

Addis Ababa University College of Social Sciences and Humanities

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Communication; for the Partial fulfillment of Master's Degree in
Public Relations and Strategic Communications**

Crisis Communication as a Strategy to Protect Reputation: The case of Mirinda

By

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and has neither been presented in any other university nor was published before and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been acknowledged.

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Fitsum Zerue entitled: Crisis Communication as a Strategy to Protect Reputation: The case of Mirinda, and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communications, Specialization in Public Relations and Strategic Communications complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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List of acronyms

CCP	Crisis Communication Plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMHACA	Food Medicine and Health Care Administration and Control Authority
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
KI	Key Informant
RQ	Research Question
WHO	World Health Organization

Abstract

Crisis events are appearing to be a recurring scenario on daily lives of companies to generate a negative outcome on their performance. In recent times, Ethiopian companies are also experiencing the hardship of crisis. Nonetheless, local companies seem not to endeavor scientific and strategic crisis communication efforts to protect their reputation and relationship with stakeholders. The study aims to explore a crisis scenario occurred at MOHA Soft Drinks S.C particularly to its well-known brand named Mirinda. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to examine the relevance of strategic crisis communication at all phases of crisis so as to protect reputational assets. In this research, the crisis event was assessed through scientific approaches and best practices on crisis communication. Qualitative research approach was employed so as to collect and analyze data generated through in-depth interview with key informants selected through purposive sampling and snowball sampling technique. The data generated through in-depth interview with nine key informants were thematically analyzed. In addition, relevant documents such as letters, radio interviews and other types of documents were examined and analyzed through content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the company is not yet to follow a scientific way of strategic crisis communication to protect its reputation and to minimize the responsibility for crisis. For instance, regarding its pre-crisis activity the company did not seem to have understanding and knowledge about key pre-crisis tasks such as organizing and using crisis communication plan, detecting signals or potentially risk issues and assigning a well-trained crisis time spokesperson. Nevertheless, finding on the crisis response phase appeared to agree with SCCT, which the research employed as a framework to analyze the response activities of the company to the Mirinda crisis. Concerning the post-crisis efforts, findings showed that the company neglected the key tasks such as evaluating the performance of crisis response, continuing investigating the crisis effects and delivering promises, which were made for stakeholders. Finally, this thesis forwarded recommendations focusing on the three phases of crisis phases to have a strong crisis communication endeavor to protect reputational assets and maintain a smooth relationship with stakeholders.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Introduction and Background of the study

Many scholars based on their knowledge and perception have defined crisis. Hence, we can argue that there is no one, or universally accepted definition (Coombs, 2010). For instance, Coombs, define crisis as “an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes (Coombs, 2007, pp. 2-3)”. In this definition, the scholar tries to describe crisis with three basic features. First, a crisis is perceptual. Second, a crisis is an unpredictable event. And third, crisis events can contravene stakeholders’ expectations, which they hold about how their organization act. Similar to this, many scholars have also considered crisis as a major instance, which can have a negative consequence for organization, company or industry as well as the public, products, and services that even threaten their future existence (Fearn-Bank, 2007).

Nowadays, a crisis is not rare case to happen, rather become inevitable and a recurring phenomenon in everyday lives. As a sudden and unexpected event crisis can have a potential to threaten organizations’ operation by inflicting the financial and reputational aspects. Besides, a crisis can inflict the physical, emotional and financial aspects of stakeholders negatively. Consequently, this may threaten the relationship between the organization and stakeholders (Coombs, 2007).

Even though crisis has the potential to ruin a reputation just in days or even destroy the institution in some cases (Yeomans, 2009), many scholars however claim that crisis is manageable through scientific ways of handling to either combat or lessen the negative outcomes. In order to achieve this, as Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) noted, Crisis communication is an essential capacity, which every organization ought to master for effective response towards issues that could threaten their license to operate.

While crisis demands the involvement of many actors, communication specialists particularly Public Relations practitioners are also expected to have an immense role in managing crisis. As Van Riel and Charles J. noted, during crises, Public Relations specialists are the principal actors to work with the crisis team in an effort of balancing between the short-term pressure

of handling strategic issues as well as dealing with the long-term activities of maintaining consistent communication with stakeholders about the company's position on the issue (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007)

Currently, the modern communication aspect appears to revolutionize almost all feature of life. There is no doubt that the business sectors are among beneficiary of the new information technology. Nevertheless, parallel to this, it is also observable that the rapid growths of technology increasingly expose and intimidating organizations in many aspects. Among such challenges hoax or a round of messages on several media are among the biggest challenge for companies that threaten their reputation and smooth relationship with their stakeholders. In this regard, African based corporate companies are also facing similar challenges. Hence, it appears to be obligatory for companies to communicate or respond strategically with the aim of countering negative postings to protect their reputation. Particularly minimizing the responsibility for crisis and curtail the level of the reputational risk are the main activities for companies as a way-out from crisis.

MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C, which this research preferred to study as a case is one of the leading producers of carbonated soft drinks in Ethiopia with product mixes of Mirinda, 7 up, Mirinda Tonic and Mirinda Apple. In Ethiopia, the company has seven operating units. Among which the three plants which are located in Addis Ababa city are: Nifas silk Pepsi Plant, Teklehaimanot Pepsi plant and Summit beverage plant.

Recently the company was hit by a crisis event when its popular orange flavor soft drink named Mirinda was considered to be poisoned and became the cause for the death of 12 people and illness of many consumers. The source of the crisis scenario was believed by the company as a round of message or rumor circulating on several media platforms targeting to inflict the reputation of its principal brand. The research, therefore, tried to examine the crisis communication strategy of the company to protect its reputational asset at all phases of the crisis: prior to the crisis, during and after the crisis

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Different perceptions towards reputation has been forwarded from several scholars, Van Riel for instance define corporate reputation as ‘ ‘ a collective representation of a firm’s past actions and results that describes the firm’s ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders (Van Riel & Fombrun, 1997, pp. 5-13)’’. From this definition, it is possible to understand that for corporate companies’ reputation is the foundation for the sustainability of their business that consumes much more effort and time. Similarly, Riel (2013) also implicitly explains reputation as a positive feeling and trust, which people can have for organization, an industry or even a country. However, many scholars agree that reputation is not a fixed or consistent assets to sustain forever, rather it tends to be unstable depending on the organization act or other external situations. In this regard, reputational assets can be deemed as an asset that is potentially exposed for risks, and this particularly be intensified with the perception of the stakeholders if they attribute the company as responsible for the crisis events (Coombs, 2007).

Nowadays, negative posting which circulates over several media platforms pose as a threat for corporate companies to cause a reputational damage by manipulate the perception and thinking of stakeholders. However, as Anthonissen (2008) noted if companies are well prepared and respond effectively for crisis, they can survive and even sustain stronger than ever before. In this respect, it is possible to mention several international companies such as Coca-Cola, shell, Johnson & Johnson, Renault, Perrier and others as an example for the proper and successful endeavor of dealing with a crisis.

As empirical evidence, it is appropriate to mention Johnson & Johnson, the largest US pharmaceuticals group as a prominent example in its effort and solve the major crisis through scientific way of crisis communication. On September 1982, people died in the US city of Chicago after taking the company’s well-known product - Tylenol tablets that was poisoned with a cyanide chemical. The crisis indeed did cost the company’s significant market share, which was accounted for one-third of the market share of painkiller. After the news had been disseminated, the company immediately began investigating the case. Finally presented itself as the defender of its consumers’ interest, and took all the responsibility for the crisis. Besides, the company also approached its stakeholders openly, directly and quickly

throughout the crisis time, and this turn the crisis into opportunities to regain its market share and protect its reputation (Anthonissen, 2008).

Recently, it is observable that Ethiopian corporate companies are also paying a huge price for negative posting. To mention some, in 2016 the East African Bottling Company, which is the Coca Cola producing company in Ethiopia was also challenged by a message on social media that accuses for producing in cottage industry in a setting where sanitation is highly compromised. Likewise, other corporate brands like ‘Anchor powder milk’ and the ‘Great Abyssinia Plc’s’ juice product, ‘Prigat’ are also few among others to be the victims for the accusation on their nutritional values. Nevertheless, among all others, a company named Ethio Ventures Limited Apex Bottling Plc, which bottled the first mineral water with brand name ‘Highland spring water’, seems the first to pay a huge price for negative publicity (Edeshaw, 2016).

By the middle of 2016, MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C is also gone through similar challenges. The round of message on its popular brand named Mirinda put the company to bear a negative impact towards the financial as well as its relationship with its stakeholders. The content of the round message was to tell that around twelve people were died and many others felt ill after drinking Mirinda. Indeed, this had the power to influence the consumers and all other segments of its stakeholders. According to the company financial report the crisis had a severe impact on its financial aspect, and this was visible on the daily sales reports. According to Endeshaw (2016) during the crisis period the daily sale was lower by 36 percent – 40 Percent. Because of the crisis, the company was also forced to inject extra 50 percent budget into its promotions budget to restore the damaged reputation.

Therefore, it is appropriate to argue that corporate companies in developing countries should also consider and pay attention to the relevance of strategic crisis communication to cope with such challenges. As the above examples and trends indicate, Ethiopian corporate companies are also becoming vulnerable for crisis due to negative postings. Hence, there is no doubt that Ethiopian corporate companies must be equipped with scientific knowledge about crisis and how to communicate with their stakeholders strategically at every phases of a crisis to maintain their relationship and protect the reputational asset. This research is therefore made its path to fill the gaps and to enable researchers as a prelude to conduct their study on crisis communication from Ethiopian perspective. Therefore, considering the city is the largest market share for the company and the seat of the headquarter where the crisis

communication efforts were managed during the crisis, the researcher of this study preferred the study to be delimited at Addis Ababa city.

1.3. Objective

1.3.1. General Objectives

The overall objective of this research is to study the role of crisis communication as a strategy to protect the reputational asset: particularly taking the case of Mirinda at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C. In line with the overall objectives, the research intends to have the following specific objectives.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To assess the crisis prevention and preparation efforts of MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C prior to the Mirinda crisis.
- To scrutinize the crisis response strategies of MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C during the Mirinda crisis, and the role of the strategies to protect the reputational assets of the company and its brands.
- To examine the post-crisis efforts of the company after the Mirinda crisis has passed.

1.4. Research Questions

- A) What kind of crisis prevention and preparation efforts were made and available at the company before the Mirinda crisis?
- B) What crisis response strategies were employed during the Mirinda crisis to maintain and protect the reputational asset of the company as well as the brand?
- C) What efforts did the company make at the post crisis phase of the Mirinda crisis?

1.5. Delimitation of the Study

Geographically: The research was conducted at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C. in Addis Ababa City, Ethiopia. In Addis Ababa, the company has three main plants. Hence, in order to generate reliable data, the study was carried out at the head office and the three plants (Nifas silk, Teklehaimanot and Sumit).

Thematically: Crisis management in general believed to have several set of functions. Among these functions, the communication part received much attention by many scholars. Thus, the subject scope or the theme of this study was to focus on examining the crisis communication concept and its role to protect the reputational asset during a crisis event. Therefore, the study attempted to analyze a specific crisis case, which was occurred at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C, in particular, to inflict its popular orange flavor soft drink brand named Mirinda. For the purpose of this study, the crisis event shall be called as “Mirinda crisis”.

Methodologically: This study was delimited to employ qualitative research approach, anticipating to generate relevant primary and secondary data. Accordingly, at the aforementioned four study sites, in-depth interviews were made with the total number of six key informants at the top-level management circle using purposive and snowball sampling technique. Besides, three registered wholesalers from the three plants were interviewed to assess the perception of stakeholders. Moreover, secondary data, including books, journal articles, reports, radio interviews and other types of data also reviewed.

1.6. Limitations of the study

One of the main problems to be mentioned as a limitation of this study was the access to archive documents, like press releases, news stories and other pertinent information released during the crisis response period. Especially, the poor documentation and the absence of public relations or communication department at the company made the effort of finding relevant documents so difficult. Hence, this needed much effort to collect relevant secondary data. Besides, in order to fill these gaps, it was necessitating the researcher to generate data from the key informants.

Moreover, the absence of researches conducted on crisis communication from an Ethiopian perspective also limited the effort of supporting the research with empirical studies. Nevertheless, the researcher overcomes this limitation through using literatures of other countries to explore best practices.

1.7. Use of terms

- In this study words 'industry', 'organization' and 'company' are used interchangeably. Similarly, the phrase 'internal stakeholder' and 'employee' would also have the same meaning.
- The word informant refers to the individual interviewees who were interviewed for this research.

1.8. Significance of the study

It is undeniable that globalization has brought several advantages, and corporate companies are the one to have immense benefits from the legacy of technological advancement. In spite of the advantages and opportunities results from the information technology, it poses several risks and challenges. As explained previously in the statement of the problem, Ethiopian companies also seem to face similar challenges. The Absence of adequate research-based knowledge about crisis communication can exacerbate the problem. Therefore, while this research is trying to examine the crisis communication through an actual case study, it would certainly enable companies including MOHA Soft Drinks S.C to have adequate knowledge about crisis communication and to reveal the existing gaps.

As the researcher of this study has noticed, researches on crisis communication and related areas are not yet examined well. Thus, this research can motivate academicians and enable to serve as a prelude to conduct further researches from Ethiopian context, and even to adopt contextual theories and models of crisis communication.

Finally, the study can also have a contribution for policymakers or other responsible bodies to design policies that protect companies from hoax or other negative postings.

1.9. Organization of the thesis

This thesis is organized in five chapters. The first chapter presents the background of the study including, statement of the problem, objective, limitation and delimitation of the research. The second chapter devotes to review literatures to highlight conceptual, theoretical and empirical studies that are directly related with the study. Chapter three presents the research methodology to show the research approach and method of the study. Chapter four

presents the findings of the study and discuss them by linking with the researches and scholars' view which are explained in the literature review chapter. The final chapter summarizes the main finding of the study, and concluding the research. Finally, based on the results of the research, the section forwards recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURES

2.1. Conceptual Literature

This section discusses core concepts used in this study, including defining crisis, causes and effects of crisis, crisis communication (pre-crisis, crisis response and post crisis).

2.1.1. Defining Crisis

The word crisis originated from a Greek word, *Krinein*, which means ‘to decide’. Hence, the word itself shows that crisis in the past time crisis was considered as a phase of illness that meant decisive turn for the better or the worse (Swedish Emergency Managment Agency, 2003).

The term crisis has assumed several definitions by scholars in an effort to describe its meaning. In examining classic studies about a crisis, Hermann (1969) for instance forwarded three basic features that make crisis different from other occurrences. First, for Herman, a crisis is a threatening issue for the important goals. Second, a crisis only allows a short period for decision-making before the situation aggravates and transformed into an intense difficulty. Third, a crisis is a situation, which has an element of surprise in it. In this regard, there seems to be a commonality between the classic scholars and the modern one to understand crisis as a threatening and sudden circumstance that requires a short response time to address quickly.

Among contemporary scholars, Fearn-Bank (2007, p. 6) for instance noted the term crisis as “something more serious than a problem” which can cause a negative outcome at all spheres of organization, company or industry by interrupting the normal activities and even a threatening aspect for the existence of an organization. Likewise, Coombs also provides a more inclusive definition, in particular, emphasizing the adverse impact of a crisis on stakeholders and reputation.

A crisis is the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of Stakeholders related to health, safety, environment, and economic issues, and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes (Coombs, 2007, pp. 2-3).

In General, though there is no single or universal definition of a crisis, few universal or generic points can possibly be mentioned about the concept. First, a crisis is perceptions held

by stakeholders. Secondly, a crisis is unpredictable or something expected to happen at any time. That is why companies are advised to be aware of the potential risks to find a solution before turning to a crisis. Third, a crisis is a phenomenon, which disturbs stakeholder's expectations, and even the sustainability of organization (Wekesa, 2013).

2.1.2. Causes and Effects of Crisis

For the last three decades, academicians and practitioners of management and communication have sparked an interest to carry out research about a crisis. The researches also receiving acceptance among experts and managers as it helps them to maintain the integrity and legitimacy of their organization. Above all the findings of such studies enable organizations to identify crisis risks or causes before it breaks out.

The management reasoning for this interest is simple: Crisis costs money, which offers the incentive to avoid, mitigate, and respond in ways that best protect capital and human resources, and generally "reputation" which some feature as the essence of effective crisis response. Damaged reputation can offend businesses', customers, non-profits' donors, and legislators who provide tax revenue for government agencies. Thus by whatever focus, the ultimate theme features is the integrity and legitimacy of the organization, as managed resources, through various disciplines, including public relations (Heath, 2010, p. 1).

