

Master Thesis

Issue management in the Dutch food industry: examining the influence of micro-level factors

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Abstract

Within the context of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event in the Dutch food industry, this research examines how micro-level factors explain differences in organizational issue management. More specifically, it is investigated to what extent managers' willingness to pursue active issue management (i.e. preparing the organization for the arising of issues, putting effort in the early identification of issues and aiming to respond quickly to issues that are relevant to the organization) is being influenced by their individual field identification and the negative affect and perceived legitimacy losses they experience due to the occurrence of such an event. A quantitative research among 260 managers of Dutch food industry organizations has been conducted in order to test the hypotheses. The results of this research do not fully support the hypothesized relationships, but nevertheless reveal that negative affect significantly influences perceived legitimacy losses. Furthermore, insights in the Dutch food industry's issue management practices have been gained.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Theoretical background	5
2.1 A field-wide legitimacy threatening event	5
2.2 Responding to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event: an institutional perspective	6
2.3 Responding to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event: issue management	6
2.3.1 Issue preparation	7
2.3.2 Issue identification	7
2.3.3 Issue response	8
2.3.4 Types of issue management	8
2.3.5 Dependent variable: A decision maker's willingness to pursue active issue management ..	10
2.4 Micro-level factors	10
2.4.1 Independent variable: A decision maker's field identification	11
2.4.2 Mediating variables: A decision maker's perceived legitimacy losses and negative affect .	12
3. Methodology	17
3.1 Research procedure	17
3.2 Variable measures	19
3.2.1 Valuation of Issue Management	19
3.2.2 Field identification	20
3.2.3 Perceived legitimacy losses	21
3.2.4 Negative affect	21
3.2.5 Additional variables	22
3.3 Reliability and validity	23
3.4 Data collection	24
3.5 Data analysis	24
4. Results	25
4.1 Descriptive statistics, correlations and reliability analysis	25
4.2 Structural equation modeling	26
4.3 Insights in the Dutch food industry's issue management	27

4.3.1 Reliability analysis	27
4.3.2 Control variable effects	29
5. Conclusion and discussion	31
5.1 Conclusion.....	31
5.2 Discussion	32
5.3 Relevance	34
5.4 Limitations and future research.....	35
Bibliography	37
Appendix	40
Appendix A: Full questionnaire	40
Appendix B: Respondent demographics	51
Appendix C: Correlation table – dependent variable vs. control variables	52
Appendix D: Correlation table – issue management practices vs. organization characteristics.....	53

1. Introduction

In February 2013, a large food scandal was part of the news bulletins. Great-Britain, Sweden, Ireland and Poland all are countries where horse meat was being found in beef products. A Dutch company was being accused of playing a central role in this scandal: something that eventually was admitted. Along with the fact that it is misleading to sell horse meat as beef, additional interest in this scandal resulted in the discovery of an even more worrisome fact. It namely appeared that there could be no guarantee to ensure the safety of consuming horse meat. The meat itself is not necessarily dangerous to be consumed by people, but medications that horses could have been getting can be (Van Amstel, 2014).

From the 1990's on, several other food scandals have emerged, but the recent discoveries resulted in a growing attention to food fraud. Both public and political worries about food safety and integrity occurred and in fact, the food industry's reputation is being negatively affected, since these scandals lead to a decrease of consumers' confidence in the food industry (Van Ruth & Huisman, 2014). A decrease of confidence due to a scandal can have major consequences for organizations, since they can be perceived as less legitimate. Sales numbers may decrease, or stakeholders possibly are no longer willing to be associated with the organization (Raaijmakers, 2013). However, it appeared that the horse meat scandal did not only affect the responsible organizations, but the food industry as a whole as well (Van Ruth & Huisman, 2014).

Raaijmakers (2013) examined a similar phenomenon in the context of the childcare industry and addressed the concept of generalization as an explanation for an entire industry that is being affected by a single scandalous event. She states that "negative critical events can induce a generalization mechanism, which explains how negative impacts from one crisis can spill over and affect other organizations in the field" (Raaijmakers, 2013, p. 105). Agterhoek (2015) illustrates that the food industry as well is subject to such generalizations. He argues that fraud in the food industry damages consumers' faith in producers, processors and sales organizations.

Raaijmakers (2013) examined how organizations respond to legitimacy challenges for their industry as a whole – and thus for themselves as well – and how the differences in response could be explained by the means of micro-level variables: decision makers' individual characteristics. This makes sense, since Felin & Foss (2005) argue that one must understand the individuals composing the whole, in order to fully explain an organization and

its actions. This research is based on Raaijmakers' (2013) research, but uses the Dutch food industry as research context and thus aims at examining how micro-level variables induce differences in organizational practices by Dutch food industry organizations, after a field-wide legitimacy threatening event in their sector. Furthermore, this research regards such field-wide legitimacy threatening as issues that have to be managed and hence, organizational response is being specified into organizational issue management.

Issues can be defined in several ways. Sirsly & Lamertz (2007) for example, define an issue as "a particular social, political or other nonmarket event or trend relevant to the firm's strategic activities" (Sirsly & Lamertz, 2007, p. 15). This definition, however, is not distinctly applicable to a food scandal. Dutton & Ottensmeyer (1987) use the term 'strategic issue', which is much better applicable since they refer to such a strategic issue as developments or trends that arise from the organizational environment and potentially can affect the performance of the organization. Ansoff (1980) refers to a strategic issue as "a forthcoming development, either inside or outside of the organization, which is likely to have an important impact on the ability of the enterprise to meet its objectives" (Ansoff, 1980, p. 133) and provides an unwelcome external threat as an example of such a strategic issue, which underlines the applicability to a food scandal.

Both Dutton & Ottensmeyer (1987) and Ansoff (1980) research how strategic issues can be managed and introduce the concept of strategic issue management. Dutton & Ottensmeyer (1987) argue that this is about perceiving and analyzing strategic issues, after which a response to the strategic issue is being developed. This enables the organization to protect itself to potential harms from its environment; to adapt to developments (Dutton & Ottensmeyer, 1987). Ansoff (1980) refers to strategic issue management systems as "systematic procedures for early identification and fast responses to important trends both inside and outside an enterprise" (Ansoff, 1980, p. 134). The concept of issue management thus does not only concern responding to an event, but as well explicitly considers identifying, perceiving and analyzing it first (Ansoff, 1980; Dutton & Ottensmeyer, 1987). Effective (strategic) issue management is important for an organization in the case of a legitimacy threatening event. Furthermore, from crisis management literature it is known that being well-prepared to a potential crisis (i.e. a field-wide legitimacy threatening event) is crucial for an organization and is highly related to issue management (Jaques, 2007). Hence, although Ansoff (1980) elaborates on organizational preparation as a part of issue identification, organizational preparation to the occurrence of a field-wide legitimacy

threatening event explicitly will be taken into account as well in the conceptualization of issue management in this research. Issue management therefore will be defined as ‘an organization’s effort to prepare for, to early identify, to analyze and to respond to an externally constituted issue’.

