

TITLE:

**CRISIS, CONSUMERS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS: A CASE STUDY
OF TIGER BRANDS.**

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DECLARATION:

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED FOR THE
HONOURS IN STRATEGIC BRAND COMMUNICATION DEGREE TO THE
INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION IS MY OWN WORK AND HAS NOT
PREVIOUSLY BEEN SUBMITTED TO ANOTHER UNIVERSITY OR HIGHER
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ABSTRACT

When a brand experienced a crisis, effective Public Relations remained important as their brand image was put to the ultimate test. Corporate giants remain so powerful in the minds of consumers that loyalty was an unbreakable bond, that trust earned over a period of time was forged, that an image was built and sustained via a promise kept over a generation of ethical trading and fun experiences. However, trust and loyalty could be questioned and challenged depending on the how the brands responded to the intensity of a crisis.

This study was conducted to analyse consumers reaction to bad Public Relations (PR) concerning brand crises, with specific reference to Tiger Brands listeriosis outbreak in 2018. In this study the research was affiliated with and components measured against the media press Tiger Brands had experienced.

The study made use of the qualitative research to gather data as, qualitative research allowed the researcher to understand subjective experiences and feelings through individuals, with regards to Tiger Brands listeriosis outbreak.

This study gathered information on when a brand was exposed to a crisis, in order to have helped firms react positively to minimise damage in the event of a scandal. This enabled the researcher to measure to what extent, if any, the damage was on brand loyalty and brand image components. It was worth completing as it was useful to measure how strong the bond was with the brand and its surrounding consumers in times of being exposed to a crisis, therefore understanding the importance of PR during a crisis was crucial in order to be well prepared and to have prevented brand erosion. Consumers stated that Tiger Brands crisis was not managed effectively and that they had lost a sense of trust with the brand.

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Contextualisation

Public Relations (PR) was an important part of any company and brand. It was intrinsically linked with crisis management, which was seen to be more evident in the working environment today and required extensive attention and efforts,- in order to ensure clarity between the brand and the public as well as to uphold their image and prevent further damage to a brand.

PR in crisis management in the past had not necessarily been taken seriously, as PR was not trackable and some brands had seen it as another expense, however as brands had become more competitive, PR in crisis management was seen to have become a priority. This research was relevant because, due to globalisation, news and information travelled faster than ever. Therefore, PR in crisis management was needed to answer questions and allegations as quickly as possible in order to prevent damage to a brand (such as being highly proactive on social media and press releases) (Mordecai, 2010).

Dziadkiewicz and Juchniewicz (2012) stated that PR in crisis management was important when it comes to preventing a decrease in a brands value and to ensure an effective communication channel was put into place.

According to studies which studies Ronn's, - experts are only called when a disaster strikes. Ronn (2016) stated that PR specialists were important for crisis management as they are the people who knew how to change public perceptions with the right words and campaigns. Furthermore, they knew that aligning their clients with the right strategies could help to alleviate many issues that come with a crisis (Flynn, 2009). However, according to Ronn (2016), the problem was that brands only take action when faced with a crisis.

Tiger Brands had been identified as one of the largest organisations that faced serious brand erosion as a result of bad PR. The corporate giant had faced the worst listeriosis outbreak in their meats in 2018. They had failed to effectively communicate and

manage their crisis. By ensuring PR practitioners had a plan in place prior to a crisis, Tiger Brands would have been well prepared for their unexpected situation/crisis (Dziadkiewicz, 2012).

This study was important as it was crucial for consumers to be protected against foods that posed a health risk. It allowed consumers to always be aware of the foods they had purchased.

This research background allowed researchers to gain facts, reasons and evidence as to how brands with bad PR resulted in long-term reputational damage.

1.1 Rationale

This research topic was selected because PR remains crucial to the success of any brand. Building and maintaining strong relationships with consumers lead to loyalty and trust towards a brand. Brands still experience a crisis more regularly, due to the pressure from competitors and the environment. Some brands did not have a PR plan put into place prior to a crisis, which caused strain on the organisation and affected their reputation and sales. Tiger Brands was selected, as this corporate giant was an accurate representation of how crucial PR remains when faced with a crisis, and how consumers reactions determined the outcomes and success of the brand. This study provided extensive research and knowledge to the public on how important PR was during crisis management.

PR remains relevant to society because it helps address consumers immediately following the discovery of the crisis and in a professional manner (Harazika, 2016). Harazika (2016) also stated that PR in crisis management allowed organisations to maintain honesty with consumers, while clearing any rumours that could have potentially damaged the organisation's brand. According to Jin and Liu (2010) no matter the industry or how ethically management behaves, it still is possible for organisations to experience poor customer reviews. Therefore, it was important for PR practitioners to provide real-time feedback. Bad PR during a crisis would affect consumers perceptions on the brand, risking a loss of sales and possibly a permanent loss of market share. Tiger Brands needed to be consistent in their communication with the public to ensure authentic empathy, honesty and satisfaction (Jin & Liu, 2010).

Brands benefited from the insights that this research yielded and thus better management of PR in the future, in times of a crisis.

This study contributed to the public by generating knowledge on how effective PR could save a brand during a crisis as well as provided information by adding to the body of knowledge on how bad PR could affect the operations and success of a brand. The sources used in this research, was provided by professionals who provide solutions and advice on how to handle a crisis efficiently and effectively. This study allowed organisations to identify the need to invest in PR, in order to stay ahead of competitors, while creating a market-leading brand.

1.2 Problem statement

Whilst organisations devoted time, effort and resources to build their brands, there were many instances where organisations failed to manage a brand well in times of a crisis. Though organisations realised how important it was to protect their brands reputation, often in times of crisis, they failed to do so.

Tiger Brands' Enterprise meats, experienced a crisis of an outbreak of Listeriosis in their meat products, which had caused major reputational damage (Knowler, 2018).

Therefore, this proposed study looked at the importance of PR during a crisis, as well as consumers reactions to bad PR concerning Tiger Brands Enterprise meats, in order to determine what a brand needed to avoid doing and what they should have done when a crisis aroused.

1.3 Purpose statement

The purpose of this study was to analyse consumer reactions to bad Public Relations concerning Tiger Brand and their listeriosis outbreak crisis, as well as the long-term effects of the damaged caused on the brand. In this study the research was affiliated with and components measured against the media press Tiger Brands had received during and after the crisis.

1.4 Research objectives

- To investigate how consumers reacted to the Tiger brands crisis.

- To determine the importance of PR in crisis management.
- To determine the impact bad PR had on a brand.
- To determine the damage the crisis caused on the organisations brand.

1.5 Research question

- How did consumers react to Tiger Brands crisis?
- What was the importance of PR in crisis management?
- What impact did bad PR have on the brands?
- What damage did the crisis leave on the organisations as a brand?

CHAPTER 2

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical foundation

The theories presented below was relevant to the topic and the objectives of this research.