Academic researchers have tried to look organizational crisis from different dimensions to show the causes and effects. Identifying types and causes of crisis indeed help organizations to deploy appropriate mechanisms to respond to the crisis. Mitroff and his colleague, for instance, listed seven major crisis types and risks: *Economic, informational, physical (loss of key plants and facilities), human resource, reputational, psychopathic acts and natural disasters* (Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001, p. 50). Similarly, crisis communication expert, W. Timothy Coombs also classified crisis into five dimensions: *rumor, natural disaster, malevolence, accident, and misdeeds* (Coombs, 2007, p. 65). The main point that these scholars and others sort crisis into different categories is just to enable organizations to prepare themselves.

Regarding effects of crisis, we cannot say all are alike. Each crisis type would have its own distinct feature that makes different from one to another. Particularly the type, duration and

frequency of the crisis situation decisively matter the effect. Nevertheless, it is possible to generalize crisis as an undesirable incident to cause brunt upon organizations. Nevertheless, the results are not necessarily mean causalities or losses of lives (Dilenschneider, 2000). As Mitroff and Anagnos (2001) noted, sometimes crisis may even affect the whole of an organization especially if the situation is a major crisis, not isolated in a small part of an organization, it can cause devastating effects such as major toll on human lives, property, financial earnings, reputation and other variables which serves for the well-being of an organization.

2.1.3. Crisis Communication

Crisis communication is a very important aspect of strategic management, which stands as a fundamental among other crisis management set of functions. In a broader manner, crisis communication can be understood as a process of gathering and processing of relevant information about a crisis to share with relevant publics (Coombs., 2010). In this regard, Fearn-Banks define crisis communication as *"the communication between the organization and its publics prior to, during and after the negative occurrences"* (Fearn-Bank, 2007, p. 7). In this definition, Fearn-Banks tries to highlight two basic points. First, the communication is to carry out throughout the lifecycle of a crisis: pre-crisis, crisis scenario and post-crisis. Second, it emphasizes that the 'publics' are the one who is entitled and legitimate to be communicated by the organization about the crisis situations. Similar to this, Coombs also concedes that crisis communication is a strategy to repair a relationship with stakeholders (Coombs, 2005). Therefore, both Fearn-Banks and Coombs seem to agree that organization should give due attention for their stakeholders or publics throughout the communication process.

Typically, crisis tends to create a need for information among stakeholders or publics. Thus, the responsible bodies should know how to process the information into knowledge to share with the stakeholders. In doing so, the crisis team should consider two basic types of crisis communication efforts; *Crisis knowledge management* and *stakeholder reaction management*. The former one comprises activities of identifying sources of the information, gathering information, analyzing information (knowledge creation), sharing knowledge, and decision-making. Whereas the stakeholder reaction management involves an effort to influence the stakeholders' perception of a crisis, the organization, and the response actions taken by the organization (Coombs, 2010).

2.1.3.1. Pre-Crisis Communication

Even though not all crises are preventable, organizations, however, must prepare themselves for this inevitable scenario either to minimize or lessen its damage. It is at the pre-crisis stage that organizations are ought to be proactive and take all the possible action to prevent a crisis. Generally, pre-crisis stage involves activities and key tasks that help to prepare and prepare for crisis events (Coombs, 2007). Details about pre-crisis tasks is discussed in ‘crisis preparation and best practices’ section.

2.1.3.2. Crisis Response Phase

Comparing the three crisis stages, the crisis response phase is the most heavily researched aspect of crisis communication. These bulk of researches in particular focus on strategic advice for practitioners highlighting how to communicate strategically during a crisis in order to bring positive outcomes and achieve the desired effect on stakeholders (Coombs., 2010).

Coombs observed and classified broadly the researches on crisis response into two sections: the *initial crisis response* and *reputation repair and behavioral intention*. The initial crisis response guidelines focus on three basic points: “*be quick*”, “*be accurate*” and “*be consistent*”.

BE QUICK: At the previous time, the traditional crisis response strategists were advising crisis managers to respond within 72 hours. However, at present due to the fast spread of information, organizations are required to react within a few hours to gain control of the crisis situations. A quick response would benefit organizations to tell their side of the story to maintain a relationship with stakeholders who want information about the situation. Furthermore, it also helps to block the attempt of unauthorized bodies from responding to the situation on the news media to exploit the crisis as an opportunity to attack the organization (Coombs, 2007). In a similar manner, Fearn –Banks also recommend organizations in crisis to tell its stakeholders about the bad news before others do to have the advantage of avoiding misunderstanding and misquoting. In recent years, revealing the detail of the crisis news on the organization website is appearing to be a common trend (Fearn-Banks, 2009).

BE ACCURATE: Accuracy of information during crisis response is also a relevant task for organizations in crisis. Being accurate helps them to build credibility, unable to keep accuracy, on the other hand, erode and penalize their constituency. Depending on the type of the crisis, false information can seriously harm the public. For instance, Coombs (2010)

preferred to look this through the case of food producing companies, and he tries to highlight how it would be devastating if such types of companies release a product with a wrong batch number and fail to correct the mistake with accurate information to recall the products.

BE CONSISTENT: Parallel to accuracy, delivering a consistent message is also very critical for an organization in crisis. Inconsistent information generates confusion among stakeholders. This may lead the organization to lose its credibility and let stakeholders think that the crisis manager or the organization is not competent enough (Coombs, 2010).

2.1.3.3. Post Crisis Phase

Post-crisis covers the period after a crisis event is assumed resolved and the organization returns to its normal operation. At this phase, the crisis management team expected to conduct at least two main activities. First, it is important to evaluate the crisis response effort to take a lesson for future. Second, organizations should continue investigating the crisis through monitoring activities. This, in particular, enables organizations to update its stakeholders with necessary information to repair reputation. (Coombs, 2007).

As a basic post-crisis task, organizations should carry out ‘crisis management performance evaluation’ in order to assess the quality and performance of the crisis management plan and crisis communication team. In doing this, the first step of the evaluation should begin with data collection or generate data from the crisis records, stakeholder feedback, internet comments, and media coverage. Additionally, structured survey, interviews or focus groups with key stakeholders also help to collect pertinent data that enable to give a meaningful assessment. As Mitroff and Anagnos (2001) suggested the evaluation process should focus on four major crisis variables to locate the strength and weakness of the crisis response effort. The variables are crisis type, crisis phases, systems, and stakeholders.

2.2. Theoretical Literature

According to Fearn-Bank (2007, p. 39), ‘a theory is used to explain what will work, what decisions should be made, how and what actions are likely to result and how things relate. It is a prediction based on what happened before.’ Likewise, Sallot (2005) also define theory as any symbolic generalization taken from empirical evidence and interpreted to describe, explain, understand, predict and control situations under study. Sallot also highlights theory-based practices are widely preferable among public relations researchers to generalize

specific case or situation within theoretical frameworks. Hence, grounding cases with theories is beneficial than doing it by intuition or habit.

For the purpose of this study, several theories and models are explored to ground the case. In this regard, Image restoration theory and situational Crisis Communication Theory appears to be the dominant theories in the fields of crisis management and particularly crisis communication. 'Image restoration theory', which is referred to be as 'image repair theory' in recent literatures provides the framework to repair image when the image is believed to be at a risk due to an offensive act. Besides, researchers employ this research mainly when the company or institutions itself is considered to be responsible for the act (Benoit, 2008). On the other hand, Situational Crisis Communication theory is mainly focuses to evaluate the reputational threat posed by crisis events (Coombs, 2007). Hence, while this research is mainly to assess the role of crisis communication as a strategy to protect the reputational asset than image, it is preferred as a model to ground the study. Moreover, the theoretical framework of the research is preferred to be "stakeholder theory" as it mainly deals about stakeholders and reputational aspects.

2.2.1. Stakeholder Theory

The term "stakeholder" is a recent buzzword. The word first becomes known in the management literature of Stanford Research Institute in 1963. At that time, the term stakeholder was defined as "a group without whose support the organization would cease to exist. Thus, the definition tends to have the notion that stakeholders are decisive for the sustainability of any organization that the management needs to be responsive. However, contemporary scholars noted this classical definition as a "narrow definition" (Bussy, 2008, pp. 4815-4816).

For instance, after two decades, in 1984, the Stanford research Institute scholar named R. Edward Freeman introduced a new definition for the word "stakeholder" in his seminal book entitled *strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Freeman defines stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the firm's objectives. Therefore, unlike the previous definition, Freeman considered stakeholders as not only groups to put their impact but also to be impacted by organizations act either to support or affect in a negative way. Therefore, understanding stakeholders' concern through listening and collaborating should be an integral feature to manage properly the organization's image and reputation.

Regarding the identification of stakeholders, many organizations appeared to be uncertain where their stakeholders are, or how they should approach them (Dolphin, 1999). However, several modern scholars seem to reach consensus to claim that stakeholders are to be found within and outside the organization. In this regard, as Robert L. Heath cited in Robert R. Ulmer (2005, p. 809), he listed some internal and external potential stakeholders for an organization. Accordingly, his list includes "publics, intra-industry players, inter-industry players, potential activist publics, customers, employees, legislators, judiciary, investors, neighbors and the media".

Similarly, Clarkson (1995) as cited by Kyhn (2008), also categorize stakeholders into primary and secondary stakeholders groups. Accordingly, for Clarkson, the classification should be made in accordance with the level of the influence to impact or be impacted by the activity of the organization. In his view, primary stakeholders are the one who has a role for the survival of the organization. If the primary stakeholders depart themselves from the organization or not willing to support, it would even be an obstacle to its sustainability. Primary stakeholders of a given company are comprised of shareholders, investors, employees, customers, suppliers and public stakeholder groups including government and communities. On the other hand, secondary stakeholder groups are those who could have an indirect impact on the survival of the company, and this includes media and other interest groups.

Therefore, if we argue that stakeholders (both internal and external) are individual or groups to have an impact or to be impacted by the actions of an organization, it is then mandatory to communicate them at all phases of crisis (Robert R. Ulmer, 2005).

2.3. Crisis Preparation Best Practices

2.3.1. Crisis Communication Plan and Crisis Management Team

One of the fundamental activities of any organization at the pre-crisis phase is to have a proactive *crisis Management team* and *Crisis Communication Plan*. Crisis Management team is a group of responsible actors assigned for the tasks of handling crisis. Crisis communication plan, on the other hand, is a well-organized document which serves as a reference with a pre-assigning tasks, pre-collecting some information and serving as a tool when crisis happens. As Coombs (2007) noted it is simply a reference to tasks and responsibilities for the crisis management team, but not a step- by step guideline for the crisis team.

Crises are events that require a quick response with no time to waste to decide who will do what, and what procedures should follow for action. Therefore, at the pre-crisis phase organizations should have a Crisis Communication plan together with Crisis Management Team for an organized and efficient response (Coombs, 2007). Of course, many PR practitioners criticizing adopting a plan for crisis by saying that crisis could never happen the way it is planned. However, Fearn-Banks disagrees and disproof such notions by bringing an empirical evidence for the need of crisis communication plan.

Numerous professionals who had plans and used them through crisis say that having a plan for any crisis helps you cope with other crisis. The Pepsi Cola Company never dreamed that hypodermic syringes would be placed in its soft-drink cans, but its worst-case scenarios did include tempering, and the existing crisis communications plan worked well. Often, only the speaking points need to be changed. The stakeholders to be notified remain the same. The crisis team remains the same (Fearn-Banks, 2009, p. 745).

To develop Crisis Communication Plan, organizations should pay attention to all kinds of crisis including a crisis type that is even unlikely to happen or with no chance to occur. Because a crisis, which is determined to be unlikely to happen, cannot guarantee that it will not happen tomorrow. Nevertheless, the plan may rank crisis types in accordance with their potential to ruin the organization (Fearn-Bank, 2007).

2.3.2. Detecting warning signals or Crisis-sensing mechanism

Detecting signals or as Coombs prefer to say *Crisis-sensing mechanism* is critically an important system of monitoring crisis-warning signals (Coombs, 2007). As Mitroff and Anagnos noted, before it happens, crisis send out “a repeated trail of early warning signals”. Thus, identifying such signals and taking action effectively would enable organizations to prevent issues before turning into a disaster. In order to identify signals of impending crisis, organizations should always scan their internal and external environment to locate warning signals and to protect themselves from these “ticking time bombs” (Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001, p. 8).

Scholars suggested that signal detection would follow three basic procedures. First, crisis managers in some ways should scan sources such as complaints and feedback from stakeholders. Second, collecting relevant information from selected sources (In this case, the

crisis team shall decide how to generate information from the sources). And third, the team must evaluate the information to know the strength of the signals and to assess how likely the signals could develop into a crisis (Coombs, 2007).

For Fearn-Banks, one of the critical efforts of signal detection is to ‘‘watch crisis of similar organizations’’.

When Pepsi Cola was hit by a crisis caused by consumers placing hypodermic needles in cans of soft drinks so that they could sure the company, the hoaxsters were said to have feared contracting HIV from the needles. The virus is not spread through soft drinks, but for some time, the public was fearful of drinking Pepsi, and this caused a decline in sales. Pepsi was able to turn the tide and showed suspicious people that it was next to impossible to place needles in their cans. This was a warning to other soft drink manufacturers and a time to examine their own operation and determine what they would do if such a ridiculous crisis hit them (Fearn-Banks, 2009, p. 742).

2.3.3. Assigning Spokesperson at Pre crisis

One of the basic notions that the crisis communication plan should include, is details about who would be the spokesperson during crisis time. Identifying primary spokesperson actually helps the organization in crisis to avoid the possibility of presenting conflicting statements. Scholars like Fern-Banks and Marra agree that the Public Relations professionals are the best to be entitled as a primary spokesperson. (Fearn-Banks, 2009).

Receiving media training helps spokespersons to know what they should and should not do on the efforts of delivering a message to media. For instance, a well-trained spokesperson avoids saying ‘‘no comment’’ for media. Because when the public hears ‘‘no comment’’, they automatically blame the organization or make guilty for hiding something from the public. According to Shelton (2008), one of the worst things that a company can be quoted as saying is, ‘‘No Comment’’.

During a crisis, it is also worthwhile to speak in ‘‘one voice’’ to deliver a consistent message. As Fearn- Banks noted, ‘‘Speaking with one voice is more crucial in a crisis than during normal operations’’ (Fearn-Bank, 2007, p. 19). In fact, having just one person as a spokesperson is preferable to avoid inconsistencies and avoid confusions. But, speaking in

one voice does not mean necessarily to assign only one spokesperson. In some cases, it is also logical to have multiple spokespersons. For example, when the primary spokesperson is not available, the alternative spokesperson can actively serve as a voice for the organization. Besides, during a crisis when the media want to get information from other sources, the alternative spokesperson can serve as an optional to be the source of information. Therefore, with strong and effective coalition multiple spokespersons can also serve for effective way to respond crisis. However, giving priority to train spokespersons methodically to have knowledge and skills at presenting messages to the target stakeholders is critically important (Coombs, 2007).

Table 1: Source (Coombs, 2007, p.3)

1. Avoid the phrase “no comment” because people think it means the organization is guilty and trying to hide something.
2. Present information clearly by avoiding jargon or technical terms. Lack of clarity makes people think the organization is purposefully being confusing in order to hide something.
3. Appear pleasant on camera by avoiding nervous habits that people interpret as deception. A spokesperson needs to have strong eye contact, limited disfluencies such as “uhms” or “uhs”, and avoid distracting nervous gestures such as fidgeting or pacing
4. Brief all potential spokespersons on the latest crisis information and the key message points the organization is trying to convey to stakeholders.

2.3.4. Pre-Crisis Web Communication Channel

The incorporation of the internet into crisis response appears to be a recent phenomenon. According to Perry, Taylor, and Doerfel (2003), internet becomes useful for crisis management in two ways: First, it enables organizations to conduct environmental scanning during the pre-crisis phase. Particularly in the western world, organizations use their webpage as a tool for issue management to get an enormous amount of information and to detect issues before they become a crisis. Second, computer-based communications also assist organizations to communicate decisions with stakeholders (internal and external) and receive feedback from their publics.

To integrate information technology into crisis preparation and prevention effort, experts advise organizations to either create a separate website or designate a section on their main website. This would have an advantage for the crisis management team to anticipate the crisis type that the organization might face and to prepare in advance for response. To explain the relevance of merging technology and crisis response effort, Coombs noted a pragmatic case of Odowalla Juice Company, which was one of the first and exemplary companies to use web communication channel as part of its crisis management, and praised for its quick and caring response. In October 1996, after drinking unpasteurized Odowalla juice a 16-month-old child died and over 70 consumers felt ill. Automatically, the company could be able to communicate its stakeholders through its website for a quick recall and cover a medical insurance for victims (Coombs, 2007).