As mentioned earlier, this research will focus on this specific type of organizational practices with regard to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event and therefore ‘issue management’ is the dependent variable. Differences in issue management can be explained from different perspectives. Dutton & Ottensmeyer (1987) and Sirsly & Lamertz (2007), for example, aim to explain differences in issue management from an organizational capabilities perspective. However, the perspective of this research will be different. Felin & Foss (2005) their statement that one must understand the individuals composing the whole, in order to fully explain an organizational level strategic topic, indicates the need for understanding how micro-level factors affect organizational actions. This statement inspired Molina-Azorin (2014) to argue that characteristics of the individuals in an organization are likely to influence decision-making processes and their outcomes, and therefore it is essential to understand these individuals to explain any strategic topic at the organizational level.

Following Felin & Foss (2005) and Molina-Azorin (2014), this research argues that micro-level factors influence issue management in organizations. For example, decision makers have their own perception of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, which then thus affects the decisions they take. In other words, the assumption is that the salience of the event differs for decision makers, which might influence the amount of action they are willing to undertake. Hence, in this research, these micro-level factors are being considered as predictors of organizational issue management. Therefore, the research question is as follows: *How do micro-level factors explain differences in organizational issue management regarding a field-wide legitimacy threatening event?*

More specifically, the aim of this research is to investigate whether variations in issue management are being influenced by managers’ differences in how they identify with their field; a relationship that hypothetically is being mediated by cognitive and emotional processes, i.e. managers’ perceived legitimacy losses and their negative affect with regard to the event. Besides examining these relationships (i.e. examining how issue management is being affected), the aim of this research is to gain insights in what issue management practices actually are being executed by Dutch food industry organizations, regardless of the occurrence of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event.

This research will provide scientific relevance, since issue management literature will be extended by taking micro-level factors into account when explaining differences in issue management on the organizational level. Furthermore, this research expands organizational crisis literature as well, for the same reason as previously mentioned. Finally, insights in the issue management practices that are executed in the Dutch food industry are being gained. This provides science with extensive knowledge about issue management in this specific industry and enables future research to compare issue management practices between different industries.

Practical relevance is present in this research as well. This lies in the fact that this research gains insights in how Dutch food industry organizations practice issue management. All sorts of organizations across the entire food industry can use this knowledge and can in fact thus learn from each other, in order to improve their issue management practices. Furthermore, the results of this research provide insights in what level of some micro-level factors is likely to result in a certain type of organizational issue management. This provides information about what type of managers an organization should employ in order to likely realize a certain type of issue management and hence enables organizations to improve solicitation procedures, to provide employees with personality trainings in order to improve issue management etc.

This research hopes to provide knowledge about how food industry organizations cope with events that occur in their industry which they did not cause themselves, but in fact for which they do take blame due to generalization mechanisms. Such events, that thus take place outside the organization but that however have great effects on the organization, namely can undesirably affect an organization's ability to meet its goals and thus are likely to induce organizational action. Micro-level factors are believed to influence the way in which organizations act with regard to these events – i.e. how they practice issue management – and hence this research will examine to what extent this relationship is significant.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 A field-wide legitimacy threatening event

Organizations continuously have to cope with various issues, like developments, trends or events within their environment (Raaijmakers, 2013). Whereas some of these issues occur on a regular basis and thus are more routine (Weick, 1979), others occur surprisingly, which hampers the interpretation and processing of it (Meyer, 1982).

Dutton & Dukerich (1991), in their research, focus on issues that occur surprisingly and state that this type of issue can become problematic for an organization, because of two reasons. First, since these issues have not been encountered in the past and therefore the organization cannot easily categorize them. Second, since surprisingly occurring issues can evoke different types of emotions and feelings. According to Dutton & Dukerich (1991) do issues that evoke strong emotions result in different organizational responses than issues that evoke weak emotions do, since they represent different types of stimuli to the individuals in the organization. Raaijmakers (2013) relates this to an issue's salience to decision makers. She states that when for example strong emotions arise due to an issue, the decision maker's attention is likely to be captured, since he or she expects consequences of acting or not acting with regard to the issue.

When salient issues like a food scandal event arise, they threaten an organization's legitimacy since they induce pressures from society. Following Suchman (1995) and Deephouse & Suchman (2008), Raaijmakers (2013) defines legitimacy as "constituents' perceptions and judgments that an organization follows social norms and –expectations and acts appropriately" (Raaijmakers, 2013, p. 108). Furthermore, she argues that when an organization acts illegitimate, generally it will be held responsible for its own actions and thus endures the negative consequences of acting so itself. However, negative consequences of acting illegitimate can spill over, which possibly threatens other organizations' legitimacy as well (Raaijmakers, 2013). In other words, organizations' legitimacy can be heavily harmed by inappropriate acting of other organizations in their field. As Agterhoek (2015) argues, does fraud in a food industry organization damage consumers' faith in producers, processors and sales organizations. Desai (2011) approves this and argues that the spill over of legitimacy loss to other organizations in the field subsequently even can damage the legitimacy of the field itself. Food organizations thus are highly subjective to scandals that are caused by other organizations in their field. They experience the negative consequences of others' actions and likely will undertake action. This willingness to act can be illustrated by institutional theory.

2.2 Responding to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event: an institutional perspective

Institutional theory argues that political, societal or cultural pressures affect organizational behaviour (Oliver, 1991). As previously mentioned do salient issues like the occurrence of a food scandal induce societal pressures that result in a legitimacy loss, both for organizations that are directly responsible for the event and for organizations that have not caused the event themselves, but who experience its negative consequences due to generalization mechanisms. This is approved by Agterhoek (2015), who stated that fraud in a food industry organization damages consumers' faith in other organizations in the field. Since consumers compose a society, this loss of confidence thus can be interpreted as a societal pressure.