2.1.1 Attribution Theory

This theory was developed by Bernard Weiner in 1935 (Kelley, 1967). Weiner's attribution theory stated that people will make judgements on behaviours and causes of events (Kelley, 1967). It described that if an event is negative or unexpected, people would search for the cause of the outcome (Kelley, 1967). The attribution theory provided a direction for this research study, as according to McLeod (1997), it provided a framework on why people used information to arrive at the causes of events. In so doing, it explained how and why consumers reacted the way they did towards a brand. Bad PR resulted in negative perceptions towards the brand (Ruud, 2011).

There are three casual dimensions in which attributions are classified from- Locus, controllability and stability (Kyhne, 2008):

- Attributions of internal locus, controllability and stability created perceptions that an organisation is responsible for a crisis. According to Ruud (2011), PR is important in ensuring ethical decisions and actions are made in crisis management. PRP's needed to make timely decisions based on crucial facts and clear thinking during extreme conditions (Regeer & Larkin, 2008). Bad PR during crisis management showed that an organisation was not taking responsibility for their actions (Pearson, 2002).
- Attributions that are external, uncontrollable and unstable indicates the crisis is beyond an organisations control. According to Ruud (2011) not communicating consistently with the public during a crisis, would result in further damage (Pearson, 2002).

The attribution theory provided a direction for this research study. According to McLeod (1997), it provided a framework on why people use information to arrive at the causes of events.

This theory applied to the research topic as it highlighted the need for Tiger Brands to provide explanations of the causes of listeriosis and their actions, to prevent negative judgements from occurring (McLeod, 1997). An unexpected event triggers an attributional search (Khyn, 2008), in so doing, allowed for PR practitioners to see the need for an effective communication plan in crisis management.

According to Kelley (1967) bad PR in crisis management leads to judgements and damage to the organisation.

2.1.2 Situational theory

This theory was introduced in 1969 and developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard. According to Cherry (2019) this theory suggested that no single leadership style was best. It rather focused on the situation at hand and which type of strategies and leadership styles were best suited to the task. The Situational theory was influenced by the commitment, competence, skill set and maturity levels of the subordinates (Deshpande, 2018).

Hersey and Blanchard (2019) suggested that there are four primary leadership styles when focusing on this theory:

- **Telling:** demands employees to act as per the instructions and directions given by the leader. Allowing employees to analyse and make decisions on his/her own is limited (Cherry, 2019).
- **Selling:** The leader “sells” his/ her ideas and leaves the implementation to subordinates (Cherry, 2019).
- **Participating:** Employees can come up with their own ideas, decisions and strategies. The leader provides less direction and supports employees (Cherry, 2019).
- **Delegating:** Entrusting the employee with completing the task, where he is given whole authority and right to perform the task (Cherry, 2019).

According to Johnson (2018) Tiger Brands had remained defiant in their infrequent communication and uncoordinated engagement with stakeholders and consumers, attempted to distance themselves as much as possible from the accusations they are responsible for the outbreak of listeriosis and the resulted deaths of 180 people. Therefore, the situational theory was relevant to this research because it outlined the importance of leaders urgently needing to be able to change their methods of managing, teaching and influencing depending on the situation that needed to be addressed (Fin24, 2019). With effective use of this theory, Tiger Brands would have been able to acknowledge the major crisis (listeriosis) and activate a suitable plan and ensure leader support to address the challenges adequately (Johnson, 2018). Through the use of applying this theory effectively, Tiger Brands would have had a quick, measurable and positive impact on their processes and productivity (Fin24, 2019).

2.1.3 Resilience Theory

The Resilience theory was developed by Pearlin and Schooler in 1982. This theory provided a set of ideas that discussed the impact of challenging events on individuals and families and how well they had adapted to that traumatic experience (Keijer, 2017). This theory was relevant to the research as it looked at how consumers, the workplace and policies were affected through bad PR and the need for changes to take place.

With reference to the resilience theory, a further investigation on consumers, the workplace and policies were conducted:

- **Consumers:** The capacity of individuals to cope during difficulty was central to a brands resilience (Pearlin and Schooler, 1982). However, bad PR resulted in the immediate deterioration of consumer trust with the brand. Tiger brands failed to provide sincerity and transparent engagement with stakeholders and the media and their shares dropped by 7% on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (Johnson, 2018).
- **Workplace:** According to Johnson (2018) it is crucial for an organisation to have an effective reputational management team and a crisis communication

plan in place, in order to prevent future damage to an organisation. Tiger Brands failed to acknowledge the seriousness of the problem (Johnson, 2018). Employees were left concerned and highly frustrated with the Enterprise group (Seeth, 2018).

- **Policies:** Policies are not primarily focused on correcting deficits, but on promoting a social environment that is conducted to individual's well-being or functioning (Chaplin, 1995). Policies should not only focus on remedial strategies to help those facing adversity, but also on establishing the resistance resources which reduce the vulnerability of all people to the negative consequences of adversity (Antonovsky, 1979). Creating opportunities for inclusion and awareness must be considered to reduce the impact and reputational damage of a crisis on a brand.

According to Johnson (2018) Tiger Brands was being perceived as arrogant, unsympathetic and more interested in protecting its profits than the safety of consumers. Therefore, this theory was crucial for this research in order to have considered an organisations strength they demonstrated that enabled them to rise above adversity, by downplaying the negative effects and promoting positive actions (VanBreda, 2001).

These theories were relevant to this study, as they showed how individuals are unique and would react differently to a crisis. Therefore, it remains important for an organisation to have a strong leader or a good PR person in order to approach a crisis correctly and adequately. The way in which consumers react to a traumatic experience depends on how authentic and caring an organisation responded to the crisis, in order to protect their brand.

2.2 Literature review

The topic this research study discussed, is Consumers Behaviour on bad Public Relations concerning Tiger Brands crisis. The literature was relevant as it drew on the most important reasons as to how bad PR could have affected a brand and created an in-depth understanding of the topic of study and began to address the research questions. In doing so, it further contextualised the study and had formed the

foundation on which the survey questions were based. The literature enabled the public to see the important role PR has in crisis management.

According to Seter (2017) news stories based on a specific company had an impact on the way those brands were perceived by consumers. Due to the increase of technological advancement, an increased activity on social media had provided a platform for a new generation of consumers (Seter, 2017). These consumers have the ability to broadcast opinions and buying habits on a brand globally. Therefore, the amount of time a brand had to respond to any reputational issues, dramatically shortens.

According to Regester and Larkin (2008) the problems faced was that companies were not understanding how consumer reactions could affect a brands performance if they do not take immediate, efficient and effective actions. Dziadkiewicz and Juchniewicz (2012) stated that bad PR in crisis management results in a decrease of an organisations value and a lack of an effective communication plan.

