

DEALING WITH NEGATIVE PUBLICITY: A CASE STUDY ON SULTAN'S DINE

Prepared by

Nowrin Ahmed

ID: 201011009

Supervised by

Shawkat Tanveer Rahman

Senior Lecturer

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Business Administration



17 December, 2023



Internship/Project Report Approval Form

Student Name: Nowrin Ahmed ID No. 201011009

Major: Marketing Year: 2023

Mobile Phone: +880 1939-797416 Email: nowrin.ahmed.bba@ulab.edu.bd

INTERNSHIP/PROJECT INFORMATION

Internship Organization: _____

Internship /Project Report Topic: Dealing with Negative Publicity: A Case Study on Sultan's Dine

Term (Tick one): ☐ Spring 2023 ☐ Summer 2023 ☒ Fall 2023

SUPERVISOR APPROVAL

(Tick One)

☒ Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐ Partial Re-write ☐ Full Re-write

Remarks (For Not Approved): _____

Signature: Shaukat Tanveer Rahman

Date: 17.12.2023

Name: Shaukat Tanveer Rahman

E-mail: shaukat.rahman@ulab.edu.bd

Phone: +880 1621-240000

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

1. I know that plagiarism means taking and using the ideas, writings, works or inventions of another as if they were one's own. I know that plagiarism not only includes verbatim copying, but also the extensive use of another person's ideas without proper acknowledgement (which includes the proper use of quotation marks). I know that plagiarism covers this sort of use of material found in textual sources and from the Internet.
2. I acknowledge and understand that plagiarism is wrong.
3. I understand that my research must be accurately referenced.
4. This assignment is my own work, or my group's own unique group assignment. I acknowledge that copying someone else's assignment, or part of it, is wrong, and that submitting identical work to others constitutes a form of plagiarism.
5. I have not allowed, nor will I in the future allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as their own work.

Name: NOWRIN AHMED (BLOCK LETTERS)

ULAB ID # 201011009

Signature: N. Ahmed

Date: 17.12.2023

Letter of Transmittal

17 December, 2023

To

Shawkat Tanveer Rahman

Senior Lecturer

ULAB School of Business

University of Liberal Bangladesh (ULAB)

688, Beribadh Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207

Subject: Submission of the project report (BUS 498).

Dear Sir,

With due respect, I would like to inform you that I have completed my project (BUS 498) on marketing strategies Sultan's Dine followed during the time when a rumor spread about their restaurant business. The title of the report is "Dealing with Negative Publicity: A Case Study on Sultan's Dine". It has been prepared for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) from University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). In this report, I have tried my best to compile the concepts which I have learned in last four years of BBA along with some information gathered from the internet for taking relevant information regarding the project report.

Therefore, I hope that it will find your acknowledgment. I am looking to your valuable feedback.

Sincerely,

Nowrin Ahmed

ID: 201011009

Executive Summary

Brand value is one of the crucial assets for a brand and it can be ruined because of the negative publicity. There are thousands of examples of negative publicity of a brand around the world. Some of them even had to shut down their business because of it and those who survived and continued, applied different marketing strategies to overcome the situation. Negative publicity is a common scenario for a business organization and therefore, they should know how previously different brands have tackled such situations so that they can learn from it. This is why, in this study, the case of Sultan's Dine is analyzed, a Biryani restaurant in Dhaka, and found out what strategies they followed to deal with the negative publicity that happened on Facebook platform on 2 March, 2023. There will be also some recommendations for Sultan's Dine from other research papers. In this study, qualitative research method has been used with systematic literature review. This study is fully based on secondary data. The information is collected from reliable internet sources such as newspapers, news channels, published articles, etc. Hopefully, this study is going to be useful for future research as well as other business organizations dealing with negative publicity.

CONTENTS

	Page no.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	01
1.1 Background of the Study	01
1.2 Research Question	02
1.3 Research Objective	02
1.4 Scope of the Study	02
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	04
2.1 Marketing Strategy	04
2.2 Brand Management	04
2.3 Negative Publicity	05
2.3.1 Causes of Negative Publicity	05
2.3.2 Examples of Negative Publicity	06
2.3.3 Effects of Negative Publicity	07
2.4 Strategies to Overcome Negative Publicity	08
2.5 Case of Sultan's Dine	10
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	11
3.1 Type of Study	11
3.2 Data Collection	11
3.3 Data Analysis	12
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	13
CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS	17
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION	18
REFERENCES	19