2.4. Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)

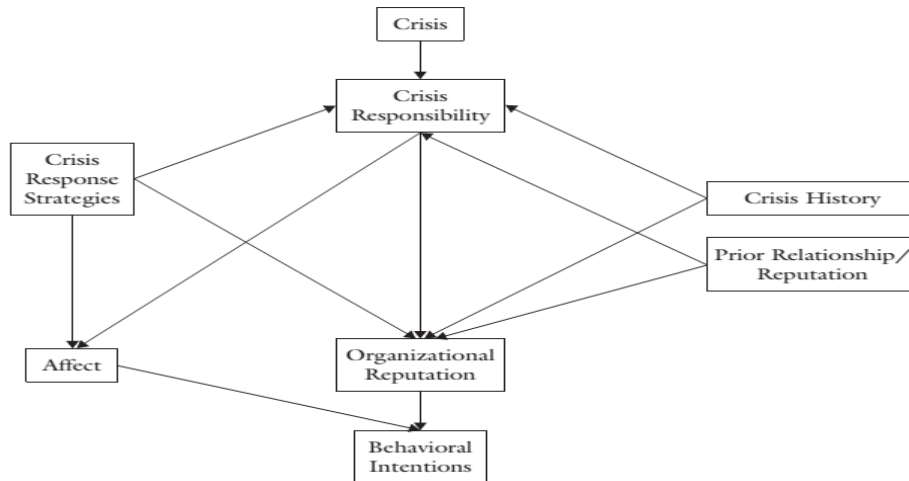
SCCT is a theory to show explicitly the crisis response strategies to deal with protecting the organizational assets, particularly reputation. This theory-based approach drew its origin from ‘Attribution theory’ to highlights the causal attribution of people while crisis situations occurred.

Crisis events in general considered to shape the perception and attribution of stakeholders. It is also obvious that people would attribute events with external or the initial factors. Therefore, as an audience-oriented theory, SCCT tries to focus on how people perceive and react to crisis situations, and what crisis response strategy should be followed by organizations in crisis to protect their reputation. Because these attributions can shape the attitude of people how they perceive about and react to the situation. As Coombs noted, attributions for events are natural, and people may attribute based on very little information.

SCCT uses responsibility to link the crisis situation and crisis response strategies. SCCT examines the responsibility created by the crisis situation (crisis responsibility) and the acceptance of crisis responsibility found in the crisis response strategy. The basic premise is that as the attribution of crisis responsibility increase, crisis managers must use crisis response strategies that increasingly accept responsibility for the crisis. Crisis managers can maximize the reputational benefits of crisis response strategies by matching

them to the level of perceived crisis responsibility (Coombs, 2013, pp. 263-264).

Figure 1: Model for Situational Crisis Communication Theory variables (Coombs, 2010, p.40)



2.4.1. SCCT two steps process for assessing the crisis threat

SCCT uses two basic steps to identify how stakeholders assess the crisis threat and make attribution of crisis responsibility. The first step starts with identifying the crisis type to define the crisis. Accordingly, SCCT clustered crisis types into three categories: (1) Victim (very little crisis responsibility); (2) Accidental (minimal attribution of crisis responsibility); and (3) intentional (strong crisis responsibility) (Coombs, 2010). Table 2 shows in detail the three-crisis type and their features.

Following the identification of the crisis type, it is important for crisis managers to consider if any intensifying factors exist. In this regard, SCCT identifies two basic intensifying factors: (1) *Crisis history* and (2) *prior reputation*. Crisis history is to identify whether or not the organization went through similar crisis scenario. As Coombs (2007, p. 143) argues, “If the organization has had a similar crisis, the current crisis will be a much greater reputational threat”. Correspondingly, SCCT states the way that the organization treats its stakeholders in the past also matters how they perceive the current crisis. A negative prior reputation makes stakeholders to hold an impression that the crisis occurred due to the poor performance.

Table 2: SCCT crisis types by crisis clusters

SCCT crisis types by crisis clusters

Victim cluster: In these crisis types, the organization is also victim of the crisis.

(Weak attributions of crisis responsibility = Mild reputational threat)

Natural disaster: Acts of nature damage an organization such as an earthquake.

Rumor: False and damaging information about an organization is being circulated.

Workplace violence: Current or former employee attacks current employees onsite.

Product tampering/ Malevolence: External agent causes damage to an organization.

Accidental cluster: In these crisis types, the organizational actions leading to the crisis were unintentional

(Minimal attributions of crisis responsibility= Moderate reputational threat)

Challenges: Stakeholders claim an organization is operating in an inappropriate manner.

Technical-error accidents: A technology or equipment failure causes an industrial accident.

Technical- error product harm: A technology or equipment failure causes a product to be recalled.

Preventable cluster: In these crisis types, the organization knowingly placed people at risk, took inappropriate actions or violated a law/ regulation.

(Strong attributions of crisis responsibility= Severe reputational threat)

Human-error accidents: Human error causes an industrial accident.

Human-error product harm: Human error causes a product to be recalled.

Organizational misdeed with no injuries: Stakeholders are deceived without injury.

Organizational misdeed management misconduct: Laws or regulations are violated by management.

Organizational misdeed with injuries: Stakeholders are placed at risk by management and injuries occur.

Source: (Coombs, 2007)

The above table depicts SCCT crisis type clusters. Accordingly, the victim cluster generates a very little crisis responsibility for the organization and stakeholders consider the organization as a victim rather than the cause of the crisis. On the other hand, the Accidental cluster generates low attributions of organizational crisis responsibility. This means the stakeholders noted the crisis as an unintentional cluster and uncontrollable by the organization. The last crisis type, which is the preventable cluster is to bring very strong attributions of organizational crisis responsibility. In this case, the stakeholders fully blame the organization as a cause of the crisis. (Coombs, 2007).

2.4.2. SCCT Crisis Response Strategies

With the rationale that communication affects people's perception, SCCT tries to match stakeholder's perception and crisis response strategies (Coombs, 2007). Therefore, as an audience-centered approach, the crisis response strategies pay attention for how stakeholders perceive the strategies.

SCCT categorize the crisis response strategies into three basic strategies: *deny*, *diminish* and *rebuild* and additionally, it suggests a supplemental strategy called *reinforcing*. Deny crisis response strategies attempt to tell stakeholders that the organization is not in crisis. The managers may confront the person or the group who claims the organization is in crisis. Moreover, deny strategy blame some outside person or group for the crisis. The second crisis response strategy, which is Diminish strategies search a way to minimize the organization's responsibility and tries to minimize the perceived seriousness of the crisis. Rebuild strategy, on the other hand, is a very accommodative strategy, which aims to improve the stakeholder's perception through compensation to victims and apology by accepting responsibility for the crisis. Furthermore, as a supplemental reinforcing strategy, Bolstering crisis response strategy recommend crisis managers remind the organization's stakeholders about the past good work and thank them for their help during the crisis (Coombs, 2010). Below table 3 summarizes the SCCT crisis response strategies.

Table 3: SCCT crisis response strategies

SCCT crisis response strategies
Primary crisis response strategies
<i>Deny crisis response strategies</i>
<i>Attack the accuser:</i> Crisis manager confronts the person or group claiming something is wrong with the organization.
<i>Denial:</i> Crisis manager asserts that there is no crisis.
<i>Scapegoat:</i> Crisis manager blames some person or group outside of the organization for the crisis.
<i>Diminish crisis response strategies</i>
<i>Excuse:</i> Crisis manager minimizes organizational responsibility by denying intent to do harm and/or claiming inability to control the events that triggered the crisis.
<i>Justification:</i> crisis manager minimizes the perceived damage caused by the crisis.
<i>Rebuild crisis response strategies.</i>
<i>Compensation:</i> Crisis manager offers money or other gifts to victims.
<i>Apology:</i> Crisis manager indicates the organization takes full responsibility for the crisis and asks stakeholders for forgiveness.
Secondary crisis response strategies
<i>Bolstering crisis response strategies</i>
<i>Reminder:</i> Tell stakeholders about the past good works of the organization.
<i>Ingratiation:</i> Crisis manager praises stakeholders and/or reminds them of past good works by the organization.
<i>Victimage:</i> Crisis managers remind stakeholders that the organization is a victim of the crisis too.

Source: (Coombs, 2007)

Moreover, as a recommendation for crisis response strategies SCCT forward the following 13 points.

Table 4: SCCT recommendations for crisis response selection

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide instructing information to all victims or potential victims in the form of warnings and directions for protecting themselves from harm.2. Provide adjusting information to victims by expressing concern for them and provide corrective action when possible. Note: Providing instructing and adjusting information is enough of a response for victim crisis with no crisis history or unfavorable prior reputation.3. Use diminishment strategies for accident crisis when there is no crisis history or unfavorable prior reputation.4. Use diminishment strategies for victim crisis when there is a crisis history or unfavorable prior reputation.5. Use rebuilding strategies for accident crisis when there is a crisis history or unfavorable prior reputation.6. Use rebuilding strategies for any preventable crisis.7. Use denial strategies in rumor crisis.8. Use denial strategies in challenges when the challenge is unwarranted.9. Use corrective action (adjusting information) in challenges when other stakeholders are likely to support the challenge.10. Use reinforcing strategies as supplements to the other response strategies.11. Victimage response strategy should only be used with the victim cluster.12. To be consistent, do not mix denial strategies with either the diminishment or rebuilding strategies.13. Diminishment and rebuilding strategies can be used in combination with one another.

Source: (Coombs, 2007)

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Introduction

This section of the study deals with the overall methods of the research, which aims to achieve the objective of the research. Accordingly, the research methodology including the design, research method and instrument and the data analysis techniques are to be covered.

3.2. Description of the study site

In Ethiopia, MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C is the manufacturer of the most common carbonate soft drinks like Mirinda, 7 up, Mirinda Tonic and Mirinda Apple. In the city of Addis Ababa, the company has three operating units or manufacturing plants: *Nifas silk Pepsi Plant, Teklehaimanot Pepsi plant and Summit beverage plant*

3.3. Research Design

3.3.1. Case Study

Case study method is a widely used type of qualitative research, which requires a careful and entire observation of a social unit to analyze a limited number of occurrences or situations and their interrelations (Kothary, 2004). According to Singh (2006) a case study would be effective if it encompasses three phases. The first one, *Retrospective phase*, refers to the past records or history of the case. Second, *Prospective phase* refers to the present status of the case. And, the third phase, *Conspective phase* focuses on the future development and improvement of the case.

This study has followed the aforementioned phases of case study. Accordingly, as a retrospective phase, the study inquired to examine the pre-crisis phase, past crisis history and prior relationship with stakeholders. In addition, as a prospective phase, it also tried to assess the present situations, particularly the existing crisis communication endeavor of the company. Lastly, while this research expected to forward recommendations, comments and advises it is anticipated to cover the endeavor of the Conspective phase.

3.3.2. Research Approach

In general, there are two basic approaches to research: qualitative approach and quantitative approach. The former involves the generation of data through a quantitative form, and it follows the rigid way to analyze numeric data. Whereas, the qualitative approach follows a

subjective assessment of the human side of an issue to analyze behaviors, beliefs, opinions and emotions towards specific issues (Kothary, 2004).

The quantitative approach usually means to study sample of a population by dispatching questionnaires to generate data. On the other hand, as a subjective way of approach qualitative research mainly focuses on individuals' experience and interpretation of events employing techniques like observation, interviews and focus group discussion by using structured, semi-structured or unstructured questions.

The research is to examine how crisis communication strategies of MOHA Soft Drinks S.C are worthy in protecting the reputation of the company and in particular its principal brand, Mirinda, which was inflicted by a reputational threat. In order to achieve this, the study is approached qualitatively as it concerns values and importance (Singh, 2006). Moreover, a qualitative approach has been selected for this research as it enables to interpret opinion and perception. Besides to in depth-interview with key informant, relevant documents were also used to generate qualitative data.

3.4. Sources of Data

There are two types of Data, Primary and secondary. The former is a type of data obtained through direct communication with the concerned bodies or informants through in-depth interview and critical observation. Secondary data, on the other hand, is to gather relevant inputs from existing records, such as books, researches, reports, conference proceedings, magazines, newspapers, archives etc. (Kumar, 2011). This research relies both on primary and secondary sources of data.

In order to gather the primary data, in-depth interview with key informants were held with selected top-level management officials assuming that their experience to manage the crisis enable them to have adequate knowledge about the subject of the study. These key informants were approached from the three plants and head office. Besides to this, in-depth interview also carried out with stakeholders, who are on the supply chain to distribute the company's products as a wholesaler. The intention of this was to grasp the understanding and perception of these key stakeholders about the crisis, and the effectiveness of the company's crisis communication effort and how likely protected their business.

In a modern society, documents kept in a form of written scripts are serving as a witness or pieces of evidence for events or facts. Such documents can be found in several formats as “notes, case reports, contracts, drafts, death certificates, remarks, diaries, statistics, annual reports, judgments, letters or expert opinions” (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004, p. 284). Reviewing such documents is, therefore, an important way of generating data through accessible documents. In doing so, besides the primary data sources, this research also extract relevant data from secondary sources of data such as letters and radio interviews, reports and other documents.

3.5. Qualitative Data Collection Method

3.5.1. In-depth interview

Holloway (2002) describes interview as a preferable form of data collection to public relations and marketing communication research. Likewise, Driscoll (2011) also noted that interviews are the best data gathering technique especially when detailed information from a few specific people and experts is needed.

In research methodology, two types of interviewing methods have been identified; Structured interviews, in which a carefully worded questionnaire is administered, and unstructured interview that enable to conduct in-depth interviews, by which the interviewer does not follow a rigid form (Kothary, 2004). Therefore, due to the nature of the study and with the aim of accomplishing a deeper understanding from knowledgeable informants, an in-depth interview was used to collect primary data.

3.6. Sampling Technique

Sample design is a definite plan, technique or procedure to select a sample from a given population. In this regard, researchers can use either the probability sampling or non-probability sampling techniques to determine their representation basis. As Kothary (2004, p. 15) noted, “with probability samples, each element has a known probability of being included in the sample but the non-probability samples do not allow the researcher to determine this probability”.

Non-probability sampling technique is typically serving the qualitative type of research to identify and select the information-rich sources purposefully (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). For this study, therefore the selection of respondents for the in-depth interview is

intentional or purposeful to generate reliable and valid data from the knowledgeable and appropriate sources. In relation to this, some knowledgeable informants were selected purposefully with snowball sampling technique. The reason behind is while it appears to be difficult for the researcher to identify those were involved and resourceful informants during the Mirinda crisis, it is logical to use the assistance of the interviewed informants to identify other informants. According to Ritchie, Lewis and El am (2003) selecting informants through snowball sampling technique is to ask informants who have already been mentioned to identify people they know much about the issue. Thus, the researcher of this study also followed the same procedure to identify new samples.

3.7. Key Informant interview

For this study, the key informants were picked purposively with two criteria. Primarily, they were selected based on the position they held in the company, as the position determine their role in managing the crisis. While the research is mainly focused on the company's strategies of crisis communication, it would be reasonable to generate data from the management officials. Secondly, as a case study that requires the opinion, the presence and involvement of key informants during the Mirinda crisis it is appropriate to select informants intentionally.

From the management circle, six key informants have been interviewed: two key informants from Teklehaimanot plant, one key informant from Summit plant, two key informants from Nifas silk plant, and one key informant from the head office.

Additionally, all plants at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C have their own list of main wholesalers or distributors. Thus, to have an insight on the stakeholders' perception towards the Mirinda crisis, three registered distributors, one from each the three plants (Nifas silk, Teklehaimanot, and Sumit) were interviewed.

3.8. Data Gathering Instrument

3.8.1. Interview guide

For the in-depth interview, an interview guide or conceptual framework was prepared in themes of the research. An interview guide is not a list of questions rather it is a list of issues, topics for discussion points to generate data through an in-depth interview. Moreover, the guide simply reminds and shows the interviewer the scope of the area to be cover by the interview (Kumar, 2011).

Hence, in order to enable the key informants to explain their perception without any limit, two kinds of interview guides were made to address the two types of groups, which this research anticipated to generate relevant data. Accordingly, an interview guide for selected key informants who are working at the top managerial level, and another interview guide for selected key informants from the supply chain were prepared. Generally, the former one is dealt to find out the strategy of the company in its crisis communication activities, whereas the interview guide for the key informants from the supply chain is exclusively intended to assess the perception of the key stakeholders towards the crisis. In addition to the interview guide, a checklist was also prepared to check whether the basic issues or themes have got the answer from the informants.