Experts are only called when a disaster strikes. Ronn (2016) stated that having the right PR specialists are important for crisis management as they are the people who know how to change public perceptions with the right words and campaigns. Also, they know that aligning their clients with the right strategies could have helped to alleviate many issues that came with a crisis (Flynn, 2009). Since organisations only take action when faced with a crisis, it was important to ensure that brands had a PR plan in place prior to future crisis's, in order to have been well prepared for an unexpected situation/event (Dziadkiewicz, 2012).

Tiger brands was known to be one of South Africa's largest food companies, whose footprint extends across the African continent and beyond (BusinessDay, 2019). They experienced a major problem that is continuously being investigated. Their recent crisis of the deadly outbreak of listeriosis caused major brand erosion, due to their bad PR in handling the crisis (Struweg, 2019). Tiger Brands did not confront the crisis immediately and were very limited in their communication to the public. Public Relation Practitioner's (PRP's) did not use the right strategies to protect their brand. According to BusinessDay (2019) the financial effect of listeriosis continues effect Tiger Brands results.

This research allowed researchers to gain facts, reasons and evidence as to how crucial consumers are to a brand and how important it is in having an effective PR team, in order to prevent bad PR in handling a crisis.

The first topic discussed in this literature review was the research paradigm most relevant to this research issue. Thereafter, a closer look was taken into the theories used and a critical review based on credible sources was also discussed, all in relation to Tiger Brands and their crisis.

2.2.1 Review of Critical Literature

The literature below focused on using credible sources to investigate different opinions and perspectives on PR when handling a crisis.

Melissa and Flynn (2014) proposed an article on the importance of handling a crisis within the first 24 minutes and not 24 hours. They stated that news travels fast. Therefore, during a crisis, Public Relation Practitioners (PRP) needed to think like a reporter and keep their messages short, transparent and to the point (Melissa & Flynn, 2014). The rapid pace of communication had forced PR practitioners to be entirely transparent in putting themselves and the company in a direct, authentic way (Melissa & Flynn, 2014). The authors stated that if an organisation was using dialogue as a tool, members of the company needed to think and talk in a similar way in accordance with the company policies and procedures.

Similarly, Booker (2013), stated that during a crisis, PR practitioners must react fast, with specific messages and honesty. Booker (2013) mentioned that a company would have to report on the crisis even if they did not have all the facts. Melissa and Flynn (2014) stressed this factor when saying that PR practitioners had to trust their “gut” and feelings when reporting on crisis with little information. These two articles differ, when Melissa and Flynn (2014) stated that when faced with a crisis, an organisation must communicate to the public first (no time for discussions), whereas, Booker (2013) stated that an organisation must communicate to their employees first, as they are the ones who are in direct contact with customers and suppliers. Booker’s article focused on describing the need for companies to review their business plan and ensure they have a financial - marketing PR crisis plan put in place. She stated that newly formed

companies were quicker to acknowledge a problem than traditional companies (Booker, 2013). During a crisis, companies dread phone calls from reporters and although it was not the attention they want, companies must use this as a tool to get out a positive message point (Booker, 2013). This researcher showed that having a PR crisis plan within an organisation could prepare them to be well-organised when faced with a crisis. It also related to this research topic, by showing how Tiger Brands had an opportunity to take advantage of reporters (paid for media-coverage) when dealing with their crisis (Booker, 2013).

Bellantonio (2014) proposed an article similar to the above two articles, in stating that honesty and education on the company's behalf are key and communication during a crisis needed to be fast and forthright. Her article stated that it was important for organisations to take ownership of what occurred and for products to be recalled immediately if they posed a health and safety risk (Bellantonio, 2014). This article indicated the importance of PR practitioners being proactive and educated about a crisis before reporting on it, to ensure there was a professional and accurate response to crisis management. Here, it can be seen that Tiger Brands had not taken immediate ownership for their products to be recalled when it posed a health and safety risk to consumers.

Powell (2013) concurs with the three articles discussed above, in terms of PRP confirming the need to regularly update the public during a crisis and the need for reporting within 24 hours. However, Powell's (2013) article differed from Bellantonio's (2014) in that he stated communication needed to be aggressive, whereas Powell (2013) stated that communication must show empathy and have a calming approach. This article stated that a crisis was about people, property or perceptions (Powell, 2013). He looked at how cases attracted a lot of attention and what the public wanted to know. Being, what the problem was, how it happened, how was it resolved, and what would be done from it happening again. If something was left unsaid, the public will fill in the blanks (Powell, 2013). He reminded stakeholders that moving beyond any crisis, was primarily, a people's business. He stated that the goal was to educate the team and rebuild trust internally with affected team members and externally with doubtful stakeholders. Powell's (2013) article was relevant because it showed the researcher how Tiger Brands failed when it came to informing stakeholders on a

regular basis and recognising the need for rebuilding trust with stakeholders to create goodwill and a positive image.

Similarly, to the articles described above, Surowiecki (2014) stressed the importance of telling the truth and delivering news the minute a crisis arises. His article was particularly similar to Bellantonio's (2014) article, in acknowledging there had been a problem, demonstrated its control over the crisis and made a real attempt to fix it. Although there were evident similarities in the above articles, Surowiecki's (2018) article differed from the previous articles as he focused on the negative impacts a crisis had on an organisation, where the previous articles provided advice and steps in saving-face of an organisation.

Surowiecki (2018) examined an intense crisis case faced by Tiger Brands. This crisis involved the brand's meat products being infected with listeriosis. Tiger Brands had not dealt with the crisis effectively. This had resulted in bad publicity and the demolishing of their reputation (Surowiecki, 2018). The company faced an incalculatable harm to their brand and lost millions of Rands. He stated that the problem with many companies was that they think they are in control and therefore, they worry less about dangers. Surowiecki (2018) emphasised on the negative impacts a crisis could have on an organisation if it was not managed properly. It described the need for an effective PR team in order to ensure an organisation was performing ethically and creating goodwill with the public during a crisis (Surowiecki, 2018).

According to Struweg (2019) the outbreak of listeriosis had been going on for 14 months. The South African Health Minister, Aaron Motsoaledi, had given the company advanced warning (in March 2017). It was evident that Tiger Brands had a bad PR team that had not handled the crisis ethically nor effectively. The above articles highlighted the importance of consumers and the role their reactions played in affecting a brand's performance. These articles demonstrated the need for organisations to own up to a crisis within the first 24 minutes, addressing the public consistently and reinforcing the changes the brand has made, in order to prevent bad PR causing damage to a brand's reputation and equity.