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The idea of brand or brand management, in modern business culture, is presented as one of the requirements for success (Johansson, 2012). Branding is an effective tool for a business to connect with its prospective customers (Lehu, 2004). Additionally, it is an asset since it has an inherent worth and when applied to a good or service, a customer may see it as having a greater value than a similar good or service (Kapferer, 2008). This is why companies give a lot of effort to build up strategies so that it can be used as a long-term direction and scope of a business to create and maintain a competitive edge (Johnson, 2008). Thus, it is a lengthy process and takes several years to form a strong brand. Unfortunately, a brand's equity is not eternal. Over time, a number of factors may impact consumers' impressions of a brand and change their perspectives. One of the primary elements that might turn a positive attitude into a negative one is an incident that causes negative publicity which can be either performance related or value related, such as how businesses behave and run their operations, rather than from product failures (Pullig et al, 2006). If brand managers do not acknowledge and address the unfavorable issues, value-related negative publicity could have a major negative impact on the brand (Andrews and Kim, 2007). Recently, such an incident happened in Dhaka with one of the leaders of Biryani business in Bangladesh, Sultan's Dine. On 2 March 2023, someone posted a picture of a bone on Facebook after eating Kacchi Biryani from Sultan's dine and the person claimed that the Kacchi Biryani was made with the meat of animals other than goat (The Business Standard, 2023). Because of the accessibility of the internet, any information, especially negative ones, travels fast and reaches a huge number of people and it enhances the impact of negative publicity (Chen 2001; Andrews and Kim, 2007). As a result, within a few days, the post went viral all over Bangladesh as it was about "Sultan's Dine". People started to make fun of them by saying the number of stray dogs and cats in their area has decreased. The number of customers and sales had dropped significantly because of this rumor. Fortunately, Sultan's Dine revived and regained their customer's trust with some strategies and promotional activities.

1.2 Research Question

The research question of this study is “*what strategies Sultan’s Dine have adopted to overcome negative publicity?*”

Research Objective

Sultan’s Dine have successfully dealt with the negative publicity they faced within a short time. By looking into their specific actions, communication methods, reputation managements and how they regain their customers’ trust, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the restaurant's ability to navigate and recover from reputational challenges. The study will examine how these tactics affect the company's reputation, relationships with customers, and overall profitability in order to highlight the reputation management lessons that may be drawn from Sultan’s Dine's experiences.

- The objective of this study is to find out what strategies Sultan’s Dine have adopted to overcome the negative publicity.

1.3 Scope of the Study

Although there are numerous brands that have faced negative publicity and have overcome the situation, this study will only focus on the case of Sultan’s Dine which is a Biryani restaurant situated in Bangladesh because the incident happened recently, created a hype and they successfully tackled the situation within a short time and this is why, it will be a great lesson for a business organization especially a restaurant business for overcoming negative publicity or WOM. To know what marketing strategies, they followed to overcome this situation, either talking directly with the managers of Sultan’s Dine were needed which falls into doing research with primary data or the other option is collecting information whatever is available on the internet and analyze their marketing activities which is in other words, using secondary data. The managers of Sultan's Dine’s have been approached for collecting primary data for this research. As the issue is sensitive, they did not want to share the confidential information. This is why, the second option was chosen which is studying based on secondary data. Therefore, this study relies on systemic

literature review or secondary data available on internet sources such as newspaper, news channels, social media, online reviews, Google, to examine Sultan's Dine's effective comeback from negative publicity.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marketing Strategy

Strategy is used in a number of disciplines, including political science, economics, organizational sociology and cognitive psychology (Cheah and Garvin, 2004). Strategy is all regarding how an organization is going to accomplish its goal. Almost all organizations nowadays are confronted with different strategic plans and decisions. Managers can test activities and suggest methods against a well thought out strategy and ultimate business goal to maintain consistency, which is vital for ongoing success. Managers will continue to waste time and money worrying over decisions that might be taken in a matter of minutes if they had a clear understanding of what their company is attempting to achieve (Fifield, 1992).

A business strategy that is not firmly grounded in the marketplace, to put it simply, will be meaningless. (Fifield, 1992). According to McDonald, one of the most important and challenging parts of the marketing process is creating marketing strategies. It outlines the strategies to be established, the weaknesses to be fixed and the process for doing so by conveying with all levels of management. With the use of marketing strategies, operational choices can be made that align the organization with the new market opportunities that have the best chances of success (Fifield, 1992).

Porter (1996) states that businesses need to be adaptable in order to react to changes in the market. To reach best practices, they need to benchmark often. Aggressively outsourcing tasks outside of their core competencies allows businesses to increase productivity while simultaneously cultivating their key competencies in the competition to outperform competitors. A business can surpass competitors only if it can create a distinction that it can defend. It needs to provide more value to clients, produce the same value at a lesser expense, or do both (Johansson, 2012).

2.2 Brand Management

Brand and branding have thrived for ages and are likely to continue to prosper for many years ahead, because of their core objective. Customers can minimize risk, make decisions more easily and achieve a more pleasant life because of brands. A strong brand improves consumers' lives

somewhat and sometimes significantly (Loken, 2010). Therefore, it is essential that brand management be done strategically. According to Malmelin and Hakala (2009), the goal of brand management is to effectively convey the brand philosophy to all partners so that they are aware of the kinds of behaviors that align with the brand. This leads to improved collaboration and, eventually, improved outcomes. Keller (1999) adds that in order to effectively maintain their brand, firms must have a long-term perspective while making marketing decisions. From a long-term perspective, brand management highlights that any changes made to a brand's corresponding marketing strategy could, by alterations in consumer awareness, impact prospect marketing success programs (Johansson, 2012).

2.3 Negative Publicity

According to Pullig et al. (2006), brand image refers to how the consumers view the brand overall. They may have a positive or negative opinion about the brand. While establishing a brand, the brand attitude could be defined, although there are elements that may influence how the customers perceive the brand and alter their perception as time goes on. Among the influential elements that could change an incident that turns a positive outlook into a negative one is that generates negative publicity (Pullig et al, 2006). Negative publicity is defined as unfavorable or critical information about a person, company or product that is spread through media channels. It can damage reputation and create a negative public perception, potentially impacting relationships and business success.