According to Oliver (1991), organizations can respond to such pressures in different ways, varying from a passive response (i.e. acquiescence or compromise) to an active response (i.e. defiance or manipulation). Raaijmakers (2013), in her research, examined that organizations that are not directly responsible for an event, as well respond either actively or passively to pressures that come up after the occurrence of the – externally caused – event. She argues that organizations for example choose for a passive response in order to avoid being associated with the responsible organization, or they prefer acting passively just in order to wait until the field's legitimacy naturally will recover. On the other hand, organizations might decide to respond actively in order to restore their field's legitimacy (Raaijmakers, 2013). In the case of active response to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, it is the field members' goal to influence external constituents' view of the field (Oliver, 1991). For example, Raaijmakers (2013) introduces Maguire & Hardy (2009) and Desai (2011) their concept of 'defensive institutional work', which is about producing texts and statements that defend the organization's field and thereby aims to repair its legitimacy after that legitimacy has been damaged: something that according to Maguire & Hardy (2009) is "a conscious and strategic response to counter the disruptive work of other actors" (Maguire & Hardy, 2009, p. 169). Other examples of active response, like changing the organization's practices and routines, or even changing the organization's structure in order to repair its damaged legitimacy, eventually are also provided by Raaijmakers (2013).

2.3 Responding to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event: issue management

Raaijmakers (2013) conceptualizes organizational response to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event as something that can vary from no or a passive response to greater levels of

(active) responsiveness. This research follows her line of reasoning (i.e. an organization can respond passively or actively), but instead of solely investigating how organizations respond, in this research, an organization's issue management system with regard to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event will be investigated. Ansoff (1980) and Dutton & Ottensmeyer (1987) have researched issue management systems in organizations. They define issue management as the effort an organization puts in detection and perception of strategic issues (i.e. field-wide legitimacy threatening events) in order to identify issues early and hence to be able to responding fast (Ansoff, 1980; Dutton & Ottensmeyer, 1987). Jaques (2007) argues that issue management is closely related to crisis management, which explicitly includes crisis preparation as a major component besides real-time action with regard to a crisis as well. Hence, in this research, following Ansoff (1980), Dutton & Ottensmeyer (1987) and Jaques (2007), the level of issue management will be conceptualized as *the extent to which an organization puts effort in the preparation for, the early identification of and fast response to an externally constituted issue* (i.e. a field-wide legitimacy threatening event).

2.3.1 Issue preparation

As mentioned earlier, does Jaques (2007) argue that issue management is closely related to crisis management and states that crisis preparation is a major component of it. He proposes an integrated management process that compasses both issue management and crisis management, although he does not provide a specific name for this process. In spite of the fact that Ansoff (1980) – although not that explicitly – slightly does take organizational preparation into account in his elaboration on issue identification, organizational preparation for coping with an issue thus has been explicitly added to the definition of issue management this research uses, based on the proposition of Jaques (2007). Issue preparation comprises activities such as allocating budgets to issue management, having a team prepared to deal with issues, preparing communication- and working-plans for certain scenarios etc. (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Furthermore, organizational culture and the way in which information is shared within the organization can be organized in such a way, that the organization will be best prepared for the arising of an issue (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993).

2.3.2 Issue identification

Ansoff (1980) stresses the importance of the early identification of issues. Once a field-wide legitimacy threatening event occurs, it is important to assess the extent to which the event could harm the organization, i.e. whether an issue will originate from the event. Although an organization might be highly prepared for the occurrence of an event and forthcoming arising of an issue, issue identification still can be challenging.

In his research, Ansoff (1980) compares strategic issue management with periodic (e.g. annual) strategic planning. Whereas a strategic planning beforehand anticipates on the occurrence of certain events, issues can arise fast if they are caused by unexpected events and moreover can have a quick impact on the organization (Ansoff, 1980). Because of this fast arising, it is hard to incorporate issue identification in the annual strategic planning. Hence, it is desirable to be able to detect the issue on time, which enables the organization to respond fast enough (Ansoff, 1980). This early identification can be realized by reviewing and updating a 'key strategic issues list' periodically, as well by continuous attention for the possible arising of new issues. An important aspect of issue identification, after an issue has been detected, is the perception of it. By analyzing and categorizing the detected issue, an organization is able to determine the issue's relevance for the organization and hence can determine whether and what action is required.

2.3.3 Issue response

After identifying an issue, the organization is able to initiate a response. (Ansoff, 1980). As mentioned earlier, does Oliver (1991) argue that organizations can respond to external pressures in different ways, varying from a passive response to an active response. According to Dutton & Ottensmeyer (1987), responding to issues also comprises activities varying from very passive such as doing nothing and waiting until the issue will go by (i.e. the organization's field's legitimacy will restore naturally), to more active responses like proactively communicating to external stakeholders about the organization's role in the situation or even like changing the organization's practices, routines or even its structure in order to repair its damaged legitimacy. The way in which a response is being initiated and executed, is organization-specific.

2.3.4 Types of issue management

Both Ansoff (1980) and Dutton & Ottensmeyer (1987) note that strategic issue management systems can have different forms, including by means of size. In some (large) organizations the strategic issue management systems are very elaborate and formalized; while in others just senior level executives informally identify issues that have to be managed (Dutton & Ottensmeyer, 1987). Ansoff (1980) approves this, but he nevertheless models a general responsibility distribution, as illustrated in Figure 1. According to Ansoff (1980), the 'staff' group within the organization is responsible for monitoring and detecting events, evaluating them and subsequently to inform decision makers about the issue. Next, the 'general management' (i.e. these decision makers) assesses the issue and decides about the course of action: it assigns the responsibility for resolving issue to a particular unit or ad hoc

group within the organization. Ansoff (1980) argues that in large organizations an actual staff department can exist, but in smaller firms often a few top managers are likely to act as such 'staff members', detecting and analyzing events and issues, after which they engage in the issue-related decision making process as well. Depending on the size of the organization, the practical realization and execution of Ansoff's (1980) model thus will vary.

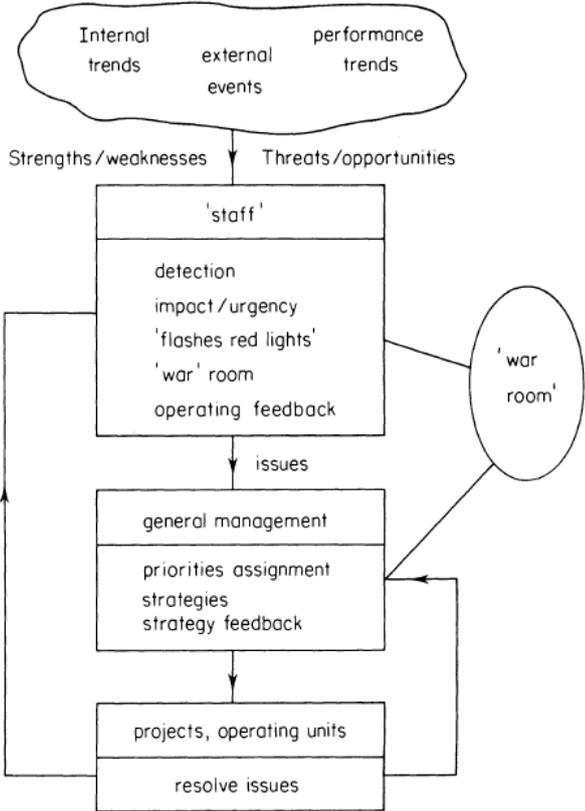


FIGURE 1: Responsibilities for strategic issue management (Ansoff, 1980)