2.3 Conceptualisation

- **Public Relations:** Professional management of creating and maintaining a favourable image between an organisation and its stakeholders (Oxford dictionary, 2010). For the purpose of this research study, it referred to a brands effort to gain trust and goodwill from the public.
- **Crisis:** A time of intense difficulty or danger (Oxford dictionary, 2010). For the purpose of this research study, it referred to a sudden change or event that affected the functioning of an organisation.
- **Crisis management:** The process involved whereby an organisation dealt with a sudden emergency situation (Oxford dictionary, 2010). For the purpose of this research study, it referred to the necessary actions taken by management when dealing with an unpredictable event.
- **Brand:** A Unique sign, symbol, design, words, or a combination of these, that were employed in creating an image that identified a product and differentiated it from its competitors (Business dictionary, 2010). For the purpose of this research study, it referred to the corporate identity of a brand.
- **Consumers:** A person who bought goods or used a service (Oxford dictionary, 2010). For the purpose of this research study, it referred to those who purchased products from Tiger Brands.
- **Organisation:** A group of people that had been structured and managed to meet a need or pursue a collective goal (Business dictionary, 2010). For the purpose of this research study, it referred to people who were working systemically together for a particular purpose.

- **Ethically:** A way that related to moral principles (Oxford dictionary, 2010). For the purpose of this research study, it referred to an organisation that acted in a morally good, correct manner.
- **Manage:** To have handled or directed, with a degree of skill (Oxford dictionary, 2010). For the purpose of this research study, it referred to handling a situation successfully, regardless of the difficult circumstances.
- **Effectively:** Having the desired result (Oxford dictionary, 2010). For the purpose of this research study, it referred to an organisation acting in such a way, that it benefited the brand.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Research design and methodology

3.1.1 Paradigm

The paradigm most relevant to this research study was Interpretivism.

This paradigm stated that people are fundamentally different from objects (du Plooy *et al.*, 2014:27). According to du Plooy *et al.* (2014) the goal of this paradigm was to understand and describe meaningful social actions and experiences. Reality was a social construction and common sense was an important source of knowledge (du Plooy *et al.*, 2014:34). Subjective, qualitative methods were used and uniqueness was valued. Critical researchers assumed that public relation practitioner's (PRP's) were professionals who had the ability to read meaning into other people's thoughts and actions during a crisis because they shared a meaning system with them (Argenti, 2002). They acknowledged that each person was unique and reacted differently to a crisis. According to Blumer (1989) PRP's during crisis management were responsible for understanding human's behaviour in order to gain an in-depth understanding of what actions from an organisation were meaningful and relevant for them.

However, this paradigm was relevant to this research study as according to Struweg (2018) Tiger Brands never responded or took into consideration the public's lives that were at risk. It was said that Tiger Brands PRP's had not acknowledge people's thoughts and views on their brand. The lack of engagement with consumers and the media rapidly raised concerns about how transparent Tiger Brands had been in handling their crisis (Struweg, 2018). Bad PR had led to Tiger brand experiencing brand erosion (Struweg, 2018). Identifying theories that provided an outline and guidelines to managing a crisis effectively had been identified.

3.1.2 Research design

The research design was qualitative in nature because data was analysed and interpreted to make informed decisions regarding the findings of research (du Plooy *et al.*, 2014). The goal of qualitative research was to gain an understanding of the subjective experiences of participants (Maxwell, 1941). An interpretative approach to data analysis and interpretation rested on the foundation that there was no absolute right or wrong answer for human behaviour (du Plooy *et al.*, 2014). For this research proposal, consumer reactions to bad PR experienced by Tiger Brands was qualitative, as Maxwell (1941) stated PR was crucial in understanding other people's views and reactions and making sense of these views to have implemented a planned program that addressed the concerns individuals had during a crisis.

3.1.3 Population

3.1.3.1 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis for this research proposal was consumers who had responded to the questionnaire.

3.1.3.2 Target and accessible population

For the purpose of this research proposal, the target population was consumers who had bought Tiger Brands meat products.

The accessible population for this research proposal was consumers around Umhlanga Rocks and the Durban North area.

3.1.3.3 Population parameters

- Consumers who had been buying Tiger Brands foods within the last three years.
- Consumers that were South African citizens.

3.4 Sampling

3.4.1 Non-Probability Sampling

Non- probability sampling was used when it was nearly impossible to determine who the entire population was or when it was difficult to gain access to the entire population (du Plooy *et al*, 2014). Researchers therefore selected a sample from an accessible population and through those who had recommend other possible participants (Maxwell, 1941). A sample was a subset of a population that was considered to be representative of the population (du Plooy *et al*, 2014). This type of sampling was common in qualitative research. According to Dziadkiewicz and Juchnie (2012) there were millions of consumers in South Africa who had bought products from Tiger Brands, so it was impossible for researchers to have accessed and determined every consumer which then resulted in researchers using non-probability sampling for this research study.

3.4.2 Sampling Methods

- **Purposive sampling**

Involved a researcher choosing elements purposefully that he or she wished to include in the sample, according to a set of characteristics (du Plooy *et al*., 2014). For the purpose of this research proposal, it referred to researchers giving questionnaires to consumers who were aware of the organisations' crisis.

- **Snowball sampling**

This is when people who respond positively to participating in a study are asked if they know anyone else with the same research parameters who would be interested (du Plooy, 2014). For the purpose of this research proposal, it refers to consumers who participated in the questionnaire with positive parameters giving referrals of people who have supported Tiger Brands.

3.4.2.1 Sample size

For this research proposal the sample size was 9 consumers. These 9 consumers were chosen as the sample size as they were consumers within the researcher's parameters who provided accurate information to the questions in the questionnaire (Reddy, 2016). The researcher gained and collected information from the sample size on their thoughts and reactions towards Tiger Brands and the way they handled their crisis. This represented the average assumptions of the overall population's views (Fitzpatrick, 2015). The sample size allowed for researchers to find reliable conclusions based on the questions provided in the questionnaire (Fitzpatrick, 2015).

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The purpose of this research proposal was to construct a questionnaire based on qualitative questions, that was handed out to 9 consumers based in Umhlanga and Durban North. Data was collected from consumers selected to be analysed. The questionnaire was qualitative in nature for PRP's to gain an in-depth understanding of what individuals experienced and feelings towards the way Tiger Brands handled their crisis (Dziadkiewicz & Juchnie., 2012). It allowed for PRP's to develop a communication plan that addressed and handled individuals' perceptions during a crisis (Maxwell, 1941).

As far as data collection methods were concerned, the conduction of research involved the use of a questionnaire, which was used as an interview guide for the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions. There were 9 open-ended questions and 1 closed -ended question. The researcher proposed open-ended questions to inspire more thought and to receive an explanation on personal opinions and views towards

Tiger Brands (Maxwell, 1941). The researcher proposed a close-ended question to receive facts that were easier to compare and analyse (du Plooy *et al*, 2014). The types of questions included in the questionnaire for this research study, allowed the researcher to gain more information from a consumer's perspective on Tiger Brands as well as whether he/ she found PR necessary and effective for crisis management. The researcher determined whether there was a need to employ more PRP's within organisations and where consumers opinions and thoughts differed from a PRP's with regards to handling a crisis. The type of questions intended for this research elicited good information of how bad PR affected an organisations brand.