2.3.1 Causes of Negative Publicity

There are two primary sources of negative publicity: customer dissatisfaction and external media comment. There is also a third source of negative publicity, competitor activated negative word of mouth (WOM), which is especially noticeable when businesses are introducing new goods or services. The primary source of negative publicity is when customer dissatisfaction occurs, particularly when it derives from poor service delivery. Customer dissatisfaction with the company's products or services has the ability to propagate negative word-of-mouth throughout

clients' social media networks. Competitor sales forces may also pick up on this dissatisfaction and exploit it (William, 2014).

According to Alkalbany (2015), there are three reasons for spreading negative publicity or rumor. Despair and fear: these news arise from people's desperation and anxiety, such as fear of enemies, the spread of an illness or undefined terrorist attacks. Wishes and dreams: This kind stands for hopes and dreams that are realized through rumors that comfort both the listener and the transporter, leading both to believe them (Center et al, 2008). Hatred and envy: it attacks the life of peace and aims to create animosity division among the people. Moreover, it aims to create national, religious or sectarian conflict to undermine the nation's sense of patriotism and ultimately the spirit of its citizens (Saflfery, 2005). Similar things happen among the brands also and it affects the trust of their customers. The fact that negative information has a greater influence on word-of-mouth (WOM) than positive information (Eisingerich et al, 2011), adds to the effect of the internet. In other words, people are more motivated to spread unpleasant news to others. This fact decreases the time to address the negative publicity for the companies.

2.3.2 Examples of Negative Publicity

It takes years to build a strong brand and only one mistake can ruin its whole reputation especially when it breaks the customers' trust. There are numerous brands that have faced brand crisis because of negative word of mouth. Whenever people hear the name Johnson & Johnson, the first thing that comes to mind is the most iconic product: Johnson & Johnson baby powder. But in 2017, it was found that this powder contains asbestos that causes mesothelioma, a deadly asbestos cancer, although the executives knew about it from early 1970s but decided to hide it from the people (Whitmer, 2023). Samsung Galaxy Note 7 burned a house of a South California family in 2016. The phone batteries overheated because they were too large for their case and eventually caused a fire (Roberson, 2016). In 2015, a rumor spread in India about Maggie noodles that it contains MSG (Monosodium Glutamate) and Lead which were more than the prescribed level and it is harmful for humans to consume (FDA tests Nestlé's Maggi noodles after food scare prompts recall in India, 2015). In 2018, H&M launched a new line of animal centric children's sweatshirts. They modeled an African-American child wearing their sweatshirt that says "coolest monkey in the jungle" across

the chest whereas, with white models the same line was featuring “survival expert” or “junior tour guide” (Bartirromo, 2018). Unfortunately, "Monkey" has a past of being used as a racial insult directed at African Americans. Many believed that the picture demonstrated the company's view of the youngster as subhuman. In January 2016, several websites well-known for fake news, published that McDonald’s uses worms as filler in their burger to reduce cost and eventually their customers got infected with parasitic roundworms (Taylor, 2016). In June 2015, a Californian shared a picture of a chicken tender of KFC that looked like a rat on social media and claimed that KFC uses rat instead of chicken (KFC says DNA shows 'fried rat' was chicken, 2015). A well-known Bangladeshi fashion brand “Aarong” did a scam with their customers in 2019. During Ramadan, when everyone was shopping for the upcoming Eid, they raised the price of the products double between only 5 days. This created a huge chaos among the customers and government authorities took necessary measures as a punishment (Sharmin, 2019).

2.3.3 Effects of Negative Publicity

Researchers and practitioners alike must comprehend how customers react to unfavorable brand information. The ease of access to unfavorable brand information on the internet in general and social media in particular has made this awareness more crucial (East et al., 2007). Consumers view new information more analytically because unfavorable publicity contradicts their preconceived notions about a business (Pham and Muthukrishnan, 2002). Moreover, customers' enhanced desire for whatever is unavailable seems to be the response to information being hidden (Worchel, 1992). According to other studies (Pullig et al. 2006; Eisingerich et al. 2011), unfavorable information about a brand can significantly influence consumers' views and, ultimately, influence their purchasing behavior. According to Pullig et al. (2011), if unfavorable information causes people to have a bad attitude toward the brand, this could harm the brand's overall associations and cause financial losses for the company as a result of customers changing their purchasing habits. When the bad sentiment becomes unbearable, brand hate occurs (Miller, Mazis, and Wright, 1971; Anderson, 2003). Strong feelings of hate for a brand can take many forms, including boycotts, negative WOM, complaints, and even acts of revenge (Grégoire et al., 2009). To be precise, a consumer does not have to use a brand in order to hate it, in fact, a consumer's experience with a brand might include anything from watching a video to hearing

unfavorable WOM (Zhang, 2017).

