as possible that they get consistently delivered to all stakeholders (EFSA). The messages need to summarize the essence of what the establishment intends to convey and are not to signal any type of speculation or blamer (EFSA). Most importantly, establishments need to make their key messages as transparent as possible in that they do not even attempt to hide the fact an establishment still lacks info and data of the happening (EFSA, p.12). Lastly, establishments need to identify, train, and prepare their spokespersons, to share the set holding statement and key messages, and to speak on behalf of the establishment. These are the main components of the communication approaches EFSA advises establishments to abide to during a crisis.

c. Post-crisis phase

As for the last phase of the crisis management; the *post-crisis* phase, during this phase the establishment is to return to its usual business operations and to try to better prepare itself for possible future crises (Coombs, 2007). In spite of the great efforts an

establishment might put into planning and into taking precautions, it can still find itself confronting a crisis, at least from time to time (Weiner, 2006). After undergoing a crisis, an establishment should gather all its efforts in an attempt to evaluate and assess the handling of the passed crisis; trying to figure out what worked and what needs improvement (Coombs). Through performing this step, establishment should seek new ways to improve prevention, preparation, and/or the response to crisis (Coombs, 2007).

Although the crisis is no longer the focal point of establishment's focus at this stage, establishments should still track the issue through monitoring blogs, online media, and other means of communication, at least for the month to come, as Gonzalez-Herrero and Smith advise (2008). Moreover, the entitled establishment is to still issue updates on its recovery process and the corrective actions it implemented (Coombs). No matter what, and as advised, establishments should never cease to communicate, especially during and after a crisis hits (Taylor & Perry, 2005). As such, establishments should deliver all the additional information they promised their public to deliver, should they have done so during the crisis, so not to jeopardize their publics' trust (Coombs). Upon compiling the recovery efforts, establishments are to submit a report to all stakeholders (Coombs, 2007).

This was the crisis management and communication model advised by Coombs and Weiner.

2. *Hiltz, Diaz, & Mark's Model*

Hiltz, Diaz, and Mark summarized Coombs and Weiner's phases in four main phases. For Hiltz, Diaz, and Mark (2011), a crisis management constitutes of mitigation, preparedness, response (that is commonly called emergency management), and recovery (Coombs & Weiner, 2011). The first phase; mitigation, refers to the pre-crisis actions

taken to identify and reduce risks (Hiltz et al., 2011). The second phase; Preparedness, refers to precautionary measures taken prior to a crisis. These measures enable emergency managers and the public to adequately react when a crisis actually takes place (Hiltz et al.). The third phase, response; refers to actions taken immediately in anticipation of an upcoming crisis, as well as during and after the happening (Hiltz et al.). In practice, this step proved to help reduce human and other possible losses (Hiltz, et al.). The fourth phase, recovery; is the phase that is sometimes never completed. This phase refers to returning organizational activities back to “normal” (Hiltz et al., 2011). This was the crisis management and communication model advised by Hiltz, Diaz, and Mark. In this thesis, I will focus on during the crisis stage and recovery stage.

B. How to Communicate a Crisis?

In order to formulate the establishment’s crisis communication strategies, an establishment should first outline whether the crisis is the result of an internal or an external organizational issue (Jin et al., 2011). Identifying the origin of the crisis is integral for determining the responsibilities of handling it. In point of fact, the crisis is usually defined by the underlying organizational infrastructure that directs whether the handling is to be done via a centralized or a localized manner (Jin et al.). To add, it has been shown that the more the public attributes a crisis to external factors, the more they are likely to accept establishment’s position and explanation (Jin et al., 2011). Throughout past responses, even defensive strategies have shown to be more appropriate in situations of establishment's weak control; such as natural disasters (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009). As such, the nature of the witnessed crisis has a direct effect on the communication strategy and approach an establishment is to follow.

Once an establishment proceeds to communicate its witnessed crisis, in order to guarantee a wider spread of information and to maximize communication outcomes, establishments are advised to communicate their crisis via all available means of communication; combining one-way and two-way communication strategies (Taylor & Perry, 2005). In our “media-saturated” world, a proper crisis communication plan cannot but entail reaching out the establishment’s stakeholders via the traditional offline as well as the trending online media.

1. Media Relations and Channels

Whether in times of crisis or not, establishments need good media relations. In fact, resources need to be invested in media relations during “peace times,” in preparation for the hard times (EFSA, 2012). The media, especially in time of crisis, can play a dual role. It can either help establishments deliver contending messages to what is generally being circulated or it can confront establishments with all the accusations directed to them. Contrary to what many establishments perceive, instead of them considering the media as their enemy, establishments need to respect the media’s role and try to collaborate with it rather than to avoid it (Weiner, 2006). As suggested by the EFSA (2012), of the many media relations establishments can invest in are the press and printed publications in terms of traditional offline media; and websites, digital publications, and social networking in terms of trending online media (2012, p. 20).

For long, establishments have considered the press as their primary means of communication and of reaching out their stakeholders. Times of crisis were no exception to this. Like any other type of media, investing in the press has both advantages and disadvantages. Of the common advantages are the ability of press to grant establishments a widespread of information. Of the common disadvantages, the

traditional media; specifically the press has been long accused of, are providing rumormongers a platform and a room for speaking, disseminating misrepresenting statistics, and distorting facts (Kjtzinger, 1999, p. 55). Moreover, journalists have been blamed for exaggerating risk, whipping up hysteria, and distorting reality in times of corporate crises (Kjtzinger, 1999, p. 55).

In terms of printed publications, EFSA advises establishments to invest in this type of media for a number of reasons. These reasons include; reaching specific target audiences with tailored messages and not being confined to time (2012, p. 22). Printed publications are specifically useful in geographical areas and countries where internet access is limited (EFSA, 2012, p. 22). Simultaneously, and for the same factors, the printed publications show to be inadequate in times of high risk and of urgent public health circumstances, as the publications cannot be issued on time (2012, p. 22). Just like the press, the printed publications have both advantages and disadvantages establishments need to consider before they invest in them during times of crisis (EFSA, 2012, p. 22).

In terms of websites, EFSA advises establishments to have a good website that gives the public a direct access to quality background information pertaining to the crisis (2012, p. 20). In parallel, and for internal communications, an intranet site can be a good investment too (Coombs, 2007). Of the other common advantages investing in a website grants establishments, are those that websites assist the spread of urgent public health announcements and updates pertaining to issues of high concern; offer different formats of electronic documents such as pdf, word, multimedia, and others (EFSA, 2012, p. 20). To add, websites fit all types and levels of risk and crisis; promote communication with a broad audience; allow easy update and addition of supplementary

information; and allow linking and connecting other sources and players (EFSA, p. 21). With all these advantages associated to investing in websites, it should still be noted that websites prove to be inappropriate at many instances; especially when they do not allow or facilitate the engagement with audience in a two-ways communication (EFSA, 2012, p. 21).

In terms of social networking, EFSA advises the investment in this type of media for the rapidity, simplicity, effectivity, and outreach of posts. Ever since their launch, social networking media were praised for the rapid and transparent sharing and circulation of information among interested parties and people (EFSA, p. 26). In spite of the availability of 24-hour television, radio, online newspapers and magazines coverages, the social networking sites still succeed in developing faster stories (EFSA, p. 25). In addition to allowing simple messages to reach a wide array of audiences, the social networks help effectively attach the online communities together to initiate discussions, which can later foster behavioral changes (EFSA, 2012, p. 26).

Last but not least, the social networks can provide a broad outreach to existing and new audiences (EFSA, 2012, p. 26). The means of inappropriateness of investing in social networking media, as pinpointed by EFSA, lie in the possible duplication of the content shared on the establishment's website (2012, p. 26). Social networking also appears inappropriate as they increase establishment's vulnerability to threat with the speedy sharing of untrustworthy content (Roshan et Al., 2016). These were the main advantages and disadvantages of using social networks during a crisis.

2. Other Means of Communication

During their crisis, in addition to the mediated means of communication establishments can resort to, they can always invest in interpersonal means of

communication. In their interpersonal communications, establishments can invest in meetings and workshops, public consultations, and partner/stakeholder networks (EFSA, 2012, p. 24).

In terms of meetings and workshops, establishments follow this means of communication when they attempt to engage the establishment with its key targeted audience, especially on the sensitive information and facts an establishment cannot share otherwise (EFSA, 2012). The meetings and workshops are appropriate for information sharing and discussions of the made decisions and other possible ones to-be made (EFSA). In light of the appropriate usage of this means of communication, it proves to be inappropriate at many instances, as they are inapplicable in reaching out a large number of people at various geographical areas (EFSA, 2012).

In terms of public consultations, this type of communication showed to be appropriate during times of crisis. Public consultations prove to be strong for their ability to facilitate dialogue among different stakeholders (EFSA, 2012). They are appropriate as they allow receiving a variety of perspectives pertaining to controversial or complex issues (EFSA). These perspectives that can be later used in the decision-making process (EFSA). As such, this type of media is followed when a message, before it being delivered to the public, requests testing (EFSA, 2012).

Lastly, establishments can resort to partner/stakeholder networks to listen to different perspectives and attitudes; as it assists establishments in understanding their environment (EFSA, 2012). The input generated from partner/stakeholder networks can later help shape the establishment's direction/priorities/work program (EFSA). In the same manner establishments will be extracting input from key partners and stakeholders, they will also be providing appropriate information to stakeholders on all

pressing current activities (EFSA, 2012). As such, this means of communication is a two-way means that engages establishments with their partners and stakeholders.

With the various available means and channels of communication establishments can follow, the audience and interest groups the establishment intends to reach remain the main factors that define which communication channel, tool, and type to use (EFSA, 2012). The applicability and employability of these means of communication by Lebanese food establishments during the 2014 reputation crisis will be assessed throughout this thesis study.

C. Connecting the Dots

This work has multiple aims including:

- to critically analyze and assess the social media communication strategies

Lebanese food establishments tend to employ during crises, by taking three main Lebanese food establishments (Crepaway, Roadsters Diner, and Kababji) as case studies for a specific food safety crisis witnessed in 2014.

- to also trace how different stakeholders construct the crisis
- to investigate the role of the Lebanese media, specifically the press, in covering the crisis and projecting different stakeholders' voices.

I chose the launch of a food safety campaign by the Lebanese Ministry of Health in 2014 and its corresponding reputation crisis as a case study for this thesis. There are three main contributions for the work: (1) presenting a comprehensive overview of the 2014 crisis communication and the different stakeholders' perspectives and expectations of this crisis and its handling, (2) tapping on one of the topics scarcely researched in the Middle East and the Arab region, (3) and to bring Lebanese establishments a research-based crisis communication approach they can use as a future resource in handling any

unforeseen crisis and a humble attempt to help improve the general Lebanese corporate communications scene. For this, the research questions raised for this thesis are:

RQ 1: How did various stakeholders construct the crisis response used by Lebanese food establishments during the 2014 reputation crisis?

RQ 2: How did the Lebanese press frame the crisis and who were the main players covered by the Lebanese press?

RQ 3: Taking three food establishments as case studies, what were the social media communication strategies employed by Lebanese food establishments as they confronted the product-harm crisis in 2014?

D. Theoretical Framework

In this study, to better capture the raised research questions, I assessed the applicability of two main crisis communication theories and one media theory to the Lebanese food establishments' responses/strategies and to the press coverage. The theories I chose for this thesis are image repair theory, situational crisis communication theory used in addition to the attribution theory, and media framing theory. These theories were purposefully selected for their direct relation and address to the raised research questions. The image repair theory and the situational crisis communication theory will help assess the social media communication strategies Lebanese food establishments employed throughout their 2014 crisis communication. Whereas, the media framing theory will help assess the way the Lebanese press framed the crisis and the main players it gave voice to during its crisis coverage, making them salient over others.

1. Image Repair Theory (IRT)

In our world today, the importance of image cannot be overstated. In terms of public relations, the image evolved into an essential role and a central concept today (Benoit, 1997). The image became one of the establishment's main assets that is not to be jeopardized. From here, image repair became an integral pillar to crisis communication and the image repair theory emerged (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009). First, for an incident to be labeled as an attack on the image of an establishment, two pillars should be present (Benoit). There should be an accused, a party to be held responsible for an action; and an act, which is considered offensive both as perceived by the audience and by the general public (Benoit). Second, in order to repair an image, there are five possible repair strategies; denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification (Benoit, 1997).

The first; denial, is the act of simple rejecting and of refusing all actions and responsibilities directed towards the establishment (Benoit, 1997). The second; evasion, is the act of shifting the blame or responsibilities attached to the establishment to another party (Benoit). To openly escape taking or rejecting responsibility, establishments generally follow this strategy (Claeys & Cauberghe, 2012). The third; reducing offensiveness, is the act of reducing the wrongdoing by the establishment (Benoit). Towards this end, establishments either try to strengthen audience's positive feelings instead of negative ones or try to minimize the negative feelings associated with the wrongful act (Benoit,). They can also try to employ differentiation in terms of separating the wrongful act from other similar acts, in an attempt to transcend it to a place of a more favorable context, or they can try to attack their accusers (Benoit,). The fourth; corrective action, is the act of initiating promises by the establishment to correct the wrongful act (Benoit). The fifth and the last; mortification, is the act of mere

confessing and begging for public's forgiveness (Benoit, 1997). In spite of its proved effectiveness, in past applications, image repair theory was not used in isolation (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009).

2. *Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)*

With the challenges posed by the technological advancements of this era, as publics became more participative and as spread of information became faster, crisis communication became more critical to establishments (Alicia, 2014). For long, PR practitioners used the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) framework to classify and respond to a variety of crisis situations (Alicia). This framework is functional in nature as it mainly focuses on the process of crisis communication, its end states, and attribution of crisis responsibility (Alicia). It links and incorporates the crisis types to specific crisis response strategies (Alicia). Unlike some categories of the Image Repair Theory, the SCCT stipulates that the threshold of an establishment's reputational threat and the crisis degree of accommodation or organizational acceptance are directly proportional (Alicia). Although an establishment is expected to take responsibilities for all its actions, research still suggested that a moderated sense of responsibility proves to be key (Alicia, 2014).

For Coombs (2007), SCCT can assist establishments in understanding the mechanisms of employing crisis communication so to protect their reputation during a crisis (Coombs). It does so as it helps establishments anticipate possible responses and reputation threats induced by stakeholders' reactions to a witnessed establishment crisis (Coombs). In its application, SCCT should take into consideration three main factors. The first factor is the initial crisis responsibility, which is determined as per the stakeholders' attributed responsibility to the establishment (Coombs). The second factor

is the crisis history (Coombs). Crisis history is whether or not an entitled establishment ever witnessed an identical crisis (Coombs). The third factor is the prior relational reputation (Coombs). Relational reputation is how good or bad an establishment has or was perceived by its general public to treat its corresponding stakeholders (Coombs). The crisis history of the establishment has a direct effect on the relational reputation as well (Coombs, 2007).

In its crisis communication, the SCCT generally follows four main strategies; denial, diminishing, rebuilding, and reinforcing (Coombs, 2007). Establishments resort to denial strategies the moment they claim the crisis does not exist; either through attacking the accuser, denying the incident, or scapegoating (Coombs, 2015). Denial strategy seeks to frame the crisis and remove all negative connections to the establishment (Coombs, 2007). Diminish strategy acts towards a similar end. Through diminish strategy, an establishment either responds with an excuse to limit the establishment's responsibility or with a separation and a disconnection of the establishment from all possible responsible parties of the occurrence (Coombs, 2015). Rebuild strategy aims to change perceptions of the establishment in crisis (Coombs, 2007). Rebuilding happens through presenting new positive information about the establishment that can counter all the old negative ones; through compensating all entitled victims of the crisis; or through apologizing and expressing regret for the happening (Coombs, 2007). Reinforce strategy tends to either bolster its great past standing and good deeds, ingratiate to praise its stakeholders, or victimize itself in light of the 2014 crisis (Coombs, 2015).

In spite of the applicability and advantages of implementing the SCCT strategies, this framework still has some drawbacks. Financial resource constraints

might stand as one of its limitations (Coombs, 2007). To add, the usage of these response strategies is usually subject to both the severity of the reputation threat and the attributed crisis responsibility to the establishment (Claeys & Cauberghe, 2012). When the threat is minor, offering objective information to its stakeholders might be sufficient for establishments to counter the faced crisis (Claeys & Cauberghe). However, if the threat is major, establishments are to better follow reputation restoring strategies (Claeys & Cauberghe, 2012).

3. Attribution Theory

Just like the Image Repair Theory, the SCCT is not used in isolation. With the SCCT another theory sets in play, which is the Attribution Theory. The attribution theory speculates that people generally tend to search for the causes of happening events around them; especially the sudden and the negative ones, in an attempt to understand them (Coombs, 2007). Usually, people tend to assign responsibility and blame of happenings either to situations the establishments are facing or to the establishments themselves (Coombs). Once they pinpoint the responsibilities for an incident, they start experiencing some emotional reactions, like anger or empathy towards the establishments (Coombs). These attributions of responsibility and generated emotions would later translate into motivations for action, affecting how people generally interact (Coombs). In practice, when anger is invoked and a party is judged responsible for a happening, his/her behavioral responses will escalate negatively (Coombs). The way attribution theory applies to crisis communication is through its link to the attributions of crisis responsibilities and the corresponding reputation, purchase intentions, and/or the negative word-of-mouth threats they raise (Coombs, 2007). This thesis will mainly focus on the interviewed stakeholders' attribution of the crisis responsibility.

4. Media Framing Theory

With the rise of mass media and the greater access to information it provided the public with, this type of media started to play an integral role in determining what matters the public is to think about. From here, research was initiated to address the role and effect of mass media on creating a national unity and on remodeling the public's attitude and opinion. Research suggested that media's positive framing usually shapes and elevates a public concern into a high priority issue that captures organization's concern and efforts (Muralidharan et. al, 2011). There, the media framing theory emerged.

At the core of this theory lies the mechanism through which the media presents its news to the public and through which it emphasizes and makes certain parts of the news story salient over others (Pedersen, 2017). The common patterns of inclusion and exclusion of certain news story pillars create the media frames that generally affect the news customers' attitude and perception regarding a given issue (Pedersen). Of the many common types of the *frames of emphasis* media can follow in its framing are those of issue-specific frames, generic frames, episodic frames, thematic frames, and strategic game frames (Pedersen). Issue specific frames are the inclusion and exclusion of specific issues (Pedersen). Generic frames are the inclusion and exclusion of general topics, incidents, or groups (Pedersen). Episodic frames are the full focus on one incident or topic like a crisis in an underprivileged rural area (Pedersen). Thematic frames are the focus on general incidents and topics like food poisoning incidents in the North or the South of Lebanon (Pedersen). Lastly, strategic game frames are the focus and highlights of politics as a game that is led by political gamers (Pedersen, 2017). Throughout the course of this thesis, I will assess the applicability of the different

frames of emphasis to the analysis of the Lebanese press articles published in 2014
(Muralidharan et. al, 2011).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

To answer the three raised research questions for this thesis, I followed the following research methods. (i) In-depth semi-structured interviews held with key stakeholders and experts in an attempt to uncover various stakeholders' construction of the crisis response Lebanese food establishments used during the 2014 reputation crisis. (ii) Qualitative thematic analysis of 288 press coverages of the food crisis, as published between the 3rd of October, 2014 and the 31st of January, 2015. By examining the themes most evident in the published press articles, I attempted to reveal how the Lebanese press framed the crisis and depicted the main players during the crisis. (iii) Qualitative content analysis of the Facebook posts and Instagram images the three Lebanese food establishments selected for this thesis disseminated during the 2014 crisis, in an attempt to discover the social media communication strategies these establishments employed as they confronted the product-harm crisis in 2014.

A. Design

1. Personal interviews

For the semi-structured interviews, I outlined 23 stakeholders to get interviewed for the sake of this thesis. I selected all the stakeholders using a purposive sampling technique (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). These stakeholders included: a representative from each of the three selected food establishments, eleven corresponding casual diners' customers, a Ministry of Health spokesperson, a representative from the customer Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Economy and Trade in Lebanon, a representative from civil society represented by the Customers Lebanon Assembly, three media personnel, and three public relations experts.

