The Role of Advertising in Crisis Management in Egypt
With Reference to “Heinz-Egypt” Crisis

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Abstract:
Most of the organizations worldwide, within different sectors and specializations go at some point in time through a crisis of some sort. Whether it is immediate, anticipated, sustained, or a fake one which could be based on rumors, these crises have a high impact on the image of the organizations and the consumers’ perception. Researches in this regard have previously noted that social responsibility is considered as a main tool for overcoming a crisis, which is considered impossible to achieve without the presence of a communication tool between the organization and the public, therefore in most cases media is considered the main tool to showcase the organizational situation, which may also in some cases lead to misleading information creating negative emotions and purchase behavior according to the Attribution Theory. Organizations usually have a set strategy to deal with their crisis, which happens through the Public Relations Department, going through three main stages: pre-crisis, during crisis, and post crisis. Media plays its vital role within the two stages during and post crisis, especially through social media which in turn may result to misleading information and aggravation of crisis. This is where advertising plays a very positive and leading role, advertising campaigns can work on the psychology of the consumers by using the Image Restoration Strategies to achieve the desired outcome, disclaim rumors and misleading information, and to regain consumer trust. The research refers to the “Heinz-Egypt” crisis that occurred in December 2016, claiming that the organization has been using ingredients that are toxic and unfit for human use in manufacturing their tomato products, which led to severe loss in sales and ruination of the organizational image. An advertising campaign is proposed adopting the theories of image restoration.

Statement of the Problem: Advertising has been rarely used as a crisis management tool in Egypt, where research lacks in this field. After studying the case of “Heinz-Egypt” crisis which had highly affected its sales and consumer perception, it had been noted that the organization had only used its social media Facebook page to reply to consumers’ comments, in a way to correct its image and deny the incident, advertising using Image Restoration Strategies was not considered, although proven to achieve a positive effect in several cases worldwide. Objectives: This research aims to the study of using advertising as a main tool of communication in crisis management in Egypt, and the implementation of the Image Restoration Strategies within the advertising messages to achieve its psychological goals, making advertising an essential part of the crisis management plan. Methodology: The research follows the Descriptive qualitative methodology. Findings: Advertising in crisis situations cannot be neglected, having a positive influence on public opinion, consumer behavior and organizational reputation. Utilizing the Image Restoration Strategies within the advertising verbal and non-verbal context increases the effectiveness of positive conscious community engagement, which helps the organization in building and rebuilding their images. Crisis advertising, unlike Commercial advertising, is considered as a strategic communication tool, where its main aim is the propitiation of the consumers, and the design of its messages should work towards the same concept.

Keywords:
Heinz-Egypt Crisis, Crisis Management, Advertising, Image Restoration Strategies

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