Analytical customers are more inclined to blame the brand than the retailer for their bad consumer experience, which lowers their desire to make a purchase from the brand. Individuals who have trouble assigning responsibility are more likely to move to a different brand than those who are adamant about who is responsible (Mattila and Ro, 2008). Previous studies have also indicated that consumers' post-purchase assessments are significantly impacted by their attribution of unfavorable publicity related to products or services (Sparks and Callan, 1997). Customers were less inclined to repurchase a brand's goods if they thought the company should bear all the blame for the unpleasant experience (Folkes et al., 1987). People sometimes blame users more for negative WOM involving well-known brands such as blaming victims for exaggerating or dramatizing the damage. On the other hand, if the impacted brand is not well-known, people are more likely to hold the brand accountable (Laczniak et al., 2001). It appears that attitudes toward the parent brand are negatively impacted more strongly by the severity of negative publicity around a brand extension (Zhang and Taylor, 2009). Moreover, if a consumer has a strong sense of assurance about the brand attitude, that is, if they are brand loyal, then negative publicity might not have an impact on their views about the brand (Pullig et al., 2006).

2.4 Strategies to Overcome Negative Publicity

Negative publicity or negative WOM is uncontrollable, much like a natural disaster. Therefore, suppressing negative WOM is far more crucial than promoting positive WOM (Williams and Buttle, 2014) as it has the power to destroy a brand. Williams, M., and Buttle, F. (2014) suggests three major implications for the management of WOM: leadership, organizational readiness and Public Relation (PR) management. First, the leadership of the company must be aware of the potential effects of negative publicity on brand equity, customer acquisition, staff morale, organizational reputation, and management tenure. Functional managers should be tasked by business leaders with selecting relevant key performance indicators that monitor both negative WOM and the events that set it off, such as unsatisfied customers, poor service, recalled products, breaking voluntary or legal codes of conduct, benchmarking data publication, and impending negative press coverage. Additionally, the leadership needs to be ready to make investments in

people (PR), processes (crisis management, complaints management), and technologies that will allow the organization to track WOM and react accordingly. Senior management should also take the initiative to respond to critical remarks made in the media by collaborating closely with PR and according to proven PR techniques. The second managerial suggestion is that everyone in the organization should be aware of the possible harm that negative news media coverage can bring and be prepared to take appropriate action. The relationship between negative WOM and positive WOM can be emphasized in education and training. Positive WOM may arise from attempts to reduce negative WOM by satisfying the complainant completely (Ang and Buttle, 2006). Third managerial recommendation is that PR should take the lead when it comes to organizing and handling negative publicity, especially if the organization is the target of disparaging remarks or attitude in the media. After that, PR can communicate with sales, marketing, advertising, and customer support, among other company divisions.

Four aspects of organizational responses to negative WOM were manipulated by Sparks et al. in order to examine managerial responses: source of response, voice of responder (a "human tone" produced better results than a "formal tone"), speed of response (faster was preferred), and action frame (whether an issue had already been corrected). This study emphasized that while companies have limited control on online reviews of their goods and services, they do have control over how those reviews are addressed. They so emphasized how crucial it is to know which components of a response work best to change customers' perceptions.

Local Restaurants of Fayoum follow these strategies to tackle rumors about their business, they are following (Khalaf, Morsy and Hassan, 2019).

1. They go with the denial strategy. Removing any potential connections between a restaurant and the issue is the goal of denial strategy (Frandsen, 2011). This strategy works well when all the stakeholders concerned, including the media, accept that the restaurant bears no accountability for the incident (Kaplan, 2010).
2. Launching an aggressive marketing or intensive campaign following the debunking of the rumor.
3. Finding the causes, origins, and intents of rumor mongers.

4. Interacting with customers on social media via a restaurant's website, dispelling rumors and convincing them to stop lying.
5. Developing a group to handle food rumors at restaurant.
6. Discrediting the rumors by working with the appropriate authorities.
7. Setting up a specific budget for the restaurant's crisis management will help it handle problems with accuracy.
8. Simply ignoring the rumor and not responding to the mongers.

2.5 Case of Sultan's Dine

A resident of Dhaka ordered Kacchi Biryani from Sultan's Dine-Gulshan branch through Food Panda. After eating the food, he clicked a photo of the remaining bone and few days later, on March 2 2023, posted it on Facebook claiming that the bone is so thin that it cannot be a bone of a goat, indicating that it was a dog or cat's bone and Sultan's Dine was accused of allegation (The Business Standard, 2023). The government investigators went there and investigated the matter thoroughly but didn't find anything wrong about meat, although they tried to contact the complainant several times and found out his cell phone was switched off and it seemed he had disappeared. Meanwhile, the restaurant's sales dropped significantly. Within a few days, the post went viral all over Bangladesh because it was about one of the most famous Kacchi Biryani restaurants in Bangladesh. People start mocking and sharing memes about Sultan's Dine that the stray animals in their area had decreased. People started to concern whether the food of Sultan's Dine is Halal or not. And those who were defending the restaurant were simply labeled as "paid agents".

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Type of Study

This study is qualitative in nature as it focuses on obtaining in-depth understandings, viewpoints and subjective experience from media representatives and internet sources. The objective of this study is to find out how Sultan's Dine has overcome the negative publicity that happened on March 2, 2023 or in other word, what marketing strategies they followed to regain their previous position in the Biryani market which is only possible to know through qualitative study as subjective experience, opinion or data in words and meanings are needed. On the other hand, due to some limitations of quantitative research, this method was not chosen. For example, quantitative research frequently ignores the complex background and qualitative elements surrounding the topic in favor of numerical statistics and statistical analysis. Conducting a more comprehensive investigation is frequently necessary to comprehend the underlying causes and contextual elements impacting perceptions. Quantitative techniques concentrate on predefined factors. They might overlook unanticipated or newly discovered elements that qualitative approaches are better suited to recognize and investigate. Therefore, qualitative research method was chosen as it enables a thorough understanding of the restaurant's recovery process beyond simple quantitative statistics by allowing the investigation of various opinions, motivations, and the subtle strategies used in lessening the impact of negative publicity.