Of the first to reach out to, Crepaway welcomed the invitation, at the time Kababji and Roadsters Diner revoked it. Kababji simply responded "the person responsible for answering your questions can't be available for your requested interview," (email communication, December 27, 2017) at the time Roadsters simply responded that the directors and managers in charge rejected the request, without clarifying the reason behind this rejection (email communication, December 9, 2017). The customer Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Economy and Trade in Lebanon also revoked my request, without mentioning the reason behind this revoke. In addition to the two main food establishments and the directorate, other interviewees revoked my request to get interviewed for this thesis. The revoke was referred to the simple fact their corresponding personnel, who handled the food safety case back in 2014, no longer work at the corresponding establishments; like The Daily Star and Burson Marsteller. I initiated the study with the remaining sample of 18 interviewees.

In terms of the selection criteria, I chose the food establishments as based on their online media activity and well-known names in the Lebanese casual dining industry. Their customers were randomly selected, through a Facebook post and a convenient sampling method to encompass age groups (all 18 or older) and different genders. The selected Ministry of Health spokesperson, representative from the customer Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Economy and Trade in Lebanon, and representative from the Customers Lebanon Assembly were those who were directly handling the food safety campaign and case back in 2014. The media personnel chosen were the outlets and the contributors who covered the crisis the most, mainly Annahar, As-Safir, and The Daily Star. These three outlets were the most prominent in the "Food Safety" press tracings of the Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center database at AUB

(2016). Lastly, the public relations experts are those of the top three PR agencies specialized in crisis communication in Lebanon, as listed in the Middle East and North Africa Media Guide. These agencies are Memac Ogilvy, Burson Marsteller, and Porter Novelli. All interviewed stakeholders are listed Table 1 of this thesis.

Table 3.1

List of all interviewed stakeholders

<u>Type of stakeholder</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date of Interview</u>
Civil Society	Customers Lebanon	Nada Nehme	Board member	Jan 5, 2018
Customer		Christina Majdalani		Jan 6, 2018
Customer		Elsa-Maria Karam		Jan 10, 2018
Customer		Joelle Abi Khalil		Jan 17, 2018
Customer		John Angelopoulos		Jan 30, 2018
Customer		Lama Zaki		Jan 17, 2018
Customer		Liliane Zaki		Jan 14, 2018
Customer		Linda Daoud		Jan 6, 2018
Customer		May Habib		Jan 17, 2018
Customer		Shireen Makarem		Jan 5, 2018
Customer		Soltan Aryan		Dec 31, 2017
Customer		Yara Daoud		Jan 9, 2018
Food Establishment		Crepaway		Mark Thoumy
Government	Ministry of Health Assembly	Joyce Haddad	Head of Service	Jan 8, 2018
Media	Annahar	Salwa Baalbaki	Journalist	Dec 5, 2018
Media	Assafir	Adham Jaber	Journalist	Dec 10, 2018
PR Agency	A&A Porter Novelli	Serena Abdel Karim	PR Manager	Jan 11, 2018
PR Agency	Memac Ogilvy	Danielle Chebli	Creative Director	Jan 2, 2018

Table 3.1

2. Thematic analysis of media coverage

For the thematic analysis of media coverage, I employed a qualitative thematic analysis of press articles shared between the 3rd of October 2014 and the 31st of January 2015 by Lebanese press. The articles were curated with a simple, yet exhaustive, online search for press articles using “Food safety campaign” and “حملة سلامة الغذاء” keywords (Penney et al., 2011). The comprehensive search returned 288 articles published by major Lebanese newspapers like Annahar, Assafir, The Daily Star, Al Akhbar, among others. With these 288 articles, I initiated the qualitative thematic analysis.

3. Content analysis of social media communication

For the content analysis of social media posts, I employed qualitative analysis of the Facebook posts and Instagram images the three food establishments of this study published on their handles. The analyzed content was that shared after November 2014 that directly pertains to food safety, it was curated by a simple retrieval of the posts and images the establishments shared as of November 11, 2014 on their handles.

B. Procedure

1. Personal interviews

In the process of recruiting the interviewees for this study, I approached all interviewees except casual diners' customers via email invitations. On the other hand, I randomly approached and recruited the diners' customers via social media posts published on Facebook and Instagram social media platforms. With the exception of Memac Ogilvy's PR manager and 10 customers, who preferred to get interviewed via email, all participants accepted to get personally interviewed, and personal interviews were accordingly conducted with them at their corresponding offices. The Customers Lebanon Assembly representative and the personally interviewed customer preferred to get interviewed in a coffee shop. The Customers Lebanon Assembly representative and the personally interviewed customer preferred to get interviewed in a coffee shop. In total, I interviewed 18 stakeholders, including experts, via personal and email interviews. A sample of the face-to-face interview protocol conducted with the different stakeholders, and another sample of the interview protocols conducted with the assigned food establishments and customers are attached in Appendixes A, B, and C. On average, interviews took around 28 minutes. I transcribed and translated the interviews (when needed).

The interviews started by stressing the importance of the interviewees' input, voluntary participation, privacy, and informed consent (copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix D of this thesis). All interviewees had the option to choose whether to disclose their names in the study or not. Knowing that the product-harm crisis took place back in 2014 and many of the key stakeholders might have faded memories, a packet was provided to all key stakeholders with screenshots of the Facebook posts and Instagram images the selected three establishments; Roadsters Diner, Crepaway, and Kababji, shared on their platforms during and after the crisis. A sample of the packet materials can be found in Appendix E, F, G, H, I and J.

2. Thematic analysis of media coverage

In conducting thematic analysis of the 288 curated press articles, the process went as follows. After receiving the search results, I compiled and prepared all articles in a file. Then, I started a thorough reading and simultaneous noting of the general content and the specific notable words used in each of the compiled articles, as they described and reported the food safety campaign. The general content was recorded for all the 288 compiled articles. As for the specific notable words, preference was given to press articles that reported or reflected on any Lebanese restaurant and/or casual diner during the food safety campaign, excluding those articles that reported on supermarkets, dairy factories, butcher houses, bakeries, and other food establishments.

With the thorough reading, I became familiarized with the style of the press reporting. I then started to capture the general topics, matters, and subjects the press was covering, and showed interest in covering (Nowell et al., 2017). I qualitatively summarized and analyzed these extractions (Roberts & Pettigrew, 2007). Throughout the readings, I was identifying important topics, sections, quotes, and terms the press

highlighted in their reporting. From each read passage, and during the first cycle coding, I derived labels and data that capture the content and essence of the articles and that correspond to a certain theme or bigger issue (Nowell et al., 2017). The coding was based on single words, sentences, or passages that have a summarizing attribute or effect in making certain ideas and content salient over others (Saldaña, 2009). Here, I mainly implemented descriptive, in vivo, process and versus coding (Saldaña). Descriptive coding is the code that sums the primary subject of an article, in vivo coding is a term or word the press article used that sums the subject of the whole article or passage, process coding is a word or phrase that captures certain action mentioned in the article or passage, and versus coding is concepts and terms used by the press articles to convey conflict (Saldaña, 2009). Out of each press article analyzed, I noted down the mentioned stakeholders (if any were mentioned) and the key terms or keywords the press used to describe these stakeholder.

After reading all the articles and compiling all noted key terms and key words for each stakeholder, I initiated the second cycle coding. I implemented pattern coding (Saldaña, 2009). Following Semetko and Valkenburg (2006) methodology, at this stage I started to inductively produce information themes and derive meaning out of the unstructured data at hand (Nowell et al., 2017). The main news frames and themes I arrived at, based on Semetko & Valkenburg findings, were the following: attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality (2006). Once I analyzed and thematically interpreted all curated articles (Roberts & Pettigrew, 2007), I initiated themes refinement and memoing (Nowell et al., 2017).

3. Content analysis of social media content

In conducting content analysis of the Facebook posts and Instagram images, the process went as follows. After going through the food establishments' handles and curating the content that pertains to food safety and the 2014 crisis, I proceeded with qualitative analysis of the content at hand. I went through the content, watching out and noting down the topic, wording, language, and length of the captions the food establishments used, all in an attempt to capture the strategies the establishments followed in their crisis communication.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

A. Interviews' Findings

The interviews with the customers started by assessing the the top-of-mind awareness (TOMA) of the chosen three Lebanese food establishments. Accordingly, casual diners' customers were asked to list the first casual diners that come to their minds. Responses varied from Roadster Diner, to Classic Burger Joint, Crepaway, Zaatar w Zeit, Moulin D'or, Deek Duke, and DIVVY, with Roadsters Diner being mentioned the most. As for the years of being a loyal customer to the listed brands, responses varied between almost 4 years to over 16 years of loyalty to the diners they mentioned. The interviewed customers further reflected that they mainly follow these diners on Facebook and Instagram, with the majority following them on Facebook; whereas two respondents replied that they do not follow any brand on any social media platform. Based on the responses, the success of Roadster Diner and Crepaway in TOMA, and failure of Kababji in this sense were clear.

1. Crisis in perspective

The interviews then proceeded to put the 2014 crisis in perspective and to capture its essence. Towards this aim, the interview with the Head of Service at the Ministry of Health Mrs. Joyce Haddad asked about the reason why the ministry initiated the 2014 food safety campaign. Mrs. Haddad reflected that in 2014, there were few factors that raised the issue of the campaign. Some of the factors included witnessed food poisoning cases in some Lebanese restaurants and complaints the Ministry of Health received in this regard (p.c., January 8). Although many Lebanese ministries get

in play when it comes to issues pertaining to food safety, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce, and Ministry of Tourism, this time since there were cases of food poisoning and eventually issues that relate to the Lebanese public health, the Ministry of Health had to take the lead, as Mrs. Haddad added (p.c.). From here the campaign started as the Minister requested investigating the happening and obtaining samples from restaurants for examination. However, with the many cases of nonconformity the examined samples returned, the ministry realized that not only the restaurants, but also their suppliers, are to be held responsible for food safety. Here, the ministry had to alter its approach and follow the "from farm to fork" trajectory, which is examining all supplies, a category after the other. As such, the campaign got to focus on two main factors; conformity of the collected products and conditions of the establishment's kitchens (p.c.).

2. How do various stakeholders define a crisis?

Given the 2014 food safety campaign took place, stakeholders were asked whether they consider the 2014 case a reputation crisis and a sort of defamation to the mentioned Lebanese food establishments or not. They were then asked about their definitions of a crisis.

From the Ministry of Health's point of view, many countries follow the "name and shame" technique, so to induce a positive shock and to raise public awareness, Lebanon is no exception to this as people needed to know what they were eating (Haddad, p.c.). As such, the ministry does not consider the campaign and the corresponding labeling of food establishments a defamation to any. Mrs. Haddad backed up this claim by the fact the ministry started issuing Gold and Silver certificates

to establishments, which after their nonconformity labeling, started to follow the ministry's health and food safety standards (p.c.). Mrs. Nada Nehme, Agricultural Engineer (Food safety and quality expert) and board member of the Customers Lebanon Assembly, further supported the ministry's point of view, as she stated that Arabs tend to consider any pointing out of mistakes as a defamation of the mentioned party (p.c., January 5, 2018). It was a mere alert system, she commented (p.c.).

From a media point of view, Mrs. Baalbaki, a journalist at Annahar newspaper reflected her belief that there was a defamation of food establishments at the beginning of the campaign (p.c., December 5, 2018). In food safety campaigns, there is always a lousy reputation attached to the outlined establishments, which reputation take time for customers to forget and stop referring to, she added (p.c.). Yet, Mrs. Baalbaki believes that the better known the establishment is then the harder the defamation and reputation crisis is to hit (p.c.). As such, for her the campaign was not a reputation crisis to all establishments.

From the many responses I received by now, it was clear how the 2014 campaign was not perceived the same by different stakeholders. Here, a question came to the front; what is a crisis and what turns an establishment's mistake into a crisis? Replying to the question, Mr. Mark Thoumy, Crepaway's Marketing and Communication manager and member of the founding family, reflected that for a mistake to become a crisis, it is to be induced by mismanagement; by the way one handles the mistake (p.c., December 12, 2018). In 2014, Crepaway's case went as follows. On the same exact day the Ministry of Health visited Crepaway's kitchens and took samples for testing, Crepaway sent samples to their own labs for testing as well. The results of the two reports came out completely different; with the ministry's results

outlining the samples as nonconforming to its standards and Crepaway's results outlining the samples as conforming. Although Crepaway did not label the 2014 incident as a severe crisis, Mr. Thoumy still considered it a reputation crisis for the mere fact their name was publicly mentioned and negatively labeled with the initiation of the food safety campaign.

With other interviewed stakeholders, crisis definitions varied. Mr. Adham Jaber, a previous journalist at Assafir newspaper, reflected that there are no media story exclusions and inclusions to be made to any incident pertaining to public health and safety (p.c., December 10, 2018). For the media, every public health mistake raises red flags and requires attention and media coverage, which exposes it to the risk of turning into a crisis (p.c.). Taken from a PR point of view, not any mistake can turn into a crisis, as Ms. Abdel Karim, PR Manager at A&A Porter Novelli, stated (p.c., January 11, 2018). A mistake becomes a crisis only when it gets people to respond to it and when it creates some noise; when a mistake creates a dominant effect, as she added (p.c.). As such, in case a mistake entitles a well-known establishment and affects public health (EFSA, 2016), and in case it creates some noise (Weiner, 2006), this mistake evolves into a crisis. Arriving at this collective definition, it was interesting for me to look back at literature and realize that this collective definition matches that in literature.

3. How important, serious, and personally relevant was the witnessed crisis?

After living the crisis, interviewees were asked to assess, using in a Likert scale, the importance of the 2014 food safety campaign and the accompanying crisis that came thereafter. For Crepaway, the campaign was extremely important as the Ministry of Health was needed to control the Lebanese food industry, which started to witness

randomness in opening and operating of restaurants and diners (Thoumy, p.c.). Mr. Thoumy added, the crisis was also an eye-opener for establishments to correct their procedures and food safety standards (p.c.). This was seconded by the Ministry of Health represented by Mrs. Hadded who considered the crisis as a push for establishments to watch out closely on their sources, to control, and to monitor their procedures (p.c.). As such, the initiated campaign and crisis were extremely important for her. For Mrs. Nehme, the 2014 crisis was important; although she believes that many question marks revolve around it (p.c.). The campaign and corresponding crisis were important as they induced a shock at the establishments' level and pushed them to correct their operations, she added (p.c.). Politically analyzing the campaign, Mrs. Nehme reflected her resentment that in Lebanon, public officials tend to consider basic operations scheme and regular activities as great personal achievements, which is not acceptable for her (p.c.). Mrs. Baalbaki, confidently blaming the food establishments among all other stakeholders for the happening, considered the crisis as extremely important and serious (p.c.). Similar scoring was given by Mr. Jaber who perceived the 2014 crisis as extremely important and extremely serious. While considering the campaign as serious and important, as it was held on steps and over a long term, Ms. Abdel Karim revealed sadness that in Lebanon nothing lasts; not an establishment was held accountable from the beginning till the end, as she claimed (p.c.). When asked about their attribution of the importance of the campaign and crisis, casual diners' customers' responses varied. Four casual diners' customers scaled the campaign and crisis as extremely serious, five scaled it as neutral, and two scaled it as extremely unserious. In terms of importance, three scaled the campaign and crisis as extremely important, one as important, four as neutral, two as unimportant, and one as extremely

unimportant. As such, from the responses, it was clear how the food establishment, authority, assembly, media, PR personnel, and casual diners' customers attributed different levels of importance and seriousness to the 2014 crisis.

When asked, using in a Likert scale too, about the degree the interviewed stakeholders were personally concerned about getting affected by the witnessed crisis and about experiencing some product-harm at the labeled food establishments, responses varied. Mrs. Nehme stated that she was always at risk and she still is (p.c.). She added that the public showed a great concern, as they attempted to reach out to the assembly asking for recommendations of healthy and clean food establishments they can still visit (p.c.). The Lebanese public activism is a products of the shock (Nehme, p.c.). The public was all furious when the crisis hit; however, it seems they have forgotten about it all now (Nehme, p.c.). Just like Mrs. Nehme and the general public who tried to reach out to the assembly, Mrs. Haddad was concerned and Mrs. Baalbaki was extremely concerned about their personal well-being, the later even shared that she stopped eating out, until establishments re-adjusted their procedures (p.c.).

Table 4.1

How important, serious, and personally relevant was the witnessed crisis?

<u>Type of stakeholder</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Importance</u>	<u>Seriousness</u>	<u>Relevance</u>
Civil Society	Nada Nehme	4		5
Customer	Christina Majdalani	3	3	3
Customer	Elsa-Maria Karam	3	3	5
Customer	Joelle Abi Khalil	5	5	5
Customer	John Angelopoulos	2.5	2.5	3
Customer	Lama Zaki	5	5	3
Customer	Liliane Zaki	2	3	1
Customer	Linda Daoud	5	5	4
Customer	May Habib	1	1	1
Customer	Shireen Makarem	3	3	3
Customer	Soltan Aryan	2	0	0
Customer	Yara Daoud	4	5	4
Food Establishment	Mark Thoumy	4	4	
Government	Joyce Haddad	4	4	
Media	Salwa Baalbaki	5	4	5
Media	Adham Jaber	5	5	4
PR Agency	Serena Abdel Karim	4	4	4

PR Agency	Danielle Chebli				
*5: <i>Extremely important</i>	4: <i>Important</i>	3: <i>Neutral</i>	2: <i>Unimportant</i>	1: <i>Extremely unimportant</i>	
5: <i>Extremely serious</i>	4: <i>Serious</i>	3: <i>Neutral</i>	2: <i>Unserious</i>	1: <i>Extremely unserious</i>	
5: <i>Extremely concerned</i>	4: <i>concerned</i>	3: <i>Neutral</i>	2: <i>Unconcerned</i>	1: <i>Extremely unconcerned</i>	

Table 4.1

4. Who is to be held responsible?

Even though Mr. Thoumy kept on reflecting on the importance of the witnessed campaign and crisis, for many reasons he listed in his interview, he still referred to the importance of handling such campaigns properly by the ministry (p.c.). Mr. Thoumy reflected how chaotic things were during the 2014 campaign and how hard it was to reach out and communicate with the Ministry of Health back then (p.c.). From this questioning of the ministry's handling to other raised questions, Mr. Thoumy's shifting of blame to the ministry was made obvious.

With these raised doubts, it was interesting to touch upon the Ministry of Health's story that was almost opposing to that of Crepaway's. The Ministry of Health reflected that Crepaway did not reach out to it and did not share any objection in regards to the followed sampling method (p.c.). Mrs. Haddad added that in all countries around the world the Ministry of Health or any ministry or authority is the only designated party to state whether a sample is transported in a right or wrong manner (p.c.). She further explained that the ministry's inspectors underwent training by international experts of WHO - the World Health Organization, confidently concluding that “definitely, not at a singular time, not even a probability, the inspector committed a mistake” (p.c.). Still, at the time Mrs. Haddad revoked any questioning of the followed sampling method, she did not fail to comment that many authorities, including the Ministry of Health, were falling short to their responsibilities before the 2014 campaign

(p.c.). She commented that many authorities were not routinely inspecting the food establishments that fall under their jurisdiction (p.c.).

At this stage of the thesis, I still found myself short to know which party is to be held responsible for the mistakes that later evolved into a crisis back in 2014. For this, I decided to apply the attribution theory and directly ask stakeholders about the party which they hold responsible for the crisis. During her interview, Ms. Abdel Karim assigned responsibility to the ministry for initiating this “revolution,” as she called it (p.c.). She believed the campaign was seeking advertisement of the minister himself more than anything else (p.c.). One of the interviewed casual diners' customers had a similar view to Ms. Abdel Karim's. Refusing to assign any responsibility to the food establishments, a casual diners' customer threw all the blame at the ministry for the crisis. Taking things halfway, Mrs. Nehme exclaimed that in Lebanon it is quite common for establishments and individuals to shift the blame and to try to go around things, rather than to attempt to correct them (p.c.). For this, Mrs. Nehme believes that everyone has a role; everyone is responsible from their position (p.c.). For her, the Ministry of Health needs to be held responsible for the outdated law we still have in Lebanon, which dates back to 1960 (p.c.). This law sets food safety in perspective (Nehme, p.c.). On the other end, Mrs. Danielle Chebli, Creative Director at Memac Ogilvy & Mather, believes the food establishments are the party to be held responsible as they are leaders in the market and they should live up to the promises they created by setting up the benchmark and by earning people's trust in their brand (email interview communication, January 2, 2018). Seven interviewed casual diners' customers had a similar view to Mrs. Chebli communicating that the entitled establishments are to be held accountable and responsible for the witnessed crisis. From these responses, it was

obvious how various stakeholders differently attributed responsibility and blame for the crisis.