Moreover, the secondary data sources such as letters, radio interviews and reports and other similar relevant data are gathered from the company archives and online sources to interpret through content analysis.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

- The key informants received relevant information about the purpose of the research.
- During the in-depth interview except few, many of them were willing for audio records. All informants, particularly those who were willing for audio records were assured of confidentiality.
- In order to ensure anonymity, the key informants' name is replaced with pseudonymous.

3.10. Data Analysis

To draw meanings from the qualitative data generated through in-depth interview with key informants, and the secondary data from relevant documents, the research used thematic way of analysis and content analysis, respectively. According to Kothary (2004) content analysis is a preferable way to analyze documentary materials including records of either spoken or printed materials. Besides, thematic way of analysis also enables qualitative research to categorize and analyze data based on key themes and concepts (Ritchie, Spencer, & O'Connor, 2003).

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

As explained hitherto, this research is to scrutinize the crisis communication strategy of MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C and the endeavor to protect its reputation at risk inflicted by a crisis scenario to its well-known orange flavor soft drink named Mirinda. In doing this, all the sections of this chapter is allotted to present and discuss the main findings obtained from primary data sources through in-depth interviews with key informants and selected archived secondary sources data such as press releases, letters, radio interviews and other contents of media coverage.

For this purpose, six key informants who are at the top-level management are interviewed from the four study sites, namely Teklehaimanot plant, Nifas Silk plant, summit plant and the head office. In addition, the interview of three key stakeholders who are working as an agent or distributor of MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C products also included generating relevant primary data. Hence, in this chapter, those refer with a pseudonymous “*II-*” are informants at the top-level management. In a similar manner, “*KSI-*” stands for stakeholder informant.

This chapter organized the presentation and discussion of findings in accordance with the research questions explicated in chapter one. The sections, therefore, display the findings and discussions on the issues of crisis prevention and preparation, the crisis response strategies of the company and finally the post-crisis activities in a sequential manner.

4.2. The prevention and preparation for crisis

Generally, a pre-crisis phase is a period of crisis prevention and preparation. At this phase, companies are thus expected to pay attention to several tasks to prevent and prepare for crisis situations. Organizing crisis communication plan, assigning spokesperson for crisis time, detecting signals and enhancing the recalling capacities are some of the principal pre-crisis phase activities or tasks to minimize risks and prevent issues as early as possible. Therefore, this section is allotted to assess these key tasks at Moha Soft Drinks Industry S.C. in particular focus on the case of Mirinda crisis.

4.2.1. Crisis Communication plan in dealing with the crisis

Regarding whether the company has a clear written document of Crisis Communication or crisis management plan, this researcher could find out that the company has a formal

document prepared with clear procedures and action plan that can serve as a guideline for a crisis.

The plan even begins with defining what crisis means for the company, and how it could affect the entire operation of the company. In addition, it also specifically focuses on how to proceed with crisis scenarios that can inflict reputational assets and damage the smooth relationship with its stakeholders. Nevertheless, despite the fact that there is a proactive crisis communication plan, the company did not seem to use the plan as a guideline for Mirinda crisis. After the crisis occurred, the company just established other new crisis committee reversing the previous crisis team members listed on the crisis plan, according to key informants.

Though all informants and observation are evidence for disregarding the existing crisis communication plan, the company however put in place a basic program named *Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)* that could help the crisis prevention efforts named This document encompasses internationally recognized preventive approaches endorsed by WHO and FAO that is to ensure the safety and quality of production by analyzing the physical, chemical and biological hazards (WHO & FAO, n.d.). Concerning this, II-F in particular strongly believed that food-producing companies should prioritize for HACCP document than crisis communication plan.

Nonetheless, there were other key informants strongly disagree upon this. II-C, in particular, argued that the food safety and quality systems cannot always make companies safe from a crisis, rather both crisis plan and the HACCP documents are important for a company to prevent a crisis.

Inviting people to visit the production process in plants confidently help the company to build trust among the stakeholders to witness the product safety and quality. Had there been strong ties with stakeholders, we could minimize the hoax that caused the Mirinda crisis (II-C, 24/04/18)¹.

¹ በየጊዜው ሰዎች የአመራረት ሒደቱን እንዲያዩ ጉብኝት እንዲያደርጉ ማድረግ በምርቱ ላይ እምነት እንዲኖራቸው ይረዳል። ይህም በምርቱ ጥራት ላይ የሚነሱ ወሬዎችን ለመግታት ይረዳል። እንዲህ አይነቱ አሰራር ቢኖረን ኖሮ በሚሪንዳ ላይ የተነሳውን ወሬ ማስቆም በቻልን ነበር።

From the above quotation, we can understand that the key informant highlighted the significance of maintaining a strong relationship with stakeholders is a key to prevent a crisis than relying on documents. Overall, the results show that even though the crisis communication plan was already in place, the company did not execute it as a guideline for Mirinda crisis. Hence, this is actually inconsistent with what crisis communication scholars recommend. For instance, Coombs (2007) strongly advise companies to have a Crisis Communication Plan (CCP) with pre-assigning tasks for dealing with crisis.

4.2.2. Efforts of Detecting Signals at the Pre-Crisis Phase

Crisis communication scholars recommend companies to work on identifying the signals or issues to take action before turning into a disaster. This subsection presents how the signal detection activities at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C. were undertaken to identify issues for a crisis, particularly during the Mirinda crisis.

In this respect, the findings show that at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C there seems to be no formal way of detecting signals. The in-depth interview data showed that the company only to rely on its sales representatives to receive comments and feedback about the market situation. Yet, except the market situation, other sources, such as the media have been neglected as a source to identify a range of issues and potential crisis. For instance, II-C said the following:

I have been staying with this company for almost 15 years, however, I do not yet see any formal way of detecting signals through media monitoring or other ways (II-C, 24/04/18)².

Regarding this, II-A also strongly believed that it would have been possible to minimize the adverse challenge of the Mirinda crisis had it been a formal way of media monitoring.

Besides, the sales representatives, findings show that the company relies more on an informal way of identifying issues than following the scientific way of detecting signals. Concerning this, II-D emphasized on the disadvantage of the informal way of signal detection.

² በዚህ ካምፓኒ ውስጥ በነበረኝ የ15 ዓመት ቆይታ ውስጥ አስጊ ሁኔታዎችን ለመለየት እንዲረዳ የሚዲያ ውጤቶችን እና ሌሎች የክትትል ስራዎች ሲሰሩ አላየሁም፡፡

We do not actually have an organized way of detecting signals to identify issues that are possible to turn into crisis. However, informally, when we notice issues to threaten our company and brands, we usually raised them at the managerial meeting. Nevertheless, the problems raised by someone may not receive attention by others (II-D, 19/04/18)³.

Concerning the issue of signal detection, II-F believed that the company has a special section at the head office with a responsibility to monitor regularly the media and the environment to identify issues before turning into a crisis. However, based on the findings through an in-depth interview with the key informants at the head office, the researcher of this study witnessed that the company is not yet applying such activities. Therefore, this can also indicate that there is an information gap between plants and head office, which obviously can challenge the crisis prevention and preparation aspects.

Overall, the above findings witnessing the company's understanding of crisis sensing mechanism or efforts of detecting signals is not to agree with the scientific way of handling crisis. For instance, scholars like Mitroff and Anagnos believe that crisis is to send out warning signals before it happens. Hence, they strongly advise companies to scan regularly their internal and external environment in a formal way to identify risks and potential issues for a crisis. (Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001). Based on this, it is possible to argue that the incompetence towards detecting warning signals at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C can put the company at a crisis risk by weakening the prevention and preparation for crisis.

4.2.3. How Enhancing the Recalling Capacity Help Crisis Communication

The purpose of this subsection is to examine one of the main tasks of pre-crisis that help the crisis prevention and preparation aspect of companies. As explained previously enhancing the recalling capacity indeed help companies to minimize threats of crisis. Concerning this, the following discussions tried to assess the recalling capacity of MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C by emphasizing on the case of Mirinda crisis.

³ የተደራጀ አሰራር ባይኖርም፣ መደበኛ ባልሆነ መልኩ ግን አስጊ ሁኔታዎችን ስንረዳ በአስተዳደር ስብሰባ ላይ እናነሳለን። ነገር ግን ለአንዱ አስጊ የመሰለው ችግር ለሌላው ደግሞ አስጊ መስሎ ላይታየው ይችላል።

As all key Informants stated twice a year, the company regularly perform an unannounced investigation or examination called *Mock recall*. In this program, the sales and marketing unit is to inform its employees suddenly to collect products from the market within a given time. The main objective of this activity is to boost the capacity for a real recall.

In his thesis, entitled “Business Ethics Practices: The case of Moha Soft Drinks Industry S.C., Teklehaimanot Plant” Gebisa (2010), assures that MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C has a Proactive product recall guideline that enables to remove products with defects to be removed from the market and warehouse.

Enhancing the capacity of recalling products is especially relevant for food-producing and pharmaceutical companies. While food and medicine are sensitive and demand safety, there could be a time, which the companies may oblige to pull products with an error from the shelves and warehouses. In this regard, taking the case of Johnson & Johnson Company for its *Tylenol case* is the best example that shows the relevance of enhancing the recalling capacity. What makes this company to be mentioned by many crisis communication scholars is, the capacity and effort of the company to recall all the Tylenol tablets from all points of sale when it was informed that the renowned Tylenol tablets were poisoned with cyanide chemical. This actually helped the company to minimize the responsibility for the event and maintain its reputation (Anthonissen, 2008).

The Mirinda crisis does not actually seem demanding a recalling activity. However, from the above findings, we can argue that the strong recalling capacity could help the company in minimizing the risk of crisis that needs a recalling. In this regard, Moha Soft Drinks Industry S.C. appears to be exemplary for other local companies by its capacity of recall program.

4.2.4. Views on Crisis Time Spokesperson

Crisis creates a need for information particularly among stakeholders (Coombs, 2010). Hence, explaining what is going on for stakeholders is the main duty of the company through its spokesperson. In this regard, scholars devote considerable attention to crisis time spokesperson. This subsection is, therefore, to analyze the Mirinda crisis spokesperson through the eyes of the informants’ as well as scholars’ view.

On the aforementioned crisis communication plan, which is more likely unknown by some informants, during the in-depth interview, it is clearly stated that there should be a crisis time

spokesperson to speak on behalf of the company. Accordingly, on the plan, the Human Resource manager (HR manager) is assigned as a spokesperson to represent the company during crisis time.

No other member or employee of the company is allowed to officially discuss the crisis issue with any party. This spokesperson or the public relations representative (Human Resource manager) should discuss with the General Manager and the crisis management team, the issues, which shall publicly be exposed, and issues to be held back until clear images are achieved⁴.

The above piece clearly puts that the Human Resource manager (HR manager) is entitled to serve as a spokesperson for crisis time. However, findings show that during the Mirinda crisis the company did not let him/her to act as a spokesperson, rather the head of the marketing department was serving as a spokesperson reversing the plan's provision.

During the in-depth interview, the key informants were asked to forward their view about the Mirinda crisis spokesperson and the criteria by which the spokesperson was selected. Regarding this, the acting spokesperson for the Mirinda crisis himself informed during an interview for this study by saying that the duty was given to him due to the reason that the crisis was considered as a marketing issue. On the other hand, II-B believes that the duty was given to the then spokesperson due to his eloquence and persuasive nature, which was believed by the company as a quality to defend the company and reputation under attack.

The key informants were also asked their comment towards the performance or effectiveness of the Mirinda crisis spokesperson. In this regard, II-C, for instance, commented that the spokesperson would be far better had it been from the production and quality department than from the marketing unit in order to show clearly the safety and quality aspects of the production process.

In my view, I would say the spokesperson could be better if that was selected from the production and quality division than marketing department to show clearly the safety and quality of our brands. This could obviously encourage consumers and disproof the hoax, which was related directly to the safety and quality of the brands. In fact, Above all, I wish the company had a public relations and communication department to work in collaboration with the

⁴ extracted from the company crisis communication plan

quality and safety department to take the spokesperson duty as well as all other communication aspects (II-C, 24/04/18)⁵.

II-D, on the other hand, stated that the entitlement of the Crisis communication plan for the HR Manager could be far better than designating new spokesperson.

While the HR manager is the one who maintains a long-term relationship with the external stakeholders representing the organization, that was the right choice. However, I wish we had public relations and communication department within the company structure to manage or handle such duties (II-D, 19/04/18)⁶.

From the above findings, one can conclude that the company did not have a spokesperson for special media training. Rather the company appears to follow the criteria of assigning its crisis time spokesperson in view of the crisis type. This even led to reverse the entitlement of the crisis communication plan. In this respect, this does not seem to agree with scholars' recommendation. As many scholars emphasizing crisis time spokespersons should receive media training. For instance, Coombs (2007, p. 78) noted as saying "a poorly trained or unskilled spokesperson merely exacerbate the crisis situation".

On the other hand, during the in-depth interview, it is noticed that key informants were recommending the company to have public relations and communication specialists, this actually to agree with scholars like Fearn-Banks (2009) who recommend the spokesperson duties should be managed by public relation specialists.

Regarding the consistency of the spokesperson, all the informants expressed that the messages during Mirinda crisis were consistent enough to explain the cause of the crisis as a

⁵ ከሽያጭ ባለሙያ ይልቅ ድርጅቱን ወክሎ የሚቀርበው ሰው ከምርት ጥራትና ደህንነት ክፍል ባለሙያ ቢሆን ኖሮ ስለ ምርቱ ጥራት በተሻለ መንገድ ማስረዳት ይችላል ብዬ አስባለሁ። የተነዛውን ወሬ መቋቋም የሚቻለውና ተጠቃሚውንም ሊያደፋፍረው ይችላል ነበር። ከሁሉ በላይ ግን ድርጅቱ የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ወይም ኮሚዩኒኬሽን ክፍል ኖሮት ቢሆንና ከምርት ጥራትና ደህንነት ክፍል ጋር በጥምረት ቢሰራ ኖሮ ይበልጥ ውጤታማ መሆን ይቻላል ነበር።

⁶ አሁን ባለው ሁኔታ የሰው ሐብት አስተዳደር ክፍል ኃላፊው ድርጅቱን ወክሎ በቀውሱ ወቅት የቃል አቀባይነቱን ስራ መስራቱን እደግፋለሁ። ምክንያቱም ከባለድርሻ አካላት ጋር ያለውን ጥብቅ ግንኙነት የሚመራው እሱ ነው። የሆነ ሆኖ ግን የሕዝብ ግንኙነትና ኮሚዩኒኬሽን ክፍል ቢኖረን ኖሮ መልካም ነበር እላለሁ።

negative posting to defend the company. Similarly, all informants also expressed that the spokesperson tried to give an answer to all questions on media and avoid saying “no comment”. Beside the informants, the radio interviews of the spokesperson with two local FM radio stations (Sheger FM 102 and Bsrat FM 101.1) witnessing that the spokesperson tried to give an answer to all questions by avoiding the “no comment”. As Shelton (2008) noted, one of the worst things that a company can be quoted as saying is, “No Comment”, as it leads the public to think the company is responsible for the cause of the crisis or as if there is something which the company wants to hide from them. In this regard, MOHA Soft Drinks S.C. seems to have the advantage to minimize the responsibility of the crisis, and that could help to minimize the crisis risk.

4.2.5. Examining the Pre Crisis Web Communication Channel

Scholars agreed that pre-crisis communication efforts should be backed with modern information technologies for effective crisis prevention and preparation aspects. In this respect, internet technology is becoming a significant way for crisis prevention and preparation efforts. The objective of this subsection is to explore how the pre-crisis web communication channels were applied at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C particularly during Mirinda crisis.

As Coombs (2007) noted, companies should either create a separate website or designate a section on their main website prior to the crisis scenario. In his view, integrating information technologies at pre-crisis crisis phase enhance the companies’ effectiveness for crisis prevention and preparation. Nevertheless, during the in-depth interview, the key informants at the managerial level expressed that the company did not exert such effort before the Mirinda crisis. However, at the crisis response phase, with the intention to help the response activity the company created a Facebook page. Concerning this, all informants believed that the Facebook page had an immense role in the crisis communication effort to address stakeholders. Also as the researcher of this study tried to visit the page, the company posted original letters written from Zewditu hospital and Hawassa City Administration Health department⁷, by which they declared that no case for death or illness appears at their institution that is related with taking Mirinda.

⁷ Letters are annexed

However, concerning the crisis communication web channels, II-F, noted that the company is recently to launch a new web communication technology that facilitates information exchange between the internal stakeholders.