3.2 Data Collection

The study relies on secondary data or sources of information that have previously been published or made publicly available, rather than conducting interviews or surveys. These resources contain previously published articles, news reports, media coverage, online reviews, YouTube videos and social media marketing activities from Sultan's Dine. Specific search terms or keywords were used on search engines like Google to identify relevant information related to Sultan's Dine and the negative publicity it faced. The keywords used were designed to uncover articles or discussions specifically addressing allegations against Sultan's Dine, the restaurant's marketing activities following the rumor or negative publicity, its relationship with food delivery platforms like

Foodpanda, and potentially other pertinent topics. Some of the keywords are like this- **“Sultan’s Dine” AND “allegation”, “Sultan’s Dine” AND “Rumor”, “Sultan’s Dine” AND “marketing activities after the rumor”, “Sultan’s Dine” AND “Foodpanda”, etc.**

3.3 Data Analysis

As it is mentioned before, information from the manager or employees of Sultan’s Dine could not be collected because of their reluctance to provide such information, this research had done fully based on secondary data available on the internet using systemic literature review. Some judgments were used to collect information related to the research objective and research question. Authentic sources were used where fake information is not available such as newspapers like The Business Standards, news channels like Somoy TV, RTV News, Sultan’s Dine own and authentic Facebook page. Information were also collected from unofficial sources like from YouTube vloggers (Rafsan The Chhotobhai, Baidik Chatterjee, Liliput Farhan) because these vloggers actually influenced a lot of people about Sultan’s Dine at that time as people admire and trust them. One vlogger (Dr. Foodie) even showed the whole process of how Sultan’s Dine makes their Biryani. While collecting information, only information that is relevant to the incident that happened with Sultan’s Dine on 2 March, 2023 were used. For example, while searching videos related to the allegation of Sultan’s Dine a lot of videos came such as food reviews of Sultan’s Dine before the incident or videos which did not seem authentic (using images and animation). Only videos which were published from authentic news channels or food vloggers who are famous and professional in making such videos and which were published within a month after the incident happened were taken.

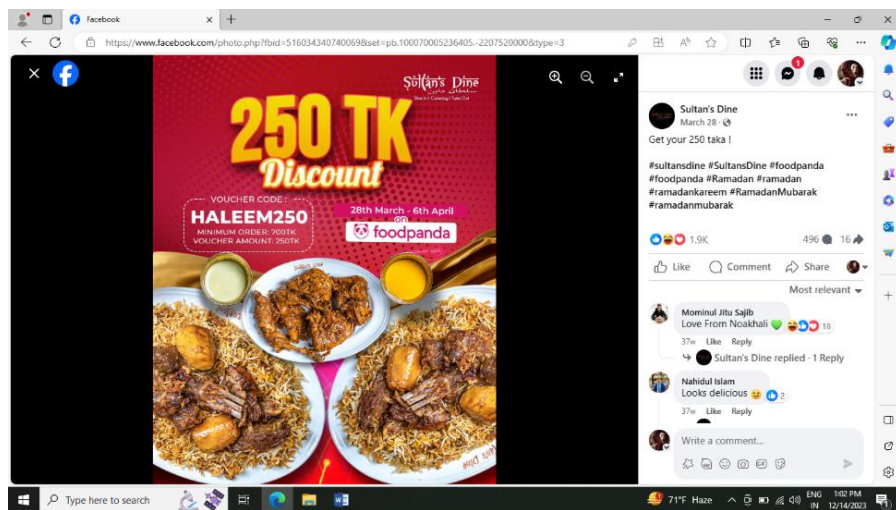
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Sultan's Dine, one of the leading Biryani businesses in Bangladesh. In fact, some say it is the best Kacchi Biryani restaurant in Bangladesh. It is because they have their own unique recipe and they always give fresh and good amounts of food in their servings. This is why, despite being a bit pricey, people love to visit their restaurant. And for the same reason, their customers stood for them even after the rumor spread about their food quality. After visiting their Facebook page and YouTube videos related to this negative publicity, it is found that people actually trust Sultan's Dine. In a Facebook post where they said, "Thanks for believing us", apart from negative comments, there were plenty of comments that claimed Sultan's Dine is best or people trust Sultan's Dine. Some of the comments are "Sultan's Dine always best", "Best kacchi in bd. We're always with you sultans dine. Just keep it up", "গতকাল ওঁড়ার করেছিলাম। টেস্ট ভালো ছিল সবসময়ের মত। I Believe in Sultan's dine. সবসময় প্রিয় ছিল, আছে, থাকবে।" (Yesterday, I had placed an order. The taste was good as always. I believe in Sultan's Dine. Has always been my favorite and will remain so). Some of them also demanded justice. "আস্থা ছিল আছে থাকবে। এখন যারা অভিযোগ করেছিল তাদের বিরুদ্ধে মান হানির মামলা করে ক্ষতিপূরণ দাবি করেন।" (The belief remains, exists, will persist. Now, those who had complained, file cases against them for defamation and claim damages) (Sultan's Dine, 2019). Still, they faced a difficult situation at this time. Their sales had dropped. People were making fun of them on social media. In fact, some people called them and said they have lost their dogs. Fortunately, because of their marketing activities, they regained their position within a month.