5. Lebanese corporate communications scene

Once asked about the general Lebanese corporate communications scene, the first interviewee, Mr. Thoumy, explained that although establishments internationally claim to be transparent, they never really are (p.c.). For Mr. Thoumy, establishments only reveal insights when they have something to share with their publics and when they want their publics to hear from their side (p.c.). As such, for him there is nothing as full transparency. Mr. Thoumy's claim was repeated by the journalist Mr. Jaber, who also stated that Lebanese establishments, mainly health and food establishments, never used to release reports and logs concerning their activities (p.c.). He added, during the 2014 crisis, Lebanese food establishments were neither transparent nor open in terms of crisis communication with their various stakeholders (p.c.). These claims were later verified by the Ministry of Health and the customer Lebanon Assembly, who mentioned that Lebanese food establishments did not attempt to reach out to them back in 2014 so to clearly state their point of view. From a PR perspective, Ms. Abdel Karim believes the Lebanese corporate communication scene is shy (p.c.). Lebanese establishments tend to think they know how to communicate with their publics and that they do not need the help of PR professionals; however, it is not the case as she exclaimed (p.c.). Ms. Abdel Karim added that Lebanese establishments mainly think the only way for them to handle a crisis is through responding, and this is not always the right way to do it (p.c.).

6. Relationship with the media

For Mr. Thoumy, media relations are more of a tactical relationship than an ongoing one (p.c.). Crepaway is not in the media unless they choose to be (Thoumy, p.c.). Still, Crepaway uses different social media channels to follow the trends and to follow its publics on the channels or platforms they are mostly active on, Mr. Thoumy commented.

Going into details, questions with interviewed stakeholders then shifted to the online and offline media presence and activity the three selected Lebanese food establishments have. Nine of the interviewed casual diners' customers reflected their belief that their preferred diners are usually active on Facebook and Instagram, mainly on Instagram. One interviewee reflected their diner is also active on Twitter; while two interviewees did not have any insight on such activity. On their social media platforms, diners tend to share information concerning their new plates/releases, branches, competitions, or special offers as the casual diners' customers reflected. All interviewees communicated that the diners they listed are active in terms of two-ways communications with their publics. Even if some never tried reaching out to establishments and message them on social media, they still reflected their confidence that the mentioned diners will definitely respond, should they try to reach out to them. As for offline media activity, the interviewees' responses split in half with some referring to the food establishments being active in stores and others referring to them not being active offline at all. Some even believed it is not common for establishments to use offline media and issue press releases and regular updates. In times of crises or when the establishment's name gets negatively mentioned, two interviewees noted that establishments would then become active in terms of media relations and presence as they would start releasing reports on the subject at hand.

Further commenting on media relations, the other interviewed stakeholders had different views. Mrs. Nehme commented in her interview that the role of media and especially journalism should not be overseen by food establishments (email interview communication). According to her, the two have important roles in framing the public's interests and actions and in exerting pressure on the entitled establishments (email interview communication). Ms. Serena Abdel Karim, suggested that establishments are nowadays less active than they used to be on offline media (email interview communication). As for Mrs. Chebli, Lebanese food establishments are generally profound being active communicators with their public (email interview communication). On online media, the type of information Roadsters' shares attempts to serve the brand essence focusing on "what does the brand do for me?" (email interview communication). She added, Roadsters are generally active on offline media; on out-of-home advertising and through their call center (email interview communication). These were some of the assessments the interviewees communicated corresponding to the food establishment's media presence.

7. Crisis communication handling, education, and preparedness

Given the reputation crisis took place back in 2014, the questions moved to assess the crisis communication handling, education, and preparedness of the Lebanese food establishments during the 2014 crisis. The assessment was mainly made through the lenses of the image repair theory and the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), as the interviewees were asked: What were the communication strategies establishments followed once and after they confronted this crisis? Did these strategies change with time? Were they denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and/or mortification strategies?

At the time Mr. Thoumy believed other Lebanese food establishments did not handle the crisis very well, he believed Crepaway was and is prepared to handle such crises (p.c.). This belief originates from the fact other Lebanese establishments, instead of them toning down the crisis, they actually heated it up into a bigger crisis, as Mr. Thoumy said (p.c.). As for Crepaway, the establishment responded by telling their public their side of the story and the truth they arrived at after conducting samples testing (p.c.). In its handling, Crepaway consulted Facebook only, as it was the platform widely visited back then. They did not consult any other social media platform or channel, as the people they wanted to reach out to were on Facebook, Mr. Thoumy affirmed (p.c.). On Facebook, Crepaway shared the examination records of the samples they sent to their own labs on the same exact day the Ministry visited their kitchens and took some samples for testing. This was the type of information they shared during crisis, which Mr. Thoumy believed was enough and addressed the crisis well.

At the time Crepaway does not have a CMP or dedicated personnel to handle crises, a fact that is not surprising for Lebanese establishments, when the crisis erupted the board invited the food safety department and the operations department and all came together to decide the next steps to take to handle the crisis, Mr. Thoumy described (p.c.). Looking back at the crisis, Mr. Thoumy affirms that Crepaway handled it well and adds that he wishes nothing was made more or less. For him, Crepaway had one role to do; that is proving things from a scientific point of view (p.c.). At the time Crepaway's case was not fully labeled by the establishment as a reputation crisis, the communication strategy the establishment used helped it mitigate the 2014 crisis, with all its unprofessionalism and unabdance to the internationally advised strategies like Coombs and Weiner's Model and Hiltz, Diaz, & Mark's model of handling and

communicating a crisis. This fact might be either explained in the specificity of the Lebanese communications scene that is in itself not well-established yet or in the general culture in Lebanon that lacks solid, research-based, and accredited basis of communication that made Crepaway's response enough.

At the time Mr. Thoumy believed Crepaway handled the crisis well, the Ministry of Health representative had a different point of view. For Mrs. Haddad, Lebanese food establishments did not handle the crisis well as they did not implement proper crisis communication approaches (p.c.). Defending her claim, Mrs. Haddad communicated that food establishments never approached the Ministry in a professional manner during times of crisis (p.c.). Of the many witnessed scenarios Mrs. Haddad mentioned were those when food establishments failed to send personnel with adequate negotiation skills to sort things out with the ministry or when they failed to send personnel who later on passed the ministry's message to their establishments (p.c.). For this, Mrs. Haddad states that most establishments were weak and not prepared to face a crisis back in 2014 (p.c.). The majority were denying the happening, accusing the sampling technique, simply stating that the issue is not from their end, or being very defensive and going public on media stating false matters, she continued (p.c.). Building on a similar belief, Mrs. Nehme stated that Lebanese food establishments are not educated in terms of crisis communication (p.c.). They still follow old fashioned approaches, and in 2014 they were not concerned to admit their misdeeds because they know that in Lebanon no one faces consequences, Mrs. Nehme affirmed (p.c.). This made their situation even worse, she added (p.c.). For both Mrs. Haddad and Mrs. Nehme, having emergency preparedness, response, and plan/strategy define the long term effects of a crisis. For all this, Mrs. Haddad and Mrs. Nehme believe that the

establishments' handling was not done right as they were just waiting their name to get mentioned by the ministry so the act; they were reactive rather than active.

From a media perspective, Mrs. Baalbaki outlined that establishments tended to deny the happening, to simply comment that the ministry's means of transferring meat and chicken were not scientific (p.c.). They also tended to shift the blame, mainly towards the suppliers, she continued (p.c.). For this, Mrs. Baalbaki did not consider the handling neither moral nor correct. She added that at the beginning of the campaign, while following up on the campaign to report on it, she reached out to the Lebanese restaurant owners' union (p.c.). The union said to Mrs. Baalbaki that they have a plan. However, their plan was not aimed at addressing how restaurants are to handle or communicate the crisis, but at the restaurants to start abiding by the ministry's standards and food safety procedures (p.c.). Starting from this claim, Mrs. Baalbaki labeled many Lebanese food establishments as disoriented in terms of crisis communication (p.c.). In the same token, Mr. Jaber believed the handling of the establishments was not professional at all, which shows their unpreparedness to face a crisis (p.c.). They never anticipated encountering such situations; mainly due to political reasons like absence of official censorship and lack of compliance with the law, he added (p.c.). Not an establishment's approach entitled giving out explanations of the happening, he stated (p.c.). Not only this, Mr. Jaber added that there has always been an exchange of responsibilities; as if establishments were attempting not to confirm their guilt (p.c.). To better handle crises, Mr. Jaber commented that a big establishment should have its own Public Relations office to handle media with a well-established communication mechanism (p.c.). As for the long term effect of a crisis, Mr. Jaber referred that the media outlets define this effect through the way they engage with the crisis (p.c.). The

more reputable newspapers, establishments, television channels, and radio stations get engaged in covering the incident, the greater the effect of the crisis is (p.c.). In 2014, Mr. Jaber recalled that the media attempted to turn the food safety case into a public interest (p.c.).

Upon reviewing the supplied packet of social media posts of the three food establishments, Ms. Abdel Karim assessed the responses as follows. For her, Roadster's statement of commitment to food safety and quality and of support to the minister's campaign does not add up, although, she was pleased to see them mention facts years later when they attained certificates from ISO and the ministry (p.c.). From this packet, Ms. Abdel Karim concluded that Roadsters strategic approach was leaning more towards taking corrective measures and actions (p.c.). Reviewing the rest of the packet, Ms. Abdel Karim concluded that Crepaway sounded so defensive in their approach, although they did some right crisis handling in sharing facts and results (p.c.). She also concluded that Kababji simply went sycophant (p.c.). Ms. Abdel Karim added that establishments should never seek CSR as a strategy to handle and overcome a crisis (p.c.). For her, CSR activities should always be there, with or without a crisis, it is a must for all establishments as it defines the identity of an establishment (p.c.). Moving to morality and correctness of the handling of the crisis, Mrs. Abdel Karim noted that in communication, there is no right or wrong (p.c.). In times of crises, it solely remains to the establishments to project if the handling of the crisis was done wrong; only if sales decreased or if handling evoked more negative reactions from the concerned publics, as she added (p.c.). When asked about the most integral factor that determines the long term effect of a crisis, Ms. Abdel Karim responded that to avoid negative long term effects, establishments should never lie to their publics (p.c.). From Mrs. Chebli's

perspective, denial is never a good way out of a crisis as it fires back very quickly and might project a long term effect (email interview communication). In terms of the handling, Mrs. Chebli believed the entitled establishments faced the crisis by reducing offensiveness with proof that they are following the right standards and by taking corrective actions, which is one of the strategies Roadsters followed (email interview communication). For this, with the help of online communication, media coverage, certificates and awards, the handling was done well from all angles by Roadster Diner, as Mrs. Chebli replied (email interview communication).

As for casual diners' customers, most of them do not recall the strategies the three establishments followed during 2014 crisis. In numbers, six of the interviewed casual diners' customers do not recall the handling, at the time the others recall the social media posts and TV/press conferences the food establishments employed. For this, casual diners' customers were asked to check the packet and assess the establishments' handling of the crisis. Five casual diners' customers considered the handling right, one considered it done right only by Roadsters and Crepaway, and two considered it done wrong. In terms of morality, eight considered it a moral and good handling, two considered it immoral and bad handling, and one considered it moral and good handling only by Roadsters and Crepaway. In terms of reactions and perception, at the time one casual diners' customer stated that they will no longer dine at their favorite establishment should it face a reputation crisis, three others responded they will feel shocked/surprised by the news without specifying the action they would take thereafter, two reflected they would stop visiting the diners until they fix their procedures, and four reflected they would not judge or assess their brands and would actually wait to hear the brands' side of the story. In fact, one of these interviewees reflected a greater trust in the

diners than in the Ministry of Health, and another reflected they would go dine at their favorite diner even more than before, in an attempt to support it by sharing pictures and content on social media about the visit. From these responses, the trust and brand loyalty of the casual diners' customers to their favorite brands was made obvious. As for the long term effect of a crisis, for casual diners' customers it is determined by the initial cause of the crisis and the business motives behind it (if any). The long term effect is also determined by the way an establishment handles it; in not taking corrective actions, in not responding, and in denying the problem.

With all these responses of stakeholders, I arrived at the second research question's answer. RQ 1: How did various stakeholders construct the crisis response used by Lebanese food establishments during the 2014 reputation crisis?

8. How to better handle a crisis? - from stakeholders' point of view

Given the sensed disappointment of stakeholders of the Lebanese food establishments' handling of the crisis back in 2014, interviewees were asked to communicate their preferred strategies and approaches of crisis handling and communicating. The Ministry of Health spokesperson suggested that the best means is for establishments to try to figure out the issue with the corresponding authority they are facing a problem with (p.c.). Mrs. Haddad added that she would have personally preferred seeing establishments hold workshops and invite all competent authorities to attend, hold press conferences, disseminate press releases thereafter and publish the content on their websites (p.c.). She also added that she would have loved seeing them follow the lead of other establishments in producing videos that show their facilities and their internal operations; videos that will indirectly and smartly respond to the crisis

(p.c.). As for the customers Lebanon Assembly, Mrs. Nehme reflected that she would prefer seeing establishments communicate with their concerned public through television (p.c.). Let them raise awareness, let them sponsor ads and programs like “A minute on food safety” or "moments on food safety," all programs that will add up to establishment’s standing in the customer’s perspective, she suggested (p.c.). Mrs. Nehme also communicated that establishments usually fear public media and they always attempt to directly deal the occurring issue with the corresponding stakeholder and/or authority; instead of them publicly addressing it (p.c.). For her, like Mrs. Haddad she would love seeing establishments hold press conferences, meetings, training, management reviews, assessments, among others as they communicate a crisis. As such, Mrs. Nehme seems to disagree with Mrs. Haddad in terms of the preferred strategy and approach to handling a crisis. The first wants establishments to publicly deal with it, the latter wants them to address it with the corresponding authority only.

From a media perspective, Mrs. Baalbaki would have preferred seeing establishments go out publicly and state the wrongful act they committed, explain their misdeeds, and re-adjust their operations so for one to better trust them (p.c.). As for the channels of communication, Mrs. Baalbaki believes that establishments should have used television more than anything else (p.c.). From a PR perspective, Ms. Abdel Karim would have wanted establishments to start by evaluating the happening, understanding the crisis, and understanding the truth behind it so for them to know "what part of the truth [to communicate] because it is not always good to tell all the truth or the way it is, this is the PR role actually in the end; how to show the reality to all the people" (p.c.). Ms. Abdel Karim added that shifting responsibility is wrong (p.c.). She added that establishments should watch out as taking time to respond to a crisis will place them at

the same risk of not responding at all, said Ms. Abdel Karim (p.c.). For this, for her establishments are to be conscious about three main pillars of crisis communication that are timing, content, and way of communicating – the how (p.c.). She added, the response is to be very short and very straight to the point (p.c.). In fact, research supports Mrs. Haddad's belief as it suggested that timing and quick response are always key in crisis communication (Haas-Kotzegger & Schlegelmilch, 2013). Haas-Kotzegger and Schlegelmilch further suggested that the public are to better perceive a crisis should they hear about it first from the establishment itself (Haas-Kotzegger & Schlegelmilch, 2013).

Other major factors for crisis communication, as mentioned by Ms. Abdel Karim, were the response being done on the same exact platform or channel the news or crisis first initiated on (p.c.). Second, for her social media is always integral in crisis communication (p.c.). As such, preplanned calendars are to be stopped and be altered to only communicate the crisis. To add, other PR tools like news primetime broadcast are to be sought, in addition to interviews, press conferences, and reportages about the establishment sometime after the crisis; which tool Ms. Abdel Karim recommended the most (p.c.). For Mrs. Chebli, the question is no longer which PR tool or channel is to be used; it is about storytelling and about the kind of message establishments want to get through to their concerned publics (email interview communication). As such, establishments should not search for the most effective channels, but for the channels that will help them best communicate their crisis, she commented (p.c.). These were the general preferences different stakeholders had pertaining to crisis communication.

From the casual diners' customers' perspective, the best means establishments can use to address a crisis are the following. Nine of the interviewed casual diners'

customers suggested resorting to social media as a primary means. In second place came television, and lastly mobile phone text messages. In terms of media text, nine casual diners' customers replied that they would like the diners to disclose the happening, admit responsibility (if there is any), and take corresponding corrective action. Three other casual diners' customers replied that honesty is the best strategy out, regardless of the means to be used. Others suggested that reducing offensiveness, interacting, and seeking community building on social media platforms is key for crisis handling. As for PR tools, interviewed casual diners' customers suggested that establishments are to best consult radio announcements, as mentioned by nine interviewees; TV announcements, as mentioned by five interviewees; interviews/press conferences and social media, as mentioned by three interviewees each; and other singular mentions of emails, mobile push notifications, billboard ads, and phone calls. These were the different suggestions and recommendations interviewed casual diners' customers had for their favorite establishments should these face a reputation crisis.

To sum things up, all interviewees were asked to summarize their golden rule for handling a crisis. Mr. Thoumy referred that not panicking is key (p.c.). Taking time to study the matter and to respond is essential, as he added (p.c.). Throughout the interview, for the several times Mr. Thoumy referred to his confidence in Crepaway's procedures, quality, staff, service, traceability, and regular testing of their own samples, these can all be added to the golden rule he would suggest, although he did not bluntly mention it. In terms of advice, Mr. Thoumy asked establishments to highlight traceability, whether in food industry or any other industry, and to never take a defying stance against a ministry, regardless if the matter is politically driven or not (p.c.). On

the contrary, one is to be smart about it by coping with the corresponding authority, he commented (p.c.).

From the Ministry of Health's perspective, having specialists handle the crisis is golden; if it is a food safety crisis, let a food safety specialist handle it (p.c.). Mrs. Haddad also added that scientifically handling issues is key; supporting establishment's claims with scientific facts is crucial (p.c.). Adding to Mrs. Haddad, Mrs. Nehme in her interview advised establishments to communicate with all their stakeholders and especially with the public (p.c.). For Mrs. Nehme, the golden rule for handling a crisis is for establishments to communicate internally and externally (p.c.). This communication will not only benefit the corresponding establishments but also the whole industry as it will move it forward towards a quality system, she added (p.c.). As for the communicated text, Mrs. Baalbaki advised sharing a lot of visual proof, in the form of pictures or videos of the facilities. For Mr. Jaber, the golden rule lies in establishments always abiding by the law in the first place and having a designated public relations office (p.c.). As for his advice, Mr. Jaber believes that whichever party is to speak first is the one to get to win the PR battle (p.c.). Means of media do not matter for him, as the first story that comes out will take all the spotlight (p.c.). As such, establishments are to focus more on the message than the means, for the content is vital, as he added (p.c.). From a PR perspective, Ms. Abdel Karim believes that the golden rule is for establishments to stop, take a step back, think, then act (p.c.). As for the interviewed casual diners' customers, of the many golden rules they suggested were showing the other side of the story, taking the responsibility and acting up to it, always saying something as their audience is waiting, being honest, being quick, and proving their

commitment to a better service. With these words, the interviewed stakeholders communicated the rules they consider golden in terms of crisis communication.

9. Can a crisis be perceived as an opportunity?

In terms of the possibility of perceiving a crisis as an opportunity, almost all interviewees agreed on the positive aspect of any witnessed crisis. To start with, the Ministry of Health revoked calling the food safety campaign a food safety crisis; as a campaign always starts with the least good of things and then leads to the best of it, as Mrs. Haddad commented (p.c.). Moreover, the passage and approval of the food safety law by the Lebanese parliament is one of the many positive aspects Mrs. Haddad and Mrs. Nehme listed in their interviews. Mrs. Haddad further commented that a crisis is always an opportunity to move forward and to have a prevention plan (p.c.). She added that in terms of public safety, establishments should have been grateful to the ministry for helping them avoid an outbreak (p.c.). For Crepaway, Mr. Thoumy reflected in the interview how almost everything can be turned into an opportunity; in 2014 case, the opportunity was in the market getting better controlled. He also added that the crisis helped reaffirm that investing in the best quality ingredients, supplies, and service always pays off (p.c.). This investment was the best lesson Crepaway learned too (p.c.).