According to Dutton & Ottensmeyer (1987), strategic issue management systems can also be distinguished based on their performance type. As mentioned earlier, they state that strategic issue management systems on the one hand can be passive, while on the other hand they can be active. Within strategic issue management, passive systems limit themselves to the detection and analysis (i.e. identification) of issues, as they make little effort to change organizational processes. On the other hand, active strategic issue management systems as well initiate action (i.e. an actual response to the issue) to resolve the issue (Dutton & Ottensmeyer, 1987). Following Dutton & Ottensmeyer (1987) their classification of issue management systems based on performance type (i.e. active or passive), this research' assumption is that being well-prepared for the occurrence of an event and forthcoming issue(s), as well contributes to the extent of activity of an organization's issue management.

Hence, this research' definition of active issue management is *'being well-prepared to be able to identify issues early and to respond fast to them'* whereas passive issue management will be defined as *'solely identifying issues without pursuing any further actions'*.

2.3.5 Dependent variable: A decision maker's willingness to pursue active issue management

The aim of this research is to explain differences in how issue management is being practiced in Dutch food industry organizations. Since individuals compose an organization, it is necessary to understand those individuals in order to explain an organizational level strategic topic like issue management (Felin & Foss, 2005). In other words: individuals determine the type of issue management an organization practices. In this research, micro-level factors (i.e. individuals' personal characteristics) are being expected influencing organizational issue management, because they affect the choices that individuals make (Molina-Azorin, 2014). However, it is not directly measurable how these micro-level factors actually influence organizational issue management (i.e. *the extent to which an organization puts effort in the preparation for, the early identification of and fast response to an externally constituted issue*), which is a macro-level variable, but only how they affect individuals' decisions with respect to their organization's issue management. Therefore, the dependent variable of this research will be operationalized as *a decision maker's willingness to pursue active issue management*. Hence, since individuals' decisions thus determine an organization's issue management, the influence of micro-level factors on organizational issue management can be estimated.

2.4 Micro-level factors

Ansoff (1980) states the following: "Strategic issue management cannot be made to work unless key managers in the organization accept a central role in the system" (Ansoff, 1980, p. 143), which stresses the importance of understanding how key managers will act within the organization, when one is willing to explain differences in issue management.

Very basic and elementary, but nevertheless very true, do Felin & Foss (2005) state the following: "organizations are made up of individuals, and there is no organization without individuals" (Felin & Foss, 2005, p. 441). Based on that statement, Molina-Azorin (2014) criticizes the trend in strategic management literature that organizations are being considered as entities existing of organizational routines, -capabilities and -knowledge. He notes that however it is obvious and legitimate that independent variables that are measured at the organizational level explain organizational level dependent variables, individual actions (i.e. independent variables measured at the individual level) might as well have relevance in

explaining organizational level phenomena. Since individuals make decisions, individuals' characteristics (i.e. emotions, perceptions etc.) are likely to influence the decision-making process and thus the outcomes of it. Therefore, Molina-Azorin (2014) summarizes his arguments as follows: "as noted by Felin & Foss (2005), to fully explicate any strategic topic at an organizational level (capabilities, knowledge, learning, identity), one must fundamentally begin with and understand the individuals that compose the whole as the central actors, specifically their underlying nature, choices, abilities, propensities, heterogeneity, purposes, expectations and motivations" (Molina-Azorin, 2014, p. 105).

As mentioned earlier, important aspects of issue management are perceiving the situation and deciding how to respond to it. Since both perceiving the situation and making the decision about whether to respond or not are being executed by individuals, understanding these individuals is crucial to explain issue management. Hence, based on Molina-Azorin's (2014) argument, in this research the focus will be on the influence that decision makers' personal characteristics have on an organization's issue management. More specifically, this focus will be on psychological foundations, as Powell, Lovallo & Fox (2011) note that especially psychological micro-foundations are very important in explaining firm heterogeneity.

2.4.1 Independent variable: A decision maker's field identification

The independent variable in this research is 'field identification', which will be defined as *the extent to which a decision maker believes himself to be in sympathy with his field and its norms and values and the extent to which his self-concept is being derived from his membership of that field.*

People can possess a social identity, which is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1974, p. 69). According to Raaijmakers (2013), industries or fields are also possible sources of social identification. Hoffman & Ocasio (2001) provide the following definition of industry identity (i.e. field identity): "the common rules, values, and systems of meaning by which industry participants establish rules of inclusion, competition, and social comparison among industry members; create distinctions within and between industries; and delimit industry boundaries" (Hoffman & Ocasio, 2001, p. 416).

In their research, Hoffman & Ocasio (2001) revealed that if an event damages an industry's identity, the industry is likely to pay great attention to the event. Therefore,

Raaijmakers (2013) argues that in the case of such a significant event, that shocks the entire field, it is likely that a decision maker's field identification is being activated by the occurrence of the event. She states that disturbing field-level events are more salient for participants in that field, who possess high field identification levels. Subsequently, she argues that those events thus are more salient to those decision makers in the organization, that closely identify with their field (Raaijmakers, 2013). This can be explained by the fact that if individuals' social identity is partly derived from their field membership, this identity is being threatened as well during a field-wide legitimacy threatening event (Lok, 2010; Scott, 2008). Furthermore, Ashfort & Mael (1989) as well state that when individuals strongly identify themselves with a particular group, they are likely to personally experience the success or failure of that group very strongly.

Hence, the expectation is that high field identification levels of decision makers will result in their decision to pursue an active response to issues that result from field-wide legitimacy threatening events (i.e. engage in active issue management), whereas decision makers with low levels of field identification are likely to pursue a more passive response. This expectation forms the basis for the first hypothesis of this research.

Hypothesis 1: The higher decision makers' field identification, the greater their willingness to pursue more active issue management will be in the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event.