(PLEASE SEE ATTACHED APPENDIX B, FOR SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND LAYOUT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE)

The questions asked in the questionnaire were appropriate and relevant to the research study. Further information external to the questionnaire during the collection of the questionnaire between consumers and the researcher furthered the knowledge in PR and crisis management for the researcher (Fisher, 2003).

For the purpose of this research, a questionnaire was used, where the researcher had sat down with each consumer and wrote down his/ her response in the questionnaire for them. This gave consumers less work and encouraged more thoughts. Filling in these questionnaires took place between 9am – 11 am on Monday morning, the 8th September 2019. The provided questionnaire required personal views, which aimed to identify consumers emotions, feelings and opinions regarding their thoughts and views on Tiger Brands and PR in crisis management. The main advantage of questionnaires was that they involved personal and direct contact between the researcher and the consumer, as well as eliminated non-response rates (Pearson, 2002). Consumers were able to ask any questions or queries regarding confusion of the questionnaire (Fisher, 2003).

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

According to Moore & McCabe (2005), the type of research whereby data gathered was categorised in themes and sub-themes, so it could be comparable for open-ended questions. A main advantage in data analysis was that it helped in data collected being reduced and simplified, while at the same time produced results that were measured

using quantitative techniques. Data analysis gave the ability for researchers to structure the qualitative data collected in a way that satisfied the accomplishment of research objectives (Pope, 2002).

During data analysis, it was important to ensure the data was prepared. Data was collected into a written text before being able to have started with the analysis (du Plooy *et al*, 2014). The researcher used line-by-line coding as he/she had to literally read the text line by line. It was time consuming, but helped to build a conceptual frame which was applied to all the data (du Plooy *et al*, 2014). Researchers also used selective coding. Due to the large amount of information received by each consumer, the essential information that most adequately described the central notion of the question was selected (du Plooy *et al*, 2014). Open or substantive coding was used in order for researchers to have read through the entire text to get an overall impression and understanding of the text/ data collected (du Plooy *et al*, 2014). It was important for researchers to then have checked their consistency with which coding was conducted, which allowed the researcher to conduct meaningful conclusions from the data received (du Plooy *et al*, 2014).

Apart from question 1, all questions in the questionnaire were open-ended questions. Therefore, the researcher analysed the data by observation, problem identifications and concepts that helped the researcher to understand the information. The researcher wrote down each question separately and recorded each consumers response. Line-by- line coding was used because the researcher literally needed to read each line separately to analyse and ensure all the information received by consumers was clearly understood and taken into consideration. The researcher looked at the connection between the data received to show how one consumers view influenced another. Corroboration/ Legitimization was completed by evaluating alternative explanations, disconfirming evidence, and searching for negative responses. The research was then able to discuss and report the findings.

Question 1, being a quantitative, close- ended question, was be recorded by creating a table. This allowed researchers to have an overview, easy layout of the average years of consumers loyalty towards the brand.

3.7 Trustworthiness

There were four aspects of trustworthiness that qualitative researchers established: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2016).

Credibility referred to the accuracy in which the researcher had interpreted the data provided by participants. Participants were the individuals who reasonably judged the credibility of the results (Trochim, 2006). According to Olivia (2010) it was seen as the most important aspect in establishing trustworthiness. This was because credibility essentially asked the researcher to clearly link the research findings with reality in order to demonstrate the truth of the research findings. The researcher increased credibility by spending more time with consumers around the area and by providing qualitative data that was accurate (du Plooy- Cilliers *et al*, 2016). According to Geoffrey (2009) triangulation involved multiple methods that the researcher used to gain a more complete understanding of the role in PR in crisis management, which ensured research findings were robust, comprehensive, rich and well-developed. The research showed credibility by understanding the value information had to brands using PR in crisis management. Having insights based on research and analysis as well as listening actively, considering carefully and responding succinctly to consumers views and opinions to the research topic, automatically created creditability (Geoffrey, 2009).

Transferability referred to the ability of the findings to be applied in a similar situation and deliver similar result (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2016). The researcher took detailed notes of specific details gained from the questionnaire responses and compared them to what other consumers responded. If answers were comparable, the research was deemed as more credible. It is crucial that the researcher provided a detailed description as given to consumers, thus enabling them to have had a clear understanding and comparable results. This allowed the researcher to have a generalised view on consumers reactions towards the way Tiger Brands handled their crisis (Farley, 2011).

Dependability ensured that the research findings were consistent and could have be repeated (Farley, 2011). Dependability was measured by the standard in which the research was conducted, analysed and presented. Therefore, the researcher needed

to ensure that questionnaires and interviews with consumers were professional and that adequate time was taken for the analysis of the research findings. Dependability was important to trustworthiness because it established the research findings as consistent and repeatable. Researcher's wanted to make sure that if an external researcher were to look over the data, they would have arrived at similar findings, interpretations and conclusions of consumers reactions towards Tiger Brands response to their crisis. Detailed reporting's enabled an external researcher to repeat the inquiry and achieve similar results. It also enabled the researcher to understand the methods and their effectiveness.

Confirmability referred to how well the data collected supported the findings and interpretation of the researcher (du Plooy- Cilliers *et al*, 2016). The researcher ensured confirmability by ensuring a detailed description of the findings was presented, in order to ensure others who looked at the data collected, came to similar conclusions as the researcher did. The researcher also checked and rechecked the data during the entire research process. This process was established to determine whether the researcher had been biased during the study, this was because of the assumptions qualitative research allowed the researcher to bring unique perspectives to the study and their findings (Farley, 2011). Therefore, necessary steps were taken to help ensure as far as possible, that the outcomes in results of the experiences and concepts of the consumers interviewed, as opposed to the qualities and preferences of the researcher. According to Wood (2003) an audit strategy was a key technique for establishing confirmability. This allowed for an external researcher to understand exactly how and why decisions were made. An audit strategy helped the researcher to confirm his or her reliability and accuracy of their very own findings.

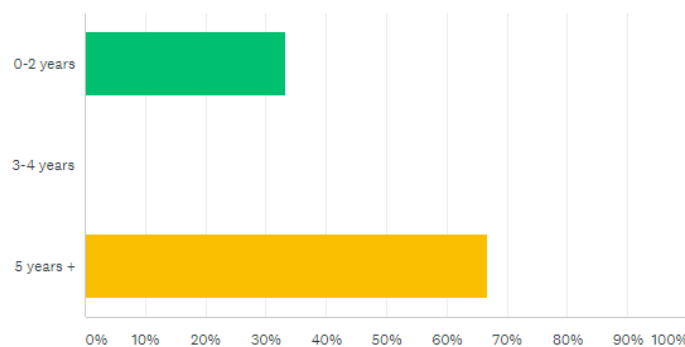
CHAPTER 4

4 Findings and interpretation of findings

4.1 Presentation of findings

Question 1

How many years have you been supporting Tiger Brands for?