Mrs. Nehme and Mrs. Baalbaki seconded Mr. Thoumy's reflection. For the first, in the food industry, customers always see an opportunity, it is always an opportunity for establishments to improve their standing. For the latter, the campaign and accompanying crisis reawakened the citizens and triggered some fear at the establishments' end, a fear of their names getting labeled, so they started to keep an eye on their procedures and hygiene (p.c.). Interviewed media personnel added that before

the campaign, establishments were more conservative with their kitchen, not allowing media to enter, cover, and take pictures. However, after the campaign, establishments became more open and started to allow media to enter their premises. For Mrs. Baalbaki, this crisis actually had more of a repairing than a damaging effect (p.c.). Unlike the other interviewees, Mr. Jaber did not assign a full positive aspect to the campaign, as he said that it holds a 50% positive aspect to it, because now the establishments and the public are well aware of the situation (p.c.). Given the 50% of positive aspect a crisis can hold, Ms. Abdel Karim added (2018) in her interview that a crisis can be seen as an opportunity as at the end

It is the fact that someone is talking about you, that is advertising. This is promoting your name even if negatively, they are talking about you and it is good. Every news is a good news, even if negative and even if neutral (p.c.).

As for the interviewed casual diners' customers, all of them reflected that a crisis can be perceived as an opportunity. Of the many justifications given were those relating to the lessons learned; to helping push competitors out of the market and to generating more lead; to helping establishments highlight their quality standards; to strengthening their bond with their customers; to enhancing PR, publicity, and visibility; and to noticing and adapting to change.

Adding more on the lessons learned from a crisis, in a separate interview, Mr. Asser responded that a witnessed reputation crisis at AUB was a lesson his office learned in terms of the importance of keeping records of social media, as people tend to delete them and this will distort proof (p.c.). Similarly, it was a lesson learned in terms of the importance of storing one's own emails so to be able to retrieve them later on (p.c.). Summing up, all stakeholders agreed on the possibility and importance of perceiving a crisis as an opportunity and as a learning experience (Brockner & James,

2008). Brockner and James' research findings can help explain this common mindset and belief witnessed among the interviewed stakeholders. Given the norm that having a crisis as opportunity mindset is not a rule of thumb for establishments and executives, establishments and other stakeholders might have perceived the crisis as an opportunity either because they initially believe its scope was narrow or because they do not fully believe the establishments are responsible for the crisis in the first place (Brockner & James, 2008).

B. Thematic Press Articles Analysis' Findings

Out of the 288 press articles I thematically analyzed, the main labels and derived data were compiled under five main media frames: attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2006). Given I proceeded with the thematic analysis by deducing what and how the press reported on and about each of the four key stakeholders, who were voiced in the press reporting, of government, food establishments, public, and civil society/NGOs, to better analyze data, the deduced data was listed as per each entitled stakeholder.

1. Attribution of responsibility

In its reporting on Lebanese food establishments, it was clear how the press attributed responsibility to the establishments in not abiding to basic and minimal food safety measures (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2006). For the many times the press described the establishments as corrupt, as trying to deceive the Lebanese citizen who trusted them, as trying to go above and beyond the law and the state, as purposefully abusing the citizen, and as setting ground for a food mafia; criminalization of food establishments and victimization of the citizens by the Lebanese press back in 2014 was

made obvious (Saida City Net, 2014). In fact, for the press, this food safety campaign revealed an iceberg of corruption, a real food safety catastrophe. This catastrophe forced a Minister's speech to degrade, for the first time ever witnessed in Lebanon, to street speech, as he clearly and openly said to the public in one of his press conferences that Lebanese food establishments are feeding us shit – "*Aam ytaamouna khara.*"

In the analyzed press articles, just like in the personal interviews held with key stakeholders, food establishments like TSC blamed the transportation means the ministry followed during the campaign (Bou Moussa, 2014). In an interview, TSC stated earlier that the means of sampling the ministry followed were wrong (Bou Moussa). As per TSC, the ministry's inspector waited to get to her car in the parking lot to place the taken sample from their fridge in a cooler (Bou Moussa). However, is not this the same exact means the public transforms their bought goods home? Even though TSC attributed responsibility to the ministry, it still affirmed that they will collaborate with the ministry and send more samples for retesting without taking legal measures against it (Bou Moussa). Other food establishments attributed responsibility to the Ministry of Health as well. Some blamed the government for it initially certifying the sources these establishments buy their supplies from (Bou Moussa, 2014). Others blamed the government for not informing or properly communicating with them concerning the campaign and the inspections. Still, just like TSC food establishments affirmed their commitment and ongoing abiding to international food safety standards and procedures and to quality and safety measures with responsible conscience "*Rou7 mas2oula*". Provoking their good intentions, the establishments further communicated their willingness to collaborate with the Ministry of Health and to retest their samples.

In spite of all their negative views of the campaign, some food establishments still perceived the 2014 campaign as an opportunity to the sector.

In spite of it considering the Lebanese food establishments as corrupt, the press did not fail to attribute responsibility to the Lebanese government as well. In the press reporting the absence of accountability; the absence of proper law implementation; the available outdated laws; the lack of personnel, expertise, and proper crisis communication at the Ministry of Health, clearly portrayed the government in general as corrupt, or inefficient and inadequate at least (Shoufi, 2014). This was also revealed by the press in indirectly highlighting the clear socio-economic divide between the Lebanese public and politicians, in one article where it asked Lebanese deputies about the places they usually eat from (Abji, 2014). Lebanese food establishments further supported the press' claim about the ongoing corruption, or at least inefficiency and inadequacy, as they stated that the ministry did not properly communicate with them (Khayyat, 2014). These establishments commented that during the campaign they first knew about their non-conformity results only via the television and not directly from the ministry (Khayyat, 2014). Tanmiah Food Group further suggested that the ministry notified it about the conformity of its samples to know later on via the television that its products and samples were non-conforming (Kheshasho, 2014). A meat trader even commented that one can no longer trust the government as its personnel are objects to bribes; one needs monitors to watch monitors, he added (Sidahmed, 2014).

In many press articles, it was interesting to see many outlets personify the whole Ministry of Health in the minister Abou Faour himself. With this personification and the claim that the food safety campaign was a national issue, case, and concern, the press portrayed the minister as the first of his own. With the existing conflict that overrides

many ministries and offices, the press signaled the 2014 food safety campaign as a chance for Lebanese unity. The press further depicted minister Abou Faour as the first minister to open files that have been in former ministers' drawers for years and as the first to hold people and officials accountable over food safety breaches (Saida City Net, 2014). Not only the press, other Lebanese officials also participated in this personification. It was an Abu Faourian revolution for food safety, PM Salam stated in one of his interviews (The Daily Star, 2014). A revolution that is armed with public and political support, as The Daily Star reported (Dakroub, 2014). The political party to which minister Abou Faour belongs to also personified this campaign, as the PSP pledged the campaign as theirs. Of the many other cabinet supporters to Abou Faour were the Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri, minister Michel Pharaon, minister Walid Joumblat, minister Mohamad Mashnouk and others. Abu Faourian revolution intended to fight food corruption, starting from the Ministry of Health itself (Shoufi, 2014). In the course of the food safety campaign, minister Abou Faour did not fail to attack the ministry's personnel who issued reports without conducting preliminary sampling tests of products (Shoufi, 2014).

For prioritizing public health and safety, the press further depicted Abou Faour as a national hero who vowed to undertake a battle and a national cause for food safety and who considered it his primary responsibility (Taniou, 2014). In different press articles, the minister was portrayed as an unstoppable and an accountable minister, especially with his speech when he stated that some food establishments owners are close friends of him and are party affiliates and that this will not keep him from his duty and from holding them accountable in case they had nonconforming products (Annahar, 2014). Abou Faour also stated that he was pressured to stop, but he will not fall subject

to this pressure (Bou Moussa, 2014). For all this, many press articles concluded that the minister is restating the citizen's trust in the ministry and the state as a whole (Shoufi, 2014). Indeed, it should be mentioned here that with the available sectarian and political divide that separates the country, many press articles outlined that such a food safety campaign would have never succeeded should it not have received political backup in the first place. For these articles, political backup is a rule to success.

2. Conflict

In its reporting on the Lebanese government, it was clear how the press pinpointed the internal conflict and the overriding jurisdictions of governmental bodies over food safety cases (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2006). As published by The Daily Star, food safety in Lebanon is not a one-man show, there are eight bodies that have hand in it (The Daily Star, 2014). Unfortunately, these eight bodies do not coordinate well (The Daily Star, 2014). Minister Abou Faour highlighted this fact since the beginning of the campaign with his clear claim that he accepts no questioning of the methods his ministry was using to inspect samples (Annahar, 2014). Abou Faour added that scientific reports stand between his ministry and any establishment and body that has a say against it (Annahar, 2014). And for all critiques, Abou Faour addressed them to fulfill their duties first, before overriding their jurisdictions to question those of the Ministry of Health (Bou Moussa, 2014). The minister's rejection of any questioning and the fact political office rules accountability was further made clear by the Head of Importers Syndicate who stated that the syndicate and establishments can ask, but they cannot fight or stand in front of the ministry (Chbaro, 2014).

In many press articles, “otherness” of ministers and ministries was further made obvious with the blame and responsibility shift taking place between different ministerial offices and bodies. The clashing released statements by ministers, especially between minister of economy Alain Hakim and minister Abou Faour, and the internal cabinet opposition from minister Faysal Karamah and others, reflected the existing division inside the cabinet over the food safety case.

The conflict between the two ministers Abou Faour and Hakim was brought to the frontline as the ministers took it publically to the media. Reflecting on minister Hakim’s opposition to the campaign, minister Abou Faour said minister Hakim is being rude in favoring economy over public health. Minister Abou Faour wondered if he should say things differently so to protect the economy (Annahar, 2014). Minister Abou Faour further slammed public officials for putting profit and prestige above public health (The Daily Star, 2014), which fact pushed him to take this campaign as his personal duty to take care of the citizens’ health (Shoufi, 2014). The tension between the two ministers escalated after the testing of the sugar silos in Tripoli proved nonconformity of the products. After this, minister Abou Faour described the ministry of minister Hakim as a ministry of paperwork, which he had unrealistic expectations of (The Daily Star). Minister Abou Faour further asked minister Hakim to resign as an act of courage (The Daily Star). On the other hand, at the beginning of the campaign, minister Hakim reflected that the campaign is a mere defamation to establishments, a “terrorism against restaurants” (The Daily Star, 2014), Hakim added that the campaign is “shooting ourselves in the head not even the foot” (The Daily Star, 2014), stating that fighting corruption does not start at Halabi or Kababji (The Daily Star, 2015). After the silos incident, minister Hakim described Ministry of Health as a ministry of marketing

and advertisement that is only concerned with media exposure, it is a circus show, Hakim added (Assafir, 2015). After some time, Hakim asked the other minister to switch communication to internal discussion between the two Ministries instead of having it done over the media (The Daily Star, 2015).

Similarly, the conflict between the two ministers Abou Faour and Karameh was brought to the frontline as the latter took it publically to social media. In a Facebook post, minister Karameh challenged, and somehow mocked minister Abou Faour as he invited him over a *kashta knefe* at al Hallab (Akiki, 2014). In his post and a later interview, minister Karameh signaled an attack on the area and the people the ministry is exerting via the initiated food safety campaign (Akiki). This attack mirrored the sectarian and tribal affiliation ingrained in the Lebanese society, which people halt anyone from mentioning or touching their own sects or tribes. Karameh further commented that Al Hallab has their own labs; should it be true nonconformity exists we would have got poisoned long time ago, he added (Akiki). Minister Karameh did not stand against the campaign all in all, but against its handling (Akiki). He also added that there is a possibility of errors and mistakes so the campaign ought to follow "transparent" and "serious" investigations (Akiki, 2014).

To add, many press articles reflected political and sectarian extensions and interventions in the food safety campaign, that spanned from complete support to complete opposition. An example that projects this political and sectarian extension that was highlighted the most in the press reporting was the Beirut Slaughterhouse (Farfour, 2014). In fact, the press highlighted the Beirut Slaughterhouse as a case purposefully overlooked by the Lebanese government and certain ministers of a specific religious belonging (Farfour, 2014). The fact that the campaign also excluded certain

geographical areas, or at least postponed some key area's examination, like greater Beirut area till later stages of the campaign, raises similar doubts (Chbaro, 2014). Based on similar political, sectarian, and geographical divides, Lebanese syndicates divided with some welcoming and some disapproving the campaign. It was interesting to come across such divide where syndicates in Tripoli stood in solidarity next to one another and next to food establishments against the Ministry of Health (Dakroub, 2014), while others like ones in Alay, an area of political and sectarian affiliation to minister Abou Faour welcomed the campaign and highlighted the minister's great efforts (Daou, 2014). In the middle, stood the Syndicate of Restaurants and Pubs Owners in the South and the Head of Importers Syndicate that claimed the right of the ministry to inspect, follow up, and guard public safety, but which believed the ministry should have taken more time before announcing results and names (Tabaja, 2014).

With these political and sectarian interventions, many Lebanese food establishments communicated their belief that the food safety campaign is a mere political matter and not a health one. It is a mere unsettled political scoring- "tasfeyet 7isabat siyasiyah," which attempts to shift people's concerns, as some food establishments and experts reflected (Chbaro, 2014). For some experts, people forgot about political and safety concerns and shifted their interest to food safety (Najjar, 2015). This fact is better explained by Muralidharan, Rasmussen, Patterson, and Shinin study that suggested that media's positive framing usually shapes and elevates a public concern into a high priority issue that captures organization's concern and efforts (Muralidharan et. al, 2011). For this, some food establishments lack trust in the government and in its inspectors, as reported in the press. For others, the whole campaign was some false news being circulated.

3. *Human Interest*

In its reporting on the food safety campaign, it was clear how the press highlighted the human interest (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2006). The press did not fail to project what a scandal, catastrophe, and daily burden Lebanese citizens are living with the current food safety standards (Farfour, 2014). The Daily Star went extreme in one of its story highlights and title reading “Menu of Death” (Obeid, 2014), at the time other outlets simply called the minister’s nonconforming establishments as a List of Shame (Najjar, 2015). The press also highlighted the human interest through the criminalization of food establishments and victimization of the citizens. In its reporting, the press referred to food establishments as food traders, which term is negatively signaled when used in its Arabic version - “*Tejjar al ghitha2*” (Charara, 2014). The press also referred to these establishments as monopolizing the food sector (Wehbe, 2014). In terms of the victimization of citizens, the press described the Lebanese public as anesthetized and lost (Saida City Net, 2014). Other articles described the public as handcuffed and helpless (Annahar, 2014). The press countlessly projected the right of people to know; to know what they are eating, specially that their food is dipped in sweat, diseases, and bacteria (Annahar, 2014).

Once asked the public, the Lebanese press arrived at the following findings. Some Lebanese citizens reflected that given the pollution the Lebanese public lives in, the public became immune to food pollution. Others reflected their carelessness and indifference (Bou Moussa, 2014). This reflection was further made obvious through the spread of memes on social media that the Lebanese public initiated. Others reflected how this campaign was a national shock, which some people still expected and anticipated. Some communicated their lack of trust in the Lebanese politicians,

government, and state adding that this campaign will change nothing for them as they will still eat what they eat (Bou Moussa). Some even blamed the politicians and government for the campaign stating that it is somewhat too late for them to act now “hl2 fa2o?” (Bou Moussa). For them, the whole campaign is a TV carnival – “Haysa e3lamiya” (Aarji, 2014). On the other extreme, some communicated their lack of trust in the Lebanese food establishments that abused their trust in them. These people stated they will stop visiting food establishments at all, for some time, will still visit but not consume listed nonconforming products, will turn vegetarian as a precautionary measure, or will turn to neighborhood butchers and shops for grocery shopping (Obeid, 2014). As the campaign proceeded, people got to better acknowledge and support the initiative (Saida City Net, 2014).

Just like the food establishment’s divide, the public’s attitude divided as per their geographical and sectarian background. In Tripoli and Sidon, the public considered the campaign as an attack on the region and its economy (Aarji, 2014). The public even mobilized themselves on social media to “save” Al Hallab (Aarji). In other areas, like Alay the public welcomed and thanked the minister for initiating this campaign. In the same token, social media activists launched a hashtag of #MinisterOfWholeLebanon #wazzeer_kol_lobnan in support of the minister (Najjar, 2014).

In terms of the civil society, it was interesting how minister Abou Faour was annoyed by the fact the civil society was absent and silent throughout his campaign. The minister wanted the civil society to be more active and concerned with the whole campaign (Shoufi, 2014). Later on, in one of his interviews, Zouhair Berro the president of the Consumers Lebanon Assembly stated that the campaign’s results are actually not surprising, but more of expected (Obeid, 2014). For him, the campaign simply

confirmed what the assembly was certain of, signaling that the civil society is thriving to fight corruption while the ministries do not listen (Obeid, 2014). Berro reaffirmed that this is the first time the Lebanese Ministry of Health initiates such a campaign (Chbaro, 2014). Still, the campaign requires food safety law decree and implementation, he added (Chbaro, 2014).

In terms of the international community, the press highlighted that foreign diplomats reflected their surprise that Lebanese customers did not react to the campaign, that they were careless and did not change or alter their consumption habits, which the diplomats translated as the lack of the public's trust in the Ministry of Health (Semaan, 2014). In terms of the media, minister Abou Faour reflected his disappointment of the media in how its interest declined with the progress of the food safety campaign (The Daily Star). To reinstate the media's interest, the minister changed his approach as to inspect, warn, inspect again, then in case of no abidance launch raids to shut down the corresponding establishments (The Daily Star).

In the reviewed articles, it was interesting to read the press seek expert advice on the crisis so to better understand the public's reaction to it. In an interview by Annahar, psychiatrist Pia Zeynoun was interviewed. Through her interview, psychiatrist Zeynoun reflected that Lebanese people generally love to know the unknown; they love scandals – "*fadee7a*" (Tanious, 2014). Psychiatrist Zeynoun added that forgetting is also common among Lebanese people as people only remember what is in their sight, which is usually the reason why PR advises people to stay calm and not to go public in some time so people forget about a scandal they faced (Tanious, 2014).

4. *Economic Consequences*

In its reporting on the food safety campaign and in interviewing various key stakeholders, the press projected various economic consequences and concerns (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2006). In the articles highlighting the Lebanese government, it was made clear how different ministers, specifically the minister of economy, placed the Lebanese economy above public health and safety, as minister Abou Faour claimed. Not only this, many Lebanese food establishments and syndicates also reflected their concerns pertaining to the risk this campaign was placing the whole Lebanese food and even touristic sector at. For many, like the minister of tourism and the Head of Hotel Owners association, it was a risk of slandering the sector, of tarnishing Lebanon's image abroad (Dakroub, 2014), of stabbing the sector in the heart, of defaming the sector and the food establishments, and of putting lots of jobs at risk (Shoufi, 2014). The Head of Beirut Chamber of Commerce reaffirmed the fear of putting 100s of jobs at risk (Sidahmed, 2014). Starting from Al Hallab's incident, minister Karamah projected that this campaign is a hit to the biggest sector in Lebanon (Akiki, 2014). As for Al Hallab, Karamah stated that this establishment employs youth and it fought wars, so it is unacceptable to defame it (Akiki). For some of the Lebanese public the press interviewed, the 2014 campaign shut down household revenues and ruined families - "5arab byout el3alam."

5. *Morality*

In its reporting on the ongoing food safety campaign and through interviewing various stakeholders, the press reported the belief of many of these interviewees that the ongoing campaign is a mere propaganda that lacks morality and value (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2006). The press highlighted this propaganda with an article accompanied by a photo that shows minister Abou Faour signing sandwiches of other ministers

during a cabinet session, as a gesture that he approves and confirms the conformity of the establishment (Annahar, 2014). This reporting signaled public propaganda, social media trends with an influencers approach.