2.4.2 Mediating variables: A decision maker's perceived legitimacy losses and negative affect

Besides this direct impact from a decision maker's field identification on their willingness to pursue active issue management, it is expected that this relationship occurs through two mediating variables. Since decision makers not only need to observe an event in order to respond to it, but they as well need to perceive it after which they can decide what to do, it is necessary to understand which micro-level factors influence this perception. Raaijmakers (2013) suggests that cognitive and emotional micro-level factors are important in understanding the relationship between a decision maker's field identification and organizational responsiveness. This research will follow Raaijmakers' (2013) line of reasoning. Furthermore, Powell et al. (2011) as well revealed the importance of understanding psychological micro-foundations (i.e. micro-level factors) in explaining firm heterogeneity, which approves the importance of understanding cognitive and emotional micro-level factors.

More specifically, the role of a decision maker's perceived legitimacy losses and its negative affect that arise from the event's occurrence will be investigated as possible mediating variables in the relationship between a decision maker's field identification and his willingness to pursue active issue management.

2.4.2.1 A decision maker's perceived legitimacy losses

As mentioned before, decision makers' perception of an event is likely to have great influence on the decisions they make with regard to that event. One of the aspects that influences this decision maker's perception of events is his perceived legitimacy losses, which will be defined as *the extent to which a decision maker believes that his field's legitimacy decreases due to the event*.

Raaijmakers (2013) notes that from issue management literature it is known that the extent to which organizational actors perceive how environmental actors judge them (i.e. as being legitimate or not), is of great influence on their interpretation and action with regard to an issue. This implies that the way how decision makers perceive legitimacy consequences, resulting from an event in their organizational environment, is of great importance in predicting how they are likely to engage in issue management with regard to that event.

One can assume that when organizational legitimacy is being blamed during a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, the organization's decision makers always will strive to restore this legitimacy. However, decision makers' responses in order to regain legitimacy will be even more active and with greater urgency when they perceive the event as evoking personal legitimacy losses (Raaijmakers, 2013). As active issue management consists of this highly active and fast organizational response, high levels of perceived personal legitimacy losses are thus expected to result in high levels of active issue management. The other way around, events that are being perceived as less threatening are likely to evoke different actions than events that are being perceived as really harmful. Events that evoke less perceived personal legitimacy losses thus probably result in a passive action, i.e. low levels of, or even no issue management. Thus, the more personal the legitimacy loss is being perceived as, the more active the reaction will be.

In the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, the extent to which perceived legitimacy losses are being perceived as personal losses is very likely to be influenced by a manager's field identification (Raaijmakers, 2013). As mentioned earlier, do Ashfort & Mael (1989) state that when individuals strongly identify themselves with a particular group (i.e. their field), they are likely to personally experience the success or failure of that group very

strongly. Thus, when decision makers highly identify with their field, perceived legitimacy losses of the field will be perceived by them as personal legitimacy losses. Hence, it is likely that active issue management will be undertaken, whereas decision makers with low levels of field identification tend to perceive the event as less threatening to their personal legitimacy and thus are likely willing to undertake less active issue management practices.

Therefore the hypothesis is, that in the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, high levels of field identification will lead to a higher level of perceived legitimacy losses by the decision maker – since these legitimacy losses are being perceived as more personal – which subsequently results in a more active response to the issue evoked by the event, i.e. high levels of active issue management.

Hypothesis 2: The positive relationship between decision makers' field identification and their willingness to pursue more active issue management, in the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, is mediated by decision makers' perceived legitimacy losses.

2.4.2.2 A decision maker's negative affect

Besides a decision maker's perceived legitimacy losses, it is believed that a decision maker's negative affective feelings, due to the occurrence of the event, as well as are an underlying mechanism in the relationship between a decision maker's field identification and his willingness to pursue active issue management. This negative affect will be defined as *the extent to which a decision maker experiences being negatively emotionally affected by the event.*

According to Frijda (1988) does individuals' experience of an unexpected interruption of their ongoing activities trigger their emotions. Disturbing happenings, such as a field-wide legitimacy threatening event thus are very likely to trigger individuals' emotions (i.e. feelings of anger or restlessness), and especially – in the case of crisis situations – very negative emotions are being triggered (Raaijmakers, 2013). Voronov & Vince (2012) argue that lower emotional investment (i.e. not feeling positively associated with, or being negatively affected by) in an institutional order (i.e. the environment as it currently is) triggers individuals to initiate change, which, in other words, means that actors that feel negative emotions about a situation are likely to be willing to change that situation.

Besides cognitive micro-level factors like perceived legitimacy losses, decision makers' emotions thus as well can be evoked by institutional pressures, i.e. societal pressures (Raaijmakers, 2013). Since such pressures are being experienced by individuals (Raaijmakers,

2013) and individuals compose an organization (Felin & Foss, 2005), personal emotions are likely to shape organizational response to an event (Raaijmakers, 2013). More specifically, experiencing negative emotions due to an event tends to result in action towards the event's consequences (i.e. resolving the issue of legitimacy losses). Hence, decision makers' level of negative affect, due to a threatening event, increases the extent to which organizational response is active, i.e. a high level of negative affect that decision makers experience increases an organization's active issue management.

However, in spite of the former notion that emotions might guide decision makers' decisions, the amount of negative affect that follows a field-wide legitimacy threatening event is not similar for every decision maker in that field (Raaijmakers, 2013). Therefore, similar as with regard to the cognitive micro-level factor previously elaborated on, the expectation is that decision makers' negative affect feelings will be the strongest for those who experience high levels of field identification. If individuals highly identify themselves with a field, a challenge to that field will result in higher feelings of negative affect – i.e. strong negative emotions – among those individuals, since they perceive such a field-challenging event as more psychologically relevant for themselves, whereas individuals with lower field identification levels are better able of psychologically disassociate themselves from the event and its emotional consequences (Raaijmakers, 2013). Subsequently, as mentioned above, these feelings of negative affect will result in high levels of issue management.

Hence, the hypothesis is that in the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, high levels of field identification lead to large feelings of negative affect by the decision maker, which subsequently results in willingness to respond actively to the issue evoked by the event, i.e. high levels of active issue management.

Hypothesis 3: The positive relationship between decision makers' field identification and their willingness to pursue more active issue management, in the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, is mediated by decision makers' feelings of negative affect.

2.4.2.3 Additional mediation

Besides the previously elaborated mediating relationships, another relationship is assumed to be present. According to Frijda (1988), negative emotions induce a painful perception of a situation and George & Jones (2001) argue that emotions direct how people make sense of situations. Hence, in this research, the expectation is that negative affect reinforces a decision maker's perception of legitimacy losses: because of feeling negatively

affected, decision makers might perceive the losses of legitimacy more intense than if they do not feel emotionally down.