We are preparing to launch a new technology that would link every internal stakeholder with an internet-based network. The software application named Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is developed by Microsoft Company. The software is to link every staffs. I hope the company will have the chance to incorporate this web channel to crisis management efforts (II-F, 20/04/08)⁸.

From the above findings, we can summarize that the company was not incorporated web communication channel at the pre-crisis phase. However, efforts have been made during the crisis response phase to use social media platform particularly Facebook. In this regard, it disagrees with crisis communication scholars who advise companies to integrate web-based channels at the pre-crisis phase. As Perry, Taylor, and Doerfel (2003) put, integrating web-based channels or internet at the pre-crisis phase has an enormous advantages such as to identify environmental scanning to detect risks and communicate with stakeholders. In this manner, one can conclude that the tasks of integrating web communication channel during the pre-crisis phase at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C does not match with what crisis communication scholars suggest.

4.3. Crisis response strategy to protect reputation

The purpose of this section is to examine the crisis response strategy of MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C after its reputation was inflicted by a negative posting which narrates its popular orange flavor soft drink has been poisoned and became a cause for the death of around 12 consumers at Addis Ababa and Hawassa city. Again, by taking this as a case, this section examined the crisis response strategies and efforts of the company during the crisis period.

To ground the case, Situational Crisis Communication Theory is selected to see how likely the crisis response strategy enables to protect the reputational asset of the company. Using SCCT model as a framework could make possible to understand the crisis situation, crisis

⁸ በቅርቡ ሰራተኛውን እገርስ በርስ የሚያስተላልር የኢንፎርሜሽን ቴክኖሎጂ ተግባራዊ ለማድረግ በዝግጅት ላይ ነን፡ ፡ ይህ ኢንተርኔትን መሰረት ያደረገ ፕሮግራም Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) የሚባል ሲሆን ባለቤትነቱ የማይክሮሶፍት ካምፓኒ ነው፡፡ ይህ ፕሮግራም ቀውስን በመከላከል ስራ ላይ አስተዋፅኦ ይኖረዋል ብዬ አስባለሁ፡፡

response strategies and a system for matching the crisis situation and crisis response strategies (refer chapter two).

4.3.1. Stakeholder analysis

As an audience-oriented theory-based approach, SCCT considers stakeholders as decisive actors in the crisis response efforts. Therefore, knowing how stakeholders perceive the crisis would enable to understand how stakeholders attribute the crisis and for whom they make responsible for the crisis. In doing so, this section is to analyze the perception of stakeholders and to match the stakeholder perception and the level of reputational threat during Mirinda crisis.

One of the main and important parts of managing crisis is to identify stakeholders and ranking them based on their impact toward the crisis situation. According to Anthonissen (2008) identifying the targets would help to have an effective communication and sort the information that is required by each stakeholders at the crisis response phase.

In this section, the categorization of the stakeholders into primary and secondary groups is made based on the criteria of Clarkson depending on the priority given by the company and what the crisis situation itself demands (Clarkson, 1995). Accordingly, the primary stakeholders on table 4.1 are depicted with the assumption to have a direct impact or significance on the crisis situation. Similarly, the secondary stakeholders are sorted with the view of having an indirect impact on the crisis compared with the primary stakeholders.

Table 5: Stakeholders for the case of Mirinda crisis

Primary Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pepsi Cola International • Health Care Administration and Control Authority (FMHACA) • Ministry of Trade of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia • Employees • Consumers • Suppliers (Agents) • Moha Soft Drinks Industry S.C • Zewditu Hospital • Hawassa City Administration Health Department
Secondary Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media • Unions (<i>National Industrial Federation of tourism, The Ethiopian Industrial Federation of Construction, wood, Metal, Cement & other Trade Unions, Federation of the Food and Beverages, Tobacco and Allied Trade Unions, Ethiopian Workers Associations Confederation</i>)

Adopted from Kyhn (2008)

Regarding the primary stakeholders, as a franchiser, Pepsi Cola International preceded as a primary stakeholder. To support this argument, we can take the following words extracted from of the radio interview of the then spokesperson with Bisrat FM radio station.

When we first found out the news, which causes the crisis, we immediately communicate our franchiser, the Pepsi Cola International to share the information. Now we are expecting to hear their opinion (Lemma, 2016).

Moreover, the government offices particularly the Ministry of Trade of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Food Medicine & Health Care Administration and Control Authority (FMHACA) were also presented as primary stakeholders during the crisis period. With the mandate of assuring the safety and quality of food products, both institutions were concerned and the situation needed their direct involvement.

There are also some reasons that enable to categorize the internal stakeholders or employees of companies under the lists of primary stakeholder. In particular, from others, crisis situations of a given company are, believed to affect employees directly. As a matter of survival, employees are also expected to exert much effort in crisis response activities. On the other hand, companies in crisis may also prefer to involve its internal stakeholders for an effective result in their crisis response effort. In this respect, findings reveal the direct involvement of internal stakeholders of MOHA Soft Drinks S.C that enable this research to categorize them as a primary stakeholder.

Concerning the company's willingness to involve its employees, II-A said the following:

Once we became certain that the news was targeting to blackmail our reputation, we just let every internal stakeholder to work on promoting the Mirinda brand to repair the inflicted reputation (II-A, 18/04/18)⁹.

Similarly, II-E also reflected the role of the employees as follows:

During the crisis time, Nifas silk plant had around 800 staffs working at different levels. Each worker is expected to have their own social networking, which they could lobby to disproof the news. I can say that the effort of the employees had a critical role in restoring the reputational damage (II-E, 19/04/18)¹⁰.

In addition to the informants above, II-F also emphasized that the employees had a persistent effort specially to use their Facebook account to counter messages, which damage the reputation of the company, particularly, Mirinda brand.

Based on findings, this study also able to categorize the company workers' association, *Moha Soft drinks S.C. Workers Association*, as a primary stakeholder. As results show the association was directly engaged in the crisis response efforts. For instance, letters were sent

⁹ በምርቱ ላይ የተዘገበው ዜና ሐሰት እንደሆነና ስም ለማጥፋት እንደሆነ ከተረዳን በኋላ የድርጅቱ ሰራተኞች ቀውሱን በመቋቋም እና የምርቱን በጎ ገፅታ ለመመለስ እንዲሰሩ ጥሪ አቅርበንላቸው ነበር።

¹⁰ ለምሳሌ እሌንን የኛን ንፋስ ስልክ ፋብሪካን ብንወስድ ወደ 800 ገደማ የሚሆኑ በተለያዩ ቦታ ተመድበው የሚሰሩ ሰራተኞች አሉ። እያንዳንዱ ሰራተኛ ደግሞ የራሱ የሆነ ማሕበራዊ ግንኙነቶች ስላሉት ሐሰተኛውን ወሬ በማስተባበልና የምርቱን መልካም ስም በመመለስ ስራ ላይ ሊኖረው የሚችለውን አቅም ከፍተኛ ነው።

out through its network spelling out the news is false and their company needs cooperation to encourage others to consume Mirinda. In its content, the letter also addressed that if the situation continues in that manner, around 8000 workers of the company would lose their job. In response to this, the union also received a positive reply from different Associations and Unions such as *National Industrial Federation of Tourism, The Ethiopian Industrial Federation of Construction, wood, Metal, Cement and other Trade Unions, Federation of the Food and Beverages, Tobacco and Allied Trade Unions and Ethiopian Workers Associations Confederation*¹¹.

As shown in the above, the involvement of internal stakeholders for crisis response endeavor has been prevailed at MOHA Soft Drinks S.C. These findings actually support the argument of Fearn Banks, which consider internal stakeholders as an asset for companies in crisis time to respond to crisis without charging any payment (Fearn Banks, 2007).

In addition to the aforementioned unions and associations, the media were also another key set of actors during the Mirinda crisis in both positive and negative aspects. As Anthonissen (2008, p. 5) states, “the media have the power either to play down or exacerbate a crisis”. This is actually consistent with what II-A and II-B stated. During the interview, both informants blamed a local FM radio station as a cause to aggravate the crisis. According to these informants, the crisis had brought more impact after the negative posting was reported as a news by the local FM radio station.

Having in mind, the relevance of the main agents or distributors’ perception, as previously explained, three key stakeholders were interviewed from the supply chain. Nevertheless, the perception of all the three key stakeholder informants is more likely similar. They perceived the crisis as a hoax of a round of social media message.

I have been working with the company for many years as an agent. I know the safety and quality production processes they use to produce Mirinda and the other products. I cannot deny the hoax was a bit confusing and a hard time for

¹¹Letters are annexed

our business, but it did not take me time to identify that was simply a hoax (KSI-A, 23/04/18)¹².

Overall, the above data generated from the primary, secondary and additional stakeholders, it seems possible to summarize the crisis type and the level of the reputational threat within the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) as Table 4.2 depicted below.

Table 6: Stakeholders' perception towards the crisis type and the level of reputational threat

Stakeholder's perception	Reputational threat
Victim Cluster <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rumor with no similar crisis history 	Weak attribution of crisis responsibility= mild reputational threat

Adopted from Kyhn (2008)

The above table summarizes two things, the stakeholder's perception, and the reputational threat. According to SCCT, in a crisis situation, the perception of stakeholders' enables to identify to whom they make responsible for the event (refer Table 2.3). Therefore, based on the findings depicted on the stakeholders' analysis section, we can conclude as the crisis of Mirinda was perceived by the stakeholders as a 'rumor', which is to be categorized under the victim cluster by SCCT. As the theory noted, such type of crisis is believed to have an advantage for companies than other types of crisis, as it puts only a weak attribution of crisis responsibly and to have only a mild reputational threat.

4.3.2. Past Crisis History and Prior Relational Reputation

Stakeholders are likely to assess crisis situations by a 'crisis history' and 'prior relational reputation'. Crisis history refers to the presence of similar crisis in the history of the company, which stakeholders could remind, whereas prior relational reputation is looking if the company has a negative relationship with its stakeholders. Hence, both crisis history and

¹² ከድርጅቱ ጋር ረጅም አመት እንደ መስራቱ ማሪንግም ሆነ ሌሎችም ምርቶች የሚመረቱበትን የምርት ጥራት ሒደት አውቃለሁ። ወሬው ለተወሰነ ጊዜም ቢሆን አወዛግቦኝ የነበረ ቢሆንም አሉ-ባልታ እንደሆነ ግን ብዙም ሳይቆይ ነበር የተረዳሁት። ዘገባው በገበያዎችን ላይ ተፅዕኖ ነበረው።

relationship history are major intensifier, which “intrinsically increase a company’s reputational damage regardless of the strategies employed by the company” (Cooley & Cooley, 2011, p. 204). Therefore, the following section of the study is to explore the presence of similar past crisis history and the prior relational reputation at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C. and to analyze whether these two factors intensified the Mirinda crisis.

4.3.2.1. Past Crisis History

Regarding the issue of crisis history, one scenario that was told by key informants during the in-depth interview was the crisis scenario occurred in 2005, which was related to the national election. By that time, the chief executive, as well as the owner of MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C, Shaykh Muhammed Hussayn al-Amoudi, was seen campaigning for the ruling party, EPRDF, wearing a T-shirt with the party’s symbol- the bee. In addition, he was officially expressed his opposition to the popular opposition party named Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) for using the insignia of St. George football club (the club which he was sponsoring) the English letter ‘V’. As a result, this instigated groups a campaign to boycott MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C products. Nevertheless, all informants except IIB believed that this crisis history did not have to impact the Mirinda crisis. Concerning this II-B said the following:

Since then, our reputation appears to be delicate. No one can deny our company is still associated with the political stand of our chief executive. I can argue that the Mirinda crisis and other challenges towards our reputation are still influenced by that (II-B, 13/04/18)¹³.

From the above findings, it is possible to argue that the company did not go through a crisis scenario, which is related to the safety and quality of its products. In addition, except II-B the rest informants believed that the aforementioned crisis to have no impact on the Mirinda crisis. According to SCCT, a crisis history that could intensify crisis scenarios is only if the company had similar crisis type. Hence, based on the findings, we can argue that the company had the opportunity to minimize the reputational damage during the Mirinda crisis.

¹³ ከዚያን ጊዜ ጀምሮ ሰዎች ድርጅታችን ከሊቀመንበራችን የፖለቲካ አቋም ጋር አያይዘው ነው የሚረዱት። እንዲህ አይነቱ ተፅእኖ በሚሪንዳው ቀውስ ላይም ቢሆን ተፅዕኖ ነበረው።

4.3.2.2. Priori relational reputation

Similar to crisis history, negative prior relational reputation is also believed to intensify the crisis situation. Regarding this, all the key informants at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C believed that the company has a smooth relationship with its stakeholders.

II-C, for instance, tried to mention the ambulance donation to Tikur Ambesa Specialized Hospital¹⁴ and National Blood Bank Service office¹⁵, which he thought as a good example to show the company's commitment to corporate social responsibility. He also added, at the plant, he is working (Teklehaimanot plant), the employees are voluntarily contributing money from their salary to cover the school expense of children from the low-income family. Besides to the informants at MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C, all key informants from the supply chain, who were interviewed for this study expressed that the prior relational reputation of the company was positive.

Thus, similar to the crisis history, findings revealed that the company has a smooth relationship with its stakeholders and that enables to have a positive reputation among its stakeholders. Therefore, according to SCCT, this would help the company to avoid intensifying factors for the crisis.

4.3.3. Analyzing the Initial Crisis Response Strategy

According to informants, the first step, which the company did, was to contact Zewditu hospital to see if there were victims treated at the hospital where the news claim the victims were treated. Regarding this, the company received a letter from both institutions Zewditu hospital and Hawasa City Administration's Health Department that ascertain the case did not happen at their institutions. Moreover, the administration of Zewditu hospital also cooperated to give a statement for media to inform no cases of illness seen at their hospital that is attributed to Mirinda brand.

On that round of social media news, there was a person named Dr. Sabir Ahmed who has been mentioned as the source of the information. However,

¹⁴ A state run hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

¹⁵ National Blood Services office is the nonprofit governmental organization established with core function of community mobilization and education on voluntary blood donation, blood collection, laboratory processing, testing and production of blood, distribute of health facilities, promote appropriate clinical use of blood, research and capacity building.

the hospital proved us no one with that name has been working in that hospital
(II-A, 18/04/18)¹⁶.

As interviewees explained, during the crisis time, the company instantaneously gave a press conference for media after collecting relevant documents. Furthermore, the acting spokesperson also speaks frequently for media on behalf of the company with a message that the company is a victim of a hoax.

Regarding communicating quickly to the public two key informants, II-A and II-B believed that the company response was quick enough though it seems a bit late due to the process of gathering relevant information from relevant sources like Zewditu hospital and Hawassa City Administration Health Department.

Contrary to the above-mentioned informants, II-D said the following:

Our response was not quick enough. Though it seems logical to collect relevant information before contacting media, this, however, gave an opportunity for the hoax to spread out easily. Obviously, this extended the recovery time (II-D, 19/04/18)¹⁷.

At the initial crisis response, besides accuracy and consistency of messages, crisis communication researchers also emphasize on the matter of how likely companies are quick to give their response for media to address their stakeholders. In this respect, they advise companies to respond quickly before the crisis exacerbated. As Shelton (2008, p. 26) noted, if companies are not willing to respond quickly, “the press will fill that vacuum with information, comments or opinion, which does more to sell their story and less to protect your business”. The above findings, including II-D stated that the company gave the response within 72 hours, and this seems to agree with Coombs, who argues the communication should be within 72 hours (Coombs, 2007).

¹⁶ በማሕበራዊ ሚዲያ በተለቀቀው ዜና ላይ የመረጃው ምንጭ ተብሎ የተጠቀሰ ሳብር አሕመድ በሚል ስም የሚጠራ ሰው ነው። ነገር ግን ዘውዲቱ ሆስፒታል በዚያ ስም የሚጠራ ሰው በነሱ ተቋም እንዳልነበረ ነው የገለጹልን።

¹⁷ ዘገባውን በማስተባበል ላይ ፈጣን ምላሽ እንዳልሰጠን መናገር እችላለሁ። በርግጥ ወደ ሚዲያ ከመቅረብ በፊት ተገቢውን መረጃ መሰብሰብ የሚያስፈልግ ቢሆንም፣ በመሀል ሐሰተኛው ወሬ እንዲላመት ግን እድል ሰጥቶታል። ይህም ከቀውሱ የማገገሚያውን ጊዜ አራዝሞታል።

4.3.4. Assessment of the Crisis threat using SCCT

According to SCCT, the first step for companies to assess the crisis threat should start with identifying the crisis type. Thus, both data types, generated through the in-depth interview and relevant documents indicate that the crisis type was a rumor, (“false and damaging information about an organization is being circulated”) in the victim cluster (see table 2.3).

