Online news media framing of corporate crises

The case of the ''Live for Now'' Pepsi advertisement in the USA

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ABSTRACT

In April of 2017, the ''Live for Now'' Pepsi advertisement, starring Kendall Jenner was released. Pepsi created this advertisement, with the aim to celebrate the unique moments in life that make people feel alive, as was stated in the press release that they published on the same day (PepsiCo, 2017a). The commercial depicted a rather joyful protest, full of young people. Kendall Jenner was seen to also join the protest, and towards the end of the commercial, she offers a Pepsi to the policemen that are present it the protest, which causes the protest to end. On the day of the release, the commercial instantly received backlash. Stakeholders took on social media to highlight all the troubling parts of the advertisement and online news media started publishing numerous articles. All this resulted in Pepsi pulling the ad only one day after the release.

This explorative study seeks to research how was the ''Live for Now'' Pepsi advertisement was framed by the online news media in the USA, from April 4th of 2017, until May 4th of 2017. For that purpose, 47 different news articles were analyzed, taken from 18 different online news media outlets in the USA. The articles were analyzed with the help of the Atlas.ti software, and the method used in order to answer the research question was qualitative content analysis.

The main findings of this research first included the main news frames that were most frequently used from the news media, which are the attribution of responsibility frame, the morality frame, and the conflict frame. Some of these findings were aligned with previous literature of An and Gower (2009), however, some differentiations were also observed. In addition, it was found that the majority of the articles used an ironic and negative tone when narrating the crisis issue. Also, most of them did take an active stance against Pepsi, and did not just keep a neutral position, without expressing an opinion towards the issue. Furthermore, the articles widely covered political and societal issues. Based on the fact that the advertisement used the marketing strategy of brand activism and was therefore firmly connected with issues that touched upon political and societal issues, it was only expected that the articles would also reproduce these concerns as well. In addition to that, the commercial was perceived as ungenuine, and therefore, discussions about whether Pepsi should have associated the brand with such important issues was questioned. Lastly, from the results, it was seen that even though Pepsi adopted a specific frame, the news media did not seem to follow the same frame, which can prove to be an important lesson for companies in times of crisis. Also, several frames seemed to emerge from same news media outlets, as many of them reproduced different content, inspired by the same issue, as the crisis issue evolved, in order to keep the audience's attention and to keep the story fresh.

KEYWORDS: News frames, Corporate crisis, Pepsi, ''Live for Now'', Brand activism

1. Introduction

On April 4, 2017, Pepsi released the ''Live for Now'' commercial featuring the famous model, Kendall Jenner. The commercial was accompanied with a press release from Pepsi that outlined the idea behind the advertisement, how the concept suited the brand's values, and what the entire film stood for and represented. In this press release, Pepsi stated that during the year of 2017, the brand would celebrate the ''Live for Now'' events in life, which was also the name and the main motto of the advertisement, embrace all the people that leap in every moment in life, while stating that "It features multiple lives, stories and emotional connections that show passion, joy, unbound and uninhibited moments. No matter the occasion, big or small, these are the moments that make us feel alive.'' (PepsiCo, 2017a). The press release also explained the choice of Kendall Jenner as the commercial's main protagonist, as well as the choice of Skip Marley's "Lions" as the advertisement's soundtrack, by stating that they are both modern-day icons who perfectly suit the brand's principles (PepsiCo, 2017a). It is worth mentioning, that the press release also featured quotes from Kendall Jenner and Skip Marley, both of whom expressed their gratitude and excitement for the project, while also supporting and embracing the message that Pepsi sought to convey through the "Live for Now" advertisement (PepsiCo, 2017a).

The advertisement featured a 3-minute version, and a 30-seconds edited version, and was directed by Creators League Studio, Pepsi's in-house creative agency (PepsiCo, 2017a). At the beginning of the commercial, the overall setting and tone is being established. Two artists, one male cellist and one female photographer wearing a hijab, are introduced, all while a demonstration is seen to be taking place in the streets, with people marching for an unspecified reason. A few seconds later, Kendall Jenner is first presented, wearing a blonde wig and red lipstick, and is seen taking part in a photoshoot. The rather joyful protest seems to be happening right next to the shooting, which appears to distract the supermodel. During the next scenes, the cellist and the photographer notice the protest, and both decide to join. A few seconds later, Kendall Jenner removes her blonde wig and red lipstick and immediately joins the march as well, along with all the other young people protesting. Later in the advertisement, now that the artists and Kendall Jenner have joined, the scenes mostly focus on the protest. Police officers also appear in the demonstration, looking serious and concerned about the occurrence. Towards the end of the ad, Kendall Jenner grabs a Pepsi, offers it to them, returns to the crowd of cheering demonstrators, and everyone, including the policemen, becomes joyful and smiles.

As soon as the commercial aired, it instantly received heavy criticism (Victor, 2017). People turned to twitter to express their concerns and dislike towards it, accusing it of being inappropriate and insensitive, of trivializing the Black Lives Matter Movement, while also of capitalizing the then-

current political situation. The ad was pulled by the company only one day after it was released, and a press release was issued in which Pepsi clarified her intentions, apologized for the incident, and apologized to Kendall Jenner for making her a target during all this backlash (PepsiCo, 2017b). The issue quickly emerged into a crisis for Pepsi, spread across social media and got widely covered by the news media.

This thesis aims to research how this corporate crisis was framed by the different online news media, and whether competing and counter frames emerged. The research question of the study is hence introduced: "How was the "Live for Now" Pepsi advertisement framed by the online news media in the USA?". More specifically, competing frames will be examined after analysing how Pepsi presented the issue on the one hand and how the news media framed it on the other. Furthermore, counter frames will also be researched between the same news media outlets, as some published more than one article in different points of time, and finally between the different news media outlets. According to Anderson (2018), counter frames are the frames that emerge after the original frame, they advocate a position that is opposed to the initial frame, and are necessary to be created by the objectors, since the original framed already influenced some people in thinking in a specific type of way. In order to better understand the analysis, a detailed timeline of the crisis can be found in Appendix A.

1.1 Societal relevance

The issue under research is of great societal interest, for several reasons. First, this thesis presents an advertisement from a company that did not reach the intended point, and eventually developed into a corporate crisis. According to Coombs (2007), since crises are perceived as threats to the reputation of the organization, and can eventually harm the reputation, they therefore have the power to change the way that stakeholders interact with the organization (Barton, 2001, as cited in Coombs, 2007). In case of crises, corporations should be aware of how the crisis could be portrayed by the press and therefore, how it could influence public opinion. Moreover, as the different competing and counter frames that emerged around the issue will be explored, the research will prove to be valuable, as companies should be aware of the different frames that readers get exposed to, and how they affect them and their perceptions on the crisis issue.

In addition, according to Carroll and McCombs (2004), news media are highly effective in instructing readers on what to think about, and in impacting how the readers will think about the topics they read in the news. Journalism is an essential pilar of the society, as it provides data, knowledge, insights, and different points of view to the individuals that need to participate as

members of the society (Gans, 2003, as cited in Wolfgang, Vos & Kelling, 2019). It is crucial for brands to know details around this framing and how it could later affect their corporate image in the eyes of the consumers.

1.2 Scientific relevance

Framing theory has been a popular topic among media and communication scholars, however mostly focused on news framing, with only limited but growing scholar attention on the framing of corporate crises. For instance, van der Meer and Verhoeven (2013), researched how the Dutch Moerdijk crisis was framed by news media and the public, emphasizing on the starting point of the crisis, and the importance of the tweets that were written at that point of time. Another example is Nijkrake et al., (2015), that studied how a major hospital bacteria outbreak in the Netherlands was framed by the corporation itself and by the news media, focusing on how the corporate communication later affected how the news media discussed the crisis issue. Another relevant example is that of An and Gower (2009), that explored the different news media frames and attribution of responsibility were presented, based on different crisis types, after analyzing 247 articles covering crisis news stories during the year of 2006.

The "Live for Now" Pepsi campaign has already been investigated in certain academic articles and theses, but mostly from a communication and brand reputation standpoint (Taylor, 2017; Meister, 2019). Taylor's (2017) study focused on how the basic communication model could have helped Pepsi in this crisis, whereas Meister (2019) intended to demonstrate the real implications that crisis communication approaches have on a brand's reputation by researching Pepsi's case study. However, a research gap was discovered in the existing literature. The framing of the "Live for Now" advertisement by the online news media, and the different counter and competing frames that emerged from that framing, notably in the United States, has not been researched before, and that is the literature gap that this research aims to address.

1.3 Chapter outline

The structure of the entire research will be examined in this paragraph. The research is divided into five chapters that enable the researcher to explore the subject in depth before getting to the point of answering the research question. In the introduction chapter, the study background was introduced. The crisis issue was identified, and the research question was established. Previous knowledge on the topic was discussed, the

social relevance of the study was explained, while also the gap in the research was addressed.

In the second chapter of the study, the theoretical framework chapter, relevant theories and previous findings will be discussed in subcategories. The first subcategory will concern crisis communication. There, it will further be analyzed what a crisis is, and how it could be handled to minimize its negative effects. The second subcategory will be about news media and framing theory. The process behind how news media pick up topics will be explained, special attention will be paid to how powerful are news media in times of crisis, while which frames are usually observed when reporting corporate crises will be presented. The third section discusses competing frames, and how they can emerge in times of crises. Lastly, theory and previous knowledge about the topic of brand activism will be addressed.

The methodology chapter will first state why qualitative content analysis is suitable for this study and will be further justified. The data collection, sampling, and operationalization of the method will be analyzed. Also, the validity and the reliability of the study will be addressed.

Then, in the results section, which consists of the fourth chapter of the research, the results that occurred after the data analysis will be presented, while connections will also be made to the theory that was previously discussed. Also, a discussion about the results of the research will be included.

Finally, in the final chapter, the conclusions that have been made from the research will be discussed, and an answer will be given to the research question. The chapter will end with the implications of the results, the limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this section, relevant theoretical approaches, and previous empirical research will be further analyzed. To be more specific, first, theory about corporate crises will be presented. More specifically, in order to better comprehend the ''Live for Now'' commercial crisis, it will be addressed what exactly a corporate crisis is, how it could affect a company's reputation at the eyes of the stakeholders, and possible crisis response tactics that the company in crisis can utilize. Afterwards, theory about news media and framing theory will be reviewed, and in greater detail, more information will be given on how frames work and operate, news value, and on which frames most commonly appear in the news when reporting corporate crises. The third concept will be competing frames, where it will be analyzed which exactly are the competing frames that could emerge during a corporate crisis, and how they can affect the readers' opinions, and lastly the topic of brand activism, as well as details around authentic brand activism will be considered.

2.1 Corporate crisis

Organizations are supposed to behave in certain ways, according to neo-institutional theory, and more specifically, act in ways that are compatible with social norms/expectations (Allen and Caillouet, 1994, as cited in Coombs, 2006). Only when they follow these rules and fulfill these standards, they are considered legitimate (Coombs, 2006), and eventually are able to avoid social scrutiny (Finet, 1994). A breach of these social norms/expectations is a common starting point for corporate crises (Coombs, 2006). Corporate crises are defined as "specific, unexpected, and non-routine events or series of events that [create] high levels of uncertainty and threat or perceived threat to an organization's high priority goals" (Seeger et al., 1998, p. 233). Coombs (2007), also noted the unexpected aspect of corporate crises, however, further added their characteristic to interrupt the organization's activities while also posing a financial and reputational risk.

A reputation is a collective assessment made by stakeholders, of how well an organization meets the stakeholders' expectations based on their previous actions (Wartick, 1992, as cited in Coombs, 2007). Reputation is of great value for an organization, as if it gets shifted from favorable to unfavorable, it can affect how stakeholders interact with the organization itself (Coombs, 2007). A

favorable reputation perception could bring several advantages to an organization, such as attracting superior employees, managing to charge higher prices on the market (Carmeli & Tishler, 2005), and trust (Doorley & Garcia, 2020), however, an unfavorable one may lead to stakeholders cutting ties with the organization or even spreading damaging information about it (Coombs, 2007). Nowadays, that social media have proven to be an essential part of our daily lives, further attention has been drawn to reputation management as the concept of ''citizen journalist'' has risen, resulting in companies no longer being in total "control" of the communication messages around their brand (Doorley & Garcia, 2020). This concept could have both negative and positive aspects for the organization. On the one hand, Aula (2010) argued that it common for users to extensively share unconfirmed information online, in some cases significantly different from the information that the organization shares, a phenomenon that leaves organizations considerably more exposed to reputational risks. On the other hand, Doorley and Garcia (2020) highlighted the value of organizations tracking their brand reputations by observing the conversations that are happening online, in real-time, which can prove to be a big asset for the company, as the first step of building engagement with the stakeholders is by first ''listening'' to them. This process could prove valuable with keeping stakeholders satisfied, as well as helping organizations quickly interact when problems or opportunities arise, finally leading to improved reputation management (Doorley & Garcia, 2020).