- 0-3 years: 3 respondents
- 3-4 years: 0 respondents
- 5+ years: 6 respondents

Question 2

Why do you purchase Tiger Brands products?

- 4 respondents stated they purchase Tiger Brands products for their Jungle Oats
- 1 stated that they are easily accessible
- 3 stated they purchase their products because of their quality and pricing
- 1 stated because of the taste of their products

Question 3

How did you feel when you found out about the listeriosis crisis?

- 6 respondents stated that they were shocked and highly concerned
- 1 person stated that they were not concerned because they did not buy any of their products
- 1 person stated that they had no idea about the listeriosis outbreak
- 1 respondent stated that they understood brands do experience a crisis within their lifetime and therefore, feel empathy for Tiger Brands

Question 4

In your opinion, do you think Tiger Brands managed their crisis effectively and why?

- 4 respondents stated that Tiger Brands managed their crisis effectively because of their transparency, 'quick' product recalls and apology
- 4 stated that Tiger Brands had not managed the crisis effectively because of the negative press releases and timely responses to the public. They also stated that Tiger Brands should have investigated where things had gone wrong and that they should have been more transparent with the public with regards to their communication
- 1 stated that they were unsure whether Tiger Brands had handled the crisis effectively

Question 5

How would you have addressed the crisis as opposed to the public relations practitioners?

- 3 respondents stated they would have addressed the crisis the same way Tiger Brands did, with regards to product recalls
- 5 stated that they would have been open and given the public an immediate response by keeping stakeholders up-to-date and providing proof of health checks
- 1 stated that he/she would have addressed the crisis by showing the public all the steps and procedures they had taken to rectify the situation. He/she also stated that Tiger Brands should have reached out to the affected families and offered them some kind of support

Question 6

What are your views on the brand today?

- 1 respondent stated that they do not see Tiger Brands 'brand', they see the individual products
- 5 respondents stated that would still support the brand because of their Jungle oats and the quality of their other products.
- 3 stated that they have a negative view and lower standards towards the brand because they are afraid of their products being affected again in the future and that they would avoid purchasing their meat products in the future.

Question 7

Would you still support the organisation, regardless of its past and why?

- 7 respondents stated that they would still support Tiger Brands, however of these 7 respondents 5 stated that they would not purchase their meat products
- 1 respondent stated that he/she would not support the brand because he/she believes Tiger Brand is not ethical in their practices
- 1 respondent had a neutral response. He/she stated that they would not support the brand if they had purchased a product that was infected with listeriosis, however because they have not experienced that they would still support the brand but still have a sense of distrust with the brand

Question 8

What steps would you take to re-build the brand name?

- 3 respondents stated that they would increase Tiger Brands visibility through their media presence
- 2 respondents stated that he/she would have ensured better quality and health and safety checks and better transparency and communication with the public
- 2 respondents stated that they should ensure great products for the future
- 1 respondent stated that they would not re-build the brand name, but would focus on each product line individually and market those. He/she stated that

they would dissociate products from the brand because people know the products not the brand

- 1 respondent stated that he/she would push being more open and clearer about their internal processes and would invite members of the press to go into factories to see what they are doing differently.
- 1 respondent stated Tiger Brands should ensure quality products, fair pricing and ethical business practices

Question 9

What do you think organisations should do to prevent a crisis from happening in the future?

- 6 respondents stated that organisations hygiene and cleanliness as well as health and safety needed to be top priority
- 1 respondent stated that organisations must be more stringent when testing their products, where there is any threat of possible contamination
- 2 respondents stated that crisis happen, however organisations need to have regular procedures and plans in place to make sure everything they do is up to standard and that ingredients must be closely monitored

Question 10

What are your perceptions on Tiger Brands communication to consumers?

- 4 respondents stated that Tiger Brands did the best they could have done at the time
- 3 stated that their engagement with the general public was limited and that their communication was weak
- 2 stated that Tiger Brands does not have effective PR, however their marketing of products remains effective

4.2 Interpretation of findings

Question 1

How many years have you been supporting Tiger Brands for?

0-3 years: 3 respondents

3-4 years: 0 respondents

5+ years: 6 respondents

From these findings, the researcher was able to identify that most of the respondents have been supporting Tiger Brands for more than five years. This showed the researcher that respondents are loyal to the brand. Three respondents stated that they have only been supporting Tiger Brands products for less than three years. These respondents were younger individuals who have only recently been buying their own food products.

Question 2

Why do you purchase Tiger Brands products?

From these findings, respondents stated that they purchase Tiger Brands products because their products are easily accessible, good quality, price and variety. From these findings, it could be said that individuals associate Tiger Brands primarily with their Jungle oat products.

Question 3

How did you feel when you found out about the listeriosis crisis?

Majority of respondents were shocked, concerned and paranoid. This backed up the researcher's interpretations throughout the research as individuals stated that they became 'put off' and very cautious towards the brand. This affected Tiger Brands reputation and trust with customers. Customers considered alternative brands because they did not know which products were safe enough to the consumer and which were not. According to the attribution theory, Tiger Brands crisis was caused from an internal locus which created perceptions that the organisation was responsible for the crisis. Tiger Brand's processed meats consume a large amount of their profits,

respondents mentioned that they have turned away from buying Tiger Brands processed meat products because of the outbreak of listeriosis. However, one of the respondents stated that he/she was not aware of the outbreak. This shows the researcher that every 1 out of 9 individuals (on average) are not aware of the Tiger Brands crisis. Therefore, it can be interpreted that Tiger Brands experienced major brand erosion.

Question 4

In your opinion, do you think Tiger Brands managed their crisis effectively and why?

To the researcher's surprise, most of the respondents felt as if Tiger Brands were transparent and took responsibility throughout the crisis because of the product recalls. This shows the researcher that these few respondents did not read the press releases, nor watched the news. More effort and details were needed in order to uphold their goodwill and professionalism with the public, as opposed to only product recalls. However, the rest of the respondents who stated that Tiger Brands did not manage their crisis effectively, stated that Tiger Brands did not go 'above and beyond' to assure their customers that a crisis like such, would not happen again in the near future. They also stated that Tiger Brands should have taken control and investigated where things went wrong. This shows the researcher that Tiger Brands had not uphold their image to the public and as a result had lost customer loyalty and trust.

Question 5

How would you have addressed the crisis as opposed to the public relations practitioners?