The next step that follows the identification of the crisis type is to see whether the company has a similar crisis history and a negative or an unfavorable prior relational reputation with stakeholders. Based on findings described earlier, MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C appeared to have no significant crisis history that was similar to that of Mirinda crisis, which characteristically attributed with quality and safety of the product. Similarly, the findings of the company relationship with its stakeholders also indicate that company had a moderate relationship prior to the Mirinda crisis with its publics.

As depicted in Table 3 (refer chapter two), the SCCT has set of recommendations as crisis response strategies for each type of crisis. Accordingly, as a primary crisis response strategy, the theory proposes three basic response strategies: *Deny crisis response strategy*, *Diminish crisis response strategy* and *Rebuild crisis response strategy*. Among these crisis response strategies, the company applied the deny crisis response strategy for the Mirinda crisis. In this case, the company followed consistently the prescription of the SCCT, as the deny crisis response strategy is advisable for victim type of crisis.

Actually, within the deny crisis response strategy, the SCCT also prescribe three basic options that help the company to minimize its responsibility for a crisis and lessen the reputational risk. First, *Attack the accuser*, which is to confront the person or group claiming something is wrong with the company. Second, *Denial* refers to crisis asserting that there is no crisis. And Third, *Scapegoat*, to blame some person or group outside of the company for the crisis. Accordingly, during the Mirinda crisis the company employed two strategies; attack the accuser and scapegoat by avoiding the denial strategy that asserts there is no crisis (refer Table 3 in chapter two).

The two crisis response strategies, *Attack the accuser* and *Scapegoat* are particularly evident in the acting spokesperson interview with Tadius Addis radio program at Sheger 102.1 Fm

radio station¹⁸ (Lemma, 2016). On this interview, the spokesperson was confronted with the accusers as they are fabricating hoax to attack the reputation of the brand. Furthermore, the *scapegoat* strategy was also reflected in a letter sent to distributors and consumers by which the company blamed others for instigating a hoax towards the company's popular brand.

An individual recently, without any evidence or actual occurrence spread false news damaging the goodwill of our best Mirinda¹⁹

As a supplement crisis response strategy, SCCT also recommends secondary crisis response strategies or supplemental strategies called *Bolstering crisis response strategies*. Within this, there are three crisis response options: *the reminder strategy*, to tell stakeholders about the past good works that the company did. *Integration strategy* is praising stakeholders and reminding them the past good works that the company did. Furthermore, the *Victimage strategy* is used to remind stakeholders that the company is a victim of the crisis (refer Table 3 in chapter 2).

In this respect, archive documents showed that the company did not exhaustively employ the supplemental strategies. Particularly, as the company had positive prior-relationship with its stakeholder, it was possible to exploit the advantage of accommodating bolstering crisis response strategy into its crisis response efforts.

Nevertheless, although the company did not incorporate the bolstering strategies as expected, it is actually possible to mention some attempts to use the strategies. For instance, as a *remind strategy*, during an interview with Tadias Addis radio program, the spokesperson tried to explain the contribution of the company on several social responsibilities (Lemma, 2016). Furthermore, the letter that was written for stakeholders on June 14, 2016, manifests the attempt to use *integration strategy*.

We would like to deliver our heartfelt appreciation for lasting long as loyal consumers by distributing and utilizing the Pepsi- Cola products for many years²⁰

Comparing the three strategies of *Bolstering*, the company emphasized on *Victimage strategy* than the two strategies. In all data, which this research dealt, it is observable the company pay

¹⁸ Sheger FM 102.1 is the first private radio station in Ethiopia

¹⁹ Taken from a letter written on June 14, 2016, addressing distributors and consumers, see appendix

²⁰ Taken from a letter written on June 14, 2016, addressing distributors and consumers, see appendix.

much attention to show stakeholders that the company is a victim of the crisis. However, there seems to be no effort to integrate the past good work of the company with praising the stakeholders to employ the integration strategy for effective crisis response.

Table 7: Reputational threat, MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C crisis response strategy and SCCT recommendation

Reputational Threat	MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C Crisis response	SCCT Recommendation
Weak attribution of crisis response = Mild reputational threat	<p>Deny CRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attack the accuser • Scapegoat <p>Bolstering CRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminding • Victimage 	<p>Deny CRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attack the accuser • Denial • Scapegoat <p>Bolstering CRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminding • Victimage • Integration

The above table is to summarize the discussion on the crisis response strategy of MOHA Soft Drinks Industry for Mirinda crisis and to see how likely the effort matches with the SCCT recommendation. Accordingly, the table shows that the company’s response strategy matched with what the theory recommends.

4.4. Assessing the post crisis phase activities

Scholars advice crisis managers not to feel that they have completed their work when the crisis assumed resolved. At the post-crisis phase, companies are expected to perform some

major tasks. Evaluating the crisis response effort, monitoring about the crisis situations and fulfilling the promises given for stakeholders are some of the principal duties for companies at the post-crisis phase (Coombs, 2007). In this respect, the main objective of this section is to look at the post-crisis efforts of MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C.

Regarding to know what lessons were taken from the Mirinda crisis, key informants expressed that the scenario really awakens them on the need of working on prevention and preparation of crisis.

The main lesson we learned from the Mirinda crisis was the need to strengthen our capacity of prevention and responding to a crisis. Immediately after we recovered from the crisis, a meeting was held at the head office with all top-level management staffs to discuss what we can do in the future to strengthen our crisis prevention capacity. Finally, we established an ad-hoc committee to identify core activities but currently, the committee is not active enough (II-B, 13/04/18)²¹.

Concerning evaluating the crisis response, key interviewee at Teklehaimanot and Nifas Silk informed that their plant had made a survey among customers during the post-crisis phase with the intention of assessing the existing perception towards the brand. However, as informants disclosed there was no any effort to interpret the data to have a meaning for assessing the performance of the crisis response.

In this regard, the findings do not agree with scholars like Mitroff and Coomb who believe the post-crisis evaluation should target on evaluating the performances of the crisis response activity including assessment of the crisis team (Coombs, 2007) and (Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001).

Similar with, the performance evaluation, monitoring activities is also one of the main tasks of post-crisis phase. Through monitoring, companies would be able to investigate several sources, including the media to see whether the crisis perception among stakeholders is

²¹ የሚረገጽ ቀውስ ድርጅታችን የቀውስ ዝግጅትና መከላከል ስራ እንደሚያስፈልግና መጠናከርም እንዳለበት አስተምሮን አልፏል። ከቀውሱ እንዳገገምን ወዲያው በዋናው መስርያ ቤት የአመራሮች ስብሰባ አድርገን ወደ ፊት ቀውስን ለመከላከል ምን ማድረግ አለብን በሚለው ላይ ተወያይተን ነበር። ለዚህ ተግባር ኮሚቴ አቋቁመን የነበረ ቢሆንም በአሁኑ ሰዓት ግን ኮሚቴው እንደታሰበው እየተንቀሳቀሰ አይደለም።

changed. In addition to this, as Coombs noted, monitoring is also essential to update stakeholders with the necessary information so as to strengthen the reputation repairing process (Coombs, 2007). Concerning this, IIC believed that the lack of professionalization is the obstacle to perform such activities.

The main problem is we do not have professionals or special units that perform media monitoring activities. For instance, the absence of communication or public relation department stands as a challenge for the company to perform media monitoring activity (II-C, 24/04/18)²²

As explained above, post-crisis phase is a time to deliver promises made to stakeholders during the crisis response phase. As scholars argue, during the crisis response period, if they cannot deliver, companies should not have to promise stakeholders. In this respect, findings indicated that the company had given at least two promises through its primary spokesperson on media. The first promise was the following:

The company has found evidence to identify the source of the hoax. We can even find out they have a similar history to blackmail the goodwill of others. We are preparing to take the case to court for legal action (Lemma, 2016).

In spite of promising stakeholders to take the case to the court, the company did not follow through with its promises. During the in-depth interview, II-A argued the following.

It was possible to take the case into court, but we feared that it could rearise the crisis. Thus, we then focused to meet the increasing demand (II-A, 18/04/18)²³

In addition, the company also promised the following through its spokesperson on an interview on Bsrat FM radio station:

We informed our franchiser, Pepsi Cola International, about the issue raised on the safety of the product. Now we are expecting their statement. We will inform the public immediately after we receive their say (Lemma, 2016).

²² የሚዲያ ክትትል ስራን ለመስራት የሚያስችል ባለሙያም ሆነ ለዚህ የተደራጀ ክፍል አለመኖሩ ነው ችግሩ። በተለይ የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ወይም የኮሚዩኒኬሽን ክፍል አለመኖሩ ይህን ስራ ለመስራት እንቅፋት ነው።

²³ ጉዳዩን ወደ ሕግ መውሰድ ይቻል የነበረ ቢሆንም ጉዳዩ እንደ አዲስ እንዳያገረሽ ስለሰጋን ነበር የተውነው። እናም በወቅቱ እየጨመረ የመጣውን ፍላጎት ወደ ሚሟላት ስራ ነበር ያተኮርነው።

Again all informants believed that this was not also delivered as promised. These findings are against the scholars' recommendation that emphasis on following the principle of delivering what it is promised.

4.5. Summary of Main Findings

Throughout this study, the Mirinda crisis has been examined with the objective of assessing how crisis communication strategies can maintain the reputational assets. In order to achieve this, three basic research questions were raised with a specific emphasis on the three phases of crisis: pre-crisis, crisis response and post-crisis. This section is therefore to summarize the main findings of the study that is generated through qualitative research approach.

To address the first research question, the study generated relevant data on the understanding and efforts of pre-crisis activities. As explained earlier, at the pre-crisis phase, companies are expected to pay attention to key tasks that prevent and prepare them for crisis situations. Among these tasks, the research, in particular, focused and explored the company's crisis communication plan, crisis time spokesperson, efforts to detect risk signals and the recalling capacities.

To begin with, the findings of crisis communication plan revealed that the company had a pro-active plan even before the Mirinda crisis, which could enable to serve as a guideline for dealing with the crisis. However, the study finds out that during Mirinda crisis, the plan was unseen by the company and managers were not seem to follow the procedures articulated on the plan.

Yet, as many of the informants expressed, the company appears to devote considerable attention to a document named *Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)* than the crisis communication plan. This document is more of a technical specification to control physical, chemical and biological hazards during the whole production process to maintain the safety and quality of the products. As findings indicate, the company believes that this document would have significance in preventing a crisis, particularly for crisis types related to the safety and quality of the product.

As previously stated, detecting warning signals through scanning the internal and external environment is among the basic tasks of pre-crisis phase so as to assist the activities of prevention and preparation of crisis. In this regard, the data revealed that during the Mirinda

crisis and even at present, the company does not have a crisis-sensing mechanism or a systematic means of collecting crisis risk information. In this respect, the company perception and understanding about signal detection seems to be limited only to assess the market situation using its sales representatives mainly to receive comments and feedbacks. Yet, efforts to identify and collect crisis risk information through media monitoring and other mechanisms have never been undertaken.

Crisis communication scholars advise food-producing companies, in particular, to have a strong recalling capacity. Hence, this study endeavored to study the recalling aspect of the company. In this regard, findings showed that the company has a proactive recall guideline, which enables to remove products with defects from the market and warehouse. Furthermore, the company is performing an exercise called *Mock recall* twice a year. In this exercise, the company shall inform suddenly its marketing and sales crew to collect products with a specific batch number from the market. As results indicated, the main objective of this exercise is to boost the recalling capacity of the company when the real recall is needed.

Scholars noted that at the pre-crisis phase companies should nominate a crisis time spokesperson to serve as the mouth of the company. Regarding this, the company's crisis communication plan clearly stated that the Human Resource Manager should act as a crisis time spokesperson. However, findings showed that during the Mirinda crisis, the Human Resource Manager did not serve as a spokesperson. Rather the management assigned new spokesperson reversing the provision of the document to assign the head of the Marketing department as a new spokesperson. Thereby, the study revealed that the criteria of the company to select its crisis time spokesperson is merely to follow the type of the crisis than emphasizing on efficiency whether the spokesperson received a special media training to deal efficiently with media.

Concerning the performance of the Mirinda crisis spokesperson, all key informants agreed that the messages for media were consistent and accurate. In relation to this, the radio interviews with the spokesperson aired during the Mirinda crisis also show that he tried to give an answer for all questions and avoid saying "No comment", which actually sounds as hiding something from the public.

The second research question of the study attempted to answer the crisis response efforts of the company after the Mirinda crisis. The main objective of this part of the study was to

scrutinize how the crisis response efforts help the company to minimize the reputational damage.

To assess the perception of the stakeholders for the crisis, the research used Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) as a framework of the study. In this section, much emphasis was given to assess the effectiveness of the crisis response strategies to minimize the responsibility for a crisis. In doing so, first, the study listed all the relevant actors or stakeholders that were involved during the Mirinda crisis, and sort all the stakeholders into categories of primary, secondary and additional stakeholders, based on the level of their impact on the situation. This effort enables the study to have results on what roles could stakeholders play during crisis situations.

According to SCCT, to assess the perceived organizational responsibility for the crisis, the procedure should begin with identifying the type of the crisis. Thus, based on the stakeholder analysis the crisis type has been identified as a “rumor” type of crisis. In addition, the study also noted the level of the reputational threat was to be a mild reputational risk from the Mirinda crisis (refer Table 6).

In an effort to assess whether there were intensifying factors, particularly the similar past crisis history and unfavorable prior relational reputation, findings showed that the company did not have a similar crisis related with the safety and quality of the product for Mirinda crisis. In addition, results of the study indicated that the company has a favorable reputational relation with its stakeholders before the crisis event. Therefore, these findings indicated that the Mirinda crisis did not seem to have intensifying factors.

To examine the initial crisis response of the company, the study also tried to examine the steps and procedures that were followed by the company to respond to the crisis. Hence, findings showed that the company presented on media after securing relevant documents that help to defend the company. In addition, concerning communicating its stakeholders quickly, findings showed that the company disseminates information to the media within 72 hours.

The third research question, which the research anticipated to answer, was the post-crisis activities of the company. Compared with the pre-crisis phase and crisis response efforts, one can conclude from the findings that the post-crisis phase efforts of the company were poor in its performance. At this phase, the company did not even deliver what it has been promised during the crisis time for the stakeholders. In addition, when we look the activities of

performance evaluation, findings indicated that the company did not exert effort to evaluate the crisis response activities, which actually could help the company to learn for future. Moreover, results also show that the company did not undertake monitoring activities to continue the investigation or providing necessary updated information to its stakeholders.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

As explained in the previous chapters, when a crisis hit a company it could threaten its several aspects, and sometimes it could even challenge its sustainability. Currently, it is observable that the Ethiopian companies are also passing through a recurring crisis situations. This particularly tends to increase with the coming of new technologies, particularly the social media and other many information technology platforms. As it is mentioned in the statement of the problem in chapter one, a round of negative messages on such platforms appearing to challenge companies and inflict the reputational asset by threatening their smooth relationship with stakeholders.

The purpose of this study was to examine how the crisis communication strategies can help companies to protect their reputational asset. In doing so, an actual case of Mirinda crisis at MOHA Soft Drinks S.C was selected to conduct this research. This company is one of the few biggest local corporate companies to have more than eight thousand staffs and affiliated with the international company called Pepsi Cola International. Hence, taking this company, and the recent Mirinda crisis as a case, the research strives to give highlight about the current local companies' perception towards crisis and how likely they are employing scientific approaches to deal with crisis situations.

With the assumption of crisis communication efforts to start at the pre-crisis phase and to proceed even after the crisis assumed to be solved, the following three research questions were designed to address the three phases of crisis with special emphasis to Mirinda crisis.

(RQ1) were crisis prevention and preparation efforts available at the company that enables to protect the reputational asset? (RQ2) What crisis response strategies employed to maintain the reputation of the company as well as its brands? (RQ3) What post-crisis efforts did the company make after the crisis assumed resolved?

In order to examine the questions, various literatures were critically reviewed to look the data within the lens of what scholars and researches demonstrate. Besides, while the study was approached qualitatively, in-depth interview with key informants and document review were employed with the aim of generating primary and secondary data.

To address the crisis prevention and preparation endeavors, the study attempted to assess the presence of major pre-crisis tasks at the company. Hence, the availability of crisis communication plan, the effort of detecting signals and views on the crisis time spokesperson, and the recalling capacity of the company were assessed and analyzed. In this respect, the overall findings uncovered that the crisis prevention and the preparation of the company is yet needs further works.