Stakeholders are defined as all the groups of people who are impacted by an organization's operations in some way (Freeman, 1984), such as members of the community, customers, stockholders, employees, and suppliers (Coombs, 2007). All these different stakeholder groups can be threatened on a physical, emotional, and financial level from a crisis (Coombs, 2007), and thereby it is essential for organizations to find the most effective way to communicate with them, in order to maintain their relationship and also their own corporate image (Stephens & Malone, 2009).

Benoit (1997) has indicated some suggestions about how organizations should act when facing a crisis, beginning from the preparation phase, until the point of facing the crisis. The first step is for somebody within the organization to lead the crisis management operations, being wisely prepared for every kind of potential crisis, and composing possible response plans (Benoit, 1997). Issues and crises are separate terms, as issues can be warnings for a possible crisis, and issue management can be seen as a useful method for averting a crisis (Jaques, 2014). Besides, Coombs and Holladay (2012) discuss the concept of ''paracrisis'', which is identified as a visible to the public crisis threat that accuses a company of reckless or unethical behavior, however, has not developed into an actual crisis. According to Tombs and Smith (1995) before the rise of the crisis, there is the incubation stage, which is of major importance to the whole process. Nevertheless, once a crisis arises, it is crucial to understand the essence of the crisis, as well as the target audience to which the

organization will address to, as tailoring a message is an important aspect of persuasion (Benoit, 1997).

Once all these steps are accomplished, the final step of repairing the image takes place (Benoit, 1997). In the article by Benoit (1997), several general recommendations are given, about how a corporate image could be repaired effectively. These steps are important to be noted as the article by Benoit (1997) is one of the first ones that discuss image repairing techniques. First, since image restoration is a type of persuasive discourse, suggestions for how to make it more efficient can be drawn from a general understanding of persuasion, which means that general rules, such as avoid making false statements, avoid arguments that could go wrong, etc., can be applied (Benoit, 1997). Regarding persuasion, Soules (2015) highlighted the importance of language in rhetoric, which could also be applied in the importance of using the appropriate language during the image restoration process. Secondly, if the organization is responsible for the crisis, they should admit it instantly, not only for ethical reasons but also because refusing truthful allegations could easily backfire, resulting in the organization hurting its trustworthiness (Benoit, 1997). However, in some cases, shifting the blame, or projecting reasons that are beyond the organization's control could prove to be a successful strategy of image repair (Benoit, 1997). Furthermore, in case of admitting responsibility, reporting plans to fix and/or avoid repetition of the issue may be of critical importance, as the audience often needs to be aware of the efforts that have been made to remove or avert future issues (Benoit, 1997; Coombs, 2007). Nonetheless, these correctional plans cannot always guarantee success (Benoit, 1997). Subsequently, Benoit (1997) noted that trying to diminish the issue of crisis might not be effective, while finally arguing that there are several cases that persuasion, unfortunately, cannot fix. These suggestions are of great importance, as they have served as the base for future researchers to rely on their studies on crisis response strategies.

Corporate image and reputation are critical in the stakeholders' eyes, as they can impact their ability to give or deny support to the organization (Gray & Balmer, 1998). There have been several theories that help organizations find the most appropriate communication message in times of crisis. To begin with, the Image Restoration Theory, as presented by Benoit (1997), is based on first considering the nature of the attacks or allegations that triggered the corporate crisis. The basic concepts of this theory, that need to be considered in order to form a suitable response message, are first, that negative perceptions are created only when an organization is held responsible for a situation, secondly, that what people perceive as the truth is more important than what actually happened, thirdly, whether major stakeholder groups consider the act offensive, and lastly, which are the stakeholder groups that need to be confronted (Benoit, 1997). Similarly, the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), as presented by Coombs (2007), is a more recent,

empirically tested framework that helps predict how stakeholders will react to different response strategies, and consists of three main parts, the crisis issue, the crisis response strategies, and a way of pairing the crisis issue with the response strategies. Regarding the crisis situation, SCCT divides crisis types into three different clusters, based on responsibility (Coombs, 2006). The first one is the victim cluster, such as in cases of natural disasters and rumors, where the organization itself is also a victim (Coombs, 2006). Then there is the accidental cluster, where the behavior that led to the crisis was unintended (Coombs, 2006). Lastly, the preventable cluster, where the company purposefully put people in danger, and engaged in inappropriate behavior, or broke a law or regulation (Coombs, 2006). The main idea is that crises that belong in the same cluster will share fundamental characteristics, allowing crisis managers to use a single crisis plan to address a group of crises (Coombs, 2006).

Using a response strategy is vital when a corporate crisis emerges. Crisis response strategies are employed to restore the brand's reputation and decrease the negative effect of the crisis (Coombs, 2007). What should be emphasized at this point, is that the first response from the organization's side should include the instructing information, which is all the important information that stakeholders need to know immediately (Coombs, 2006). These comprise of firstly, the main details around the crisis, secondly, in case of dangerous consequences, how they can protect themselves, and lastly, what are the organization's actions to fix the crisis (Bergman, 1994; Coombs, 1999; Sturges, 1994, as cited in Coombs, 2006). Concerning the basic response strategies, various studies discuss the different possibilities (Coombs, 2006; Coombs, 2007; Benoit, 1997; Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Cornelissen, 2020). Benoit (1997) focused on the various message options by the organizations and identified five strategies: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness of event, corrective action, and mortification. A few years later, Coombs (2006) based his research on SCCT and identified three main response options: deny, diminish, and deal. The deny response attempts to demonstrate that either there is no crisis issue or that the company is not held responsible for the crisis, aiming to reduce the reputational risk that the crisis poses (Coombs, 2006). This response consists of three subcategories, which are attack the accuser, denial, and scapegoat (Coombs, 2006). In the diminish response, the company acknowledges that a crisis has arisen, but seeks to adjust stakeholders' crisis perceptions in order to minimize the reputational harm caused by it and is comprised by the excuse and justification option (Coombs, 2006). Lastly, the deal response can be perceived as attempts to reshape the company's image by specifically addressing how stakeholders view the organization's attempts to redefine its reputation (Coombs, 2006). According to Coombs (2006), the deal response includes the ingratiation, concern, compassion, regret, and apology subcategories. The article from Coombs (2006), also focuses on the next important part of

SCCT, which is how exactly stakeholders access these different response strategies. The research revealed that respondents interpreted the crisis response strategies as intended, in terms of both crisis accountability and victim assistance (Coombs. 2006). Cornelissen (2020), also presented a list of possible strategies, based on the company's level of responsibility. First, if the company is thought to have a low level of responsibility, then the company could select between the non-existence strategies, and more specifically between denial, clarification and attack and intimidation, between distance strategies, that include excuse and downplay, between association strategies, which are bolstering and transcendence, and lastly between the suffering strategy, which comprises of victimization (Cornelissen, 2020). On the contrary, Cornelissen (2020), suggested that in case the company is held highly responsible for the crisis, then it could either choose between an acceptance strategy, such as full apology, remediation, and repentance, or between an accommodative strategy, and more specifically rectification.

Crises are characterized by high levels of uncertainty, and therefore generate stress to stakeholders (Coombs, 2007). Information is of major importance during crises (Coombs 2007; Nijkrake et al., 2015), and without prompt information, rumors are likely to dominate the crisis conversation, create growing confusion and aggravate the situation (Veil & Ojeda, 2010). During a crisis and during the recovery/resolution period, corporate communication can help reduce negative media press and control impressions (Ritchie, Dorell, Miller, & Miller, 2004, as cited Nijkrake, 2015). Therefore, organizations may use different ways to favorably frame the crisis issue and reduce the damage to the organization's reputation (Nijkrake, 2015). These frames are then circulated to different media outlets through press releases or news releases, provided by the organization, which seeks to highlight certain situations or provide a specific explanation of the event, hoping that media can republish the information to reach a wider audience (Gilpin, 2008, as cited in Nijkrake, 2015). Nevertheless, the way that the crisis is addressed, and the actions that the organization takes, can affect the way the public perceives the crisis (Coombs, 2007), and therefore how news media write about it. However, the study from Nijkrake et al. (2015) pointed out that when an organization responds to a crisis in a specific way, that does not guarantee that news media will also adopt this frame.

An and Gower (2009) specifically researched what news media tend to emphasize when addressing corporate crises. Their results were that news media mostly seem to attribute the blame to individuals or organizations, and mostly focus on attributing the responsibility to one or the other. They also discovered that the next most frequent frames used, are the ones that highlighted the economic results from the issue, and the ones that emphasized the conflicts that emerged, while the

ones that accentuated the human factor and the morality questions around the issue seemed to not be addressed as frequently (An & Gower, 2009).

2.2 News media & framing theory

According to Coombs (2007), stakeholders rely on multiple ways to get information and form their opinions: personal experiences with the organization, mediated stories about the organization, such as news and advertising, indirect opinions from others, such as word of mouth and posts on the internet, however, the majority of information comes from news media. An interesting finding is that since the research on public opinion started, it has been found that people have low-quality opinions, if they have any at all, with high-quality opinions defining those that are firm and solid, associated with specific ideals and ethics (Chong & Druckman, 2007). These opinions could refer to any kind of issue in society, although in this study, the focus will be given on opinions on organizations. So, how do people form opinions about organizations?

The aspect of news media is of critical importance in this study. News media is a pillar institution of the democracy, as millions of people depend on it on a regular basis (Vreese, 2005). In addition, news media play an important role in crisis communication, as most of the stakeholders learn about an emerging crisis from reading the news (Coombs, 2007). News media and journalists have great power in times of crisis. First, during such times, stakeholders actively search for information about the event, the involvement of the organization with it, and in the end, make assumptions about who is responsible after assessing the press coverage (An & Gower, 2009). Press and news media have the power to strongly affect public opinion.

Shu et al. (2017) proposed that an increasing amount of people prefer social media over traditional media. The reasons behind this behavior shift, are first that news consumption on social media is ''faster'' and cheaper compared to traditional news media (Shu et al., 2017), and second, that on social media it is easier to react, share and make discussions around the issues discussed with other social media users (Stephens & Malone, 2009; Shu et al., 2017). It is also worth noting that even though social media nowadays surpasses television as the top choice for news consumption, social media news quality is inferior compared to traditional news media (Shu et al., 2017). To keep up with this change, news media channels have created official social media accounts in order to stay relevant. The rise of digital media has also proven to be beneficial for news outlets as well, as they allow journalists to get immediate feedback on their articles and whether they correspond with their readers' preferences (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017).

Framing is the process with which people conceive a specific image and idea around an issue or change the way they perceived an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007), and mainly consists of two

aspects; selection and salience (Entman, 1993). The process of framing involves selecting specific elements of a perceived truth and making them more salient in a text, in order to emphasize a certain side of the issue (Entman, 1993). By highlighting specific aspects of an issue, over others, frames help the audience make sense of this issue (Vreese, 2005). As Gamson and Modigliani (1989) stated, frames are main organizing concepts that are helpful in interpreting issues and setting which events are in dispute. Framing provides a path to describe the impact a text could have, as frame analysis illustrates the way that data from a speech or a news report could affect the consciousness of humans (Entman, 1993). Chong and Druckman (2007) suggested that as people tend to shape their views based on the values they have stored in their minds, only the views that emerge from ''strong'' frames are reachable and considered as appropriate at the given moments. However, what makes a frame "strong"? Strong frames arise from public debate, as the strongest justifications for opposing viewpoints on the subject, making them superior and more persuasive compared to other arguments (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The audience may be affected by various elements such as the strength and repetition of the frame, the external environment, and the motives that each individual may have (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

According to Coombs (2007), frames operate in two stages, frames in communication and frames in thought. Frames in communication refer to how exactly the information is portrayed in an article, meaning which exact words and phrases are being used (Coombs, 2007), while frames in thought refer to the cognitive structure that people use when processing information (Druckman, 2001). Frames in thought are partly formed by frames in communication (Coombs, 2007). To better understand this process, Entman (1993) has stated that frames have at the minimum four positions in the process of communication. First, the communicators make framing decisions consciously or unconsciously while determining what to say and use frames that are based on their personal beliefs (Entman, 1993). Then there is the text, which includes certain frames that amplify specific facts, followed by the receiver, that receives these frames and forms final opinions that may not reflect the communicator's point of view, and lastly, the culture, which is the set of popular frames that the majority of people in a social group have (Entman, 1993). These four elements are crucial to the framing process, which includes the following phases. As reported by de Vreese (2005), the first phase is called frame-building and consists of the internal and external factors of journalism that affect the structure of news frames and contribute to the final framing in the articles. The second phase is called frame-setting and is the relationship between media frames and people's prior experience and tendencies (Vreese, 2005). Therefore, news frames do not start and end only from the news media. Audiences also seem to interact with them and play a significant role in their shaping.