1. They gave different sales promotions to encourage people to come and so that they can create an image that Sultan's Dine cares for their customers. At the same time, it also allows them to communicate positive messages, upgrading quality or customer service or other strengths to counteract the negative publicity indirectly. For example, if customers order food through their app, they would give 20% off on all items. On catering, they gave 10% off. In Foodpanda, they gave a voucher which was worth 250 Taka. They also gave 26% off for 3 days as it was Independence Day in Bangladesh on March 26 (Sultan's Dine, 2019).



20% discount on all item on Sultan's Dine's app; Source: Facebook



250 Taka discount on Foodpanda; Source: Facebook



26% discount for Independence Day; Source: Facebook

2. They allowed different food vloggers even from outside Bangladesh, to visit their restaurant. In fact, they even allowed “Rafsan The Chhotabhai” to visit their kitchen. The restaurant reached a wider audience by utilizing the platform of a food vlogger, who may not have previously heard of the brand. This increased visibility has the ability to create new interest and draw in new customers who value the vlogger's advice and thoughts (Rafsan, 2023).
3. They shared a video where they showed the full process of how they make the kacchi Biryani so that no doubt remains about their quality even though the video was shot and published by another YouTuber (Dr. foodie, 2023). In fact, the video showed the whole process from scratch, from where they buy the meat to the last step of making Biryani. They tried to show that they are confident enough to show how they actually make the food because of their quality.
4. Ramadan started a few days after the rumor spread. In Ramadan, they gave free juice, dates and fruits to their customers. By doing so, they tried to demonstrate that they care about their customers and are prepared to address any problems that might have caused the negative publicity (Sultan's Dine, 2023).



Free juice, dates and fruits in Iftar time; Source: Facebook

5. They launched a new item “Haleem” in Ramadan expecting that it will create a new conversation about the restaurant and its unique service instead of focusing on the rumor (Sultan’s Dine, 2023).



Introducing new item “Haleem” in Ramadan; Source: Facebook

6. They kept posting randomly in their Facebook pages so that people would crave for eating Biryani in their restaurant. After all of these activities, eventually, they had the familiar environment in the restaurant. Their sales increased again and people stopped making fun of them.

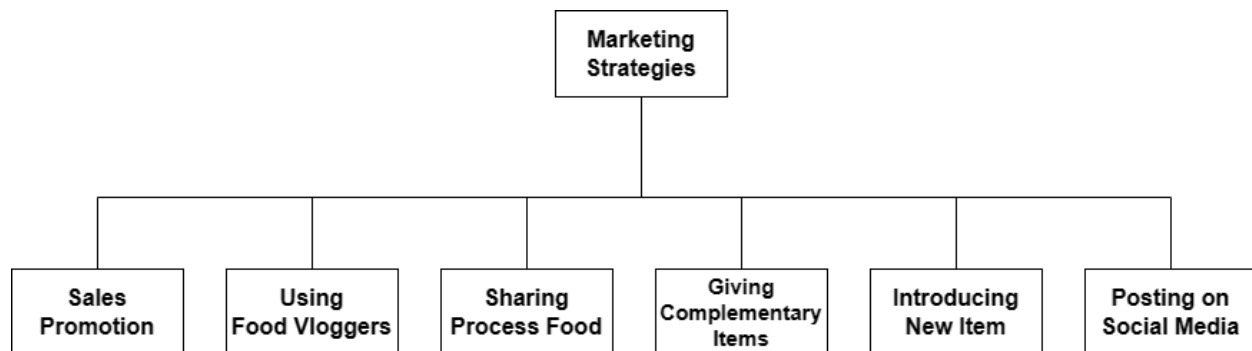


Figure 1: Marketing strategies applied by Sultan’s Dine

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATION

It is important to deal with negative publicity effectively and strategically because people react differently to different situations. Sultan's Dine have successfully dealt with their negative publicity and it may happen again and the situation can be totally different than this case and effective handling of the situation can transform it from a negative one to a positive one and result in meaningful exchange with certain customers (Ollqvist, 2015). Therefore, as per Ollqvist (2015), there are some recommendations that Sultan's Dine could implement this time or it can be implemented in future if needed. The recommendations are as follows.