Although one could argue that high levels of perceived legitimacy losses induce greater feelings of negative affect as well, this research follows Frijda (1988) and George & Jones (2001) and assumes that an emotional reaction to a certain situation precedes an attentive perception of that situation, including since ‘emotional stability’ is one of the personality factors proposed by Goldberg (1990) and thus is being considered as a fixed characteristic of an individual. In other words, this research believes that the extent to which people emotionally experience a situation is something that is embedded in one’s personality and will not significantly be influenced by other factors.

Based on the previous, the expectation thus is that perceived legitimacy losses will be reinforced by feelings of negative affect. Hence, the existence of this effect will be investigated in this research and based on the above, the final hypothesis of this research is being formulated.

Hypothesis 4: *In the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, the higher the level of a decision maker’s feelings of negative affect, the greater his perceived legitimacy losses will be.*

Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of all hypotheses.

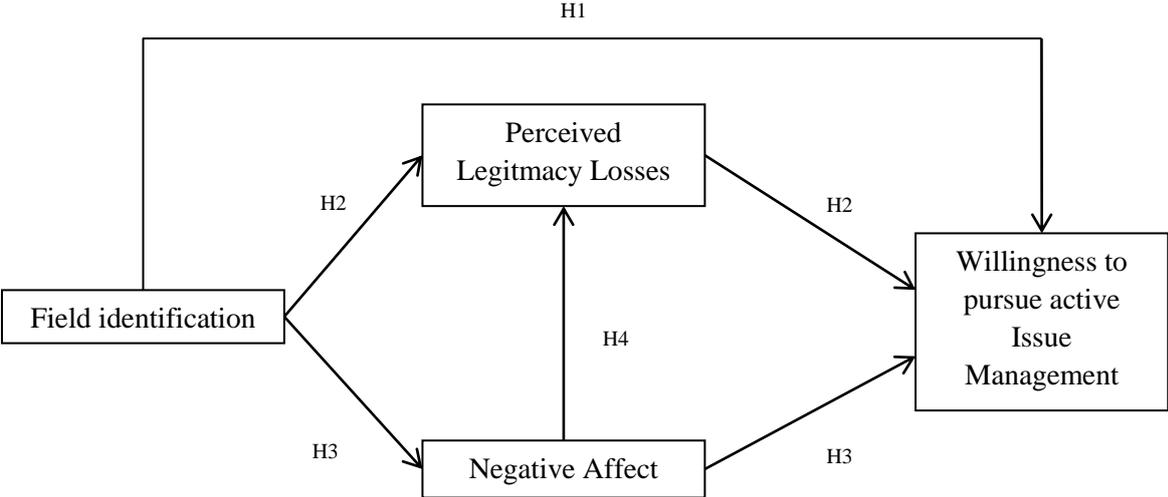


FIGURE 2: Conceptual model

3. Methodology

3.1 Research procedure

In order to test the hypotheses that were presented in the previous chapter, quantitative research has been executed. The choice for executing quantitative research instead of qualitative research has been made since the target group for this research is extremely large. Therefore, in order to be able to address and collect data from many possible respondents in a most efficient way, a questionnaire seemed most effective, because then also there is the possibility to equally compare different respondents' answers. Furthermore, respondents could participate in this research at a time that suited their convenience, which expectedly would improve the response rate.

An online survey among Dutch food industry companies has been distributed. More specifically, companies that operate in different sectors of the food industry – like the meat sector, vegetable sector, dairy sector etc. – formed the target group. Respondents that have been targeted are key decision makers (i.e. managers) in those companies. This survey has been conducted through a digital questionnaire, by making use of Qualtrics software. In the invitation e-mail, this research' purpose has been elaborated, confidentiality has been guaranteed, an explanation has been provided about the need for cooperation by all kinds of organizations and obviously the respondent has been asked to fill out the questionnaire.

The questionnaire started with an introduction, realistically illustrating examples of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event in several of the food industry's sectors, in order to enable the respondents to sympathize with such an event. Examples are the horse meat scandal in the meat sector, sprout vegetables that are being infected with a certain bacterium in the vegetable sector, shortcomings with regard to hygiene in the hotel and catering industry etc. Subsequently, respondents were asked to imagine the occurrence of such an event within their own field, after which they could fill out the questionnaire. This bears resemblance to a vignette study, however, only a single outlined situation has been provided to all respondents, instead of confronting half of the respondents with a field-wide legitimacy threatening situation and the other half with a situation in which there is no disruption of the field's legitimacy. The advantage of this method, asking respondents to imagine a certain situation in their sector, is that each addressed respondent could be provided with the same questionnaire, which made distribution of the questionnaire more convenient than when for each sector a customized questionnaire should have been developed and distributed. Disadvantageous, however, is the fact that respondents were asked to imagine the occurrence of a field-wide

legitimacy event in their sector instead of filling out the questionnaire based on an event they actually experienced. This brings along the risk of respondents interpreting the assignment of imagining a field-wide legitimacy threatening event in their field wrongly, despite the fact that this assignment has been formulated as clear as possible and has been elucidated by real-life examples. However, when limiting the target group of this research solely to food-industry sectors that have been confronted with such an event in the past, not the entire food industry (which thus is the target group of this research) could be addressed, since not every sector has been confronted with a field-wide legitimacy threatening event in former times. Furthermore do some organizations might operate in a sector such an event has been present in, but at the time the event occurred, they might have not been active yet. It was thus not possible to ask each targeted respondent to fill out the questionnaire based on his actual experience with an event. Hence, in order to keep the addressable target group as large as possible, the choice has been made for using this research method.

After being introduced with the – imaginable – field-wide legitimacy threatening event, respondents were being asked to fill out the questionnaire. They were being asked to assess statements about their sector's legitimacy after the event (i.e. perceived legitimacy losses), about how they personally emotionally experienced the event (i.e. negative affect) and about their field identification (regardless whether the event has taken place). Subsequently, respondents were being asked to assess the state of their organization's issue management, after the happening of the field-wide legitimacy threatening event. Their opinion is being asked about whether they think several aspects – preparation, identification, analysis and response, which are the elements of the definition of issue management that is being used in this research – of issue management are of a sufficient level, now that the organization has been confronted with the event. Hereby, one can derive whether a respondent has willingness to pursue more active issue management due to the event, which will be indicated by an 'insufficient' assessment of the organization's issue management practices. This research namely follows the line of reasoning that if an organizational key decision maker (i.e. an owner/ manager; which is the targeted respondent) that has the power to induce change, feels unsatisfied about something, he or she subsequently is willing to change the status quo. This respondents' opinion about the current state of their organization's issue management then can be examined to relate to their field identification, perceived legitimacy losses and negative affect, i.e. does a certain score on these variables result in a specific opinion about the sufficiency of respondents' organization's issue management and thus a willingness to pursue more active issue management? In order to enable respondents to determine their

opinion about the sufficiency of issue management properly, they first have been asked to outline the status quo with regard to issue management in their organization, regardless of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event that has taken place. Hence, respondents first were being forced to think about what is actually happening in their organization with regard to issue management, before bringing up their opinion about whether this is sufficient in the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event. Furthermore, this provides the opportunity to outline the way in which organizations in the food industry are practicing issue management, which is – besides testing the conceptual model – an objective of this research as well.