For instance, regarding the availability of crisis communication plan, the study finds out that though the company has a clear written document, it was not in use as a guideline during the Mirinda crisis. Moreover, when we look the data on the company's capacity and efforts towards detecting warning signals at its internal and external environment, a lot of work is yet expected. Also regarding the issue of selecting crisis time spokesperson and other related works, it appears to disagree with literature and scholars' recommendations. For instance, while scholars believe crisis time spokesperson should receive special media training, the company did not appear with such specialized spokesperson, rather eloquence and persuasive manners were the criteria to select crisis time spokesperson. Therefore, in general, except the strong recalling capacity of the company, the findings and analysis revealed that the company is not yet to follow the standard and scientific approaches for prevention and preparation of crisis events.

Regarding the crisis response efforts, it is actually possible to argue that the company did manage the Mirinda crisis to minimize the responsibility and the reputational threat from the crisis. However, in my view, this did not happen due to the scientific ways of responding to the crisis, rather I can argue that the crisis type characteristically helped the company to receive mild reputational threat. According to SCCT if the crisis type is assumed or perceived as a "hoax" by the stakeholders, it would only put a little challenge for companies, because they would not be blamed as a cause to the crisis. In addition to that, the absence of intensifying factors such as the absence of similar past crisis history and the positive reputational relation indeed helped the company to recover easily from the Mirinda crisis. However, in the future, if crisis with maximum attribution of responsibility is to happen, the company might not be able to handle the crisis with such traditional approach.

In this study, some key tasks of post-crisis activities were also assessed to examine the effectiveness of the post-crisis phase of the company in the aftermath of the Mirinda crisis. Hence, the research attempt to explore whether the company evaluated its crisis response

efforts and continue investigating the crisis through monitoring activities. However, similar to that of the pre-crisis efforts findings showed that such activities were disregarded by the company that could actually be inferred as unable to learn from the event.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are forwarded.

- Overall, as the findings of the study revealed, except the recalling activities, other crisis prevention and preparation activities of the company does not seem to agree with the scientific approaches. The company is not yet identifying the main pre-crisis tasks to have a strong preparation and prevention for a crisis. Thus, clear knowledge and understanding about key pre-crisis activities such as crisis communication plan, detecting signals, and other related duties should be grasped for what benefit they stand.
- While crisis communication is one of among the principal crisis management set of activities, such activities need to have a designated body to manage all the crisis communication efforts. Hence, the company must give due consideration to establish and include Public Relations department within its structure.
- As the research revealed, though the company has a clear proactive crisis communication plan, the company, however, fail to use it during the crisis time. Thus, the crisis communication plan has to be in place as a guideline for effective crisis activities.
- As the findings indicated, each plant seems to have their own crisis communication plan, which is, in fact, to be admired as a quality. Nevertheless, at the head office, there should be also a crisis communication plan that centralizes and coordinate all segments of the company's crisis communication efforts. This kind of crisis communication would particularly help for crisis events that target the whole operation of the company.
- As findings disclosed, the company has a document named HASSP, which helps to control the physical, biological and chemical hazards during the production processes. Indeed, this would have a vital role to a prevent crisis, which particularly emanates from the quality and safety of products. However, while the cause for crisis cannot always be related with the safety and quality of products, integrating both the crisis

communication plan and the HACCP document will help to strengthen the prevention and preparation for various kinds of crisis.

- The company should work to enhance a mutual relationship with its stakeholders. Particularly, as part of pre-crisis phase activity, inviting different parts of the society to visit the production process at plants would enable the company to maintain a smooth relationship and boost the confidence of customers on the safety and quality of the product. This would help to minimize crisis responsibility specifically for crisis type related to the safety of products.
- From the findings, it is possible to conclude the crisis team, which was listed on the crisis communication plan were appeared to have no role during the Mirinda crisis. Hence, the company at the head office level should organize a legitimate crisis management team who would be responsible to deal with crisis time activities.
- As previously mentioned, the company should establish public relations department for meaningful and effective strategic crisis communication efforts. One of the main tasks, which this department is anticipated to work, is strengthening the signal detection through effective media monitoring to identify crisis information or potential issues. In doing so, establishing public relations department is again advisable.
- Within the crisis management team, a spokesperson for special media training should be assigned to serve as a principal media contact and facilitator.
- During the time of the research, findings revealed that the company is recently to launch an internet-based communication. Hence, it is recommendable to exploit this opportunity as a tool for crisis communication activities. For instance, it is possible to use it as a communication channel to scan the internal environment to identify potential risks.
- After the Mirinda crisis passed, the company did not seem to carry out relevant post-crisis activities. Thus, for the future, the company needs to understand efforts of continuing follow-up communications, evaluating the crisis response performance and investigating a crisis to update its stakeholders. Moreover, the company should work to fulfill and deliver promises, which more often made by companies during the crisis time.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Instruments

Interview Guide

Interview Guide (with selected respondents from MOHA Soft drinks Industry S.C)

1. What crisis prevention and preparation strategies were available before the crisis hit Mirinda happened?
2. What Crisis response strategies and tools employed during the crisis time?
3. How the company did engage its stakeholders on the efforts of crisis response?
4. How the crisis response was worthy to maintain the relationship with its stakeholders and the reputation in particular?
5. What did the company do after the crisis had been assumed resolved?
6. How did the company communicate with stakeholders about the crisis?
7. How the stakeholders viewed the crisis?
8. Who appears to be responsible for the crisis in the eyes of the stakeholders?

ለሞሐ የለስላሳ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ ኢ.ማ. የተመረጡ አመራሮች ጋር ለሚደረግ ቃለ ምልልስ የተዘጋጁ ጥያቄዎች

1. የሚሪንዳ ቀውስ ከመከሰቱ በፊት ድርጅቱ ቀውስን ለመከላከል ብሎም ለመቆጣጠር የሚያስችሉ ስራዎችን ያከናውን ነበር?
2. የሚሪንዳ ቀውስ ከተከሰተ በኋላ ቀውሱን ለመመከት ድርጅቱ የተጠቀመው ስልት ምን ነበር?
3. ቀውሱ በመመከት ስራ ላይ ድርጅቱ ባለድርሻ አካላትን በምን መልኩ አሳተፈ?
4. ቀውሱ ከተከሰተ በኋላ ድርጅቱ ከችግሩ ለመውጣት ያደረገው እንቅስቃሴ የድርጅቱን በጎ ስም በመመለሱ ረገድ እንዲሁም ከባለድርሻ አካላት ጋር የነበረውን ግንኙነት ወደ መልካም ሊመልስ የሚችል ነበር ብለው ያምናሉ?
5. የቀውሱ ጊዜ ካለፈ በኋላ በነበሩት ጊዜያት ድርጅቱ ምን ምን ተግባራትን ያከናውን ነበር?
6. ቀውሱን በሚመለከት ከባለድርሻ አካላት ጋር የነበረው የመረጃ ልውውጥ ምን ይመስል ነበር?
7. ባለድርሻ አካላት ቀውሱን የተረዱበት መንገድ ምን ይመስል ነበር?
8. ባለድርሻ አካላቱ ለቀውሱ ማንን ነበር ተጠያቂ ያደርጉ የነበሩት?

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (Theory test question with selected respondents from MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C)

1. What was the cause of the crisis?
2. Do you think the company was victim? In what way?
3. Who was responsible for the crisis?
4. Were other parties involved in the crisis? If so, what role did they play?
5. Were there any injuries, loss of life, or financial hardship incurred by the parties?

Intensifying factors

1. Did the company have a history of similar crisis or a negative relationship with its stakeholders

Selecting a crisis response strategy

1. What crisis response strategies conducted in order to minimize reputational damage from the crisis?
2. What efforts were made to enable the internal stakeholders receive key communication prior to external audiences

ጥናቱን በ Situational Crisis Communication Theory ማዕቀፍ ውስጥ ለመረዳት እንዲያስችሉ ነሞህ የለስላሳ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ አ.ማ. የተመረጡ አመራሮች ጋር ለሚደረግ ቃለ ምልልስ የተዘጋጁ ጥያቄዎች

1. የቀውሱ መንስኤ ምን ነበር?
2. ድርጅቱ ለቀውሱ ተጠቂ የሚሆንበት መንገድ ነበር?
3. ቀውሱን የፈጠረውና ተጠያቂው ማን ነው ይላሉ?
4. በቀውሱ ላይ እጃቸው አለበት ብላችሁ የምታስቡት አካል ነበር? ከነበረሰ ሚናቸው ምን ነበር?
5. በቀውሱ ሳቢያ የተከሰተ የአካል ጉዳት፣ የፋይናንስ ችግር አልያም የጠፋ የሰው ሕይወት ነበር?

የቀውስ አባባሽ ሁኔታዎችን በተመለከተ

1. ድርጅቱ ከዚህ ቀደም ተመሳሳይ ምክንያት ባለው ቀውስ ውስጥ ገብቶ ነበር? ከባለድርሻ አካላት ጋር በሻከረ ሁኔታ ውስጥስ አልፎ ያውቃል?

ቀውሱን ለመመከት ስለተመረጡ ዘዴዎች

1. የድርጅትን መልካም ስም ለመመለስ ያለመ ቀውስን የመመከት ዘዴ ከነበረ ቢገልፁልኝ?
2. የድርጅቱ ሰራተኞች ከሌላ አካላት በተለየ ስለ ቀውሱ መረጃ እንዲደረሳቸው የተደረገው ጥረት ምን ይመስል ነበር?

Interview guide (with selected stakeholders of MOHA Soft Drinks Industry S.C)

1. Who appears to be responsible for the crisis?
2. How the crisis affected the business?
3. How the crisis response strategies help the brand to recover its reputation?

ለሞሐ የለስላሳ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ አ.ማ የተመረጡ ባለድርሻ አካላት ጋር ለሚደረግ ምልልስ የተዘጋጁ ጥያቄዎች

1. በርስዎ እይታ ለቀውሱ ተጠያቂ የሚያደርጉት አካል ማንን ነበር?
2. ቀውሱ በስራዎ ላይ ያስከተለብዎት ችግር ምን ይመስል ነበር?
3. ቀውሱን ለመመከት የተሰራው ስራ የምርቱን በጎ ስም ለመመለስ አግዟል ይላሉ?

Appendix 2: Letters



ሞሐ
MOHA

የለስላሳ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ አ.ማ.
ዋና መስሪያ ቤት
Soft Drinks Industry S.C.
HEAD OFFICE



June 14, 2016

To: Our Dear Distributors & Consumers

We would like to deliver our heart-felt appreciation for lasting this long as loyal customers by distributing and utilizing the Pepsi-Cola products for many years. An individual recently, without any evidence or actual occurrence spread false news damaging the good will of **our best Mirinda** through the Face book website. Following this baseless rumor circulating on the internet, we have confirmed that there have been no deaths or any sicknesses associated with the consumption of our Mirinda product by personally contacting Zewditu hospital as well as the Awassa health department and health station where the cases were cited to have originated from.

The Officials of these institutions have confirmed that they are not aware of such a case having ever happened. Considering this false rumor intentionally designed to damage our company, we would like to assure our consumers and distributors that our company's top priority is to ensure that the safety and quality of our products meet rigorous domestic and international food safety standards. Therefore, we kindly ask that you continue to use our products without any hesitation.



☎ 251-11-661 4655 Fax: 251-11-661 5087 e-mail: moha@ethionet.et ✉ 1270

ከሆዋሳ ሚኒስቴር ፕሮግራም ኮሚቴ ጋር

ሐዋሳ

ጉዳዩ:- መረጃ ስለመስጠት ይሆናል:-

ከፍተኛነት በቀን 08/06/2016 በቁጥር አ/ሚ/ፕ/483/2016 በተሳፈ ደብዳቤ የሞሐ ስለላሳ መጠባበቅ
 ኢ/አ/ማህር ምርት የሆነውን ሚሪንዳ የጠቡ 12 ሰዎች ለህልደተ ህይወት መዳጋቸውንና ከሞተት
 ዉስጥም ፋቱ ሰዎች ከሐዋሳ ጤና ማዕከል እንደሆነ ተጠቅሶ በተለያዩ ማህበራዊ ሚዲያዎች
 የተለቀቀውን መረጃ በተመለከተ በከተማችን ዉስጥ ሐዋሳ ጤና ማዕከል የሚባል ተቋም መኖር
 ያለመናሩን እንዲሁም የድርጅቱ ምርት የሆነውን ሚሪንዳ በመጠባቸው ምክንያት የሞቱ ሰዎች
 ካሉና ከሞቱ ሰዎች ላይ በተወሰደ የደም ናሙና ምርመራ የተረጋገጠ ዉጤት ካለ አስፈላጊዉ
 ማጣራት ተደርጎ በጽሑፍ እንዲገለጽላቸው መጠየቃቸው ይታወሳል።

በዚህ መሠረት የሚሪንዳ ምርትን አስመልክቶ በዓሁት ወቅት በተለያዩ ማህበራዊ ሚዲያዎች
 የተለቀቀውን መረጃ በተመለከተ የጤና መምሪያዉ የጤናና ጤና ነክ ድንገተኛ አደጋዎች ትኝት ምላሽ
 ዋና የስራ ሂደት እንዲሁም የጤናና ጤና ነክ አገልግሎቶችና ግብዓቶች ጥራት ቁጥጥር ዋና የስራ
 ሂደት እስካሁን ድረስ ባካሄዱት ማጣራት በከተማችን የሚሪንዳ ምርት በመጠባቸው ምክንያት
 የሞቱና በምርቱ ላይ ምርመራ ለማድረግ የተወሰደ የደም ናሙና ያለመናሩን እንዲሁም በከተማችን
 "ሐዋሳ የጤና ማዕከል" የሚባል የህክምና ተቋም የሌላ መሆኑን እንገልጻለን።

የጤና አገልግሎትና ግብዓት ለሁሉም!

 ደ.ጊ.ሰ. ዳኛ
 Desta Dogiso Dagne
 Head, Hawassa City
 Health Department

ግልጻ፡-

ለመምሪያችን:-

- ጳ ስጋላፊ ጽ/ቤት
- ጳ ስጤናና ጤና ነ/አ/ግ/ጥ/ቁ/ዋና የስራ ሂደት
- ጳ ስጤናና ጤና ነ/ድ/አ/ቅ/ም/ዋና የስራ ሂደት
- ጳ ለበሽታ መከላከልና ጤናን የማጎልበት ዋና ስራ ሂደት



በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ጤና ቢሮ
 የዘጠኝቱ መታሰቢያ ሆስፒታል
 ADDIS ABABA CITY ADMINISTRATION HEALTH BUREAU
 ZEWUDITU MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



ቁጥር: 111/11/2018/1551
 ዕለት: 09/09/2018
 ተ: 111/11/2018

→ ለጥሩ የሰላሳ መጠቀሚያ አገልግሎት አገልግሎት
 አዲስ አበባ

ጉዳይ:- መረጃ መስጠት ይመለከታል።

ግንቦት 29 ቀን 2008 ዓ.ም በተለያዩ ማረጋገጫዎች የሆሰፒታሉን ስም በመጥቀስ የሚረጋገጥ ምርት ጠጥተው ህ ስምን ለማረጋገጥ ማስተካከልን በመግለጽ የተገለጸው ሁኔታ ተከታታይ መሆኑን አስመዘኑን እንደናረጋግጥላቸው በቀን 30/09/2008 ዓ.ም በቁጥር/MOHA-PROD/15/08/16 በተገፈ ደብዳቤ ተጠይቋል።

በዚህም መሰረት ከላይ በተጠቀሰው ቀን በሆሰፒታላችን ጠላት ማረጋገጫ ጠጥተው ለመታዘንም ጠጥተው የታከሙም ሆነ የጥቁ ህመምተኞች የሌላ ከመሆናቸው በላይ የተጠቀሰው ዶ/ር ማርያም አህመድ የተባሉ ሀኪም በሆሰፒታላችን ስማቸው የሌለ መሆኑን አግልጧል። እንዲህ ዓይነቱ ሁኔታ አግባብነት የሌለው መሆኑን ቁጥጥር አንገልጻለን።

በአዲስ አበባ በአዲስ መንገድ



- ግልጻዎች፡
- ለሰራ አስኪያጅ
 - ለሚዲያል ዳይሬክተር
 - ለህክምና አገልግሎት አሰጣፍ ጥናት የሰራ ገደብ
 - ለሰው ሀብት አስተዳደር ደ/ሰ/ሀ/ደ/ት
- የዘጠኝቱ መታሰቢያ ሆስፒታል

መልስ ዘንጭ ገልጻለሁ የሚረጋገጡ ላት መሆኑን
 አዲስ አበባ ደብዳቤ ሰጠው በትዕዛዝ ተጠቅሞ ሰጠሁ።
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 መልስ ለጸባይ ገናን ቁጥር ይጠቀሙ