Respondents who stated previously that Tiger Brands had not handled the crisis effectively, stated that Tiger Brands should have reacted to the announcement of the outbreak a lot sooner than they did. If Tiger Brands had done so, negative comments would have not dominated social media. Individuals also stated that Tiger Brands should have kept consumers up-to-date and tried to reach out to families who were affected and offered them a form of support/ remuneration. This showed the researcher that consumers were not fully satisfied with the way the crisis was handled- PR was not effective. If Tiger Brands had documented the new measures put in place to check products and shared these results with the public, this would have proved

that they are doing all they can to rectify the situation. According to the Situational theory, leaders urgently needed to be able to change their methods of managing, teaching and influencing depending on the situation that needed to be addressed. Tiger Brands leadership was not effective when dealing with the listeriosis outbreak.

Question 6

What are your views on the brand today?

Majority of respondents stated that they have low standards of Tiger Brands. This showed the researcher how the outbreak of listeriosis in their products has affected the way people perceive and view their brand. Tiger Brands was popular amongst consumers within the market, however, a crisis that was not controlled in time resulted in poor reviews of the brand, effecting their profits. This backed up the attribution theory by showing how consumers used information to arrive at the causes of events. Respondents stated that they are cautious when it comes to their food products, however, they will support their other products- specifically Jungle oats. This showed that one bad experience with a brand, affects their future support they receive. It was also noted that some individuals do not see 'Tiger Brands brand' but rather see the individual product. This shows that some consumers are not always aware that they were purchasing Tiger Brands products.

Question 7

Would you still support the organisation, regardless of its past and why?

All respondents stated that they would still support Tiger Brands, regardless of their past. This shows that Tiger Brands provides a variety of products within the market that consumers would still purchase. Consumers are highly loyal to their variety of oat products they offer. It could be said that if a consumer or their family member/friends were the one who got infected, they would not support the brand in the near future. Consumers have lost trust in Tiger Brands processed meat products, however, still support their other products that do not have the chances of becoming infected with listeriosis in the future. This backs up the resilience theory in terms of the impact challenging events (the crisis) have on families and individuals and how well they had adapted to the traumatic experience.

Question 8

What steps would you take to re-build the brand name?

From the findings, respondents stated that Tiger Brands needed to implement and enforce better health and safety checks, more uphold policies internally and better transparency with the public. This showed the researcher that consumers are wanting Tiger Brands to become more open and clearer about their internal processes. Inviting member of the press to go into factories and see what they are doing differently is an effective way in changing people's perceptions positively towards the brand, while building trust and giving consumer and the public a sense of involvement and belonging with the brand. Increased media presence would also be effective in re-building their trust with the public. One respondent stated that he/she would not take steps to re-build the brand, but rather focus on each product line and market those. He/she stated that they should disassociate from the brand because people know the product and not the brand. This response had caught the researcher's attention as it differed from the rest of the responses. Focusing solely on a product and not the brand could have been risky because a strong brand leads to customer loyalty and repetitive purchases from consumers. Products that are also new to the market would also be trusted more as opposed to an unknown brands product.

Question 9

What do you think organisations should do to prevent a crisis from happening in the future?

Respondents stated that organisations need to have regular procedures and plans in place to make sure that everything they do is up standard. This would have allowed Tiger Brands to closely monitor ingredients and processes to reduce the risk of the outbreak from occurring in the future again. They also stated that Tiger Brands should have improved their health and safety checks and the standards of reports. This would have meant that Tiger Brands would be more hygienic with their practices and processes, while improving their productivity at the same time.

Question 10

What are your perceptions on Tiger Brands communication to consumers?

Respondents stated that Tiger Brands engagement with the general public was limited, considering the seriousness of the situation at the time. This meant that consumers did not have a positive image of Tiger Brands. Tiger Brands marketed their products effectively, however their PR was not effective; their communication and engagement with the public was weak. This backs up Weiner's attribution theory, where people make judgements on behaviours and causes of events. How effectively Tiger Brands had handled their crisis, determines the intensity of negative judgements the brand received.

CHAPTER 5

5 Conclusion

The following research questions and objectives were reached through the following:

- Question: How did consumers react to Tiger Brands crisis?
- Objective: To investigate how consumers reacted to the Tiger brands crisis.
 - It could be said that the objective was reached through research showing that consumers reacted negatively towards the Tiger Brands crisis, to the extent that they were not willing to purchase Tiger Brands processed meats in the future.

- Question: What was the importance of PR in crisis management?
- Objective: To determine the importance of PR in crisis management.
 - It could be said that effective PR was crucial to ensure a crisis was handled correctly and ethically, in order to prevent reputational damage and to ensure the brand was consistent in their communication with the public.

- Question: What damage and impact did bad PR have on the brands?
- Objective: To determine the damage and impact bad PR had on a brand.
 - The listeriosis outbreak had a negative impact on Tiger Brands. It could be said that bad PR resulted in distrust amongst consumers, resulting in brand erosion. The objective was reached by showing how many consumers perceptions had changed towards the brand, individuals had become more 'wary' of the brand when purchasing their products.

The problem statement of this research proposal being that Tiger Brands' Enterprise meats, experienced a crisis of an outbreak of Listeriosis in their meat products, caused major reputational damage. It had been solved by identifying that Tiger Brands lacked an effective PR team when handling their crisis and showed how Tiger Brands could have taken an ethical approach and avoided the reputational damage they experienced. Research also had identified what Tiger Brands needed to avoid doing and what they should have done when the listeriosis crisis aroused.

It could therefore be recommended that Tiger Brands employs an effective PR team and that they have strategic plans put in place for their future, in order to address and handle a crisis correctly and ethically, preventing further damage to their reputation and image. It could also be recommended that Tiger Brands communicated with their consumers consistently in order to regain their trust and loyalty with the brand.

5.1 Ethical consideration

Participants needed to be aware that they were taking part in a research study. Their consent was crucial. Consumers being interviewed in this research study clearly understood and were informed of what will be required from them, how their identities were protected and how results were used (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2016). Consumers needed to be respected by the researcher and not engage in deceptive or potentially harmful practices.

Ethics were important for the researcher in order to set standards that governed their behaviour and actions to suit their aim and goal of determining consumers reactions towards the Tiger Brands crisis. Knowledge, honesty, openness and objectivity were crucial to ensuring an ethical practice from the researcher (Resnik, D., 2015). Researchers needed to ensure no time was wasted and informed consent from consumers was first given before information and results were shared (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2016). An ethical researcher protected sensitive information as a matter of principle.

According to Mckenna (2018) ethics for consumers being interviewed was crucial. This was because their rights needed to be protected. There had to be a right to withdrawal for consumers. Consumers needed to be informed of the reasons for their participation and involvement in the research study. They needed to be respected by the researcher and not engage in deceptive or potentially harmful practices. Providing incentives to consumers was avoided because it affected how and who would participate in the study (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2016). Every effort was made to comply with the above.

(PLEASE REFER TO APPENDIX A FOR THE CONSENT FORM)

5.2 Limitations

The researcher could not access all consumers who support Tiger Brands. Consumers who agreed to in-depth interviews may not have been available during the research period. Time constraints played a major factor in limiting the researcher (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2016). The researcher only collected a limited amount of information within the given period of time.