According to de Vreese (2005), framing has an effect on both an individual level, as it may influence someone's views on a topic, as well as on a societal level, as it could initiate social change. This influence is achieved through salience, which is a concept that was also briefly mentioned in a previous paragraph. As stated by Entman (1993), salience refers to the process through which specific pieces of information seem to stand out more, appear more important, and therefore also tend to stay in the audience's memory longer. The ways that news outlets can achieve silence is through certain positioning or repetition in the text, however, in some cases, pieces of information can also be salient if they match with the audience's beliefs, even though they may not appear in the most visible placement (Entman, 1993). According to Brunken (2006), tone is another way to affect people to think of a specific issue up in a particular way, and can importantly influence public opinion (Nijkrake, 2015). According to Nijkrake (2015), in the majority of cases that media narrate events with people involved in crises, the tone is most likely to be neutral and negative, and in very few cases, positive. In addition, as frames include or exclude specific aspects around an issue, to drive attention to or away from a topic, they play a significant part in shaping public opinion (Entman, 1993). Chong and Druckman (2007) argued that framing can have both positive and negative sides. According to the literature, framing could prove to be beneficial, as people solve collective issues by establishing common frames about their situation and deciding on the most suitable course of action (Chong & Druckman, 2007). On the other hand, in the field of public opinion, framing is associated with a negative undermeaning, as it indicates that public opinion trends are unpredictable and that political insiders can exploit common desires to suit their own purposes (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Opinions can be largely influenced by sometimes minor changes in the way a topic is presented or the details the news outlet chooses to highlight (Chong & Druckman, 2007), a phenomenon that is called ''framing effect''.

The article of Harcup and O'Neill (2017) suggested that issues that include the concepts of conflict, and shareability, amongst others, are considered to have a high news value and most probably will be picked up by the media, which is usually the case for corporate crises. People search for details about the crisis and use media stories to assess the cause of the incident and organizational responsibility for the crisis (An & Gower, 2009). It is therefore essential to see how media frame crisis events, because, through these frames, the public's perceptions of the organization are influenced (Coombs, 2006b, as cited in An & Gower, 2009). According to Entman (1993), frames influence whether people will notice a problem, how they will interpret, recall, and assess it, and lastly how they will react to it. This could result in frames affecting a significant amount of the readers; however, it is unlikely that they will affect all of them (Entman, 1993). Coombs (2007) noted that the frames used in news media coverage are the frames that the majority of stakeholders

will encounter and embrace. Furthermore, news media can either create public discussion, also known as agenda-setting, through intended coverage of events and issues (Barnes et al., 2008) or can even move a crisis to the spotlight or maintain them out of the public view (Nelkin, 1988). To better explain the concept of agenda-setting, according to de Vreese (2005), agenda-setting is mostly concerned with the significance of topics, answering the ''what'' question, while framing deals with how issues are presented, answering the ''how'' question. All things considered, it has resulted that news media and journalists have enormous power, as their day-to-day decisions could remarkably affect the receipts' image of the world (Carroll & McCombs, 2003, as cited in Nijkrake, et al., 2015).

After reviewing some relevant previous literature, the five news frames that will be further used in this thesis, as identified by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), are the frames of human interest, conflict, morality, the economic frame, and the attribution of responsibility frame. The human interest frame tries to humanize and bring an emotional aspect to the presentation of the event (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). They are an attempt to make the news more dramatic and appear more emotional, with the aim to attract and maintain the interest of the readers (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The conflict frame is utilized, to project conflict and differences of opinion amongst people, organizations, or groups (An & Gower, 2009). The morality frame places the issue in a wider context of ideals, social concepts, and religious beliefs (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), while the economic one, portrays an issue regarding the outcomes that it will have on an economic level, on individuals, organizations, groups, or countries (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Lastly, the attribution of responsibility frame is determined as the way of assigning responsibility for the cause or the solution of an issue to certain groups, individuals, or the government (Semetko & Vlakenburg, 2000). According to the findings of An and Gower (2009), when communicating a crisis, news media mostly tend to use the attribution of responsibility frame, especially when the organization is held accountable for the crisis and is thought to be able to prevent it, followed by the economic and conflict frames. The remaining two frames, which are the human interest frame and the morality frame, are not that regularly used when framing crises, however, are mostly used in specific crisis types (An & Gower, 2009).

2.3 Competing frames

To keep a story relevant and interesting, news media may often frame an incident again, however, focusing on different attributes (Miller & Riechert, 2000, as cited in Nijkrake et al., 2015). That could be the case for news media, before and after a brand's crisis response, as news media often publish new articles as soon as new information becomes known. Therefore, one news media

source can publish several articles about an issue and create competing frames around it. Competing frames are defined as the process where the public is getting exposed to multiple news frames about a specific story (Edy & Meirick, 2007, as cited in Nijkrake, et al., 2015) and therefore to different arguments around it (Hansen, 2007, as cited in Nijkrake, et al., 2015).

Competing frames could also occur when the organization frames the crisis incident in a specific way and the news media in another. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) suggested that those attempting to influence public opinion on a policy issue often compete with one another to frame the issue. When crisis managers want to present their side of the story, they either create a new frame or reinforce an established one and benefit from the fact that readers create their own story versions based on the different frames they encounter (Nijkrake et al., 2015). However, Coombs (2007), added that failure arises when news outlets and stakeholders ignore the framing of the company and use opposed frames. Nijkrake et al. (2015), researched how media outlets and the corporation itself frame a crisis event. One important result from their study is that media display the event moderately in a more negative way compared to how the company does, while also that media tend to include more stakeholders in their framing, compared to corporate communication. Therefore, Nijkrake et al. (2015), concluded that media will possibly not adopt the exact same frame as presented by the company and that even though a company may try to frame a crisis in a slightly more positive way through corporate communication, that does not necessarily mean that they could avert bad press. Coombs (2007) suggested that when managers want to create a more favorable perception towards the company, they could provide stakeholders with fresh, optimistic information of the company, or remind stakeholders of the company's previous accomplishments.

So, how do competing frames influence the readers' opinions according to previous studies? Brewer and Wise (2010) noted that readers who were introduced to one frame should have different views than those who were introduced to the other frame. However, Hansen (2007) supports that as readers get exposed to numerous frames and views, it is the public's inclination, not a particular frame, that dominates public opinion. It has been argued that when consumers are presented with competing frames and with opposing viewpoints on a subject, they will prefer the option that is more compatible with their beliefs or principles (Chong & Druckman, 2007), with their predispositions (Hansen, 2007), or the one that they find more trustworthy (Coombs, 2007). An interesting finding from Hansen's (2007) research, is also that political knowledge increases the probability of predisposition and opinion stability, meaning that the effect of competing frames will not be the same of all readers. In addition, according to the study conducted by Chong and Druckman (2007), it resulted that individual preferences are a result of previous values in combination with the respective strengths of the competing frames. Edy and Meirick (2007),

researched how the news framing around the September 11th event could influence public policy support, and found out that the opinion that audiences adopt could be strongly affected by their social group, e.g., someone who possibly could be sent to war, however, their perception of the situation has a distinct effect on policy support, not connected to their social group. What can be concluded from this study is that framing is not a simplistic process, but rather a very complex and multi-factorial one, that also cannot predict how the audiences will receive and interpret the frames presented by the news. Regarding this research, more details about the competing frames that will be analyzed can be found in Appendix A.

2.4 Brand activism and woke-washing

Nowadays, on such a competitive market, brands must meet the high expectations of millennials, as most want brands to associate themselves with something bigger, rather than just chasing profits; they want brands to care about the society they represent and the world we now live in (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017). As Vredenburg et al. (2020) noted, that the concept of doing good for others is becoming more popular, and controversial topics such as the climate crisis, Black Lives Matter, and the #MeToo campaign are acting as motivators for mainstream brands to identify social challenges and concentrate on public benefit. Brand activism is an emerging marketing move for corporations, that intend to differentiate themselves from the rest of the market, by taking a stance on political and social issues (Vredenburg et al., 2020). According to Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020), brand activism allows consumers to measure the degree of moral self-brand compatibility, and more precisely, it enables customers to decide if a company's values are compatible with their own.

Authentic brand activism is defined as a strategy that is both purpose- and values-driven, in which a brand takes a public non-neutral position on social and political matters, to create change in society and marketing success (Vredenburg et al., 2020; Kotler & Sarkar, 2017). Vrenenburg et al. (2020) conclude the four defining aspects of authentic brand activism which are first a purpose- and value-driven brand, meaning a brand purpose that is also rooted and derived from the company's core principles, second, a campaign that discusses controversial, "challenging" or ''dividing'' social or political issues, third, an issue that is traditional or liberal in nature and lastly the message and the practices that occur from the brand contribute towards this social or political issue. Establishing and communicating brand activism authenticity— described as the compatibility of a brand's specific mission and principles with their brand activism message and everyday corporate practice— emerges as vital for marketing success as well as the potential for social reform resulting from the strategy (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

However, such a tactic is highly questionable by the public and is often perceived as ungenuine and with underpinning motives (Holt, 2002, as cited in Vredenburg et al., 2020), therefore making it a potentially risky choice. Nowadays, that cancel culture is a practice that is very prominent, the risks of engaging with such a tactic are numerous. According to Ng (2020), cancel culture is an action where stakeholder retreat their support from a party that is being judged of doing something inexcusable or deeply troubling, from a social point of view. Furthermore, sometimes, stakeholders do not only retreat their support, but also, they publicly express their disagreement and dissatisfaction, which has an even bigger negative effect on the accused party. Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020), suggested that when customers highly identify with a brand, they are very willing to defend the brand when it is subjected to public criticism. Nevertheless, brands can be tempted to back down and apologize if they are put under pressure (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020).

Pepsi engaged with brand activism and produced the ''Live for Now'' commercial, however, received intense backlash for it. In case where brands receive harsh criticism on their brand activism move, this backlash not only poses a direct challenge to the brand's credibility and reputation, but also to the moral principles of customers who agree with the brand's position (Mukherjee & Althuizen, 2020). As Vredenburg et al. (2020) suggested, brand activism includes both tangible and intangible dedication to the social or political cause that is supported. Pepsi's commercial was widely accused of being unauthentic. However, that was not the only reason behind the backlash, as Pepsi was also criticized for making social and political protests appear too ''easy'' and simplistic. As a result, this incident instantly spread all over social media and news channels, and rapidly evolved into a big crisis for the organization.

3. Methodology

The research question that guides this study is ''How was the "Live for Now" Pepsi advertisement framed by the online news media in the USA?''. To answer this question a specific and clear methodology must be followed. More specifically, this chapter will first state why qualitative content analysis is suitable for this study and will be further justified. The data collection, sampling, and operationalization of the method will be analyzed. Also, the validity and reliability of the study will be addressed.