It was interesting to witness in one article how the media reported on and dealt with McDonald's and Kababji diners incidents (Farfour, 2014). In one article, some press articles mentioned that chicken nuggets of one of McDonald's branches was found nonconforming and that a similar nonconforming sample was found in a Kababji branch in Metn. At the time the reporting was neutral for the Kababji's case reporting, it said the McDonald's products, not only a singular product or item, are bad – "*Al bida3a la tawsa*," as it reported in Arabic. Here, questions arise on the reason the press did not equally report the two incidents. Is it because of political reasons of influence, given that Kababji is of a higher standing than McDonald's? Or is it that it got normalized to attack McDonald's and the quality of their products? Another similar interesting reporting was encountered in The Daily Star's reporting on Tanmiah Food Group factory. At the time other press outlets named Tanmiah for not abiding to food safety measure and not abiding to the ministry's decrees, The Daily Star referred to this establishment as a "chicken farm" in its reporting (The Daily Star, 2014).

Through these five themes, it was obvious how the Lebanese press employed in its reporting all of Pedersen's frames of issue-specific frames, generic frames, episodic frames, thematic frames, and strategic game frames (2017). With all these themes and categories, the third research question of this thesis was answered;

RQ 2: How did the Lebanese press frame the crisis and who were the main players during the crisis as covered by the Lebanese press?

C. Social Media Text Content Analysis' Findings

The three food establishments had different communication strategies during the food safety crisis, as each shared different content and different number of posts. In terms of sharing content, Roadster Diner was the most active, compared to the other establishments, as they shared ten posts while Kababji and Crepaway shared one post each. Roadster Diner shared five Facebook posts and five Instagram images, all posts and images can be found in Appendix E and F. Kababji shared one Instagram image, attached in Appendix H. Crepaway shared one Facebook post, attached in Appendix I. In their postings, Roadster diner repeated the same visuals and captions on the two platforms, with shorter text posted on Instagram. The establishment posted three posts in November 2014, one in September 2016, and one in October 2016. Kababji shared one image on Instagram in December 2014 and Crepaway shared one Facebook post in December 2014. All posts and images can be found in Appendix E-J.

In the first Facebook post (Appendix E), Roadster Diner shared two long posts and three relatively short ones. The posts were shared one on November 12, 2014; two on November 14, 2014; one on September 5, 2016; and one on October 11, 2016. In terms of social media engagements, the first post received 3.3K likes, 518 shares, and 474 comments. The second received 400 likes, 49 shares, and 51 comments. The third received 4.6K likes, 255 shares, and 216 comments. The fourth post received 561 likes, 8 shares, and 12 comments. And the last post received 3.2 likes, 106 shares, and 75 comments.

The first Facebook post, shared on November 12, 2014 shared on behalf of Jana Majzoub, Food Safety Manager at Roadster diner, restated Roadster Diner's

commitment to food safety and quality, which was both conveyed in text and image. Roadster Diner proceeded to reflect on the “overarching purpose” of the establishment that is guaranteeing high quality and food safety; as established by internationally certified standards, which are not negotiable for Roadster Diner. With this claim, Roadster Diner reinstated its local belonging and international commitment/abidance both assured by food safety certifications accredited by ISO 22000, HACCP, and Lebanese Association for Food Safety (LAFS). Roadster Diner reflected on their ongoing procedures towards these ends that they produce, market, and sell safely and responsibly the food their people love. The latter claim is a clear playing on the customers’ emotions and attachment to the brand. Roadster Diner proceeded with comprehensive and detailed reflection on processes, procedures, and strategic operations they follow in day to day operations, testing, auditing, and training.

In the second Facebook post, Roadster Diner shared shots of the interview the diner’s Director of Operations had with MTV Lebanon. The caption stated that the interview was a follow up on the latest developments on the labeling; reinstating the diner’s commitment to food quality and safety. In the third Facebook post, Roadster Diner showed its support to the campaign of the MOH that is committed likewise to food safety and quality. The diner proceeded to thank the minister for his efforts and for trusting the diner and being one of its own customers, who they will always value. Roadster Diner added they will further implement and monitor food safety measures, all in an attempt to reassure their customers’ trust in the operations they are proud of, which Lebanese citizens should not doubt. Roadster ended restating their shared goal with the ministry and their support of the minister’s efforts through equipping a new lab for testing. In the fourth and fifth Facebook posts, Roadster Diner posted images of their

staff receiving a certificate, one of which was personally handed by the Minister of Health himself. The caption of the first image stated that the diner is proud of the fact their LeMall branch achieved the “highest food safety inspection grade among the casual restaurants in the mall.” The caption of the second image stated that the diner received a certificate from the minister and restated their commitment to “highest levels of care and diligence in food safety.”

Similar posts were published by Roadster Diner on their Instagram handle during the 2014 crisis, attached in Appendix F. In the first post, Roadster Diner shared the same Facebook post it published on November 12, 2014; Commitment to food safety and quality, but with a shorter text. Still, the caption Roadster Diner shared on Instagram had a long text, unconventional to the platform. The caption restated Roadster Diner's overarching purpose, of providing customers the best quality and food safety products, which are internationally approved as well. Roadster Diner played the sentimental card here as well as they affirmed they will still sell the food people love, with them not accepting any negotiation of the quality and safety of the products they serve. The caption ended that further details can be found on the establishment's Facebook page. The post received 1,135 likes.

The second Instagram image Roadster Diner shared on November 14, 2014 was a short post that showed shots of the Director of Operations interview with MTV on the establishment's latest developments. The image received 957 likes. The third Instagram image Roadster Diner shared on November 15, 2014 was that Roadster Diner Supports MOH Campaign to Refine Food Safety. The establishment shared the same image on its Facebook handle but on a different date. Unlike the Facebook post, this image had a shorter caption; a one sentence caption. The caption stated Roadster Diner's shared goal

with the MOH that is prioritizing Lebanese citizens' health and never jeopardizing it. The image received 929 likes. The fourth image Roadster Diner shared was on September 5, 2016. The image showed the diner's personnel of Le Mall Sin El Fil receiving a certificate from the GWR Food Safety. The image was captioned with a short text that simply reflected Roadster Diner's pride of receiving such a certificate and of achieving the highest food safety inspection grade in the mall. The image received 1,107 likes. The fifth and last Instagram image the diner posted was on October 11, 2016. The image showed the Diner's personnel receiving a certificate from the minister of health. The caption ended with Roadster Diner's commitment to highest levels of food safety. The image received 1,567 likes.

Relating to food establishments' social media activities and communication, in an article published by Annahar, a media communication expert Mr. Ramzi Al Najjar analyzed and reflected on the food establishments' crisis handling on this type of media (Najjar, 2015). In his reflection, Mr. Al Najjar stated that Roadster Diner rushed on November 19 to release a report and supported it by its customers' brand loyalty (Najjar, 2015). Mobilizing its customers, Roadster Diner launched hashtags # ثقوا برودستر # أنا أثق (Najjar, 2015). For Mr. Al Najjar, the report and the hashtags launch amplified people's trust in Roadster Diner. Mobilizing people's trust and loyalty to a brand are indeed a great approach an establishment can use during times of crises. To add, launching a hashtag to document and curate supportive content was a smart communication strategy followed by Roadster Diner. In fact, Roadster Diner turned the negative messages and impressions surrounding it to positive and supportive ones, which all can fall under Benoit's (1997) reducing offensiveness strategy or Coombs' (2007), rebuilding strategy.

As for the other food establishments, at the time Kababji did not share anything on their Facebook handle pertaining to the campaign, crisis, or food safety, they shared one image on Instagram only, attached in Appendix H. The image was shared on December 10, 2014 that is almost a month after the initiation of the campaign. The image simply showed a chef with thumb up and the caption read that " #Kababji stands for a simple mix of traditional culinary excellence & modern casual dining" (Kababji, 2014). The image received 22 likes. The fact that Kababji did not share except one image on social media pertaining to food safety was surprising, nevertheless expected in a communications scene like Lebanon. However, the press articles thematic analysis removed all this absurdness. In the article shared by Annahar, the expert Mr. Al Najjar outlined that after 24 hours of minister Abou Faour's famous press conference in which he listed Kebabji's name, Kababji released a report and posted it on social media, before going back to normal marketing activities (Najjar, 2015). With this hiding or deleting of its social media posts, it is clear that Kababji does not want to get labeled or affiliated anymore in any way with the witnessed crisis in 2014. However, questions about the transparency and acceptance of the crisis at hand by Kababji arise.

For Crepaway, the Kababji scenario was reversed. At the time Crepaway did not share any content on their Instagram handle, they shared one post on Facebook, attached in Appendix I. The post was shared on December 3, 2014 and had a long caption. The post was simply a report scan and the caption read that the establishment thanks the Ministry of Health for initiating the food safety campaign to protect Lebanese citizen's health and that reassured the trust Crepaway has in the ministry. Crepaway then moved to talk about the mission they took since 30 years, which is safe and high quality food, as per international hospitality standards. The post proceeds to precisely describe how

on November 12, 2014 the ministry visited their branch in Batroun to take a sample, which the branch's management questioned its technicalities. For this, the diners Food Safety & Sanity department requested taking a similar sample for testing at an accredited lab. Crepaway received results on November 20, 2014 that showed different results to those of the ministry. In the post, and reflecting on its present actions, Crepaway stated that it will seek the ministry's advice on how to proceed forward, assuring customers to rest assured as the establishment will keep them posted on findings and discussions. Crepaway ended thanking their public for their trust and support. In terms of engagement, the post received 190 likes, 28 shares, and 23 comments. As assessed by Mr. Al Najjar, by sharing lab results, Crepaway communicated transparency to its public (Najjar, 2015). However, Mr. Al Najjar added that this report triggered more questioning from the public, which is not reassuring to Crepaway (Najjar, 2015).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In 2014, it took the Lebanese Ministry of Health 40 people to get poisoned in Baalbek for it to raise red flags and launch a food safety campaign. With the health hazards the poisoning highlighted, many stakeholders came into play. Out of the many entitled stakeholders, I focused my work on only six of these bodies, mainly to assess how they all construct the importance of the food safety campaign and its impact on the food industry, consumers, and general communications scene. Their input was needed so to get a comprehensive overview of the 2014 crisis. Still, in parts of this thesis, I emphasized more on one of these stakeholders; the press. Through this emphasis, I attempted to trace how they communicated the crisis, how they framed and reported the campaign and the crisis the country was witnessing both during the introduction and the growth stages of the crisis.

A. Interviews' Findings

Since the early stages the study, I arrived at an important insight pertaining to the crisis communication. With Kababji and Roadsters Diner's negative responses to my request of interviewing them, I got convinced that many Lebanese food establishments fail to abide to the first pillar of crisis communication; which is openness and transparency to the crisis.

Putting the 2014 food safety campaign in context, which was the first of its kind in Lebanon, as expressed by almost all interviewed stakeholders, it was quite interesting how almost all interviewees failed to list some of the main procedures the Ministry of

Health was inspecting back in 2014. The main procedures that interviewees were able to mention were the ministry inspecting expiry dates, checking samples of chicken and meat, checking conditions of their storage, and conducting quality control. None mentioned the other specifications of water supply networks, wastewater removal methods, solid waste elimination, pest control practices, cleanness of bathrooms and their situation in regards to the kitchens, composing material of equipment and utensils used, conditions for delivering and storing raw materials, and conditions for freezing and refrigerating food products (Ghanem, 2015). Here, I arrived at its second insight, that is the lack of knowledge and food safety education the interviewed stakeholders have, mainly including food establishments and official health bodies. Some might argue here that this failure to list procedures is probably due to deterioration of stakeholders' memory, which argument is also valid and possible.

Another failure was pinpointed throughout the interviews. The consumers clearly reflected their activity on online and offline media platforms and their close eye kept on their preferred diners' activities, which made them aware of the absence of the three food establishments of this thesis from offline media. Although Mr. Thoumy reflected that Crepaway follows where its people are, the diner failed to realize their customers are actually active on the offline media, as small sample reflected in the personal interviews. For this, Crepaway needs to approach its customers and general stakeholders on offline media as well in their crisis communication. This activity might also raise another threat to the establishments, especially during the growth stage of the crisis. The absence of establishments from offline media will no longer allow the establishments to be the focal point of contact updating all stakeholders about the crisis at hand (Condit, 2014). This was a common practice Muralidharan, Rasmussen,

Patterson, and Shinin (2011) study on nonprofits and media organizations witnessed. At the time nonprofits and media organizations capitalized on one-way communication via disseminating information, they failed to effectively tap on two-way communication, allowing and opening room to receive stakeholders' feedback and to get closer to them (Muralidharan et. al, 2011).

Reflections of the interviewed stakeholders about getting personally affected by the 2014 product-harm contradicted the empirical findings of Silvera, Meyer, and Laufer (2012). At the time Silvera, Meyer, and Laufer's findings indicated that older consumers usually tend to align less threats to a product-harm. Building up on earlier findings too, the communicated concern of the stakeholders can be further explained by Haas-Kotzegger and Schlegelmilch (2013) finding that the closer the product is to one's body, the more the concerned will assign severity to it. And this might explain why interviewed older generation was more worried about their health and about them getting affected by the product-harm than the younger generation represented in the interviewed customers. Another explanation might be the closer relation the younger generation has to the three food establishments at the focus of this thesis. In fact, the three establishments are relatively young brands that emerged in Lebanon. They formed a closer tie and loyalty with the younger generation and this might explain why the younger generation trusted the food establishments more and did not fear getting personally affected from consuming their products.

B. Thematic Press Articles Analysis' Findings

1. Attribution of responsibility

Fearing the public's judgement, the personal interviews and the thematic press articles analysis clearly reflected the exchange of blame and responsibility between the Ministry of Health and the food establishments. This shift reflects the establishments' attempts to reduce the attribution of responsibility through framing the issue as an external rather than an internal mistake, as Jin, Liu, and Austin's findings suggest (2011). It was clear that the food establishment failed to follow Claeys and Cauberghe's projection by self-disclosing the crisis as an actual way out from taking responsibility (Claeys & Cauberghe, 2012). This shift of blame and attribution of responsibility was one of the main themes I, as based on the findings of Semetko and Valkenburg, arrived at during this thesis' press articles thematic analysis (2006). The two themes I analyzed, as per Semetko and Valkenburg's findings (2006), were economic consequences and morality.

One of the main trends for attribution of responsibility that are witnessed in Lebanon is otherness, as it is almost always the case that politicians tend to criticize and direct conviction fingers to the other party in rule. This explains how the responsibility was being thrown from one governmental body to another (The Daily Star, 2014). The government also shifted responsibility to the food establishments, forgetting all its duties of regularly inspecting nonconforming sources it certified in the first place (Bou Moussa, 2014). Just like governmental bodies, establishments did not take in convictions directed towards them. However, with all this coverage, the press bias against Lebanese food establishments was still evident through the continuous criminalization of food establishments, victimization of the citizens, and projection of the minister as a national hero by some press outlets.

2. Conflict

The second theme I analyzed was conflict (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2006). In the same realm of attributing responsibility to the other, the conflict theme arose. The fact that governmental jurisdictions overlap agitated a lot of internal governmental conflicts since the introduction phase of the crisis. These conflicts and the fact the minister rejected any questioning to his campaign bring us back to the integral and critical need for a food safety law, and other laws, in Lebanon to solve overlapping jurisdictions and overpowers granted to some bodies and persons over others. This can be seen in articles published by Annahar and The Daily Star.

3. Human interest, economic consequences and morality

The third theme I analyzed was human interest (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2006). In its reporting, the press projected and staged a lot of sentimentalism in reflecting on the campaign and its accompanying crisis, primarily with it highlighting the right of people to know what they are eating. This sentimentalism communicated concern of the press about the public's health, which was clearly communicated by journalist Adham Jaber during the interview when he reflected that there are no media story exclusions and inclusions to be made to any incident pertaining to public health and safety (p.c.). At the time the international community and foreign diplomats reflected their surprise that the Lebanese public did not adequately react to the campaign and crisis, the public explained their carelessness and indifference as they were still eating at many labeled establishments, irrespective of the ongoing campaign (Bou Moussa, 2014). Given the fact the Lebanese public has been living for years in neglect, lack of official address to lived daily burdens like garbage, electricity cutoffs, unemployment, high taxes, and more, and given the multiple times the public tried to revolt and stand against their bad living conditions, the Lebanese public should not be described as indifferent or careless.

It is a mere fact that the public became aware enough that their revolutions and attempts to change will be wasted. For this, they lost faith in reacting or simply defending their civil and basic human rights. The public clearly reflected this loss by their responses that the nonconformity results did not get them in surprise, that they were already expected and that it is somewhat too late for the government and ministries to act now.

C. Social Media Text Content Analysis' Findings

In terms of the social media analysis, it was obvious from the shy social media communication of the crisis at hand that the corresponding food establishments were not honest or at least open in their communication (Coombs, 2007). Roadster Diner proved to be the quickest in their response as they responded within a day on November 12, which was during the introduction stage of the crisis (Coombs). Crepaway, with the lab report it shared, was the most accurate in its communication, as it shared scientific findings and not mere analysis or commenting on the crisis (Coombs). Given that Crepaway and Kababji spoke via their social media channels only once with their concerned publics, it can be concluded that they were not consistent nor adequately communicating with their publics, as Kababji did not share any holding statements or key messages and Crepaway did not share the updates it promised its audience to later on share (Coombs). On the other hand, Roadster Diner's multiple posting, and follow up after 2 years when they posted about food safety in 2016, the diner showed to be consistent in its highlight and commitment to food safety (Coombs, 2007). Although Roadster Diner's content was repeated on Instagram, it was still a good strategy to follow as the two platforms target two different audiences and as it guarantees Roadster Diner a wider spread of information, which is evident in the amount of engagement the diner received on the two platforms in likes, comments, and shares.

As advised by internationally acknowledged norms, establishments in crisis are to issue holding statements and key messages (EFSA, 2016). In its postings, Roadster Diner started by sharing a statement on behalf of its Food Safety Manager, a source that gives credibility and responsibility for the content the establishment shared. From the posting, it is evident that Roadster Diner's key messages were (1) commitment to food safety and quality that is conveyed through their overarching purpose too, (2) commitment to its loyal brand customers through promising them to produce, market, and sell safely and responsibly the food they love, and (3) commitment to professional and strategic operations in day to day operations, testing, auditing, and training. With these key messages, Roadster Diner abided to the EFSA advised crisis communication concerning issuing key messages (2016). Still, Roadster Diner failed to communicate a holding statement, by not answering any of these three questions of “What happened? How did it happen? And what are you doing about it?” (EFSA, 2016, p. 13). In fact, it was not until the third Facebook post that Roadster Diner stated what it was going to do about the crisis; that it will further implement and monitor food safety measures. The other social media posts Roadster Diner shared were mere confirmations and restatements of Roadster Diner's three commitments it mentioned in the first Facebook post. The Diner adapted a neutral tone in its communication that was highlighted in it showing support to the campaign of the MOH in its third post. With this neutral tone and stance, Roadster Diner did not outline whether the crisis is the result of an internal or an external organizational issue (Jin et al., 2011). As for the 2016 posts, referring back to treating a crisis that is no longer a focal point of an establishment's attention was a great step taken by Roadster Diner towards Coombs and Weiner's *post-crisis* phase of handling a crisis (2007).

Based on this analysis of Roadster Diner's Facebook posts and Instagram images, it can be concluded that the establishment mainly employed reducing offensiveness when they wrote they are committed to food safety & quality and issuing corrective actions strategies when they wrote they will implement several control processes in all the phases of food production, as part of the image repair strategies suggested by Benoit (1997). As part of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), it seems that Roadster Diner followed research suggestions in implicitly taking moderate responsibility for the crisis, as it promised to better improve its food safety measures (Alicia, 2014). Roadster Diner communicated moderate responsibility when they posted on Facebook that “would like all of its customers to rest assured and know that if any test results showed any nonconformities in the past, we took extreme measures to ensure the safety of our guests by discarding the respective batches” (Roadster Diner, 2014). In terms of SCCT, Roadster Diner used rebuilding and reinforcing strategies (Coombs, 2007).