	Company Name	MOHA SOFT DRINKS INDUSTRY S.C ላወላሳ ሺሮኔንትህ ፎላንት	Document No	FO -AMP-E024
	Revision #0	Document Title	Letter format	Page No 1 of 1

Ref No: አሚፕ/482/2008

Date: ሰኔ 01, 2008

ለተከበራችሁ የፔፕሲ ካላ ምርቶች ተጠቃሚዎችና ደንበኞች በሙሉ

ከሁሉም አስቀድመን ለረጅም ዓመታት የፔፕሲ ካላ ምርቶችን ለደንበኞች በማከፋፈልና በመጠቀም ከኛ ጋር በታማኝነት ቋሚ ደንበኛ በመሆን በመዝለቃችሁ ከፍተኛ ምስጋናችንን እናቀርባለን። በመቀጠልም ሰሞኑን በፌስ ቡክ ድረ-ገጽ እንድ ተራ ጸሐፊ ያለምንም ተጨባጭ ማስረጃና ምንም የተፈጠረ ነገር ሳይኖር በተጠቃሚዉ ዘንድ መልካም ስም ያተረፈውንና ተወዳጁን የሚሪንዳ ምርታችንን ስም ለማጉደፍ የውሸት ወሬ ነዝተዋል። ይህ የሐሰት መረጃ በሐዋሳ ጤና መምሪያና ጤና ጣቢያዎች እንዲሁም ችግሩ ተከስተዋል በተባለው የዘውዲቱ ሆስፒታል ተገኝተን ባጣራነው መሠረት የሚሪንዳን ምርት በመጠቀም እንድም የታመመ ወይም የሞተ ሰው እንደሌለ አረጋግጠናል። የተቋሚቱ ኃላፊዎችም ምንም የሚያውቁት ነገር እንደሌለና በዚሁ ምክንያት የተከሰተ ነገር እንደሌለ ገልጸውልናል። በሆኑም ይህ የበሬ ወለደ ውሸት እና ተራ አሉባልታ የተለመደና ድርጅታችንን ለመጉዳት ሆን ተብሎ የተጠነሰሰ ሴራ መሆኑን አውቃችሁ ድርጅታችን ምንጊዜም ለደንበኞቹ ደህንነትና ለምርቱ ጥራት የሚጨነቅና በዓለም አቀፍ የምግብ ደህንነት መስፈርት መሰረት ምርቱን ለምርቶ ለተጠቃሚው የሚያከፋፍል መሆኑን በመረዳት ምርቱን ያለምንም ሥጋትና ጥርጣሬ እንድታከፋፍሉና እንድትጠቀሙ በአክብሮት እንገልጻለን።

ለበለጠ መረጃ

- > ስልክ ቁጥር
- የገበያና ሽያጭ መምሪያ ሃላፊ 0911821417
- የምግብ ደህንነትና የጥራት ቁጥጥር መምሪያ 0912033345
- የድርጅቱ ዋና ሥራ አስኪያጅ 0911741722

Tel:-251-462-20-38-81/29-50/31-62
Fax:-046-20-3898



Email: millenniummoha@yahoo.com

P.O. Box 285

TAP



የኢትዮጵያ ኮንስትራክሽን እንጨት፣ ብረታ ብረት፣ ሰሚንቶና የመሳሰሉት ሠ/ማኅበራት ኢንዱስትሪ ፌዴሬሽን
The Ethiopian Industrial Federation of Construction, Wood, Metal, Cement & Other Trade Unions

ክፍያው 0090/08
ሠ/ማኅበራት

16/10/2008
20/1789

አሁን ያለውን
የፍትህ ስልጠና
የፍትህ ስልጠና
የፍትህ ስልጠና

ቁጥር 24316/2.5/0122/2008

Ref. No.

ቀን 14/10/2008

Date

ገ.ገ.ገ
ገ.ገ.ገ

በፌዴሬሽኖችን ሥር ላሉት ማኅበራት በመሉ

አ/አ ባሉበት

ጉዳዩ፡- ከምግብና መጠጥ ኢንዱስትሪ ፌዴሬሽን በተገለፀልን መሠረት በ 8 ሺህ ሠራተኛ ላይ

የሥራ ዋስትና ጥያቄ እንድንታደግ ስለመጠየቅ

የምግብና መጠጥ የመሳሰሉት ሠ/ማ/ኢንዱስትሪ ፌዴሬሽን በቁጥር ምመት/159/08 በቀን 7/10/08 በተጻፈ ደብዳቤ በቅርቡ በሚሪንዳ ምርት ላይ ባልታወቁ ግለሰቦች በማህበራዊ ድረ ገፅ በአዋጥና በአ/አ 12 ሰዎች ሚሪንዳ ጠጥተው ሕይወታቸው አልፏል። በማለት በገለፁት እውነትነትና በቂ መረጃ የሌለውን የሐሰት ወራ በመንዛታቸው የ8ሺ ሠራተኛና በስራቸው ያሉትን ከ50ሺ በላይ ቤተሰብን የምርቱ ተሽጦ የሚተዳደረውን ኢትዮጵያዊ ሁሉ የመኖር ሕልውና ጥያቄ ውስጥ ከተዋል።

አጋራችን የሆነው የሞሐ ለስላሳ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ ሠራተኛ በሥራ ክፍሉ እንኳን ይህን የሚያህል የሰው ልጅ ሕይወት የሚያጠፋ መርዝ ሊቀምም ቀርቶ ለደንበኛ ተቆርቋሪነቱ የተሸረፈች ጠርመሱ የሚያሳድፍም አይደለም እሱም ሆነ መላው ሕብረተሰብ የለስላሳ መጠጥ ተጠቃሚነቱን ያውቃል።

ስለዚህ በፌዴሬሽኖችን ሥር ያላችሁት የማህበራችን አባላት የጉዳዩን የሐሰት ዘገባ መሆኑን አውቃችሁ እውነታውን እንድትገነዘቡ እየጠየቅን የምግብና መጠጥ ኢንዱስትሪ ፌዴሬሽን ያገኘውን የአ/አ/ክ/የዘውዲቱ ሆስፒታልና የሐዋሃ ከተማ ጤና መምሪያ መረጃ ኮፒ አያይዘናል።

ግልባጭ

- ለአሰማክ
 - ለ8ቱም ኢንዱስትሪ ፌዴሬሽኖች
 - ለሞሐ ለስላሳ መጠጦች ዋ/ሥ/አስፈጻሚ
 - ለሞሐ ለስላሳ መጠጦች ፋብሪካ የሠ/ማኅበሩ
- አዲስ አበባ



ከሠላምታ ጋር

ገገገ
ገገገ
ገገገ

THP

የምግብ የመጠጥ የትምባሆና የመሳሰሉት ሠራተኞች ማኅበራት ፌዴሬሽን



Federation of the Food, Beverages Tobacco and Allied Trade Unions

CEP 8/1668 8/10/2008

hitesu work 4/19/2008

Edo ofafer all plants manager FBT

*FC Ref. No. 90007P60/159/08

*? Date 7/10/08

hoy. f. y. v. i. e. s. o. c. f. t.

ለኢትዮጵያ ሠራተኛ ማህበራት ኮንፌዴሬሽን

አዲስ አበባ

ጉዳይ:- የአባል ሠራተኞቻችን የሥራ ዋስትና የሚፈታተን ተግባር ይመለከታል።

የሞሐ ለስላሳ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ ከሚያመርታቸው የምርት ዓይነቶች አንዱ የሚሪንዳ ምርት ላይ ማንነታቸው ያልታወቁ ግለሰቦች በፌስ ቡክ የአዲስ አበባና የአዋሳን ከተሞች ጠቅሰው ምርቱን በመጠጣታቸው በአዲስ አበባ በዘውዲቱ ሆስፒታል 8 ሰዎች በአዋሳ ጤና ማዕከል 4 ሰዎች በጠቅላላ 12 ሰዎች ሚሪንዳ ጠጥተው ህይወታቸው ማለፉን በመግለጽ ያስተላለፉት ከእውነት የራቀ ውሸትና ከተጠቀሱት ቦታዎች በተገኘው መረጃ ማረጋገጥ የተቻለውን በመግለጽ እንዲህ ያለ አጋጣሚ በዘውዲቱ ሆስፒታልም ሆነ ከነስሙ እንዲህ ያለ ጤና ማዕከል ያለመኖሩ በተገለጸበት አዋሳም ምንም ዓይነት የምርመራና የምርመራ ውጤት የተካሄደበት አጋጣሚ አለመኖሩ በተሳሳተ ደብዳቤዎች መረጋገጥ በጤና ኮፒ አያይዘው መ/ሠ/ማህበራቱ በአባሪነት ባቀረቧቸው መረጃዎች ለመረዳት የተቻለው እንዲህ ያለ ከእውነት የራቀ በከባኝነቱ ሠራተኞች የሥራ ዋስትና ከፍተኛ የስጋት ጥላ ያጠገ ድርጊት ሆን ተብሎ የተፈጸመ በመሆኑ ፌዴሬሽኑና ኢሠማክ ተገዢውን ሁሉ በማድረግ ምርቱ እንከን የሌለበት መሆኑ ለብዙሀን የኢትዮጵያ ሠራተኛ በመግለጽና በልዩ ልዩ ሁኔታ በማስተላለፍ ያህህ ከሚሆነው የከባኝነቱ ሠራተኛ ጎን እንድንቆም ጠይቀውናል።

በመሆኑም በነዚህ ድርጅቶች የሚገኘው ወደ ስምንት ሺህ የሚሆን ሠራተኛ እንዲህ ባለ ሀሰተኛ ወሬ የሥራ ዋስትናው ስጋት ላይ የሚወድቅበት ሁኔታ መኖር ስለሌለበት ለሠራተኛው ህብረተሰብ በምርቱ ላይ ምንም ዓይነት ብልሽት እንዳልተከሰተ በመገሰጽና በተለያዩ ሙንገድ ስግግራት ምርቱ ደረጃውና ጥራቱ የጠበቀ ምርት መሆኑ የማጣራትና የማረጋገጥ ሥልጣን ያልባቸው አካላት ያረጋገጡት መሆኑ ለመግለጽም እንዲመኙ የመረጃዎቹ ፎቶ ኮፒ አብረን ከዚህ ሽፌ ደብዳቤ ጋር አያይዘን መሰጠትን አዋጥን ይህ እኩይ ተግባር በፍጹም ሀሰት መሆኑን በማረጋገጥ የብዙሀን ሠራተኞች የሥራ ዋስትና እንዲታደግ አደራ አያልገን ግልጽ የተደረገላቸው እኛ ፈደረሽኖችም ለአባል ማህበራት በማስተላለፍ ተገዢ ድጋፍና ትብብር ታደርጉ ዘንድ በአክብሮት እንጠይቃለን።

አባሪ 3 ገጽ

ግልባጭ



- ለሞሐ ለስላሳ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ ዋና ሥ/አ/ስ/ፌዴሬሽን
- ለሞሐ ለስላሳ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ ለ ----- ፋብሪካ ሥ/አ
- ለሞሐ ለስላሳ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ ለ ----- ፋብሪካ መ/ሠ/ማ
- ለፀቱም አ/ፌዴሬሽኖች -----
- ለምመትዮሬ አዲት ኮሚቴ

JHP
ሮዕ 01329
13/10/2008



ቀን: ተመሪ/1308/2008
ቀን: 15/10/2008

- ለኢ.አ ሒልተን ኢንተርናሽናል ሆቴል መ/ሠ/ማ
- ለገዥ ሆቴል መ/ሠ/ማ
- ለኢትዮጵያ ሆቴል መ/ሠ/ማ
- ለገሎባል ሆቴል መ/ሠ/ማ
- ለድሪም ላይነር ሆቴል መ/ሠ/ማ
- ለራስ አምባ ሆቴል መ/ሠ/ማ
- ለብሔራዊ ሆቴል መ/ሠ/ማ
- ለዋቢ ሸባሌ ሆቴል መ/ሠ/ማ
- ለራስ ሆቴል መ/ሠ/ማ
- ለፍልውሃዎች አገልግሎት ድርጅት መ/ሠ/ማ
- አዲስ አበባ

① Full managers
Serate/panel
FZE

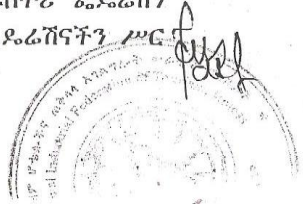
② ከገዥ ስም: 009018
ህገገዳዊ ቀን
Mmt
28/06/16

③ ማ. ዶ. ማ
ህገገዳዊ
28/06/16

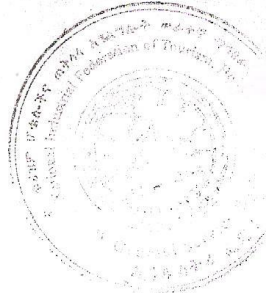
ጉዳዩ:- የትብብር ድጋፍን ይመለከታል

እንደሚታወቀው በሀገራችን ካሉት ከሰላላ መጠጥ ፋብሪካዎች አንዱ የጥሀ ለሰላላ መጠጫ ኢንዱስትሪ ኩባንያ አንዱ መሆኑ አይዘነጋም።

በዚህ ረገድ ኩባንያው ከሚያመርታቸው ምርቶች ውስጥ በተገልጋዩ /ከተጠቃሚው/ ከፍተኛ ተፈላጊ መጠጥ የሆነው የሚሪንዳ ምርት ሲሆን በዚህ ምርት ላይ ሀሰተኛ የሆነና በዚህ ሥራ ላይ የተሰማሩ 8 ሺህ ያህል ሠራተኞችን የሥራ ዋስትና አደጋ ላይ የሚጥል ሀሰተኛ ወራ በማሰራጨት / በመንዛት / መጠጡን የተጠቀሙ በኢ.አ 8፣ በሀዋሳ 4 በአጠቃላይ 12 ተጠቃሚዎች የጤና መታወክ እንደገጠማቸው የዘውዲቱ ሪፈራል ሆስፒታልና የሀዋሳ ጤና ማዕከልን በሀሰተኛ እማኝነት በመጥቀስ ፊስ ቡክን በመጠቀም በሀብረተሰቡ ውስጥ ድንጋጤ እንዲፈጠር መደረጉ አይዘነጋም። ይህንንም ዘገባ መነሻ በማድረግ የምግብ፣ መጠጥ፣ ትምህርትና የመሳሰሉት ኢንዱስትሪ ፌዴሬሽን በደብዳቤ ቁጥር መምት-የፌ/159/08 በ7/10/2008 በጸፈልን ደብዳቤ በፌዴሬሽናችን ሥር



ስለሆነም በእናንተ ማህበር ውስጥ የታቀፉ አባላትም ይሁን ጠቅላላ በተቋሙ ውስጥ ያሉ ሠራተኞች ይህንን ሀቅ በመገንዘብ የበኩላችሁን የዐረ- አሉባልታ ተግባራችሁን እንድትወጡና በሚሪንዳ ምርት ላይ አንድም እንከን የሌለ መሆኑን ለማንኛውም ተጠቃሚ ሁሉ እንድታሳውቁ ከአደራ ጭምር በመላው የከብንያችሁ ሠራተኞች ስም እየጠየቅን በቀጣይ እንዲህ ያለውን የአሉባልታ ተግባርን ለማምከንና እንቅስቃሴውን ለመግታት የምግብ፣ መጠጥ፣ ትምህርትና የመሳሰሉት ኢንዱስትሪ ፌዴሬሽን የሚያቀርብልን ማንኛውንም ጥያቄ በመቀበል የአጋርነት ድጋፍ ለመስጠት ዝግጁ መሆናችንን ለማረጋገጥ እንወዳለን።



“ከሠላምታ ጋር”
[Handwritten signature]

አስፋው አበበ
 Asfaw Abeto
 ፕሬዥደንት
 President

ግልባጭ

- > ለኢትዮጵያ ሠራተኛ ማህበራት ኮንፌዴሬሽን
 - > ለሞሀ ለስላሣ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ ዋና ስራ አስፈጻሚ
 - > ለምግብ፣ መጠጥ፣ ትምህርትና የመሳሰሉት ኢንዱስትሪ ፌዴሬሽን
 - > ለፌዴሬሽኑ ዋና ፀሐፊ
 - > ለፌዴሬሽኑ ኢንዱስትሪ ግንኙነት መምሪያ
 - > ለሞሀ ለስላሣ መጠጦች ኢንዱስትሪ መ/ሠ/ማህበር
- አዲስ አበባ**