3.1 Research Design

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) proposed that qualitative research includes conceptual and practical acts that transform the reality into a sequence of depictions, in forms of interviews, notes, recordings, etc., which in the end produce a critical and realistic perspective of how the world works. In addition, according to Flick (2007), qualitative research utilizes text rather than numbers, as empirical data, begins with the concept of the social structure of the realities investigated, and is focused on how participants perceive things, in daily settings, related to the topic under investigation. Consequently, qualitative research investigates phenomena in their natural environments, aiming to understand or interpret events, based on how individuals interpret them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

This study aims to research how exactly did the news media in the USA frame the ''Live for Now'' Pepsi advertisement in 2017. The units of analysis were online articles. Furthermore, the study focused on how this framing is interpreted. Qualitative research is therefore appropriate for the study's purpose. More specifically, the method that was used to further research the topic was qualitative content analysis.

3.1.1 Qualitative content analysis

In the article of Hsieh and Shannon (2005), qualitative content analysis is described as a research method that involves a systematic categorization process of coding and detecting themes or patterns to subjectively interpret the content of text data. It highlights variety, such as

connections and differentiations between the different parts of the text that is analyzed, while it also emphasizes the issue and its context (Graneheim et al., 2017). It enables to conduct a highly detailed description of the materials that will be analyzed, helps highlight parts of the materials that will help answer the research question while it also allows retrieving both implicit and explicit meanings in the materials (Schreier, 2013).

Qualitative content analysis helps to systematically report the meaning of the qualitative data (Schreier, 2012) which is achieved by allocating consecutive parts of the selected materials, into specific codes under a bigger coding frame (Schreier, 2013). Schreier (2013) supports that the main three aspects that distinguish this method are that it reduces the amount of data, by allowing to only focus on specific aspects of meaning that relate to the research question, that it is highly systematic, by following a specific step sequence, and lastly that it is flexible, as both concept- and data-driven categories are included in the coding frame.

This method was initially used in a concept-driven way, using an initial codebook based on previous literature. According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), a deductive approach includes using previously defined frames as variables in the coding process, in order to confirm the degree to which they are present in the news. By using a concept-driven approach researchers compare the collected data to the implications of current previous theories or explanatory models concerning the subject under research (Graneheim et al., 2017). It has several advantages, such as its ease of use in larger amounts of analysis units, and its easy replication, however, it is important to be sure to include all the different frames in the initial codebook, as some of them can easily be ignored and not included in the process (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). However, during the coding process, an inductive approach was also used. According to Graneheim et al. (2017), the inductive approach seeks patterns and themes from the data, which uses to create categories and concepts, which can later be interpreted. Therefore, the researcher used a deductive approach as a starting point, and later during the trial coding and the actual coding phase, used an inductive one as well, which in the end, led to a mixed approach.

3.2 Sample and data collection

Sampling is an important aspect of any research (Flick, 2007). Data collection is critical in research since the data is intended to assist in the comprehension of the theoretical foundations (Bernard, 2002). The sampling used for this study was purposive, a method that is included in non-probability sampling. In non-probability studies, randomization is not crucial, and samples are collected in a way that does not ensure that all units in a population have an equal chance of being selected (Etikan, 2016). In purposive sampling, the researcher has the power to pick the elements of

the sample using his criteria and, in the end, including those that he assesses are the most appropriate to study the issue he wants (Sarstedt et al., 2018). Non-probability sampling methods are well established for their simplicity and affordable cost, but they are often criticized for lacking in generalizability (Acharya et al., 2013).

The study analysed online news articles related to the ''Live for Now'' crisis, published by influential, news media channels in the USA, with high readership. These news media channels were sourced from the Reuters Institute Digital News Report (Newman et al., 2017), which includes the 15 top online brands for news consumption in the United States, based on a questionnaire on 2,269 Americans. Out of these brands, not all were included in the sample, as some did not produce primary articles and were simply reproducing content from other media outlets, while others did not meet the qualifications, as they were too short, and could result in a poor answer of the research question. Amongst the 15 top brands, 3 of them were named ''Local television news online'', ''Website of local newspaper'', and ''Website of city paper'', implying that several respondents suggested that they use local news websites to follow the news. For that reason, several local outlets were also included in the sample. The sample comprised of media outlets with different ideological standpoints, in order to lead to a more well-rounded framing outlook. According to the media bias research conducted by AllSides (*Media Bias Ratings,* n.d.), it was confirmed that outlets with left, leaning left, center, leaning right and right perspectives were present in the sample. All articles were taken from the source that produced them. Some news outlet websites did not include a search button, therefore in some cases, the researcher typed relevant keywords followed by the name of the news outlet on Google and was then straight connected to the articles. What is important to note at this point is that An and Gower (2009), suggested that crises portrayal by the news is most trustworthy close to the beginning of the incident, therefore the articles that were included in the sample were limited to only one month after the crisis emerged, and more specifically were written from April 4th, 2017 until May 4th, 2017. For the purpose of this study, approximately 30-60 articles should be analysed, all of which should be above 300 words (*Methodological Guidelines Thesis Research 6th edition,* 2021*).* For this study, 47 news articles were analyzed in total, sourced from 18 different news outlets. Table 1 shows the different online media outlets that were included in the sample, and how many articles were included from each of them. The list of the different articles can be found on Appendix B.

Media Outlet	Number of Articles
Huffington Post	5
CNN.com	4
Fox News Online	4
New York Times online	2
BuzzFeed News	3

Washington Post online	8
NBC News online	3
ABC News online	1
USA Today online	3
Los Angeles Times	2
CBS San Fransisco	1
CBS Boston	1
CBS Philly	1
CBS New York	1
Chicago Tribune	1
Seattle Times	2
New York Post	3
Miami Herald	2

Table 1 Details on news media outlets and articles

Additionally, Pepsi's official press releases and responses were analysed. First, the initial Pepsi statement before the release of the advertisement was analysed, followed by the brand's statements to Teen Vogue and AdWeek on the day of the release. Lastly, Pepsi's official press release apologizing for the advertisement, and their direct Twitter response to Martin Luther's King daughter who ironically commented on the advertisement was analysed.

3.3 Operationalization

Moving on to the operationalization of the method, after reviewing the relevant steps from Schreier (2013), the following step would be to build the initial coding frame. The coding frame is located at the core of the method, should contain at least one main category and two subcategories, and should comply with the three requirements of unidirectionality, exhaustiveness, and mutual exclusiveness, as proposed by Schreier (2013). As mentioned before, the study was conducted with both a deductive and inductive approach. The initial coding frame creation began with a deductive approach, meaning that categories and subcategories emerged by reviewing previous relevant research and theory. The main categories were drawn from previous literature about news framing at times of corporate crises (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; An and Gower, 2009; Nijkrake, et al., 2015) and served as a base for the current study. In particular, these codes were the human interest frame, economic consequences frame, conflict frame, morality frame and responsibility frame codes, and their corresponding subcategories. However, as also stated above, due to the explorative notion of this study, an inductive approach was also used. During the trial coding, the later structuring of the initial coding frame was also conducted in a data-driven way, which means that additional codes emerged from subsumption summarizing (Schreier, 2013) five articles one after

another. However, during the final coding process, even more codes were inserted, the final coding frame was structured and finalized, and can be found in Appendix C.

3.4 Data analysis

Moving on to the data analysis, the first step was to prepare the data and insert all articles into a word document, which were later uploaded to the Atlas.ti data software. Since an initial coding frame had already been created, the next step was to insert the code categories and subcategories in the software and start the main analysis of the articles. Due to the concept and data-driven approach adopted for this study, the initial coding frame served as a base to the later coding frame that was enriched and adjusted during the analysis process. As the primary goal of qualitative content analysis is to adequately describe the material, just a concept-driven approach would not be sufficient, as many parts of the material would not be taken into account (Schreier, 2013). Therefore, a mixed method that includes a deductive and inductive approach is most usually used in qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2013).

The data-driven codes were created by following the subsumption summarizing strategy, as analyzed by Schreier (2013). The first step was reading the material under analysis until a fitting concept is confronted and checking whether there is a subcategory that already covers this concept. If it was already established, then it was mentally grouped under the fitting subcategory, and if not, a new subcategory was created (Schreier, 2013). This process continued until the next relevant concept was confronted, until reaching the point of saturation (Schreier, 2013). The recurring codes were directly inserted in Atlas.ti, while the researcher also kept notes of the significant findings and patterns. Throughout the analysis process, the categories and subcategories were assessed, and some changes, merges, or distinctions of codes were made, in order to have a better structure in the final coding frame.

Special attention was paid to the dominant patterns and themes that emerged during the whole analysis procedure. These patterns and themes were the ones that mostly helped draw results and finally lead to answering the research question of the study. The results from the analysis phase are extensively reported in the results chapter.

3.5 Validity and reliability

The validity and reliability of a study is of crucial importance. Validity refers to the extent that the results of the study accurately depict the phenomenon under investigation, whereas

reliability implies that in case the study was recreated, identical results would be produced (Morse & Richards, 2002, as cited in Bengtsson, 2016). When the research considers the validity and reliability throughout the research process, then he can also ensure the trustworthiness of the study. The trustworthiness of a research implies the level of trust in data, analysis, and methodologies adopted to ensure a study's quality (Polit & Beck, 2014). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the term trustworthiness includes the standards that asses the quality of qualitative studies, which comprise of the criteria of credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. Elo et al. (2014) provided a checklist that can be consulted from researchers who seek to increase the trustworthiness of their content analysis in the different phases of their research, which are the preparation, organization, and reporting phase. Regarding trustworthiness in the preparation stage, it is essential for the researcher to be sure that he used the right data collection method for his study, that the sampling strategy was the most appropriate one, and that the units of analysis are the right ones to answer his research question (Elo et al., 2014). On the organization stage, a description and explanation of how exactly the codes arose should be included (Elo et al., 2014). Furthermore, the coding frame was checked multiple times for meeting the requirements of unidimensionality, mutual exclusiveness, and exhaustiveness, as suggested by Schreier (2013). For the reporting phase, the analysis process and the results must be described in a detailed way, for readers to clearly understand the process of the analysis and its strong and weak points (GAO, 1996, as cited in Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Moreover, to amplify the reliability of the study, clear links between the results and the data must be made (Polit & Beck, 2004, as cited in Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), by describing the data analysis in a very detailed way at the results section, and by using as many appendices and tables as possible (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). All steps and decisions must be transparent, visible, and analyzed in detail throughout all the phases of the study.

4. Results and Discussions

This chapter of the research will give a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the findings. With the aim to answer the research question ''How was the "Live for Now" Pepsi advertisement framed by the online news media in the USA?'', the findings of the data analysis will be discussed, along with linkages to the study's theoretical background, in order to further enrich the results and foster discussion around the topic. This chapter's outline will be based on the most dominant patterns and themes that emerged from the data analysis and will act as umbrella concepts that will help answer the research question. The first pattern that emerged from the data is generic frames, and more specifically the attribution of responsibility and conflict that was projected in the articles. The second pattern concerns how the articles were positioned in respect to the crisis issue. The third pattern discusses morality and societal issues, while the final one concerns competing frames.

4.1 Generic frames

One of the most prominent patterns of the research were the generic frames that were observed, and in greater detail, the attribution of responsibility and conflict frames which were obvious in various places in the articles. The ''The article suggests that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/problem'' code, appeared 54 times, making it the third most frequent code in the whole sample. In addition, ''Backlash'' was the most frequent code found, appearing 80 times throughout the sample. The sample includes a variety of examples in which extra emphasis was placed on attributing responsibility and raising conflict issues, most likely in order to make the story appear more dramatic and appealing to the reader. These two frames appeared very frequently in the sample of this study, which is a results that agrees with An and Gower (2009) that found out that the attribution of responsibility and conflict frames are two of the three most common frames when news media address corporate crises. The responsibility and conflict frames of the articles will be further explained in the following section.

4.1.1 Attributing responsibility to Pepsi

As was expected, Pepsi was intensively put into the spotlight for the widely discussed ''Live for Now'' advertisement. Most of the articles and the news media, criticized Pepsi for creating, releasing, and at some point, supporting such a commercial. On the one hand, many outlets made harsh statements, like ''Pepsi deserved every single critique thrown their way'', ''But how did Pepsi take such an expensive misstep?'', and ''They screwed up'' and many more, which all demonstrated that Pepsi was the only one to be held accountable, leaving no room for doubt regarding who was to blame for the incident.

However, on the other hand, there were a few articles that highlighted that the party which was responsible for this crisis was the in-house creation studio, Creators League Studio, mostly shifting the blame on them. CNN stated:

But how did Pepsi take such an expensive misstep? All signs point to the heavily filtered corporate bubble that the thinking came out of. The spot is the work of the company's in-house agency, which perhaps wasn't as in touch with cultural realities as it thought (CNN_4).