In its posting, Kababji did not properly invest in their available means of communication to reach out to a wider public, by them posting only on their Instagram handle and not investing in posting on other platforms to get better reach and engagement with the public. It can be also said that Kababji's posting came a little bit late, as the image was shared a month after the introduction of the crisis. Else, as mentioned by Mr. Al Najjar in Annahar article, Kababji might have actually deleted the content it initially shared pertaining to the crisis (Najjar, 2015). Even in the singular post available, Kababji still failed to address any holding statements or key messages of the establishment pertaining to food safety. With this post, Kababji was leaning more

towards denial and evasion of responsibility, by completely disregarding the crisis, as part of the Image Repair Theory strategies.

Last but not least, in its posting, Crepaway just like Kababji did not properly invest in their available means of communication to reach out to a wider public, as they only shared on post on Facebook. The establishment, through Mr. Thoumy, justified this by stating that Facebook was the platform widely used back then in 2014. However, Roadster Diner's Instagram images and the engagements they received tell a different story. Just like Kababji as well, Crepaway took long, almost a month too, to respond and act. In its response, Crepaway did convey a holding statement as the post explained what happened, how it happened, and what the establishment is to do about it (EFSA, 2016, p. 13). Of the key messages the establishment shared were (1) its welcoming to the initiative of protecting citizens' lives and (2) its mission towards safe and high quality food. Although Crepaway professionally abided to EFSA's recommendations for crisis communication, they still fell short to transparent and honest communication, as they promised their public to keep them posted on findings and on discussions with the ministry, which they never shared on their social media handles.

Through its posting, Crepaway insinuated that the crisis was a result of external organizational issue (Jin et al., 2011). With this insinuation, it can be deduced that Crepaway evaded responsibility for the mistake, or at least took a moderate sense of responsibility as the establishment wrote in its Facebook post: “since the results of the tests we performed are different from the Ministry sample test, we will be discussing this discrepancy with the Ministry first thing in the morning to clarify the results and act according to their recommendations” (Crepaway, 2014). Crepaway also reduced offensiveness about the crisis by telling their side of the story, and promised to take

corrective actions, as per Benoit's Image Repair Theory (IRT) strategies (1997). In terms of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), it can be said that Crepaway employed rebuilding strategy.

With all these strategies at hand, I was able to answer the first research question of this thesis;

RQ 3: Taking three food establishments as case studies, what were the social media communication strategies employed by Lebanese food establishments as they confronted the product-harm crisis in 2014?

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It is generally well-acknowledged that no establishment is immune from confronting a reputation crisis in its lifetime. In the food industry, product-harm crisis lies in a defective or dangerous product(s), just like the crisis Lebanese food establishments like Roadsters, Kababji, and Crepaway confronted. With the food safety incident and the accompanying Ministry of Health's name and shame approach, a reputation crisis emerged in the Lebanese food industry.

Interested in crisis communication, at the beginning of the research I assumed that the handling of the crisis by the three food establishments chosen for this thesis did not act up to professional and well-known international communication standards. This assumption was based on the fact that there are few texts written on crisis communication specific to the Middle East and Lebanon; hence, there are no culture-specific practices that the food establishments can use to handle crises. However, the results this thesis arrived at disapproved this assumption. Although, the three food establishments taken as a case study did not fully follow internationally advised crisis communication strategies, they still did implement endorsed approaches in their social media postings such as sharing key messages, reducing offensiveness, taking moderate responsibility for the happening, and others. This refers to Roadster Diner and Crepaway. As for Kababji, the social media communication was indeed lagging behind. The applied strategies of reducing offensiveness, taking moderate responsibility, and initiating corrective actions did help the food establishments properly communicate the

crisis. This help was made clearer by various interviewed stakeholders who communicated their belief that the establishments' handling was done right. Indeed, in Lebanon "there is no systematic or widely accepted strategy for managing crisis," as Burnett's findings suggested (1998), yet it became clearer for me that there is a systematic thinking and implementation behind the crisis communications approach establishments follow.

Given the specificity of the Lebanese corporate communications scene, and with the available data and insight at hand, to better handle and communicate a reputation crisis, Lebanese establishments: (a) can invest in various printed and digital media, (b) can invest in television and specifically in sponsoring ads and programs that raise awareness on food safety, (c) can invest in interpersonal means of communication like holding meetings, workshops and others, (d) can invest more in their messages and in the delivery means and approaches, (e) should never panic and instead take some time to analyze the happening before acting, (f) should communicate with internal and external stakeholders, while being honest and sincere with both, (g) Should have technical/scientific specialists work hand in hand with communication specialists.

Indeed, with the gap in knowledge and research pertaining to crisis communication in Lebanon and the Middle East, and with this thesis' limited sample, this thesis results cannot be generalized. This thesis attempted to fill the available gap; however, future studies are still needed. Of the many studies researchers can initiate are those examining the other online and offline means of media Lebanese establishments employed during the 2014 crisis communication. Studies can further examine the online press coverage of the 2014 crisis and/or the constructs of the 2014 crisis by a larger sample size or they can even delve into studying and assessing how many Lebanese

establishments fail to realize the importance of having a well-trained communications officer onboard.

Despite its many contributions, this study has a set of limitations. To start with, it was hard to get access and approval of stakeholders to participate in the study. This was especially true for international PR agencies operating in Lebanon. Second, I faced a limitation in reaching out to stakeholders who are knowledgeable in terms of the food industry or of the three food establishments of this thesis and to consumers who are specific loyal customers/followers of the three food establishments of this thesis. Third, a limitation resides in the recency effect on the ability of the stakeholders to remember incidents more than 3 years old. To jolt their memory, we used a stimulating package that might have biased or oriented the respondents. Fourth, I drew analysis and conclusions out of the posts and images I was able to find on the establishments' public profiles. As reflected in Annahar newspaper with Mr. Al Najjar, there is a high possibility that the three establishments deleted all content they shared pertaining to the 2014 crisis. With this deletion, I was not able to capture the full texts the three establishments shared on their Facebook and Instagram platforms. To add to this, establishments' crisis communication was not only restricted to social media. The establishments might have used other means of communication to communicate the happening with their various stakeholders, like the MTV interview Roadster Diner had.

Appendix A
Interview Protocol
(Cronin, 2015)
(Modéus, et. al, 2012)

INTRODUCTION

Greetings,

Again, thank you for your kindness by agreeing to participate in this interview. As mentioned earlier, in this interview, you will be asked to respond to several questions about your opinion concerning how one of your favorite Lebanese Food establishments; _____(Insert name of establishment here)_____, handled the 2014 product-harm crisis. The crisis mentioned is the one that many Lebanese food establishments faced when the Lebanese Health Ministry initiated a food safety campaign back in 2014. This interview will be integrated as a partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in Media Studies at AUB. As communicated to you earlier, you were chosen for this interview due to ____ (depending on the stakeholder)_____.

The estimated time needed to complete this interview is approximately 30 minutes. All interviews will be conducted face-to-face. The location will be set at AUB, or any other private meeting room of your preference, so to assure privacy of participants and confidentiality of data.

We will start with some general questions. Then, and since the crisis began back in 2014 and some of the information you had about it might have faded, we will show you a packet of some of the screenshots from the Facebook posts and the Instagram pictures that the selected three establishments shared on their platforms during and after the crisis, to revive your memory (Silvera et. al, 2012). After sharing the screenshots, we will move on with the interview and go into deeper and more specific questions.

This interview will be recorded so as to better retrieve, transcribe, and analyze the data in our thesis. In addition, I will be taking some notes, after obtaining your kind consent to do so.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- For how long have you been a customer/follower?
- Is the establishment active and available online, offline, or both? One-way or two-way communication?
- How can you describe the establishment's media relations and presence?
- To what extent do you think the establishment utilized and utilizes online media in their 2-ways communication?
- What social media is [ESTABLISHMENT'S NAME] active on?
- Can you describe the type of information made available to you as a customer by the establishment?
- What do you think is the establishment's best available and most effective channel of communication to use (mass media; television, radio, print media, or Internet/online services, direct p.c....)?

- What do you think are the establishment's best available and most effective PR tools (news releases, press conferences, websites, photographs, radio/TV announcements, interviews, social media...)?
- What strategies did your establishment follow? Denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and/or mortification?
- Do you know any of the establishment's CSR activities? Be environmentally responsible - contribute to the welfare of the society - to donate? (Condit, 2014)
- Was the handling right or wrong? Moral or immoral? Good or bad?
- Sentiment analysis of crisis and upon crisis – how was your reaction before-during-after?
- Was the establishment transparent, interactive, and community building in its social media engagement?
- Do you think the establishment should be held accountable for that crisis? Whom is to blame for the witnessed crisis?
- On a scale 1-5, How serious was the crisis? how important? how concerned were you about possibility of getting affected?

Appendix B
Interview Protocol with Food Establishments
(Cronin, 2015)
(Modéus, et. al, 2012)

INTRODUCTION

Greetings,

Again, thank you for your kindness by agreeing to participate in this interview. As mentioned earlier, in this interview, you will be asked to respond to several questions about your opinion concerning how one of your favorite Lebanese Food establishments; _____ (Insert name of establishment here) _____, handled the 2014 product-harm crisis. The crisis mentioned is the one that many Lebanese food establishments faced when the Lebanese Health Ministry initiated a food safety campaign back in 2014. This interview will be integrated as a partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in Media Studies at AUB. As communicated to you earlier, you were chosen for this interview for your establishment's online presence and reputable name in the Lebanese casual dining industry.

The estimated time needed to complete this interview is approximately 30 minutes. All interviews will be conducted face-to-face. The location will be set at AUB or at your establishment's headquarter in private meeting rooms, so to assure privacy of participants and confidentiality of data.

We will start with some general questions. Then, and since the crisis began back in 2014 and some of the information you had about it might have faded, we will show you a packet of some of the screenshots from the Facebook posts and the Instagram pictures that the selected two establishments shared on their platforms during and after the crisis, to revive your memory (Silvera et. al, 2012). After sharing the screenshots, we will move on with the interview and go into deeper and more specific questions.

This interview will be recorded so as to better retrieve, transcribe, and analyze the data in our thesis. In addition, I will be taking some notes, after obtaining your kind consent to do so.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What businesses are your establishment in? Which branch of food industry?
- For how long have you been in the Lebanese market?
- How can you describe the Lebanese corporate communication scene?
- How aware and educated are Lebanese food establishments in terms of crisis management? How effective? how strategic?
- Is your establishment active and available online, offline, or both? One-way or two-way communication?
- Could you describe your establishment's presence online? on social media?
- Describe your media relations
- Which stakeholders do you target within social media? And which channel attracts the most of your customers?
- To what extent do you think the establishment utilized and utilizes online media in their 2-ways communication?

- Was your establishment transparent, interactive, and community building in its social media engagement?
- Who is responsible for the social media handling?
- Do you regularly monitor the social media activities and what people are saying about your establishment? How (using what softwares), what, and when often do you monitor?
- For many, the 2014 food safety campaign was a crisis for your establishment. In your perception, do you identify it as a crisis? Whom is to blame for the witnessed crisis?
- Has your establishment ever confronted a crisis or is it your first?
- How and when did your establishment see an urgency to communication?
- Does your establishment have a CMP?

A crisis management plan (CMP) is a “reference tool, not a blueprint. A CMP provides lists of key contact information, reminders of what typically should be done in a crisis, and forms to be used to document the crisis response. A CMP is not a step-by-step guide to how to manage a crisis.

- May you give us a general overview of your establishment’s CMP?
- Do you train your employees on this CMP?
- How much does your establishment value the importance of a crisis communication plan?
- What is the sequence of actions employees have to take during a crisis? And when do you start acting? Did and do you handle crises internally or outsource them to specialized crisis PR agencies?
- How do the different levels of management perform before and during a crisis?
- Can you describe the type of information your establishment made available to its stakeholders and the type not made available?
- May you kindly describe the handling of the crisis? What channels did your establishment use? Online or offline? Which one’s reach was better?
- What do you think is the establishment's best available and most effective channel of communication to use (mass media; television, radio, print media, or Internet/online services, direct p.c...)?
- What do you think are the establishment's best available and most effective PR tools (interp.c.s, meetings and workshops, public consultations, partner/stakeholder networks, news releases, press conferences, websites, photographs, radio/TV announcements, interviews, social media...)?
- What were the communication strategies your establishment followed once and after you confront this crisis? Did these strategies change with time? Denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and/or mortification?
- Does your establishment engage in CSR? was this decision taken before or after you confronted the crisis? Be environmentally responsible - contribute to the welfare of the society - to donate? (Condit, 2014)
- Was the handling right or wrong? Moral or immoral? Good or bad?
- What are your golden rules for handling a crisis?
- Can you describe how your company responds to the threat?
- How has the crisis affected your establishment?
- How did the crisis leave the establishment? What lessons did you learn?
- What crisis communication advice can you give?

- Do you think you are better prepared now for future crises?

Appendix C
Interview Protocol with Customers
(Cronin, 2015)
(Modéus, et. al, 2012)

INTRODUCTION

Greetings,

Again, thank you for your kindness by agreeing to participate in this interview. As mentioned earlier, in this interview, you will be asked to respond to several questions about your opinion concerning how one of your favorite Lebanese Food establishments; would handle a product-harm crisis. This interview will be integrated as a partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in Media Studies at AUB. As communicated to you earlier, you were chosen for this interview due to knowledge of some food establishments we are analyzing.

The estimated time needed to complete this interview is approximately 30 minutes. All interviews will be conducted face-to-face. The location will be set at AUB or at a café of your preference, in private meeting rooms, so to assure privacy of participants and confidentiality of data.

We will start with some general questions. This interview will be recorded so as to better retrieve, transcribe, and analyze the data in our thesis. In addition, I will be taking some notes, after obtaining your kind consent to do so.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- When I mention casual dining in Lebanon, what is the first name that comes to your mind?
- For how long have you been a customer/online follower of this diner?
- Is the establishment active and available online, offline, or both? One-way or two-way communication?
- How can you describe the establishment's media relations and presence?
- To what extent do you think the establishment utilized and utilizes online media in their 2-ways communication?
- What social media is the establishment active on?
- Can you describe the type of information made available to you as a customer by the establishment?
- What do you think is the establishment's best available and most effective channel of communication to use (mass media; television, radio, print media, or Internet/online services, direct p.c....)?
- What do you think are the establishment's best available and most effective PR tools (news releases, press conferences, websites, photographs, radio/TV announcements, interviews, social media...)?
- In case your favorite establishment experienced a product-harm crisis, what channels would you think will be the most effective channels of communication the establishment is to use?
- In case your favorite establishment experienced a product-harm crisis, what do you think will be the establishment's best available and most effective PR tools?

- In case your favorite establishment experienced a product-harm crisis, what strategies would you prefer your establishment to follow? Denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and/or mortification?
- In case your favorite establishment experienced a product-harm crisis, how would you like the establishment to act? Be transparent, interactive, and community building in its social media engagement?
- Do you know any of the establishment's CSR activities? Be environmentally responsible - contribute to the welfare of the society - to donate? (Condit, 2014)
- Sentiment analysis of crisis and upon crisis – how would be your reaction before-during-after the crisis towards your establishment?
- Do you think the establishment should be held accountable if it confronts a product-harm? Ex. The one witnessed in 2014. Whom is to blame for the witnessed crisis?
- On a scale 1-5, How serious was the crisis? how important? how concerned were you about possibility of getting affected?

Appendix D

*Source: Institutional Review Board at AUB. *Social*

Forms. <https://www.aub.edu.lb/irb/Pages/SocialForms.aspx>

When Establishments Communicate: A critical analysis of the Lebanese food corporate voice during reputation crisis

Principal Investigator: Dr. Nadine Yehya

Co-Investigator: Diala J. Daoud

American University of Beirut

CONSENT DOCUMENT

SUBJECTS MUST BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS SCRIPT THAT INCLUDES THE NAME, DESIGNATION AND CONTACT DETAILS OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR AND THE CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE (TELEPHONE AND EMAIL). IF THE PARTICIPANT CONSENTS TO BEING QUOTED BY TRUE NAME IN REPORTS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH, PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT MUST BE OBTAINED. ALL SUCH QUOTATIONS MUST BE CHECKED FOR ACCURACY WITH THE INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS BEFORE THEY ARE PUBLISHED IN ARTICLES/REPORTS, OR QUOTED IN PRESENTATIONS. SEE HIGHLIGHTED SECTION BELOW

I am a graduate student in the Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies department at AUB, interested in critically analyzing the communication and crisis response strategies used by major Lebanese food establishments in the wake of the 2014 food safety crisis.

I am inviting you to please participate in this study by being part of an interview that may take about 30 minutes. I would like to take a minute to explain why I am inviting you to participate and what I will be doing with the information you provide me. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions that you may have.

I am doing this study as part of my thesis at AUB. I will be interviewing a sample of thirteen stakeholders about the crisis communication held by Lebanese food establishments during the 2014 product harm crisis raised by the Health Ministry's initiation of the food safety campaign. This collected information will be used in published thesis and possible academic presentations.

Interviews are to be held in private meeting rooms, either at AUB or at your establishment's headquarter, so to assure privacy of participants and confidentiality of data. Participation is on a purely voluntary basis. If at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to answer any questions, please feel free not to. You also have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. I would like to assure you here that there is no risk in participating in this interview.

A. Project Description

1. In this study, you will be asked to answer several questions about your opinions concerning the communication handling of the product-harm crisis by major Lebanese Food establishments upon confronting a product-harm crisis with the initiation of Lebanese Health Ministry's food safety campaign back in 2014.
2. The estimated time needed to complete this study is approximately 30 minutes. All interviews will be conducted face-to-face, in AUB or at your establishment's

offices, in private meeting rooms, so to assure privacy of participants and confidentiality of data.

3. The research being conducted may be later on published in an academic journal and possibly presented at academic conferences.

4. I would like to tape record this interview so as to make sure that I remember accurately all the information you provide. The interview tapes will not be shared, only quotes will be derived. Kindly note that your name or any quotes will not be included in my research analysis without your prior explicit permission.

B. Risks and Benefits

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk to you beyond the risks of daily life. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss.

There are no particular benefits to you personally from participating in the research study. Your participation will definitely help us better understand the communication strategies followed by the entitled food establishments.

C. Recruitment of participants and Justification of Sample Size:

The interviewed stakeholders will include: a representative from each of the three selected food establishments, a minimum of 10 customers, a health ministry spokesperson, a representative from the Consumer Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Economy and Trade in Lebanon, a representative from civil society represented by the Consumers Lebanon Assembly, three media personnel, and three public relations experts. In terms of the selection criteria, the food establishments were chosen for their online presence and reputable names in the Lebanese casual dining industry. Their customers were randomly selected, through a promoted Facebook ad and a convenient sampling method to encompass different age groups (all 18 or older) and different genders. The selected Health Ministry spokesperson, representative from the Consumer Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Economy and Trade in Lebanon, and representative from the Consumers Lebanon Assembly were those who were directly handling food safety campaign and cases. The media personnel chosen were the outlets and the contributors that covered the crisis the most, mainly Annahar, As-Safir, and The Daily Star. These three outlets were the most prominent in the “Food Safety” press tracings of the Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center database at AUB (2016). As based on their prominence they were selected for this study. Lastly, the public relations experts are the top three PR agencies specialized in crisis communication in Lebanon, as listed in the Middle East and North Africa Media Guide. These companies are Memac Ogilvy, Burson Marsteller, and Porter Novelli.

D. Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

There are no such criteria. Establishments were chosen as based on their reputation in the Lebanese casual dining industry. The Health Ministry personnel, representative from the Consumer Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Economy and Trade in Lebanon, and representative from the Consumers Lebanon Assembly were chosen as based on their involvement and handling of this case back in 2014. The customers were randomly chosen as per their interest in joining the study. Media personnel were chosen as based on K2P database and their reporting on the matter. Finally, the PR agencies were chosen as based on their specialization in crisis communication in Lebanon.