1. Negative information about a brand can stay for years in online platforms and may appear high in search. As a result, when people will search about that brand, this negative information will come first. Hence, Sultan's Dine should do its best to hide the negative information by creating positive information, getting backlinks with reliable sites so that the positive information moves up in search results. They should create content regularly about their accomplishments, event listing, growth updates etc.
2. They should give a lot of effort in SEO (Search Engine Optimization) so that they rank highly in relevant search. In this way, they can control the message as they are the one who created and maintains the online platforms.
3. They should constantly monitor the social media platforms so that they can take action immediately or, being able to swiftly delete inappropriate conversations. Also, the problem should be addressed on the platform where the masses are gathered. The issue should be discussed and resolved on the forum where it first originated and where people are already conversing about it, rather than switching the channel of communication.
4. New content appears so frequently that minor problems often fade in the sea of messages. They shouldn't take offense at everything and should be ready to receive criticism. The two simplest approaches to deal with negative publicity are to remove it or ignore it.
5. It should be noted that not every reaction needs to be made public—some situations are better handled one-on-one.
6. And last but not least, they must be honest. If they make a mistake, they should sincerely apologize.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This study presented the ways Sultan's Dine have successfully dealt with the negative publicity that occurred on 2 March 2023 on Facebook. Undoubtedly, dealing with negative publicity is one of the most difficult tasks for a brand as if it is not done correctly, it can ruin the brand's reputation and may lead to shutting the business down. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out how Sultan's Dine have overcome the negative publicity and continue their business as if nothing happened so that other brands and researchers can learn from this study how to deal with these situations as such situations are very common in the business industry. The method used in this study is a qualitative research method using convenience sampling. This study is fully based on the secondary data. The data is collected from internet sources like newspapers, news channels, social media platforms from 2 March to 2 April, 2023. After analyzing the findings, it can be concluded that the answer of the research question is that Sultan's Dine went for a reactive approach to deal with the issue such as sales promotion, introducing new outlet and item, providing complementary items, etc. It can also be concluded that in order to potentially avoid negative publicity from happening in the first place, Sultan's Dine or any other brands should make an effort to communicate in a way that is as broad, transparent, believable, and honest as they can.

In future study, it could be studied with different approaches, for instance with qualitative or quantitative or mixed research method primary data so that it can be studied more deeply. With the same research objective, different brands in different industries and in different regions can be studied. Such study can also be done with the customer's point of view of how they perceive the responses the brands provide in cases of negative publicity.

References

- AlJazeera. (2015, June 11). *FDA tests Nestle's Maggi noodles after food scare prompts recall in India*. Retrieved from <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/6/11/fda-tests-nestles-maggi-noodles-for-lead.html>
- Anderson, C. J. (2003). *The Psychology of Doing Nothing: Forms of Decision Avoidance Result from Reason and Emotion*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129 (1), 139–167. [doi:10.1037/0033-2909.129.1.139](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.1.139)
- Andrews, M., & Kim, D. (2007). *Revitalising Suffering Multinational Brands: An Empirical Study*. *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 350-372.
- Ang, L., & Buttle, F. A. (2006). *Customer Retention Management Processes: A Quantitative Study*. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(1/2), 83–99. [doi:10.1108/03090560610637329](https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560610637329)
- Bartiromo, M. (2018, January 8). *H&M apologizes for 'Coolest Monkey' sweatshirt ad featuring black child*. Fox News. Retrieved from <https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/hm-apologizes-for-coolest-monkey-sweatshirt-ad-featuring-black-child>
- Center, A. H., Jackson, P., Smith, S., & Stansberry, F. R. (2008). *Public Relations Practices: Managerial Case Studies and Problems*. Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Chatterjee, B. (2023). *Best Mutton Kacchi Biriyan In Dhaka?? || Sultan Dine || Ep-11 || India To Bangladesh [Video]*. YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feMOJ_uEA5s
- Cheah, C. Y. J., & Garvin, M. J. (2004). *An Open Framework for Corporate Strategy in Construction*. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 176-188.
- Chen, S. (2001). *Assessing the impact of the Internet on brands*. *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 288-302.
- Dr. Foodie. (2023). *Sultan Dine's এর খাসির মাংসের রহস্য আর খাসির কাচ্চির রেসিপি [Video]*. YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdkhEDO0E4Y>

- East, R., Hammond, K. & Wright, M. (2007). *The Relative Incidence of Positive and Negative Word of Mouth: A Multicategory Study*. International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 175-184.
- Eisingerich, B. A., Rubera, G., Seifert, M. & Bhardwaj, G. (2011). *Doing Good and Doing Better despite Negative Information?: The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Consumer Resistance to Negative Information*. Journal of Service Research, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 60-75
- Fifield, P., (1992). *Marketing Strategy*. 2nd edition. Butterworth Heinemann.
- Folkes, V.S., Koletsky, S. & Graham, J. (1987). *A Field Study of Causal Inferences and Consumer Reaction: The View from the Airport*. Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 534-539.
- FoxNews. (2015, June 23). *KFC says DNA shows 'fried rat' was chicken*. Retrieved from <https://www.foxnews.com/food-drink/kfc-says-dna-shows-fried-rat-was-chicken>
- Grégoire, Y., Tripp, T. M., & Legoux, R. (2009). *When Customer Love Turns into Lasting Hate: The Effects of Relationship Strength and Time on Customer Revenge and Avoidance*. Journal of Marketing, 73(6), 18–32. doi:10.1509/jmkg.73.6.18
- Johnson, G., Scholes, K., & Wittington, R. (2008). *Exploring Corporate Strategy*. 8th edition. Pearson education.
- Kapferer, J.N. (2008). *The New Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*. 4th Edition. London: Kogan Page.
- Keller, K.L. (1999). *Managing Brands for the Long Run: Brand Reinforcement and Revitalization Strategies*. California Management Review, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 102-124.
- Khalaf, S.N., Morsy, M.A., & Hassan, M.S. (2019). *How local restaurants in Fayoum handle food rumors*. International Journal of Heritage, Tourism and Hospitality Vol. (13), No. (2)