Finally, some general concluding questions have been asked, in order to be able to control for sector, profession and type of organization of the respondent.

Before eventually distributing the survey, the invitation e-mail, introduction and items of the questionnaire have been discussed with several managers in the food industry, in order to optimize the content by means of comprehensibility, completeness, length etc. They have been asked to fill out the questionnaire and to subsequently note any ambiguousness and the amount of time it took them to participate. Hence, if necessary, formulation of items could be adapted and the invitation e-mail and/or questionnaire introduction could be adjusted, in order to ensure an optimal transfer of our intentions to the addressed respondents and to realize an achievable amount of time it would take respondents to fill out the questionnaire.

3.2 Variable measures

3.2.1 Valuation of Issue Management

In order to measure respondents' valuation of issue management in their organization with respect to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, a measurement has been developed based on current literature on issue management, since no such measurement scale existed.

Based on research by Ansoff (1980) and Jaques (2007), which was leading in defining issue management in this research (i.e. *the extent to which an organization puts effort in the preparation for, the early identification of and fast response to an externally constituted issue*), four items have been constructed in order to measure to what extent respondents believe issue management is being practiced sufficiently in their organization, i.e. to measure their *valuation of issue management*. The four items have been constructed by anatomizing the definition of issue management, at which issue identification is anatomized as well into its two parts (i.e. issue detection and issue analysis). The four items measuring the dependent variable issue management are 'How do you value your organization's ability to be prepared

for a certain event?', 'How do you value your organization's ability to timely detect such events?', 'How do you value your organization's ability to analyze the possible issues that arise from the occurrence of such events?' and 'How do you value your organization's ability to quickly respond to relevant issues that arise from the occurrence of such events?'. Respondents were being asked to assess these questions on a 5-point Likert scale, varying from 'bad' to 'very good'.

As mentioned earlier, respondents first are being asked to outline the status quo with regard to issue management in their organization, in order to be able to assess its sufficiency during a field-wide legitimacy threatening event.

Pearson & Mitroff (1993) provide a clear overview of which organizational aspects are relevant to issue management. Based on their research, the following categories have been developed: organizational preparedness, organizational culture, organizational knowledge sharing, organizational communication and organizational awareness and action. These categories consist of items like 'My organization possesses the resources – people, material and knowledge – necessary to manage an issue' (organizational preparedness), 'My organization stimulates employees to discuss inappropriate behavior with each other' (organizational culture), 'My organization shares gathered experiences from an incident within the organization' (organizational knowledge sharing), 'My organization possesses a communication plan that defines which stakeholders should be informed – when, how and by who – during an incident' (organizational communication) and 'My organization is constantly looking for signals that indicate a possible incident' (organizational awareness and action). Respondents were being asked to assess whether or not they agree with these statements, by using a 5-point Likert scale varying from 'fully disagree' to 'fully agree'. For a full list of all items, see Appendix A.

3.2.2 Field identification

For the measurement of 'field identification', this research uses a multi-item measure based on Raaijmakers' (2013) article. Her measurement consisted of six items from Mael & Ashfort's (1992) scale on organizational identification, of which she modified the wording in order to make it applicable to her research context and two items from Bergami & Bagozzi (2000) their organizational identification measurement. In this research, obviously the wording of Raaijmakers' (2013) items again has been adjusted in order to make it appropriate in the Dutch food industry context. Examples of items are 'My sector highly determines who I am', 'When someone criticizes my sector it feels as a personal insult' and 'I consider my

sector's successes as my own successes'. Respondents were being asked to assess whether or not they agree with these statements, by using a 5-point Likert scale varying from 'fully disagree' to 'fully agree'. For a full list of all items, see Appendix A. Prior research has proven that this measurement scale is reliable.

3.2.3 Perceived legitimacy losses

With respect to measuring a decision maker's perceived legitimacy losses, this research as well bases its measurement on that of Raaijmakers (2013). In her article, she constructed her own measure, being inspired by the legitimacy scale of Elsbach (1994), which consisted of several statements about field-wide legitimacy losses that respondents had to assess. Based on that scale, a multiple-item scale was being developed by Raaijmakers (2013), specifically related to her research context. For example, a statement that Raaijmakers (2013) formulated was "the public opinion on children's safety in childcare has come under increased pressure" (Raaijmakers, 2013, p. 119). Subsequently, respondents were asked to rate statements' applicability to their organization's sector.

In this research, a similar approach has been followed, using Raaijmakers' (2013) measurement scale. Obviously, items have been adjusted in wording, in order to make the scale applicable to the context of this research. Examples of items are 'Since the event, valuation of my sector's products/services has decreased', 'Since the event, working in my sector has become less attractive' and 'Since the event, consumers' faith in my sector's products/services has become under pressure'. Respondents were being asked to assess whether or not they agree with these statements, by using a 5-point Likert scale varying from 'fully disagree' to 'fully agree'. For a full list of all items, see Appendix A. Prior research has proven that this measurement scale is reliable.

3.2.4 Negative affect

The measurement of a decision maker's negative affect is being executed by asking them – in their role as manager of a food industry company, and as a result of the occurrence of the field-wide legitimacy threatening event – to report the negative emotions that they are likely to experience. In order to do so, again just like Raaijmakers (2013), items measuring negative affect are being used from the scale that Watson, Clark & Tellegen (1988) have developed. Raaijmakers (2013) added the emotion 'anger' to this existing scale, as this emotion was highly present in childcare managers' responses to the field-wide legitimacy threatening event. Since it is expected that – in any industrial context – it is obvious for managers to feel angry about being harmed in their field's or organization's legitimacy,

without being responsible themselves, in this research the item ‘anger’ as well is being included in the measurement of ‘negative affect’. The measurement scale as being used by Raaijmakers (2013) thus is used in this research. Examples of items are ‘irritated’, ‘upset’, ‘sad’, ‘ashamed’ and ‘afraid’. Respondents were being asked to assess whether or not they agree with the arising of these emotions due to the event, by using a 5-point Likert scale varying from ‘fully disagree’ to ‘fully agree’. For a full list of all items, see Appendix A. Prior research has proven that this measurement scale is reliable.