While there were cases that attempted to mildly shift responsibility to other parties, there were also cases, such as the one of the Chicago Tribune, that expressed a completely different point of view, more focused on the bigger picture of the issue, that in the end, the Pepsi crisis was not the most crucial matter that the society was facing at the time. They stated the following: ''In the grand scheme of things, it's almost nice to have something like this to worry about in an era of (Donald) Trump.'' (Chicago Tribune_1).

Despite the fact that the majority of the articles blamed Pepsi for the situation, there were a variety of opinions, standpoints, and beliefs expressed. There were instances where media outlets were certain that Pepsi was the accountable party and reflected it in their articles, while there were other instances where outlets constructed favorable framings of the topic indicating some type of support towards Pepsi. This illustrates the range of beliefs held by different journalists, and thus the range of opinions that customers got exposed to. This is of crucial importance, because as was stated in the literature review, in times of crises stakeholders seek to learn more details on the event from the news and try to assess who is to blame based on the articles they read (An & Gower, 2009). This creates a certain perception of the company under crisis, which in the end can greatly affect how the stakeholders interact with it (Coombs, 2007).

4.1.2 Attributing responsibility to Kendall Jenner

When Pepsi selected Kendall Jenner to stare in the 'Live for Now '' Pepsi advertisement, she was already famous to the public, mostly due to the ''Keeping up with the Kardashians'' show she starred since she was a little child, as well as for her later modeling career.

Due to the fact that she was a well-known celebrity, the advertisement, and eventually the crisis issue itself, became highly associated with her. This feature was very clear in the majority of the articles of the sample, as most of them did not refer to the advertisement as the ''Live for Now'' advertisement, but as the ''Kendall Jenner's New ''Protest'' Pepsi Ad'', ''Controversial Kendall Jenner Ad'', ''widely mocked ad featuring Kendall Jenner'', ''Kendall Jenner TV ad'', and more. Since these quotes were repeatedly used in the titles and the content of the articles, Kendall Jenner became the ''face" of the problem, indirectly shifting some of the advertisement's blame on her.

This issue was also evident in the sample, as references to Kendall Jenner's personal life were made 18 times throughout the sample. This could be considered a high number since these were all stories on the Pepsi advertisement and not about Kendall Jenner. For example, one of the articles stated: ''It features young, white Jenner, a reality-TV star and model whose fame pedigree stems from being the daughter of transgender tastemaker Caitlyn (formerly Bruce) Jenner and Kris Jenner, and who claims Kim Kardashian West as a half-sibling.'' (New York Post_3).

Also, her statement to E! News prior to the release of the advertisement, where she shared how happy she was to stare in the advertisement was quoted three times throughout the sample. This phenomenon shows that the whole Pepsi crisis took a human face through Kendall Jenner, which in the end probably gave journalists a real person to blame in the whole Pepsi fiasco.

On numerous occasions Kendall Jenner got blatantly attacked by the journalists of the articles. One of the reasons behind the attack was the point in the advertisement where she offers a can of soda to the policeman, causing the protest to end and spreading joy to everyone. Many articles commented that this scene is completely unrealistic, and the majority of them focused on the model's skin color, implying that this could never have happened to a person of color. This can be showcased from the quote: ''Several Twitter users pointed out that Jenner, a white woman, could receive a much different reaction from police officers than black protesters would. '' (Miami Herald_1).

Nevertheless, Kendall Jenner was not only attacked about this scene. She was also heavily criticized for being portrayed as the victim in the whole situation. One of the articles, supported that Pepsi's public apology to her, did not make sense, as she definitely has a team that had received the storyboard of the advertisement before it was released, by saying that:

'There are photo boards of all these commercials, so they know exactly what's going to happen', says Schiffer. 'They did not enter into this in naïve fashion, it was a giant miscalculation that reared its ugly soda head on the Kardashians...This is a case when content slapped them in the face.' (USA Today_2).

However, there were cases that journalists portrayed Kendall Jenner as the victim of the situation and defended her. There was even an article that had previously conducted a poll, about whether Kendall Jenner is to blame, and stated: ''How much blame should she take for this disaster? The almost 500 respondents to our highly unscientific poll were inclined to give her a pass''. Another article wrote:

Hackett predicts the backlash will not hurt Jenner as the face of the soda company but will be a warning for marketers. 'She's just in the commercial. This isn't her fault', Hackett said of Jenner. 'I think it's going to be a cautionary tale for a lot of other marketers who have to be very careful about how they try to sell things.' (ABC News_1).

It was observed that news media made extensive use of the fact that Kendall Jenner was the main face of the Pepsi advertisement and in some cases shifted a part of the blame on her, either directly or indirectly. Coming back to the cancel culture concept that was previously mentioned in the literature review, this backlash towards Kendall Jenner was amplified even more by this trend, as more and more people targeted the supermodel for the issue. There is a debate going on these days, regarding whether canceling people and cancel culture are too ''cruel'', and as Ng (2020) mentioned, the concept of cancel culture itself has started being canceled, despite the fact that many have highlighted that the negative impact on the individuals targeted has been overstated. What is concluded, is that many people seemed to believe that Pepsi made a misstep when choosing the protagonist of a campaign that addressed such a sensitive societal topic. This choice was instantly exploited by the media, which on their own turn, picked up the issue and used it for their own advantage.

4.1.3 Conflict

Throughout the articles, statements highlighting conflict amongst different parties were commonly found. Backlash was not just the most common reaction when examining how the news media narrated how the public received the Pepsi campaign, but it was also the code that was most frequently coded throughout all the articles. That was a finding that was anticipated, as in the

literature, Coombs (2006), stated that companies that do not manage to act in a way that agrees to what the society expects, they are instantly viewed as illegitimate. In the ''Live for Now'' case, Pepsi did not behave in a way that the society agreed with, which led to intense backlash from the stakeholders.

Quotes like ''Viewers took on social media to voice their complaints with the ad'', ''People are Seriously Pissed With Kendall Jenner's New ''Protest'' Pepsi Ad'' or ''It didn't take long after the commercial was released for a lot of people on social media to push back'' were very common throughout the sample. These types of remarks demonstrated that people were upset with Pepsi when the commercial aired, and the news media widely emphasized the entire issue that arose as a result of this disagreement.

What is interesting to also state at this point, is that news media did not only use their own journalist's voice to display their disagreement with the issue, but also quoted other people's opinions. More specifically, many academics, industry professionals, celebrities and activists shared their opinions on news media articles, and in most of the times, they accused Pepsi, which again showed conflict between them and Pepsi. NBC News wrote: ''This ad trivializes the urgency of the issues and it diminishes the seriousness and the gravity of why we got into the street in the first place," activist DeRay McKesson told NBC News correspondent Gabe Gutierrez.'' (NBC News_1).

It was clear that the whole Pepsi incident was an issue that caused a lot of controversy and was surrounded by disagreement between Pepsi and the rest of the stakeholders. What was earlier stated in the literature review, is that Harcup and O'Neil (2017) supported that topics that involve the notion of conflict, seem to have a higher news value. This could mean that news media outlets wished to promote the more dramatic aspect of issues, in order to make their articles more intriguing and interesting to readers, while also amplify the shareability of them. Therefore, it makes sense that after analyzing the sample, conflict seemed to appear everywhere in the articles, from both the side of the news media and the side of the interviewees.

4.2 Position on the crisis issue

What was very interesting to look at, was how exactly the articles and journalists positioned themselves in regard to the crisis issue. The tone journalists had when narrating the event, the stance they adopted against the issue, the interviews they got from other people, as well as their choice of which information to include and which not, were are all valuable information when analysing the research question.

4.2.1 Tone & stance

Irony was repeatedly used when describing the advertisement and narrating the issue behind the backlash. Since irony has a negative connotation, this realization agrees with the finding of Nijkrake (2015), also stated in the chapters above, that most articles that discuss crises events adopt a negative tone, and not a positive one. Irony could demonstrate that not only news media disagreed and accused the Pepsi advertisement, but also mocked and made fun of Pepsi in a way. LA TIMES quoted:

Pepsi has an idea: a can of soda, with a Kendall Jenner twist. The company's new ad manages to achieve a startling level of tone-deafness by casting Jenner — yes, Kim Kardashian West's younger sister — as a high-fashion model who bravely whips off her blond wig to join a throng of protesters and ultimately bridge the divide with white male police (LA Times_1).

Buzzfeed News and The Washington Post even published articles based on the satirical, comic sketch made by "Saturday Night Live" that depicted how the alleged director of the "Live For Now" advertisement came up with the entire concept of the advertisement. The quote below is from The Washington Post's article, and is an example of what the supposed director states during the sketch:

'Okay, so, well it's an homage to the resistance. There's this huge protest in the street, reminiscent of Black Lives Matter. So everybody's marching, right, and they get to these police officers and you think it's going to go bad because there's a standoff, and then Kendall Jenner walks in and walks up to one of the police officers and she hands him a Pepsi. And that Pepsi brings everyone together. Isn't that like the best ad ever?' (The Washington Post_7).

By applying severe irony in the articles, a sense of having zero respect to Pepsi was created. As was previously discussed, tone is a very significant way to alter people's perceptions on particular issues (Brunken, 2006). Quotes like the ones above were evident in most of the articles, although they were not always backed by serious language and well-researched arguments and opinions. However, articles that contained irony, may appear ''stronger'' and more judgmental to the public's eyes, and could possibly have a more significant effect on them, by influencing their opinion more intensively.

In the whole sample of 47 articles, only two of them did not actively take a stance, and just neutrally discussed the Pepsi advertisement and the whole confusion around it. Opinionated articles may look more appealing to the public, as one of the reasons why people read online news is to find with different opinions of different people. Therefore, news media want to publish articles that have some kind of ''personality'' and are not just a report of the news, as this element is what consumers are looking for, and what will ultimately make an outlet stand out and get the readers' attention.

4.2.2 Interviews from other people

As previously indicated, numerous stories chose to incorporate not only the journalist's views, but also the opinions of additional interviewers. Interviews with industry professionals appeared in the papers 20 times, interviews with well-known people occurred 12 times, and interviews with academics and activists appeared 6 and 5 times, respectively.

The most common quotations came from industry specialists, who work in the marketing and advertising industries and are thus extremely familiar with the crisis situation and can more thoroughly assess where exactly the commercial went wrong. Due to their own experience, professionals stated many different and interesting opinions, such as the following one from LA Times, which gave readers a more credible opinion on the issue and a different point of view:

'I think [Pepsi] played it the way they intended to,' said Eric Schiffer, the chairman of Reputation Management Consultants, an online firm that does brand management. He said the net effect of the ad was positive 'because the world's talking about it.' (LA Times_2).

Famous and well-known people, on the other hand, are unlikely to offer the most credible viewpoint on the issue; yet, news media sites choose to include their interviews, possibly to spark the readers' interest. SNL's Beck Bennett and Kyle Mooney, Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel, Kumail Nanjiani, and Madonna, among others, made comments about the Pepsi crisis, which were eventually reproduced by the news sources. Indicatively, USA Today quoted:

The late-night comic host Jimmy Kimmel was one of many to wonder what Pepsi was thinking. 'The fact that this somehow made it through, I can't imagine how many meetings, and edits, and pitches, and then got the thumbs-up from who knows how many people is absolutely mind-boggling,' he said Wednesday on his show, Jimmy Kimmel Live! (USA Today_3).

On the other hand, academics offered a more sophisticated and well-based point of view on the situation.

> The message missed its mark widely with its target audience, said Tim Calkins, a marketing professor at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. 'There's an issue with authenticity,' Calkins said. 'The reason this one is getting people riled up is that it comes across as so inauthentic at a time when authenticity is so important, particularly for young people.' (Chicago Tribune_1).

Chicago Tribune issued the preceding remark, presenting the opinion of a marketing professor, an opinion that instantly added value to the outlet's reasoning, and thus quickly increased their value in the eyes of the readers.

What can be concluded from all the above is that each media outlet attempted to support their arguments and points of view with interviews with people whose opinions mattered, and whose views could enrich the final story. In the literature chapter, it was mentioned that according to Chong & Druckman (2007), opinions can heavily be impacted by tiny changes in the way an issue is presented or the facts that a news media choose to emphasize, a phenomenon known as the "framing effect''. The reason why so many news media sources sought to support their opinions could be due to the fact that it made the story look more well-rounded, provided an extra layer of relevance to the article, and increase their influence.