E. Contact Information

If you have questions, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you may contact the Principal Investigator by phone on 009611350000 ext.: 3712 or by email on ny17@aub.edu.lb- or - the Co-Investigator by mobile phone on 0096171441461 or by email on djd02@mail.aub.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the following office at the American University of Beirut:

The Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) and the Biomedical and Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) Institutional Review Board

Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon

Tel: 00961 1 374374, ext.: 5445

Fax: 000961 1 738025

Email: irb@aub.edu.lb

F. Protection of subject Privacy:

Participant's privacy will be highlighted at all times. No information or quotes will be shared about the participant without his/her explicit written prior permission. All the data collected are for research purposes only. To meet AUB archives services and requirements, all data will be stored for a minimum period of 3 years. The data will be stored in protected MacBook and excel sheet, locked with passwords all the time. Confidentiality will be further ensured through the usage of identification codes.

G. Subjects rights

Your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate does not involve any penalty. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You may skip any question of the interview that you do not wish to answer; you may skip answering any question during the interview just by saying "skip."

Kindly note that refusal to participate, to discontinue participation, or to skip any question does not entitle any loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, it will not affect their relationship with their workplace and AUB/AUBMC. A copy of this consent document is available to you for your records if you choose so.

H. Informed Consent

Written informed consent will be obtained from each subject at entry into the study.

Informed consent is obtained by the following process; in the email invitation to be sent to interviewees to participate in the study, a sample consent form will be attached. Subjects will have the opportunity to review the consent form before meeting with them in person and signing it prior to initiating the interview.

I. Permission to Tape the Interview:

I would like to tape record this interview so as to make sure that I remember accurately all the information you provide. Confidentiality of subjects records will be ensured throughout the whole study. The interview tapes will not be shared, only quotes will be derived. Kindly note that your name or any quotes will not be included in my research analysis without your prior explicit permission.

For research requirements only, records will be monitored and may be audited by the IRB while ensuring full confidentiality of the records.

J. Stopping Rules

This study will be stopped prior to its completion if: (1) there are any sought adverse effects that call into question the safety of the intervention; (2) there is an experienced difficulty in study recruitment or retention, which can later impact the ability to evaluate the study endpoints; (3) there are any other situations that might warrant stopping the trial; or (5) there is an explicit request done by one of the participant.

Do you have any questions about the above information?

Do you voluntarily consent to take part in this study?

Do you also voluntarily consent to this interview being recorded?

I may wish to quote from this interview either in the presentations or articles resulting from this work. Do you agree to allow me to quote from this interview?

Would you like your full name to be used in any oral presentations or written documents resulting from this research?

Consent for participation: _____

Consent for taping the interview: _____

Consent to quoting from interview: _____

Consent to Use Name: _____

If you chose to be interviewed and have your name used, you will be given a copy of this consent form with your signatures.

Appendix E Packet for Roadster Diner Facebook



Roadster diner's commitment to food safety & quality

As a local food company, Roadster diner has one overarching purpose: to provide customers with the highest quality and food safety standards based on internationally recognized principles and practices. Each day, we aim to produce food that people love, while producing, marketing, and selling them safely and responsibly.

Our comprehensive and detail oriented processes and procedures are designed to ensure that our products comply with governmental regulations and our own strict quality and product safety standards. The quality and safety of all our products are not negotiable for Roadster diner.

Food Safety Certifications

Roadster diner is ISO 22000 certified since 2008 from SGS. With this certification, Roadster diner has a proven ability to monitor and control food safety hazards to ensure food is safe for consumption based on SGS surveillance audits and HACCP documentation reviews.

Certification is received from Switzerland, Geneva, and SGS auditors confirm that Roadster diner has established and maintained its management system in accordance with the requirements of the standard on a yearly basis.

Roadster diner is also certified from the Lebanese Association for Food Safety (LAFS) for all our branches.

Food Safety Management System

Roadster diner receives its products fresh on a daily basis and takes all the necessary control measures to prevent food safety hazards. We are constantly aware and involved in the day to day operations through HACCP record keeping involving receiving temperatures, storage temperatures, cooking temperatures, personal hygiene, and cleaning schedule. Additionally, we focus heavily on the cooking process for high risk foods to ensure the core temperature is maintained according to internationally set standards of temperature.

Testing

All items are tested according to Libnor standards, (i.e. in accordance with the Ministry of Economy and Trade), from ISO accredited laboratories in Lebanon. Food and water samples are regularly taken during receiving, production, and end products to ensure all levels of the supply chain are compliant with Libnor standards. Additional samples are taken for further verification, which include swab testing of employees, utensils, food contact surfaces, and equipment.

All samples taken are by experienced and certified food safety auditors using sterile containers and single use autoclaved utensils. The samples are labeled, and sealed, and immediately sent to accredited laboratories in cooled vans to ensure the temperature of our items is within acceptable range.

Auditing

We verify our system on a monthly basis through certified food safety auditors internally and through third party auditors, including SGS and the Lebanese Association for Food Safety (LAFS) based on internationally recognized food safety standards.

Additionally, auditors from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Economy and Trade regularly conduct visits to Roadster diner branches and results have indicated the highest standards in food safety.

Training

Training on food safety is provided at all levels of the organization and covers basic food hygiene, and level 2, and level 3 Food Safety for supervisors.

Hands on trainings are also provided internally and through third party food safety auditors, LAFS, as we are always keen on the responsibilities towards food safety in our branches.

The quality and safety of all our products are a priority at Roadster diner and we remain fully dedicated to providing only the best of food products and services in Lebanon.

Jana Majzoub

Food Safety Manager

Roadster diner

*Roadster Diner. (2014, November 12). Roadster diner's commitment to food safety & quality [Facebook update]. Retrieved from

<https://www.facebook.com/roadsterdiner/photos/a.10151672422713776.632676.22917293775/10153302792928776/?type=1&theater>



Roadster diner's Director of Operations was just interviewed by MTV to follow up on the latest developments, restating our full commitment to food quality and safety.

*Roadster Diner. (2014, November 14). Roadster diner's Director of Operations was just interviewed by MTV[Facebook update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/roadsterdiner/photos/a.418774628775.213421.22917293775/10153307407273776/?type=3&theater>

Roadster diner Supports MOH Campaign to Reinforce Food Safety

Roadster diner
TOGETHER FOREVER

ROADSTER DINER
Page Liked · November 14, 2014 · Edited ·

Roadster diner has a firm commitment to the quality and safety of the food we serve. We would like to thank his Excellency for his and his team's efforts to ensure the safety of the Lebanese public, and we thank him for his trust in us and for being a valued customer. We assure him that he will always remain a valued customer.

Believing in the efforts that they are doing, Roadster diner were among the first to visit his Excellency to show support and offer full collaboration. The main message we were trying to convey during our meeting together: Roadster diner implements several control processes in all the phases of food production leading to it being served to guests, and these three phases are: receiving, preparation and cooking. In all of these three phases and for several years, Roadster diner has been conducting lab tests in the Lebanese Agriculture Research Institute (Fanar) to ensure food quality and ultimate safety, in addition to tests in the American University of Beirut, as is required by our ISO certification to conform to local and international standards.

Additional focus is applied on food items that are potentially high risk including chicken, which we would like to clarify, as it might not have been clear during our meeting, that the lab tests of the previous three months were inline and conformed to the required specifications, hence items were safe to be served for consumption.

Roadster diner would like all of its customers to rest assured and know that if any test results showed any nonconformities in the past, we took extreme measures to ensure the safety of our guests by discarding the respective batches.

Write a comment...

Roadster diner has a firm commitment to the quality and safety of the food we serve. We would like to thank his Excellency for his and his team's efforts to ensure the safety of the Lebanese public, and we thank him for his trust in us and for being a valued customer. We assure him that he will always remain a valued customer.

Believing in the efforts that they are doing, Roadster diner were among the first to visit his Excellency to show support and offer full collaboration. The main message we were trying to convey during our meeting together: Roadster diner implements several control processes in all the phases of food production leading to it being served to guests, and these three phases are: receiving, preparation and cooking. In all of these three phases and for several years, Roadster diner has been conducting lab tests in the Lebanese Agriculture Research Institute (Fanar) to ensure food quality and ultimate safety, in addition to tests in the American University of Beirut, as is required by our ISO certification to conform to local and international standards.

Additional focus is applied on food items that are potentially high risk including chicken, which we would like to clarify, as it might not have been clear during our meeting, that the lab tests of the previous three months were inline and conformed to the required specifications, hence items were safe to be served for consumption.

Roadster diner would like all of its customers to rest assured and know that if any test results showed any nonconformities in the past, we took extreme measures to ensure the safety of our guests by discarding the respective batches.

We at Roadster diner take great pride with our standards and procedures, and are confident that we serve the safest and best quality food to our customers. Therefore, we believe that if any Lebanese citizen has doubts about eating chicken at Roadster diner, then they should think a hundred times before eating chicken elsewhere.

Lastly, and in support to his Excellency's efforts, Roadster diner management has decided to fully equip a new testing lab to support speeding up the process of testing for all companies including ourselves. Details of where and how are to be left to his Excellency's preference, which may be a new branch for Al Fanar institute or another new location.

We have one shared goal: ensuring the Lebanese citizens' health and we have never and will never compromise on that.

*Roadster Diner. (2014, November 14). Roadster diner has a firm commitment to the quality and safety of the food we serve. [Facebook update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/roadsterdiner/photos/a.418774628775.213421.22917293775/10153307776328776/?type=3&theater>

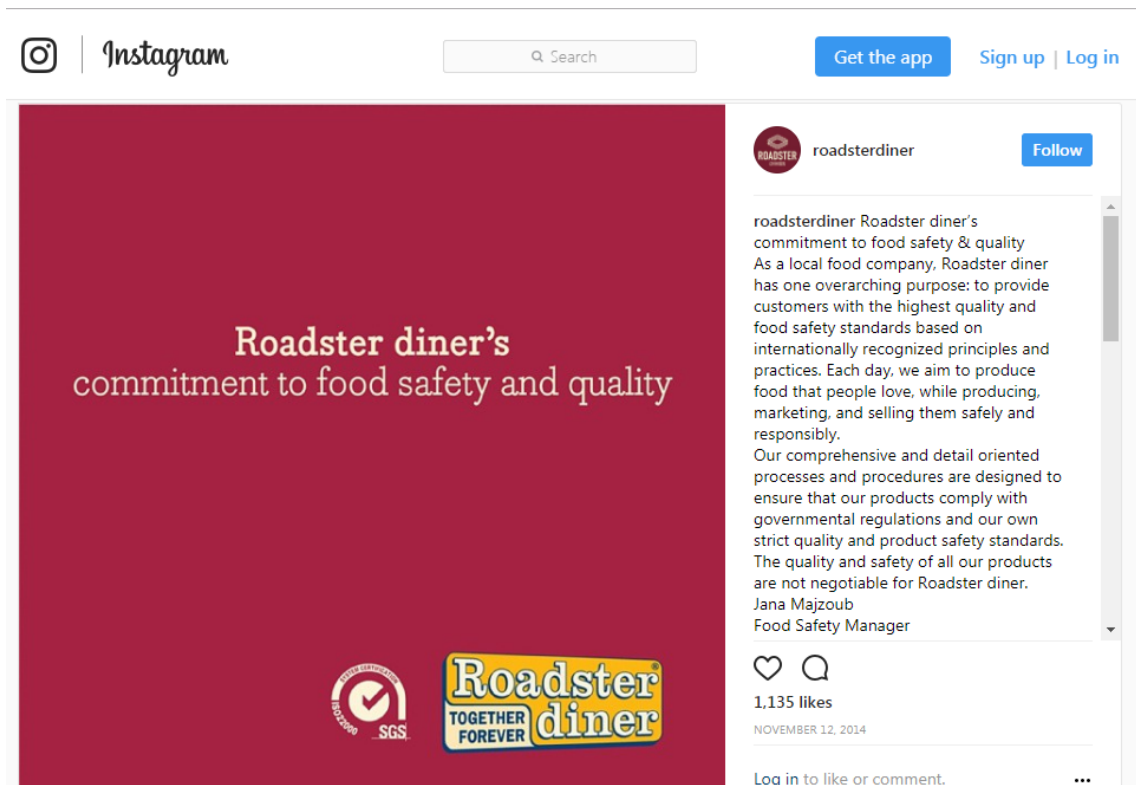


*Roadster Diner. (2016, September 5. We're proud to share with you that ROADSTER DINER in LeMallSin El Fil has achieved the highest food safety inspection grade among the casual restaurants in the mall and has received a certificate of excellence from GWR Food Safety. [Facebook update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/roadsterdiner/photos/a.418774628775.213421.22917293775/10155150991328776/?type=3&theater>



*Roadster Diner. (2016, October 11).ROADSTER DINER Journieh has received a Gold Certificate from H.E. the Minister of Public Health. We remain committed to the highest levels of care and diligence in food safety throughout our operations. #FreshCasualYours[Facebook update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/roadsterdiner/photos/a.418774628775.213421.22917293775/10155271831803776/?type=3&theater>

Appendix F
Packet for Roadster Diner Instagram Pictures



*Roadster Diner. (2014, November 12). Roadster diner's commitment to food safety & quality

As a local food company, Roadster diner has one overarching purpose: to provide customers with the highest quality and food safety standards based on internationally recognized principles and practices. Each day, we aim to produce food that people love, while producing, marketing, and selling them safely and responsibly.

Our comprehensive and detail oriented processes and procedures are designed to ensure that our products comply with governmental regulations and our own strict quality and product safety standards. The quality and safety of all our products are not negotiable for Roadster diner.

Jana Majzoub

Food Safety Manager

Roadster diner

More details are available on [fb.com/roadsterdiner](https://www.facebook.com/roadsterdiner). [Instagram update]. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/vTmAS4IQmR/>



Instagram

Search

Get the app Sign up | Log in





roadsterdiner
Roadster diner Jal el Dib

Follow

roadsterdiner Roadster diner's Director of Operations was just interviewed by MTV to follow up on the latest developments restating our full commitment to food quality and safety.

#roadsterdiner #togetherforever

load more comments

nadine.fares @carlaakil

elise_zogheib Lol!!! @joekeddy

alexandrakachkorian Hahahhahha wlk ma l wizara kelaaa 8ayr moutabikaa !!!! As if we have quality governors by any chance !!!! Duhhh !!!! #Rd #Loyal #1 #Fan #Forever

reine_alsheikh 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔

@khairallah_daya @bana_sarhan

samiraassi @rimhussein92 @mayabizri

@husseinantar




957 likes

NOVEMBER 14, 2014

*Roadster Diner. (2014, November 14). Roadster diner's Director of Operations was just interviewed by MTV to follow up on the latest developments restating our full commitment to food quality and safety. #roadsterdiner#togetherforever[Instagram update]. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/vY83t6oQhm/>



*Roadster Diner. (2014, November 15). We have one shared goal: ensuring the Lebanese citizens' health and we have never and will never compromise on that. [#Roadsterdiner#togetherforever#lebanon#rdlovers](https://www.instagram.com/p/vZY-AVoQs5/)[Instagram update]. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/vZY-AVoQs5/>

We're proud to share with you that ROADSTER DINER in @LeMall_lbSin El Fil has achieved the highest food safety inspection grade among the casual restaurants in the mall and has received a certificate of excellence from GWR Food Safety.



roadsterdiner • Follow

roadsterdiner We're proud to share with you that ROADSTER DINER in @LeMall_lbSin El Fil has achieved the highest food safety inspection grade among the casual restaurants in the mall and has received a certificate of excellence from GWR Food Safety.

hananjai Worst service ever

oli_chartouni Congratulation @roadsterdiner 🎉🎉

khouryshirley333 Chich @ferdinand_khoury

shanach @serenamae99 montre a viviane lis la caption

joe_salame @charbelsalameh_23

kamal.ne @antony_nicolas tekram 😎

abdorachedd @oliverar98

oliver.a.r Maa shaara bl akel



1,107 likes

SEPTEMBER 5, 2016

Add a comment...



*Roadster Diner. (2016, September 5). We're proud to share with you that ROADSTER DINER in @LeMall_lbSin El Fil...[Instagram update]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BJ_BzAuAN07/?taken-by=roadsterdiner



roadsterdiner • Follow

roadsterdiner ROADSTER DINER Jounieh has received a Gold Certificate from H.E. the Minister of Public Health. We remain committed to the highest levels of care and diligence in food safety throughout our operations.

#FreshCasualYours

valentinachahine ;) @nabilchahine

fattouma_kh Congrats 🙌

farahchihane RObert tole3lo kmn ? @sashazeinoun

amansalloum92 @georgesehajj

lale.antabi @eliechallita2

jjirairmaghakian @paulinazak

mehio6 @rymarafii14

eliechallita_ 🤔 @lale.aainteby

nour_elhadi Deserved



1,567 likes

OCTOBER 11, 2016

Add a comment...

ROADSTER DINER Jounieh has received a Gold Certificate from H.E. the Minister of Public Health. We remain committed to the highest levels of care and diligence in food safety throughout our operations.

#FreshCasualYours

*Roadster Diner. (2016, October 11). ROADSTER DINER Jounieh has received a Gold Certificate from H.E. the Minister of Public Health. We remain committed to the highest levels of care and diligence in food safety throughout our operations.

#FreshCasualYours[Instagram update]. Retrieved

from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BLaw4zGDBvR/?taken-by=roadsterdiner>

Appendix G
Packet for Kababji Facebook Updates

*No Facebook photos posted by Kababji between November 10, 2014 and November 18, 2014.

Appendix H
Packet for Kababji Instagram Pictures



*Kababji. (2014, December 10).[kababji#Kababji](https://www.instagram.com/p/wbqJuOLw6Y/) stands for a simple mix of traditional culinary excellence & modern casual dining.
[#BeirutFood#BeirutRestaurants#BestRestaurantsBeirut#Kababji#KababjiLeb#KababjiGrill#LebanonEats#IWantKababji](https://www.instagram.com/p/wbqJuOLw6Y/). [Instagram update]. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/wbqJuOLw6Y/>

Appendix I Packet for Crepaway Facebook Updates



IRI INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report

Date: 20/11/2014
No: 5229/1686/277267/2014

CLIENT
Name: MESSRS. CREPAWAY S.A.L.
JOUNIEH - LEBANON
Reference: Your letter dated on 12/11/2014 ; ref. 270/14

**IRI Bldg. - Lebanese University Campus
Hadath (Beirut) - Lebanon
P.O. Box: 11-2806 Beirut
Tel/Fax: +961 3 467831 - Mobile: +961 3 286240
e-mail: info@iri.org.lb - http://www.iri.org.lb 84064**

SAMPLE
Received as: " Raw Chicken"
(In a plastic container)
Received on: 12/11/2014

Results

Testing duration: From 13/11/2014 to 18/11/2014 Unless otherwise specified, the sampling was done by the client.

IRI Code No	Production date: 10/11/2014 Expiry date: 13/11/2014 Batch No: 14314	Total viable count (CFU/g)	Reference Method
266 - 1		4.7x10 ⁵	ISO 4833
266 - 2	Staphylococcus aureus (CFU/g)	<10	ISO 6888-1
266 - 12	E.coli (CFU/g)	2.0x10 ¹	ISO 16649-2
266 - 13	Salmonella /25 g	Not detected	ISO 6579
266 - 7	Anaerobic sulphite reducing bacteria (CFU/g)	1.0x10 ²	ISO 15213

The above mentioned microbiological test results are in conformity with the related technical requirements stipulated for the product.
Results relate only to the sample tested.

JS/RM/kh
Eng. Hovig Kouyoumdjian
Laboratory Head
Microbiology

Nadia Khoury
Applied Research & Testing
Director

CONDITIONS & TERMS: - It is prohibited to use this report for advertising purposes -

Crepaway
Page Liked · December 3, 2014 ·

We would like to start by thanking the Ministry of Health for the food safety campaign that aims at protecting the Lebanese citizens above all and reassure our trust in their invested efforts.

At Crepaway and for the last 30 years, our mission has been to provide quality products under the best international Hospitality standards. Food safety is a criteria we do not compromise on.

On November 12th 2014, representatives from the Ministry of Health have requested chicken and meat samples for audit from our Batroun outlet. Branch management expressed concerns at the procedure from a technical point of view. Our Food Safety & Sanitation (FSS) department was requested to take a similar sample, from the same batch, from the same branch and test it with an accredited lab.