Shift in conditions- Consumers who were to be interviewed could have experienced their own, personal problems during the period of the research study and may not have wanted to participate in the interview, as they were dealing with other stressful factors which take priority.

5.3 Anticipated contribution

The relevance of this research proposal was to examine consumers reactions to the way Tiger Brands had handled their listeriosis crisis, as well as the importance of PR in crisis management and its effectiveness. This research study was relevant to society because it highlighted the importance of ensuring brands have a plan prior to a crisis and showed the need for brands to address the public immediately following the discovery of a crisis and in a professional manner. Covering extensive research and learning in PR and crisis management in Corporate Communication, allows for the relevance and interest in having researched this topic.

For the purpose of this research proposal, the research helped brands around the world to understand how PRP's control and effectively managed the communication and the image of an organisation during a crisis. Crisis management makes or breaks an organisation based on whether there was effective communication or not during the crisis (Farley, 2011). Tiger Brands experienced major brand erosion from the way they had handled their crisis. Therefore, PRPs, being professionals, ensured a crisis is managed professionally and ethically.

The essence of research was to find more knowledge and add to the existing body of knowledge. Contribution from researchers was crucial because society cannot rely on old data and theories to survive and keep up with the pace at which the world's

evolving. By observed data and research, most organisations did not realise the need for PR in crisis management until they were faced with a potential crisis. Research areas, findings and methods were already a contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

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APPENDIX A- Consent form

CONSENT FORM

I have read the consent form and recognise that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during the course of the study without consequence. I understand that any information resulting from this study will be strictly confidential. I realize that I may ask further information about this study if I wish to do so at any time.

I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records. I agree to participate in this study.

Subject

Date

Signature

Print Name of the Subject

APPENDIX B - QUESTIONNAIRE (SAMPLE)

The following questionnaire is designed to assist the researcher in understanding consumers reactions to bad Public relations concerning brand crises.

You will be anonymous, as no personal information is needed.

Please could you answer the following questions as honestly and as accurately as possible.

BAD PUBLIC RELATIONS CONCERNING BRAND CRISES

1. How many years have you been supporting Tiger Brands for?
2. Why do you purchase Tiger Brands products?
3. How did you feel when you found out about the crisis?
4. In your opinion, do you think Tiger Brands managed their crisis effectively, and why?
5. How would you have addressed the crisis as opposed to the public relations practitioner/s?
6. What are your views on the brand today?

7. Would you still support the organisation regardless of its past and why?

8. What steps would you take to re-build the brand name?

9. What do you think organisations should do to prevent a crisis from happening in the future?

10. What are your perceptions on Tiger Brands communication to consumers?

APPENDIX C – Ethical Clearance



1 June 2019

Dear **Brooke**

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and ethical considerations were reviewed by your supervisor and moderated by the campus research panel.



Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns. We hereby provide you with ethical clearance to proceed with your research methodology.

OR



Your research proposal posed the following minor concern:

Please mention how your research design will address this issue:

Identifying the impact Tiger Brands crisis had on consumers and how it has affected their brand reputation

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

Supervisor Name: **Clive**

Supervisor Signature:

Campus Anchor Name:

Alec

Campus Anchor Signature:

TITLE: | Crisis, Consumers and Public Relations: A case study of Tiger Brands

Research Purpose/Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
To investigate how consumers reacted to the Tiger Brands crisis. To determine the importance of PR To determine the impact bad PR can	How did consumers react to Tiger Brands crisis?	Bad PR during a crisis will affect consumers' perceptions on the brand, risking a loss of sales and possibly a permanent loss of market share. Tiger Brands need to be consistent in their communication with the public to ensure authentic empathy, honesty and satisfaction. Organisations will be able to benefit from the insights that this research will yield and thus better management of PR in times of a crisis.	(Kelley, 1967) (Ruud, 2011). (Klynn., 2008) (Du Plooy et al, 2014)	Theme 1: Theoretical approach	Paradigm Interpretivism	Qualitative	An open ended, qualitative schedule will be used to elicit data from consumers based in Umhlanga. This questionnaire is qualitative in nature in order for PRP's to gain an in-depth understanding of individuals' experiences and feelings towards both organisations. The questionnaire consists of 10 questions. The researcher proposed open-ended questions to inspire more thought and to receive an explanation on personal opinions and views from consumers.	Participants need to be taking part in the research study. Their consent is crucial. Consumers being interviewed in this research study must clearly understand and be informed of what will be required from them, how their identities will be protected and how results will be used, as well as their reasons for involvement in the research study. Consumers need to be respected by the researcher and not engage in deceptive or potentially harmful practices. Every effort will be made to comply with the above.	The researcher discovered that consumer is no longer purchasing Tiger Brands meat products and have lost trust in the brand. They feel as if Tiger Brands did not handle the crisis effectively.	Tiger Brand must employ an effective PR team and that they have strategic plans put in place for their future, in order to address and handle a crisis correctly and ethically, preventing further damage to their reputation and image
	What is the importance of PR?			Theme 2: Review of previous literature.	Epistemology The impact on how consumer reactions can affect a brand	Population				
	What impact did bad PR have on the brand?			Theme 3: Conceptualisation		Population Parameters Consumers who have been buying Tiger Brands foods within the last three years. Consumers around the Umhlanga/ Durban North area				
	What damage did the crisis leave on the brand?			Theme 4: Consumer reactions	Ontology Reality is governed by laws and is a social construct.					It could also be recommended that Tiger Brands communicated with their consumers consistently in order to regain their trust and loyalty with the brand.
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/Hypotheses/Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	
Whilst organisations devote time, effort and resources to build their brands, there are many instances where organisations fail to manage a brand well in times of a crisis. Though organisations realize how important it is to protect the brand reputation, often in times of crisis, they fail to do so.	To investigate how consumers reacted to Tiger brands crisis. To determine the importance of PR To determine the impact bad PR can have on a brand. To determine the damage the crisis caused on the organisations brand.	-Consumer -Public Relations -Organisation -Brand -Crisis -Crisis Management -Effectively -Reputational damage -Manage	Attribution theory Situational theory Resilience theory	Theme 5: Bad Public Relations management Theme 6: Crisis impact on a brand	Axiology Value: Consumers honesty and participation	Non-probability sampling Sampling method Purposive sampling	Unit of Analysis Consumers who buy products from Tiger Brands and respond to the questionnaire. Data Analysis Method(s) -Line-by-line coding. -Selective coding- due to the large amount of information. -Open or substantive coding	The researcher may not be able to access a fair number of Consumers who agree to in-depth interviews may not be available during the research period. Time constraints play a major factor in limiting the researcher. The researcher can only collect a limited amount of information within the given period of time.	To expand the body of knowledge that bad PR can affect a brand in a crisis, which may potentially result in reputational damage, a loss of profits and market share.	