4.2.3 Choice of what to include

What was generally recognized was the value of what news media outlets decided to include and exclude from their stories. As discussed earlier in the study, organizations try to use favoring frames in their own communication, which then tries to pass around in forms of press releases, in the hope that media outlets will republish the information (Gilpin, 2008, as cited in Nijkrake, 2015). However, according to Nijkrake (2015), just because an organization answers to a crisis in a certain way does not mean that the news media will follow that example.

To be more precise, Pepsi's apology press release was coded 27 times, while the defense statements that Pepsi gave to magazines were coded 13 times. This is a relatively large number of frequencies and given that the majority of the articles did not attempt to defend Pepsi, it is possible that the news media included these statements to enrich their stories, provide the entire

background story to the readers, or simply support Pepsi. An example of such a quote from an article, is the one below:

> In a statement to Entertainment Weekly, a Pepsi spokesperson claimed the ad ultimately conveyed an "important" message. "This is a global ad that reflects people from different walks of life coming together in a spirit of harmony, and we think that's an [important] message to convey," they said. Speaking to Teen Vogue, the company said: 'The creative showcases a moment of unity, and a point where multiple storylines converge in the final advert. It depicts various groups of people embracing a spontaneous moment and showcasing Pepsi's brand rallying cry to 'Live For Now,' in an exploration of what that truly means to live life unbounded, unfiltered and uninhibited.' (New York Post_1).

Some articles that seemed to be supportive of Pepsi primarily highlighted the apology statement issued by Pepsi and did not address the backlash received from the stakeholders. On the other hand, stories that appeared to be strongly opposed to the campaign and aimed to further damage Pepsi's reputation featured many ironic tweets from consumers, viewpoints from other people who were similarly against Pepsi, and maybe did not include Pepsi's apologetic statement. It is therefore confirmed what was also stated during the literature, that some articles choose specific components and emphasize them to amplify a particular side of an issue (Entman, 1993), which in the end, can assist the audience in making sense of a crisis (Vreese, 2005).

4.3 Morality and Societal issues

The theme that will be further explained in this section, is a theme that emerged from the number of times the journalists initiated a conversation about moral, societal, or political issues. These issues were expected to be widely discussed in the articles, as the ''Live for Now'' advertisement is based on the marketing strategy of brand activism, which as a tactic itself, is based on expressing an opinion on political and social problems, in order to stand out from the rest of the brands (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

4.3.1 Morality

The topic of morality came up several times throughout the articles. The whole concept behind the advertisement made it very easy for news outlets to question whether airing the ''Live for Now'' advertisement was morally the right choice or not. As was already mentioned in the literature, brand activism is very doubtful in the eyes of the public, it is frequently viewed as not

genuine and motivated by hidden goals, making it a slightly dangerous choice for brands (Holt, 2002, as cited in Vredenburg et al., 2020). This statement seems to be confirmed by several news media outlets included in the research's sample. The code ''The story makes a reference to morality'' was amongst the top 5 codes in the sample, coded a total of 44 times. NBC News stated:

> The act of protest is not a marketing strategy, and there is no way to reenact the danger, the life-threatening circumstances one submits to while "on-the-ground". The sacrifices we each make are in hopes of creating a freer future for the Black people that will come after us, not for the benefit of Pepsi and Kendall Jenner. Knowing this, it is impossible to create an ad like Pepsi's without either an extreme interest in the oppression of Black people, or an extreme interest in profiting from it. But then, profiting on the backs of anti-Black violence is a symptomatic pattern in capitalism, and Pepsi's not the only one cutting checks (NBC News_3).

The Washington Post also mentioned:

> 'Corporations like Pepsi should make political statements. But their statements shouldn't distort political realities to generate revenue,' Khaled Beydoun, a law professor and scholar of critical race theory at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, wrote on Twitter (The Washington Post_3).

Apparently, what seemed to mostly annoy the majority of news media outlets is that the ''Live for Now'' advertisement did not seem authentic and with the intention of truly initiating societal change. Many articles suggested that Pepsi's advertisement appropriated the current political situation and the Black Lives Matter movement. Similar comments to this one were coded 44 times throughout the sample. News media outlets supported that Pepsi had never shown any kind of interest in the Black Lives Matter movement and has never been a part of conversations around political and social issues. Therefore, according to the articles analyzed, journalists and consumers immediately accused the soda company of doing it for publicity. This agrees with Vredenburg et al. (2020), who supported that what is crucial for the success of a brand activism marketing campaign, is to make sure that the brand philosophy is tightly connected to the cause the brand wishes to publicly support. Chicago Tribute quoted:

Many posters had a different take, saying Pepsi was co-opting the Black Lives Matter movement and making light of issues that have mobilized political resistance in recent years (Chicago Tribune_1).

Furthermore, the exact point of the advertisement depicting Kendall Jenner approaching police officers and handing them a Pepsi, raised moral concerns, and generated multiple discussions about how this image trivialized not only social justice movements, but also all the previous efforts and protests for human rights, that have been made in the past. These types of statements were coded 21 times in the whole sample. Buzzfeed News stated that:

The protest alluded to 'emotional events and very significant issues that affect the core of American society,' brand consultant Dean Crutchfield told BuzzFeed News. 'They piggybacked on a crusade and didn't have permission to do so. People found it tasteless and crass. It was trivializing grief.' (Buzzfeed News_2).

Such claims, that included a reference to morality, were extensively mentioned in the articles. According to An and Gower (2009), the morality frame is not widely used when news media frame corporate crises. However, the findings of this study contradict this assumption, as the morality frame was a frequently used frame by the news media outlets.

4.3.2 Societal and political issues

The Black Lives Matter movement was repeatedly brought up as a topic by the news media outlets. As seen in the previous section, the advertisement got widely attacked for apparently appropriating and trivializing social justice movements. In addition, background information on the Black Lives Matter movement were given 12 times throughout the articles. This could indicate that several journalists wanted to provide further information on it because they believed it was closely related to the Pepsi advertisement that they were covering in the first place. It is also worth noting that in the vast majority of times, that a reference to the Black Lives Matter movement was made, it was followed with an ironic or "hurtful" tone towards Pepsi. Seattle Times quoted:

But if you think it was the worst insult Black Lives Matter suffered last week, then you weren't paying attention. Not that the ad wasn't revolting. Imagine that, three years after the police shooting of a black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri, ignited protests by African Americans sick of seeing their sons and daughters killed without cause or consequence, you

turn on the television and see a protest march. Except, it's a curiously color-coordinated crowd carrying curiously color-coordinated signs that say almost literally nothing. 'Join the conversation!?' What does that even mean? (Seattle Times_2)

Furthermore, the comment made by Martin Luther King's daughter about the commercial was widely reported and reproduced by the media. That specific comment was very critical in the Pepsi crisis timeline, as Martin Luther King represents a symbol of black history and the civil rights struggles fought by black people, and therefore could have a great impact on whoever came across it on the news. CBS Boston quoted:

The ad makers say they just wanted to show people 'coming together in a spirit of harmony,' but they should have gotten a consult from Dr. Martin Luther King's daughter first. 'If only Daddy would have known about the power of #Pepsi,' she tweeted (CBS Boston_1).

According to Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020), when brands feel like they are under a lot of pressure, they may feel inclined to ask the public for forgiveness. This is precisely what Pepsi did after seeing Bernice King's comment. Pepsi apologized through a Twitter post, by directly responding to Bernice King, stating that they did not mean to disrespect Dr. King and that they honor his legacy (Pepsi, 2017).

Several news outlets also noted the striking resemblance between the scene of Kendall Jenner approaching the police officers and Ieshia Evans, a lady who protested at a Baton Rouge protest. During the protest, an iconic photograph of hers was taken, in which she stands peacefully in front of the police officers, doing nothing but simply standing her ground. The fact that Pepsi featured Kendall Jenner in a scene that bore a remarkable resemblance to that photo was not well received by the news media. Washington Post quoted:

Jenner's role in the commercial echoes the iconic photograph of Ieshia Evans, the black woman in a flowing sundress who stood facing riot police in Baton Rouge while protesting the shooting death of Alton Sterling. Except Jenner is white. And wealthy. Daughter of one of the most superficial families in Hollywood who has not, on reality television or social media anyway, put her life on the line to protest any of the issues being highlighted by Black Lives Matter (The Washington Post_3).

Such comments and references put a real-life protestor example to the whole backlash and were very often used by the news. Quotes that identified the resemblance between Kendall Jenner and Ieshia Evans were coded 17 times throughout the sample.

4.4 Competing frames

The final theme of the analysis concerns the different frames that emerged between media and Pepsi, between the different news media outlets, and finally, within the same news media outlets with the passing of time.

4.4.1 Between media and Pepsi

As was also stated in the introduction, on April 4th, together with the release of the ''Live for Now'' advertisement, Pepsi published an initial press release, which included introductory information and details on the advertisement, the message they wanted to pass through, as well as quotes from both Kendall Jenner and Skip Marley (PepsiCo, 2017a). Parts of this press release were coded 11 times throughout the sample. On the day of the release, the crisis had just started to burst, and only five articles that met the criteria of this study were written. However, what seemed interesting is that out of these five articles, only one of them included the initial press release statement, and only one of them just reported the news of the new advertisement without criticizing it. Also, it is worth mentioning that most of these five articles had an ironic tone, took an active stance against the issue, and already started discussing the social and political concerns that surrounded the issue.

On the day of the release, and as soon as the crisis first started to arise, Pepsi proceeded to support the commercial with statements they gave to several online magazines. On a statement to Teen Vogue, Pepsi stated:

> The creative showcases a moment of unity, and a point where multiple storylines converge in the final advert. It depicts various groups of people embracing a spontaneous moment and showcasing Pepsi's brand rallying cry to 'Live For Now,' in an exploration of what that truly means to live life unbounded, unfiltered and uninhibited (De, 2017).

In addition, as New York Post stated, on another statement to E Entertainment, Pepsi said: ''This is a global ad that reflects people from different walks of life coming together in a spirit of harmony, and we think that's an [important] message to convey.'' (New York Post_1). The defense

statements that Pepsi gave to magazines were quoted only 13 times in the 47 articles that were analyzed. This could be considered a relatively low number, which may depict that news media did not seem willing to adopt the frame that Pepsi was promoting. As was mentioned during the literature chapter and is now confirmed by the results of this study, is that as Nijkrake (2015) stated, companies try to frame an issue in a more positive way compared to the press, however this positive framing does not always imply that they can avoid negative press, due to the fact that the media will not necessarily embrace the specific frame.

On April 5th, Pepsi decided to pull the ad. A press release was published, stating that Pepsi apologizes to everyone that may got offended, including Kendall Jenner. They also shared the same post on Twitter, and also directly apologized to Martin Luther King's daughter. The apology press release was coded 27 times throughout the articles. In this statement, Pepsi admitted to making a mistake by publishing the advertising and accepted responsibility for the entire incident. As a result, the fairly high frequency with which news media sources reproduced this comment could be explained by the fact that it was such a valuable piece of information in the overall crisis timeline that they wanted to include it.

4.4.2 Between the different news media outlets

This section examines whether and how various news outlets presented the crisis issue in different ways. Surprisingly, there were no news media outlets that reported the issue in a radically different approach than others. The majority of the outlets voiced the same ideas and had the same views on the subject. While most articles had a negative perception on the topic, there were no articles supporting Pepsi and the "Live for Now" advertisement. However, on an couple of occasions, it was seen that some news websites did not express an opinion on the story but instead repeated opinions and quotes from other people, maintaining a neutral stance on the topic. These outlets established a frame, but not in a proactive manner. Such an example, could be from CNN, that stated:

> The imagery was also thought by some to be far too similar to photos of Ieshia Evans, a protester who was detained by law enforcement while protesting in Baton Rouge following the shooting death of Alton Sterling at the hands of police (CNN_1).

Words and phrases such as "was thought by some" and "The ad was quickly accused of" may indicate that certain sources did not want to voice their own view about the advertisement proactively. Rather, they preferred to replicate the views of others. On the contrary, several news

outlets actively shared their perspectives and publicly spoke their minds. For example, the Huffington Post said the following:

> The Arabic word for "love" was also written wrong on a poster. I mean, c'mon. Who wouldn't hate such a cynical attempt to profit off diversity and social movements by way of a member of the Kardashian clan? No one, it ends up (The Huffington Post_2).