- Laczniak, R.N., DeCarlo, T.E. & Ramaswami, S.N. (2001). *Consumers' Responses to Negative Word-of-Mouth Communication: An Attribution Theory Perspective*. Journal of Consumer Psychology, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 57-73.
- Laufer, D. & Coombs, W.T. (2006). *How Should a Company Respond to a Product Harm Crisis? The Role of Corporate Reputation and Consumer-based Cues*. Business Horizons, Vol. 49 No. 5, pp. 379-385.
- Lehu, J.M. (2004). *Back to Life! Why Brands Grow Old and Sometimes Die and What Managers Then Do: An Exploratory Qualitative Research Put into the French Context*. Journal of Marketing Communications, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 133-152.
- Loken, B., Ahluwalia, R., & Houston, M. J. (2016). *Brands and Brand Management: Contemporary Research Perspectives*. Routledge.
- Malmelin, N., & Hakala, J. (2009). *Guided by the Brand: From Brand Management to Integrative Corporate Communications*. Business Strategy Series, Vol. 10, No. 5, pp. 248-258.
- Mattila, A.S. & Ro, H. (2008). *Discrete Negative Emotions and Customer Dissatisfaction Responses in A Casual Restaurant Setting*. Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 89-107.
- Miller, S. J., Mazis, M. B., & Wright, P. L. (1971). *The Influence of Brand Ambiguity on Brand Attitude Development*. Journal of Marketing Research, 8(4), 455–459.
- Ollqvist, H. (2015). *Dealing with Negative Publicity in Social Media*. [Master's Thesis]. Hanken School of Economic. Retrieved from [Microsoft Word - Master's Thesis - Hanna Ollqvist.docx \(helsinki.fi\)](#)
- Pham, M. T., & Muthukrishnan, A. V. (2002). *Search and Alignment in Judgment Revision: Implications for Brand Positioning*. Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 18- 30.
- Porter, Michael, E. (1996). *What is Strategy*. Harvard Business Review, Vol. 74, No. 6, pp. 61-78

- Pullig, C. Netemeyer, R. G., & Biswas, A. (2006). *Attitude Basis, Certainty, and Challenge Alignment: A Case of Negative Brand Publicity*. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 528-542.
- Rafsan, I. (2023). *Is Sultan's Dine actually Selling "Kukur er Kacchi" | Sultan's Dine Exposed* [Video]. Rafsan TheChhotoBhai. Retrieved from [Is Sultan's Dine actually Selling "Kukur er Kacchi" | Sultan's Dine Exposed - YouTube](#)
- Rahman, S., & Ali, S. (2023, March 14). *The meat of the matter: A planned attack to take down Sultan's Dine?*. The Business Standard. Retrieved from <https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/meat-matter-planned-attack-take-down-sultans-dine-599242>
- Roberson, J. (2016, September 7). *Recalled Samsung Note 7 possible cause of Horry County house fire*. WMBF News. Retrieved from <https://www.wmbfnews.com/story/33034080/recalled-samsung-note-7-possible-cause-of-horry-county-house-fire/>
- Saffery, M. (2005). *Corporate Rumors: Causes, Formation, and Refutation*. University of Southern California.
- Sharmin, N. (2019). *আড়ং- এর প্রতারণা, একই পণ্যের দাম ৫ দিন পর দ্বিগুণ* [Video]. Ekattor TV. Retrieved from [আড়ং- এর প্রতারণা, একই পণ্যের দাম ৫ দিন পর দ্বিগুণ | নাদিয়া শারমিন | News | Ekattor TV - YouTube](#)
- Sparks, B.A. & Callan, V.J. (1997). *Service Breakdowns and Service Evaluations: The Role of Customer Attributions*. Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 3-24.
- Sparks, B.A., & Bradley, G.L. A. (2014). *A "Triple A" Typology of Responding to Negative Consumer-generated Online Reviews*. doi: 10.1177/1096348014538052
- Sultan's Dine. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook Page]. Facebook. Retrieved from www.facebook.com/dinelineasultan/

- Taylor, K. (2016, January 22). *A viral rumor that McDonald's uses ground worm filler in burgers has been debunked*. Business Insider. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/debunked-mcdonalds-uses-worm-filler-2016-1>
- Whitmer, M. (2023). *Johnson & Johnson's Connection to Asbestos*. Asbestos.com. Retrieved from <https://www.asbestos.com/companies/johnson-johnson/>
- Williams, M., & Buttle, F. (2014). *Managing negative word-of-mouth: an exploratory study*. Journal of Marketing Management, 30(13-14), 1423–1447.
doi:10.1080/0267257x.2014.933864
- Worchel, S. (1992). *Beyond a Commodity Theory Analysis of Censorship: When Abundance and Personalism Enhance Scarcity Effects*. Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 13 (1), 79-92. [doi:10.1207/s15324834basp1301_7](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15324834basp1301_7)
- Zhang, C. (2017). *Brand Hate*. Concordia University. Retrieved from [Brand Hate - CORE Reader](#)
- Zhang, L. & Taylor, R.D. (2009). *Exploring the Reciprocal Effect of Negative Information of Brand Extensions on Parent Brand*. Marketing Management Journal, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 1-15.