The results were released on November 20th and showed that food sample was compliant with international food safety standards. The results are attached for reference.

Testing food with accredited labs is a common practice at Crepaway and is undergone on a regular basis, inside central kitchen, branches and at suppliers' end, by both our FSS department and our independent consultants.

Since the results of the tests we performed are different from the Ministry sample test, we will be discussing this discrepancy with the Ministry first thing in the morning to clarify the results and act according to their recommendations. Rest assured that we will keep you posted on the results of our discussions and will clarify all findings in all transparency.

Thank you for your continuous trust and support.

*Crepaway. (2014, December 3). We would like to start by thanking the Ministry of Health for the food safety campaign that aims at protecting the Lebanese citizens above all and reassure our trust in their invested efforts. [Facebook update]. Retrieved from

We would like to start by thanking the Ministry of Health for the food safety campaign that aims at protecting the Lebanese citizens above all and reassure our trust in their invested efforts.

At Crepaway and for the last 30 years, our mission has been to provide quality products under the best international Hospitality standards. Food safety is a criteria we do not compromise on.

On November 12th 2014, representatives from the Ministry of Health have requested chicken and meat samples for audit from our Batroun outlet. Branch management expressed concerns at the procedure from a technical point of view. Our Food Safety & Sanitation (FSS) department was requested to take a similar sample, from the same batch, from the same branch and test it with an accredited lab.

The results were released on November 20th and showed that food sample was compliant with international food safety standards. The results are attached for reference.

Testing food with accredited labs is a common practice at Crepaway and is undergone on a regular basis, inside central kitchen, branches and at suppliers' end, by both our FSS department and our independent consultants.

Since the results of the tests we performed are different from the Ministry sample test, we will be discussing this discrepancy with the Ministry first thing in the morning to clarify the results and act according to their recommendations. Rest assured that we will keep you posted on the results of our discussions and will clarify all findings in all transparency.

Thank you for your continuous trust and support.

*Crepaway. (2014, December 3). We would like to start by thanking the Ministry of Health for the food safety campaign that aims at protecting the Lebanese citizens above all and reassure our trust in their invested efforts. [Facebook update]. Retrieved from

<https://www.facebook.com/crepaway/photos/a.387630379241.166875.11046469241/10152833887089242/?type=1&theater>

Appendix J
Packet for Crepaway Instagram Pictures

*No Instagram pictures posted pertaining to the food safety campaign during the whole months of November and December; given that the page was posting content almost daily.

REFERENCES

- Aarji, Y. (2014, November 12). لماذا يرفض طرابلسيون قرار أبو فاعور؟ *Annahar*.
<https://www.annahar.com/article/188869-لملذا-يرفض-طرابلسيون-قرار-أبو-فاعور>
- Abdel Karim, S. (2018, January 11). Personal interview.
- Abji, F. (2014, November 12). من اين يأكل نوابنا؟ *Annahar*. Retrieved from
<https://www.annahar.com/article/188829-من-اين-يأكل-نوابنا>
- Akiki, V. (2014, November, 2014). فيصل كرامي لـ"النهار": يتفضّل أبو فاعور ع كعكة قشطة. *Annahar*. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/188874-فيسل-كرامة>
[لالنهار-يتفضّل-أبو-فاعور-ع-كعكة-قشطة](https://www.annahar.com/article/188874-فيسل-كرامة-لالنهار-يتفضّل-أبو-فاعور-ع-كعكة-قشطة)
- Alicia, M. (2014). The Impact of Media Frames and Treatment Responsibility within the Situational Crisis Communication Theory Framework. *Corporate Reputation Review; Basingstoke* 17(1).p. 78-90. Retrieved from
<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/docview/1497987880?pq-origsite=summon>
- Asser, M. (2016, December 29). Personal interview
- Benoit, W. (1997). Image Repair Discourse and Crisis Communication. *Public Relations Review* 23(2). Pp. 177-186. Retrieved from http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0363811197900230/1-s2.0-S0363811197900230-main.pdf?_tid=bfcb09c-f1d9-11e6-8adf-00000aacb35e&acdnat=1486983001_c68e4e3a8ec38bb928fc666f1d2f7636
- Bernstein, J. (2016). The 10 Steps of Crisis Communications. Retrieved from
<http://www.bernsteincrisismanagement.com/the-10-steps-of-crisis-communications/>

- Bou Moussa, R. (2014, November 12) أخذوا العينات: TSC المتاجر والمطاعم المتهمة "عم تصوفر" و. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/188930-أخذوا-العينات-بشكل-خاطيء-tsc-المتاجر-والمطاعم-المتهمه-عم-تصوفر-و>
- Brockner, J. & James, E. (2008). Toward an Understanding of When Executives See Crisis as Opportunity. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjU09a41-QAhXFCiwKHT9lBucQFggBMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fjab.sagepub.com%2Fcontent%2F44%2F1%2F94.short&usg=AFQjCNEYMQIHxWYazAYCO7s9Iadltkyww&sig2=anyNGtuv1JTeSTDNJcK68w>
- Burnett, J. (1998). A Strategic Approach to Managing Crises. *Public Relations Review* 24(4).Pp. 475-488. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S036381119980112X>
- Charara, I. (November 13, 2014). كيف يرد "تجار الغذاء" على اتهامات وزارة الصحة؟ Retrieved from: <http://assafir.com/Article/3/383934>
- Chbaro, A. (2014, November 12). عوامل تعزز الفساد الغذائي. *Annahar*. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/188861-عوامل-تعزز-الفساد-الغذائي-في-لبنان>
- Chbaro, A. (2014, November 13). تراشق اتهامات بين تجار المواشي واللحوم المجمدة. *Annahar*. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/189208-بين-المجمد-والذبح-اللبناني>-آكل-الضرب

- Chbaro, A. (2014, November 24). عاصفة الخضر آتية... مزروعات ترش بمبيدات ممنوعة. *Annahar*. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/192361--عاصفة-الخضر>
[عاصفة-الخضر](https://www.annahar.com/article/192361--عاصفة-الخضر)
[آتية-مزروعات-ترش-بمبيدات-ممنوعة](https://www.annahar.com/article/192361--عاصفة-الخضر)
- Chebli, D. (2018, January 2). Email interview.
- Claeys, A., & Cauberghe, V. (2012). Crisis response and crisis timing strategies, two sides of the same coin. *Public Relations Review* (38). Retrieved from <http://fulltext.study/preview/pdf/139443.pdf>
- Condit, B. (2014, October 20) 7 critical steps to crisis management. Retrieved from <http://www.inc.com/bruce-condit/7-critical-steps-to-crisis-management.html>
- Coombs, T., & Holladay, S. (2010). *The Handbook of Crisis Communication*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Coombs, T. (1995, May). Choosing the Right Words: The Development of Guidelines for the Selection of the “Appropriate” Crisis-Response Strategies. *Management Communication Quarterly* (8). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247741868_Choosing_the_Right_Words
- Coombs, T. (2007). Protecting Organization Reputations During a Crisis: The Development and Application of Situational Crisis Communication Theory. *Corporate Reputation Review; Basingstoke* 10 (3). 163-176. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/docview/231501136?pq-origsite=summon>
- Coombs, T. (2007, October 30). Crisis Management and Communications. Retrieved from <http://www.instituteforpr.org/crisis-management-and-communications/>

- Coombs, T. (2015). The value of communication during a crisis: Insights from strategic communication research. *Business Horizons* (58). Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0007681314001505>
- Crepaway. <https://www.facebook.com/crepaway/>
- Crepaway. <https://www.instagram.com/crepaway/>
- Crisis Communication Management – Types of Crises. Retrieved from <http://www.praccreditation.org/resources/documents/APRSG-Crisis-Comm-Management.pdf>
- Dakroub, H. (2014, November 15). Abu Faour demands closure of two restaurants, butcher. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Nov-15/277713-abu-faour-demands-closure-of-two-restaurants-butcher.ashx>
- Daou, A. (2014, November 13). صدمة في عاليه. *Assafir*. Retrieved from <http://assafir.com/Article/383718>
- Dawar, N., and Pillutla, M. (2000). Impact of Product-Harm Crises on Brand Equity: The Moderating Role of Consumer Expectations. *Journal of Marketing Research: May 2000, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 215-226*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.37.2.215.18729>
- European Food Safety Authority. (2012). *When Food is Cooking a Storm: proven recipes for risk communications*. Retrieved from http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/20120712_EFSA_RCG_EN_WEB.pdf

- European Food Safety Authority. (2016). *Best practice for crisis communicators: How to communicate during food or feed safety incidents*. Retrieved from http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/crisis_manual_160315.pdf
- Farfour, H. (2014, November 3). مسلخ بيروت: إهمال متعمد قفاله؟. *Al Akhbar*, pp. 8. Retrieved from https://al-akhbar.com/PDF_Files/2435/pdf/p08_20141103.pdf
- Ghanem, R. (2015, February 05). *Food safety rules for restaurants and hotels*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessnews.com.lb/cms/Story/StoryDetails.aspx?ItemID=4632>
- Gonzalez-Herrero, A., & Smith, S. (2008). Crisis Communications Management on the Web: How Internet-Based Technologies are Changing the Way Public Relations Professionals Handle Business Crises. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* (16). Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-5973.2008.00543.x/abstract>
- Haddad, J. (2018, January 8). Personal interview.
- Health, Economy Ministries in dust-up over sugar. *The Daily Star*.
- Hiltz, S., Diaz, P., & Mark, G. (2011). Introduction: Social media and collaborative systems for crisis management. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction* (18). Retrieved from <http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2063231.2063232>
- Holtzhausen, D., & Roberts, G. (2009). An Investigation into the Role of Image Repair Theory in Strategic Conflict Management. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 21 (2). 165-186. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/doi/pdf/10.1080/10627260802557431?needAccess=true>

Institutional Review Board at AUB. *Social Forms*.

<https://www.aub.edu.lb/irb/Pages/SocialForms.aspx>

Jaber, A. (2017, December 10). Personal interview.

Jin, Y., Liu, B., & Austin, L. (2011), Examining the Role of Social Media in Effective Crisis Management: The Effects of Crisis Origin, Information Form, and Source on Publics' Crisis Responses. *Communication Research (X)*. Retrieved from <http://crx.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/09/16/0093650211423918>

Kababji. <https://www.facebook.com/KababjiLebanon/>

Kababji. <https://www.instagram.com/kababji/>

Khauli, Leila. (2017, January 9). Personal interview.

Khayat, D. (2014, November 25). ماذا قال أصحاب معامل اللبنة. *Annahar*. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/192700-اللبنة-معامل-اللبنة>

Kheshasho, I. (2014, December 1). بعد قرار اقفال «تنمية» لمخالفته الشروط... كيف ردت إدارته؟ *Janoubia*. <http://janoubia.com/2014/12/02/بعد-قرار-اقفال-تنمية-لمخالفته-الشروط/>

Kjtzinger, J. (1999). Researching risk and the media. *Health, Risk, & Society*, 1(1). Pp. 55-69.
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13698579908407007?journalCode=chrs20>

Knowledge to Policy Center (2016). Retrieved from

<http://www.aub.edu.lb/k2p/msgdir/Pages/k2ppresstracing.aspx>

Muralidharan, S., Rasmussen, L., Patterson, D., & Shin, J. (2011). Hope for Haiti: An analysis of Facebook and Twitter usage during the earthquake relief efforts.

Public Relations Review 37(2). pp. 175-177. doi#10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.01.010

Najjar, R. (2015, January 15). هكذا تعامل "متهمو" السلامة الغذائية مع الأزمة... وهذا ما يجب أن يفعلوه.

Annahar. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/205537--هكذا-تعامل>

[متهمو-السلامة-الغذائية-تواصلوا-مع-الأزمة-وهذا-ما-يجب-أن-يفعلوه](#)

Nehme, N. (2018, January 5). Personal interview.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017, October 2). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *Sage Publication*.

Retrieved from

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1609406917733847>

Obeid, G. (2014, November 12). Food scandal: Menu of death. *The Daily Star*, pp. 1.

Retrieved from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Nov-12/277318-food-scandal-menu-of-death.ashx>

Pedersen, R. (2017). Media Framing. In F. M. Moghaddam (Ed.), *The SAGE*

Encyclopedia of Political Behavior (Vols. 1-2). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

Publications, doi:

<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/10.4135/9781483391144.n215>

Penney, K., Snyder, J., Crooks, V. A., & Johnston, R. (2011). Risk communication and informed consent in the medical tourism industry: A thematic content analysis of

Canadian broker websites. *BMC Medical Ethics*, 12(17), doi:# [10.1186/1472-6939-12-17](https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6939-12-17)

Police to begin raiding non-compliant restaurants: Lebanon Health Ministry. *The Daily Star*.

Roadster Diner. <https://www.facebook.com/roadsterdiner>

Roadster Diner. <https://www.instagram.com/roadsterdiner/?hl=en>

- Roberts, M. & Pettigrew, S. (2007) A thematic content analysis of children's food advertising. *International Journal of Advertising*, 26(3), 357-367. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2007.11073018>
- Roshan, M., Warren, M., & Carr, R. (2016). Understanding the use of social media by organizations for crisis communication. *Computers in Human Behavior* (63). Retrieved from <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2988676>
- Saldaña, J. (2009) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. City Road, London: SAGE Publications
- Seeger, M., Sellnow, T., & Ulmer, R. (1998). Communication, Organization, and Crisis. *Annals of the International Communication Association: Communication Yearbook*, 21(1). Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/23808985.1998.11678952?scroll=top&needAccess=true>
- Semaan, M. (2014, November 28). دليل المستهلك لسلامة غذائه - في ظل الشكوك بالرقابة. *Assafir*. Retrieved from <http://assafir.com/Windows/PrintArticle.aspx?ChannelID=3&ArticleID=386782&ref=Toolbar>
- Semetko, H. A., Valkenburg, P. M. (2006). Framing European politics: a content analysis of press and television news. *Journal of Communication* 50(2), pp. 93-109. doi#: [10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843.x)
- Shoufi, E. (2014, November 12). «** عم يطعمونا خ». *Al Akhbar*. Retrieved from <https://al-akhbar.com/Community/41209>

Shoufi, E. (2014, November 21). مشهد في وزارة الصحة: كلهم خبراء في الأغذية الفاسدة. *Al Mada*.

Retrieved from <https://www.almada.org/-/الصحف/المشهد-في-وزارة-الصحة-كلهم-خبراء-في-الأغذية-الفاسدة>

Shoufi, E. (2014, November 24) الهيئات الاقتصادية خائفة: وقت الخضوع للدولة *Al Akhbar*.

Retrieved from <https://al-akhbar.com/Community/41880>

Shoufi, E. (2014, December 4). ألف حالة تسمم: الرهان على القضاء 11. *Al Akhbar*. Retrieved

from <https://al-akhbar.com/Community/42516>

Sidahmed, M. (2014, November 20). Mixed feelings as Karantina slaughterhouse shut down. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Nov-20/278268-mixed-feelings-as-karantina-slaughterhouse-shut-down.ashx>

Silvera, D., Meyer, T., and Laufer, D. (2012). Age-related reactions to a product harm crisis. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 29 Issue: 4, pp.302-309*. Retrieved

from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/07363761211237371>

Tabaja, A. (2014, November 13). النبطية: انزعاج من التشهير. *Khiyam*.

<http://www.khiyam.com/news/article.php?articleID=18156>

Tanious, C. (2014, November 13). فساد المأكولات يربع اللبنانيين اليوم لكنهم سينسون الأمر غداً.

Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/188898-فساد-المأكولات-يرعب-لبنانيي-اليوم-لكنهم-سينسون-الأمر-غدا>

Taylor, M., & Perry, D. (2005). Diffusion of traditional and new media tactics in crisis communication. *Public Relations Review (31)*. Retrieved from

<http://www.global.asc.upenn.edu/fileLibrary/PDFs/taylordiffusion.pdf>

- Thomas, G., & Stephens, K. (2015). An Introduction to Strategic Communication. *International Journal of Business Communication* (52). Retrieved from <http://job.sagepub.com/content/52/1/3.full.pdf+html>
- Thoumy, M. (2017, December 12). Personal interview.
- Wehbe, M. (2014, November 18). "محميات" الغذاء الفاسد. *Archive AlManar*. Retrieved from <http://archive.almanar.com.lb/article.php?id=1030808>
- Weiner, D. (2006). Crisis communications: managing corporate reputation in the court of public opinion. *Ivey Business Journal* (March/April). Retrieved from <http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/crisis-communications-managing-corporate-reputation-in-the-court-of-public-opinion/>
- (2013). *Crisis Management*. Retrieved from <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/crisis-management>
- (2014, December 2). Abu Faour orders closure of chicken farm. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Dec-02/279593-abu-faour-orders-closure-of-chicken-farm.ashx>
- (2014, December 15). Lebanon PM urges long-term fix to food safety crisis. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Dec-15/281111-lebanon-pm-urges-long-term-fix-to-food-safety-crisis.ashx>
- (2014, December 18). بالأسماء لوائح جديدة غير مطابقة للسلامة الغذائية يكشف عنها أبو فاعور. Retrieved from <http://anbaaonline.com/?p=284843>
- (2014, November 11). ابو فاعور لـ "النهار" : من غير المقبول أن يأكل المواطن بقايا المجارير. *Annahar*. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/188580--ابو-فاعور-لـ-النهار--من-غير-المقبول-أن-يأكل-المواطن-بقايا-المجارير>

(2014, November 11). *Annahar*. !بالأسماء... اللبنانيون يأكلون "الميكروبات" من المطاعم والمتاجر.

Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/188559--بالاسماء-ابوفاور-يكشف>

[مؤسسات-غذائية-لا-تستوفي-الشروط-الصحية](#)

(2014, November 12). Abu Faour's blacklist of health violations draws support,

criticism. *THE DAILY STAR*. <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon->

[News/2014/Nov-12/277332-abu-faours-blacklist-of-health-violations-draws-](#)

[support-criticism.ashx](#)

(2014, November 13). بالصورة- شاهدوا أبو فاعور يوقع على "سندويشات" الوزراء قبل الأكل.

Annahar. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/189214--ابوفاور-وقع>

[قرار-الموافقة-على-اكل-السندويشات-لزملاءه](#)

(2014, November 13). ما هي المؤسسات المخالفة المعايير الغذائية في كسروان وضواحي بيروت؟.

Annahar. Retrieved from <https://www.annahar.com/article/189105--ما-هي>

[المؤسسات-المخالفة-المعايير-الغذائية-في-كسروان-وبيروت](#)

(2014, November 13). Abu Faour set to expose Beirut's dirty food secrets. *The Daily*

Star. Retrieved from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon->

[News/2014/Nov-13/277457-abu-faour-set-to-expose-beirut-dirty-food-](#)

[secrets.ashx](#)

(2014, November 13). Lebanon health minister dishes up more food-safety violators.

The Daily Star. Retrieved from

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/ArticlePrint.aspx?id=277474&mode=print>

(2014, November 20). !البلد برمته فاسد: نحو إعلان حالة الطوارئ الصحية. Saida City Net.

Retrieved from <http://www.saidacity.net/news/169924/-إعلان-نحو-البلد-برمته-فاسد>

[!حالة-الطوارئ-الصحية](#)

(2015, January 3) «الصحة» و «الاقتصاد». *Assafir*. Retrieved from

<http://assafir.com/Article/393645>

(2015, January 5). Lebanon economy minister denounces Abu Faour 'circus show'. *The*

Daily Star. Retrieved from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon->

[News/2015/Jan-05/283107-lebanon-economy-minister-denounces-abu-faour-circus-show.ashx](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/Jan-05/283107-lebanon-economy-minister-denounces-abu-faour-circus-show.ashx)

(2016, June 20). وزارة الصحة: ضبط عينات غير مطابقة في عدد من المطاعم على مختلف الأراضي.

Retrieved from <http://www.elnashra.com/news/show/1002725/-وزارة-الصحة-ضبط-عينات-غير-مطابقة-عدد-المطاعم-على>

[عينات-غير-مطابقة-عدد-المطاعم-على](http://www.elnashra.com/news/show/1002725/-وزارة-الصحة-ضبط-عينات-غير-مطابقة-عدد-المطاعم-على)