According to what was stated in the theory, when readers get confronted with competing frames and conflicting opinions on an issue, they will most likely favor the choice that is more aligned with their values or ideals (Chong & Druckman, 2007). However, on our case, there was no different framing of the issue, and therefore the reader did not have to choose the frame that mostly suited their personal beliefs.

4.4.3 Between the same news media outlets

Finally, several news outlets published several articles in the first month following the release of the "Live for Now" advertisement. The Huffington Post case is particularly interesting as it is one of the news media sources that published several articles on the subject, while simultaneously changing their approach to the subject over time. Two articles were released on the 5th of April, one on the 6th, one on the 13th, and a last one on the 19th. The first two articles, published just one day after the release, were overly critical and judgmental, while also very focused on the political concerns that were raised from the ad. However, on the 6th of April, two days after the ''Live for Now'' release, the media outlet appeared to tackle the matter in a more relaxed manner, as they published an article about a real-life incident of a protestor handing a Pepsi soda to the Oregon mayor, that still criticized Pepsi but not in such an intense way compared to the previous two. A very interesting note is that on the 13th of April, The Huffington Post even posted a whole article about how some people actually seemed to like the ad, even presenting numerical data to support this claim. Then, on April 19th, the source's last post included several examples from brands that had previously faced comparable issues to the one that Pepsi was having at the time.

Fox News Online is another noteworthy example of the various counter frames that it constructed. Despite the fact that they never aggressively opposed Pepsi and never wrote anything negative about them, they nonetheless published five pieces on the subject. More specifically, on the day of the release, they wrote a very generic narrative piece, just announcing the new commercial, on April 5th they again created a narrative article, also explaining that Pepsi pulled the ad. A few days after, on the 28th of April and on the 3rd of May they shared more generic article, one

with a Heineken advertisement that also received backlash in the past, and one with the real-life Oregon protestor incident.

What was concluded from these observations, is that several news media outlets took advantage of the issue and reproduced it again and again, by approaching it from different angles, in order to fully benefit from the publicity that the whole crisis took. It was therefore supported that to keep a story alive and entertaining, news media may reframe an incident, concentrating on specific perspectives of it (Nijkrake, 2015). Another conclusion drawn from these findings is that even though there were exceptions, most news outlets were most opinionated and judgmental towards the beginning of the crisis, but after a few days began focusing and writing about different angles of the issue, as well as more generic ideas mildly associated with the topic, in order to keep the story fresh.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore how the "Live for Now" Pepsi advertisement was framed by the news media in the USA. More specifically, for this purpose, 47 articles from 18 different news media outlets were coded, by using the method of qualitative content analysis. In this last chapter, firstly, the study's findings will be presented in a way that answers the research question. Then, the theoretical and societal implications of the study will be explained. Finally, the limitations of the research will be highlighted, and some future research suggestions will be given.

5.1 Main findings

The first point that can be concluded from the research, is that the two most often used frames in the articles, when framing the ''Live for Now'' Pepsi advertisement, were the attribution of responsibility frame and the conflict frame. This completely agrees with the findings of An and Gower (2009), that also supported that these two frames, together with the economic one, were the most used frames when news media discussed corporate crises. In the majority of cases, most news media outlets were heavily opinionated regarding the issue, and the responsibility was attributed to Pepsi itself, as media criticized the brand for releasing such content. What is notable, is how much Kendall Jenner became associated with the crisis. As she was the protagonist of the commercial, she also became the ''main face'' of the crisis issue. Her name was used in every single article in the sample, and most of the news media framed the story in a way that made her share the blame with Pepsi. The concept of cancel culture, which has been discussed in the literature, may play a key role in this, as crises are now exaggerated even more by this trend, and brands, as well as people are easily sabotaged by the public. In addition, due to the incident that caused the crisis, conflict was apparent in most of the articles. This conclusion was expected, as Coombs (2006) supported that when brands cannot act in a way that stakeholders expect them to, then conflict emerges.

It was also concluded that certain articles had significant differences in their stance on the issue and the opinions they provided. When narrating the situation, most articles employed an ironic tone and took an aggressive stance against the soda company. This discovery also agrees with what was stated in the literature, that in most cases, crises are framed in a negative way (Nijkrake, 2015). In addition, during the framing of the ''Live for Now'' advertisement, many interviews from other people were used in the articles. This showcases that sometimes minor details in news media pieces can heavily affect the way that a reader perceives an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Furthermore, what was noteworthy, was how intensively, the concepts of morality, politics, and societal issues were discussed throughout the articles. This was an expected finding, as the concept behind this advertisement was closely linked to a political theme. According to Vredenburg et al. (2020), brand activism can prove to be a tricky marketing strategy, as many times it is viewed ungenuine, a fact that was supported by the results of this study. Since the message behind the ''Live for Now'' advertisement was not presented in an appropriate way, the discussion of morality quickly came into the picture. It is important to say, that in this study, the morality frame was extensively used in the articles, which contradicts the finding of An and Gower (2009), who found out that it case of corporate crises, it was not that frequently used. Also, the Black Lives Matter movement and people connected to it, were prominent in most of the articles. In detail, Martin Luther King's daughter and the comment she made, as well as Ieshia Evans and the resemblance of Kendall Jenner's scene with her iconic photo, were repeatedly brought up by the different news media sources.

Finally, what is important, in order to answer the research question, is that most news media outlets did not seem to adopt the frame that was used by Pepsi itself. It was confirmed that, even though companies may try to shift the conversation to the way they want to, by using specific frames in their communication, that does not mean that news media will follow this path as well (Nijkrake, 2015). In the case of this study, news media seemed to frame the crisis in a more negative way compared to Pepsi itself. Moreover, even though, on the literature it was extensively discussed how possible it is for news media outlets, to express different opinions on the same issue, this was not the case for the Pepsi commercial. Almost all outlets seemed to adopt the same opinion when framing the crisis issue. Additionally, regarding the competing frames, it is noteworthy, that as the time passed, the same news media reproduced the Pepsi crisis again and again, but by approaching it from a different angle, in order to keep the story fresh and alive. This finding also verified Nijrkake's (2015) claim that this practice is popular among news media outlets amid company crises.

5.2 Theoretical and societal implications

Looking back at the literature that was presented as a base for this study, it can be stated that most of the findings of this study, are in accordance with the previous knowledge that has been written on this topic. The frames that An and Gower (2009) supported as the main frames occurring when news media frame corporate crises, were mostly aligned with the main frames that were found in this research. However, there were two main differences. The first one was regarding the economic frame, which was not present in the articles of this study, however, An and Gower (2009) claimed that it was one of the most common frames used. The second difference was that An and Gower (2009), included the conflict frame in the list of the least used frames, however, in this study, it was one of the most commonly coded frames. Besides, Coombs's (2006) finding, that backlash occurs as soon as companies do not act as what the society accepts as the "correct" way, was also confirmed thought this study. Importantly, Nijkrake's (2015) conclusion, that news media tend to frame the crises more negatively compared to companies, was proved to be true based on the present research as well. The practice of brand activism, and the importance of only using it when the connection between the cause and the company is strong and real (Vredenburg et al., 2020) was also highlighted by the results of this thesis. Lastly, as Nijkrake (2015) supported, the fact that news media outlets publish multiple articles on one topic, focusing on different angles, in order to keep the story interesting and appealing to the readers, was also confirmed through this research.

This study made an important contribution to the existing knowledge of corporate crises and the news media framing that can arise because of them. As stated in the beginning, in case a brand commits a misstep and finds itself in a crisis, it is important to understand which frames the news media will use to discuss the company crisis, and in which tone they will address it. Additionally, all the information on the competing and counter frames, can prove to be very critical in case of crises, as through this study, the frames that emerge within the same news media outlets and between different ones were examined. Through that analysis, companies can better understand how the frames may develop over time, and how they can affect the stakeholders and their perceptions on the brand.

5.3 Limitations and future research

What is necessary to be mentioned, is that the conclusions that emerged from this study, were influenced by several limitations, which also helped to make several suggestions for future research. One limitation of this study could be that it only analyzed the sides of the company and the news media. One way that the same topic could be

studied in a wider spectrum, and offer richer results, would be by also incorporating the stakeholders' side and more specifically, their reactions from social media.

Another limitation of the study may be that it only studied news media articles published one month after the "Live for Now" advertisement release. This may have limited the study towards articles and reactions that were more rushed. One future suggestion would be to study how the specific commercial affected Pepsi on the long-term, and how exactly the news media framed the brand, after that one month passed.

One last limitation of this study could be that only the text included in the articles was analyzed. However, many articles included photos and videos. Therefore, a suggestion for a future study would be to also include these visuals in the analysis by using a multimodal discourse analysis and get a more well-rounded conclusion on the framing of the news media outlets.

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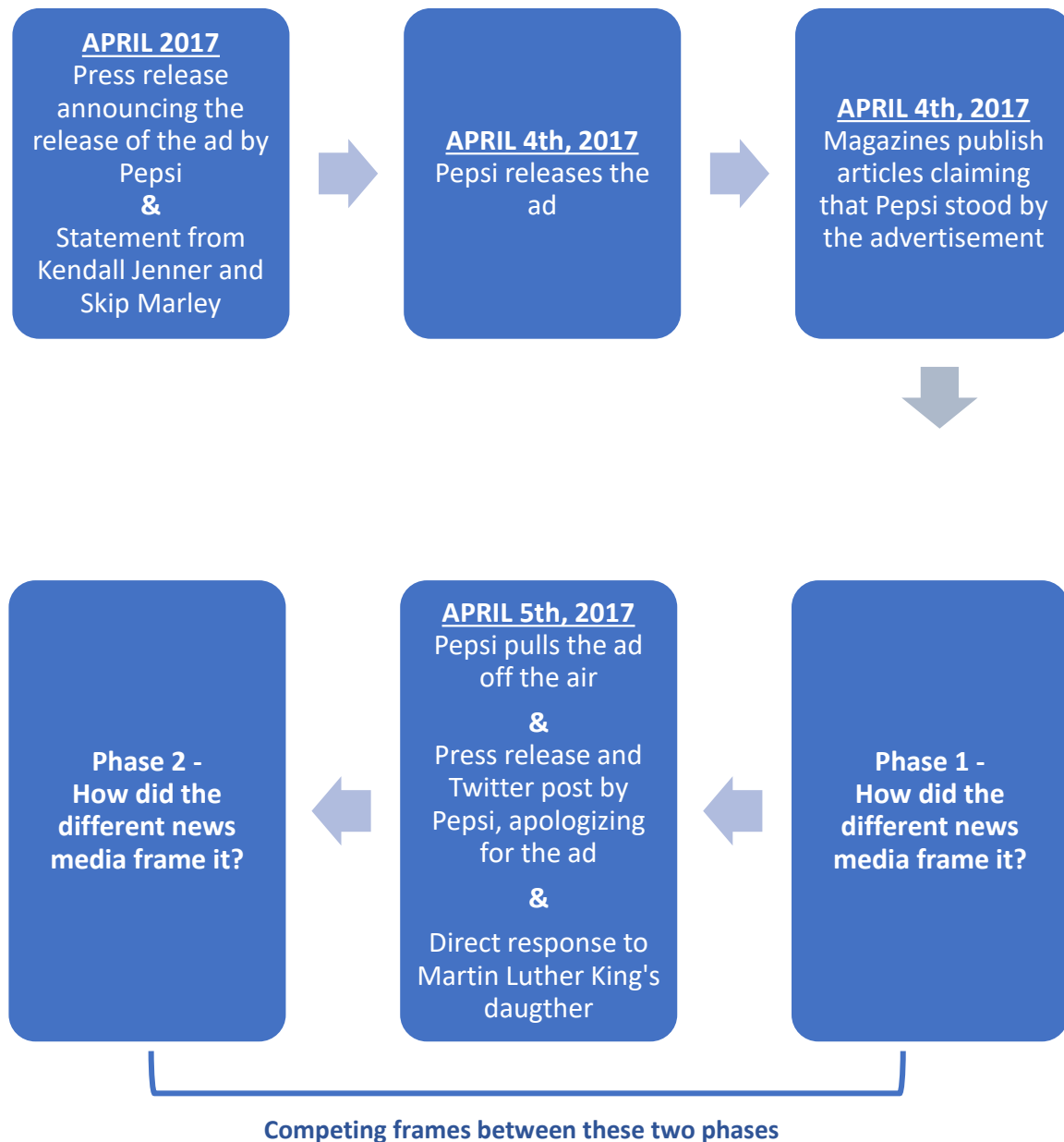Soules, M. (2015). *Media, persuasion and propaganda* (Ser. Media topics). Edinburgh University

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Appendices

Appendix A - Detailed Timeline of the Crisis

APRIL 2017
Press release announcing the release of the ad by Pepsi
&
Statement from Kendall Jenner and Skip Marley

APRIL 4th, 2017
Pepsi releases the ad

APRIL 4th, 2017
Magazines publish articles claiming that Pepsi stood by the advertisement

**Phase 2 -
How did the different news media frame it?**

APRIL 5th, 2017
Pepsi pulls the ad off the air
&
Press release and Twitter post by Pepsi, apologizing for the ad
&
Direct response to Martin Luther King's daugther

**Phase 1 -
How did the different news media frame it?**

Competing frames between these two phases

Appendix B – News media articles list

The Huffington Post_1 - Pepsi's Portrayal Of A Muslim Woman Was As Tone-Deaf As The Rest Of The Ad (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/pepsi-ad-kendall-jenner-muslim-woman_n_58e50875e4b0d0b7e166e184)\

The Huffington Post_2 - Bitterly Divided Nation Takes Moment Off To Hate S**tty Pepsi Ad Together (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/pepsi-ad-divided-nation_n_58e50f85e4b0f4a923b44e60)

The Huffington Post_3 - A Real Protester Gives Oregon Mayor A Pepsi. It Didn't End Well. (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/portland-protester-mayor-pepsi_n_58e5671ce4b0fe4ce0880c43)

The Huffington Post_4 - Turns Out, A Lot Of People Liked That Kendall Jenner Pepsi Ad (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/kendall-jenner-pepsi-ad-poll_n_58ef7b41e4b0b9e98489ccd6)

The Huffington Post_5 - Ludacris Sure Had The Last Laugh Over Bill O'Reilly And Pepsi, Didn't He? (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/bill-oreilly-ludacris-pepsi_n_58f7bd98e4b0de5bac437601)

CNN_1 - Kendall Jenner's Pepsi ad sparks backlash (https://money.cnn.com/2017/04/04/media/kendall-jenner-pepsi-ad/index.html)

CNN_2 - Pepsi and Kendall Jenner join the rogues' gallery of tone-deaf ads (https://money.cnn.com/2017/04/05/media/pepsi-kendall-jenner-tone-deaf-ads/index.html)

CNN_3 - Protester's Pepsi gift to mayor doesn't go down smoothly (https://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/06/us/protester-gives-mayor-pepsi/index.html)

CNN_4 - What Pepsi really got wrong (https://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/07/opinions/pepsi-failed-appropriation-opinion-leppert/index.html)

Fox News_1 - Kendall Jenner appears in Pepsi's 'Jump In' commercial featuring protesters (https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/kendall-jenner-appears-in-pepsis-jump-in-commercial-featuring-protesters)

Fox News_2 - Pepsi pulls Kendall Jenner ad after backlash (https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/pepsi-pulls-kendall-jenner-ad-after-backlash)

Fox News_3 - May Day protests: Rioters throw full cans of Pepsi at Oregon police (https://www.foxnews.com/us/may-day-protests-rioters-throw-full-cans-of-pepsi-at-oregon-police)

Fox News_4 - Heineken's politically charged ad earns praise on social media (https://www.foxnews.com/food-drink/heinekens-politically-charged-ad-earns-praise-on-social-media)

New York Times_1 - Pepsi Pulls Ad Accused of Trivializing Black Lives Matter (https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/business/kendall-jenner-pepsi-ad.html?searchResultPosition=1)

New York Times_2 - A Pepsi Commercial's Lesson for Advertisers (https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/opinion/a-pepsi-commercials-lesson-for-advertisers.html?searchResultPosition=2)

Buzzfeed News_1 - People Are Seriously Pissed With Kendall Jenner's New "Protest" Pepsi Ad (https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/bradesposito/people-are-seriously-pissed-with-kendell-jenners-new)

Buzzfeed News_2 - Pepsi Says It "Missed The Mark" With The Controversial Kendall Jenner Ad (https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/maryanngeorgantopoulos/pepsi-says-it-missed-the-mark-with-the-controversial)

Buzzfeed News_3 - "SNL" Did The Pepsi Ad From The Director's Point Of View And It Was Brutal (https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tomnamako/snl-sent-up-the-pepsi-ad-and-people-were-there-for-it)

The Washington Post_1 - 'Clearly we missed the mark': Pepsi pulls Kendall Jenner ad and apologizes (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2017/04/05/clearly-we-missed-the-mark-pepsi-pulls-kendall-jenner-ad-and-apologizes/)

The Washington Post_2 - 'Nevertheless, she Pepsisted': Kendall Jenner made a Pepsi ad. The Internet made glorious memes. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2017/04/05/nevertheless-she-pepsisted-kendall-jenner-made-a-pepsi-ad-the-internet-made-glorious-memes/)

The Washington Post_3 - Pepsi tried cashing in on Black Lives Matter with a Kendall Jenner ad. Here's how that's going. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/04/05/pepsi-tried-cashing-in-on-black-lives-matter-with-a-kendall-jenner-ad-heres-how-thats-going/)

The Washington Post_4 - A bad Pepsi ad and the cost of obesity (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/get-there/wp/2017/04/06/a-bad-pepsi-ad-and-the-cost-of-obesity/)

The Washington Post_5 - Pepsi apologizes to Kendall Jenner for decision she made and got paid for (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/04/06/pepsi-apologizes-to-kendall-jenner-for-decision-she-made-and-got-paid-for/)

The Washington Post_6 - How did that Kendall Jenner-Pepsi ad even get made? SNL imagines an answer. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2017/04/09/how-did-that-kendall-jenner-pepsi-ad-even-get-made-snl-imagines-an-answer/)

The Washington Post_7 - Heineken to Pepsi: Hold my beer (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/04/28/heineken-to-pepsi-hold-my-beer/)

The Washington Post_8 - A second-by-second breakdown of Kendall Jenner's unspeakably tone-deaf Pepsi ad (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2017/04/04/a-second-by-second-breakdown-of-kendall-jenners-unspeakably-tone-deaf-pepsi-ad/)

NBC News_1 - Pepsi Pulls Controversial Kendall Jenner Ad After Outcry (https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/pepsi-ad-kendall-jenner-echoes-black-lives-matter-sparks-anger-n742811)

NBC News_2 - Late-Night Hosts Skewer Kendall Jenner's Pepsi Ad (https://www.nbcnews.com/pop-culture/tv/late-night-hosts-skewer-kendall-jenner-s-pepsi-ad-n743561)

NBC News_3 - OpEd: Pepsi and the Systemic Violence of Capitalism (https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/oped-pepsi-systemic-violence-capitalism-n743166)

ABC News_1 - Pepsi pulls protest ad starring Kendall Jenner after backlash (https://abcnews.go.com/US/pepsi-faces-backlash-protest-ad-starring-kendall-jenner/story?id=46589304)

USA Today_1 - Pepsi yanks Kendall Jenner TV ad, apologizes to her (https://eu.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2017/04/05/tone-deaf-pepsi-yanks-kendall-jenner-ad/100079818/)

USA Today_2 - Kendall Jenner: Is she 'complicit' or not in Pepsi ad fiasco? (https://eu.usatoday.com/story/life/tv/2017/04/06/kendall-jenner-she-complicit-not-pepsi-ad-fiasco/100129622/)

USA Today_3 - How did Pepsi's ad even get off the drawing board? (https://eu.usatoday.com/story/money/2017/04/06/pepsis-ad-diversity/100133470/)

LA Times_1 - Analysis:: Cringe-worthy Pepsi ad uses Kendall Jenner, protests and police to sell soda (https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/gossip/la-et-mg-pepsi-ad-kendall-jenner-20170404-story.html)

LA Times_2 - Pepsi's Kendall Jenner ad: Mistake or subversive strategy? (https://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-pepsi-crisis-pr-20170406-story.html)

CBS San Fransisco_1 - San Francisco Threatens Lawsuit Over Derided Pepsi Ad (https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/04/07/san-francisco-threatens-lawsuit-over-derided-pepsi-ad/)

CBS Boston_1 - Keller @ Large: Pepsi's Failed Ad May Have United Us (https://boston.cbslocal.com/2017/04/06/pepsi-kendall-jenner-ad-jon-keller-wbz/)

CBS Philly_1 - Pepsi Pulls Kendall Jenner Ad That Sparked Social Media Firestorm (https://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2017/04/05/kendall-jenner-pepsi-backlash/)

CBS New York_1 -Pepsi Pulls Kendall Jenner Ad Following Online Backlash (https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2017/04/05/kendall-jenners-protest-pepsi-spot-prompts-online-backlash/)

Chicago Tribune_1 - Pepsi pulls this controversial Kendall Jenner ad after widespread backlash (https://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-pepsi-kendall-jenner-protest-video-backlash-0406-biz-20170405-story.html)

The Seattle Times_1 - Pepsi pulls widely mocked ad featuring Kendall Jenner (https://www.seattletimes.com/business/pepsi-says-its-pulling-widely-mocked-ad/)

The Seattle Times_2 - Give Sessions a Pepsi and a hug, and we're good, right? (https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/give-sessions-a-pepsi-and-a-hug-and-were-good-right/)

The New York Post_1 - Pepsi should fire its ad agency (https://nypost.com/2017/04/04/the-internet-is-not-happy-with-pepsis-protest-ad/)

The New York Post_2 - Pepsi is yanking its tasteless protest ad (https://nypost.com/2017/04/05/pepsi-is-yanking-its-controversial-protest-ad/)

The New York Post_3 - Pepsi's sleazy bid to sell soda an insult to everyone (https://nypost.com/2017/04/06/pepsis-sleazy-bid-to-sell-soda-an-insult-to-everyone/)

Miami Herald_1 - Pepsi debuted a new protest commercial featuring Kendall Jenner. Everyone hates it. (https://account.miamiherald.com/paywall/subscriber-only?resume=142734539&intcid=ab_archive)

Miami Herald_2 - Pepsi fails in its effort to 'teach the world to sing'

(https://account.miamiherald.com/paywall/subscriber-only?resume=143022359&intcid=ab_archive)

Appendix C - Final coding frame

Category	Subcategory
Human interest frame	Article provides human example or ''human face'' on the issue
	Resemblance with Ieasha Evans
	Article emphasizes how individuals and groups are affected by the issue
	Article goes into the private lives of the actors
	Article refers to the non-direct victims of the issue
Economic consequence frame	There is reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action
	There is a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future
	There is a mention of costs/ degree of expenses involved
General information	On the political background
	Similar incidents
	On the advertisement
	On Iesha Evans
	On the Black Lives Matter movement
Conflict frame	Article refers to two or more sides of the issue
	Article refers to parties which defend themselves against criticism
	The article reflects disagreements between parties-individuals-groups-countries
Morality frame	The story makes a reference to morality
	The story offers specific social prescriptions about how to behave
	The story does contain a moral message
Responsibility frame	The article suggests that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/ problem
	The article suggests solution(s) to the problem/ issue
	The article suggests the problem requires urgent action
	The article refers to potential problems

Opinions on the ad (quoted)	Famous – well-known person
	Industry professional
	Consumers on twitter
	Academic
	Activist
Pepsi's reaction	Defense
	Pulling the ad
	Apology
	Explanation
Public's reaction	Backlash
	Support
	Unity
	Confusion
	Debate
Background information	On the ad
	On the Black Lives Matter movement
	Similar incidents of the past
What was ''wrong'' with the ad according to the articles	Racist features
	Lack of authenticity
	Lack of relevance
	Ungenuine
	Appropriation
	Trivializing social justice causes
	Not realistic
	Tone deaf
Direct quotations	Of the apology press release - twitter post

	Of the initial press release – before the release
	On Kendall Jenners's statement
	Of the statements to magazines