3.2.5 Additional variables

3.2.5.1 Control Variables

Besides the variable-specific questions that have been asked in the survey, respondents have been asked to indicate the sector (i.e. the meat sector, vegetable sector, dairy sector etc.) they operate in, their specific profession, whether their organization is a producing or service organization and to indicate the size of their organization by means of annual turnover and number of employees. Hence, it is possible to control for the possibility that respondents’ sector, profession or type of organization affects their scores on the dependent variable.

3.2.5.2 Marker Variable

The possible occurrence of measurement error will be taken into account as well. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff (2003) argue that method bias is one of the primary causes of measurement error, which threatens the research conclusions’ validity. They namely argue that despite the fact that random measurement error is also problematic, especially systematic measurement error is a problematic phenomenon, since this will bias the observed relationships between the constructs. Podsakoff et al. (2003) more specifically elaborate on common method variance (CMV) as being a problematic systematic method bias. They define CMV as “variance that is attributed to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent” (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003, p. 879). In their research, Podsakoff et al. (2003) provide an overview of several potential causes of CMV. The one that is especially interesting to take into account is ‘acquiescence bias’, i.e. “the propensity for respondents to agree (or disagree) with questionnaire items independent of their content” (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003, p. 882). This phenomenon is interesting, since it is important to be able to check whether a respondent has filled out the questionnaire with attention or that he filled it out rashly.

In spite of the statement by Podsakoff et al. (2003) that CMV is attributed to the measurement method, acquiescence bias is not necessarily expected to be caused by the way

in which the variable measurement is modeled. Williams, Hartman & Cavazotte (2010) state that CMV is about the fact that “a researcher’s substantive variables are contaminated by a single unmeasured factor, that has an equal effect on all of the variables” (Williams, Hartman, & Cavazotte, 2010, p. 3). Acquiescence bias can be considered as such an unmeasured factor. For example, one cannot measure a respondent’s desire or propensity to unconditionally agree with items (like for instance answer ‘5’ to every item).

In order to control for the occurrence of this phenomenon, a marker variable has been added to the questionnaire. Lindell & Whitney (2001) propose the use of such a variable to check for CMV, and thus for identifying acquiescence bias. Lindell & Whitney (2001) argue that by adding a variable that is theoretically unrelated to all other variables it is possible to check for CMV. If such a marker variable is theoretically unrelated to the other variables, then there namely is an expected correlation of 0 (i.e. no correlation) between this marker variable and the other variables. Hence, if there however will be found a correlation between this marker variable and the other variables, acquiescence bias might be present. The more close the correlation coefficients are to a value of 1 the more reason to believe there is acquiescence bias. Namely, if respondents unconditionally agree or disagree with an item, like for instance answering ‘5’ to all items, the correlation coefficients should be 1. Based on the correlation coefficients between the marker variable and other variables, one thus can argue whether there is acquiescence bias.

The marker variable that has been chosen to be included in the questionnaire is ‘organizational bureaucracy’, since there is no theoretically expected relation between this variable and the variables ‘field identification’, ‘perceived legitimacy losses’, ‘negative affect’ and ‘valuation of issue management’. In order to connect this variable with the rest of the questionnaire, it has been positioned as the item ‘After the event, my organization experiences more bureaucracy’ between the items measuring ‘perceived legitimacy losses’. Hence, this item does not appear unexpectedly, as it can be considered as part of that scale. The assumption however is still that, theoretically reasoned, the item will not correlate with the other items measuring ‘perceived legitimacy losses’.

3.3 Reliability and validity

As mentioned earlier, existing measurement scales with a proven reliability have been used to measure the independent variables. For the dependent variable there was no existing measurement scale available and thus a scale has been constructed. A reliability analysis has been executed in order to control whether this variable has been measured appropriately.

Furthermore, due to the use of existing validated scales for the independent variable measurement and one very simple and clear self-constructed scale – which thus is fully based on the definition of issue management – for the measurement of the dependent variable, the validity of this research is expected to be fine, as well by making use of a marker variable in order to control for acquiescence bias. Only the fact that respondents have been asked to keep in mind a self-imagined field-wide legitimacy threatening event in their sector, when filling out the questionnaire, might affect the validity. Since respondents might misinterpret what to imagine exactly then, there is a chance that the items related to the event will not measure exactly what they are intended to measure. However, as mentioned earlier, by clearly describing how such an event could look like and by providing real-life examples, the chance of respondents' misinterpretation of this research' intentions is being minimized.

3.4 Data collection

In order to collect data, a selection of 10-15 managers of food industry organizations and managers of organizations that are highly associated with food industry organizations has been asked to assist in executing this research. They cooperated by providing the names and e-mail addresses of people in their network that belong to the target group of this research and by – as a more close connection to those people – asking them to participate in the research. This method resulted in a list of names and e-mail addresses of 260 managers of food industry companies, who thus all had been informed about the research by a personal connection, which is expected to have increased the response rate. Since their names were known, it was also possible to customize the beginning of the e-mail linking to the online questionnaire (i.e. 'Dear mr. x'), which is believed to have increased the response rate as well, because recipients might have perceived this approach as more personal and sympathetic.

The questionnaire thus has been sent to a sample of 260 managers of food industry organizations. This population consisted of people with various management professions (i.e. owner, production manager, account manager etc.) at different types of organizations (i.e. large versus small and producing versus service organization) in different food industry sectors (i.e. the meat sector, dairy sector, drinks sector, hotel and catering sector etc.).

3.5 Data analysis

Structural equation modeling has been used in order to execute a path analysis and test the conceptual model of this research. Since this method can be used for testing several mediating relationships and as well for testing interrelationships between all variables in the model, this is a very applicable analysis method (Raaijmakers, 2013).

4. Results

86 responses have been registered by the Qualtrics software, of which 12 responses consisted of partly filled out questionnaires, 31 responses consisted of questionnaires not being filled out – but nevertheless thus have been registered – and 43 were completely filled out and thus were appropriate to use for analysis. Hence, N=43.

4.1 Descriptive statistics, correlations and reliability analysis

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations of the relevant variables. Internal reliabilities (i.e. Cronbach's Alpha values) for the measurement scales are presented – if applicable – between parentheses in each row. All measurement scales have proved to be reliable.

TABLE 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations

Variable	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Valuation of Issue Management	42	3,50	0,65	1	(,852)			
2. Field Identification	43	3,20	0,56	,026	1	(,695)		
3. Perceived Legitimacy Losses	43	2,97	0,61	-,171	,087	1	(,769)	
4. Negative Affect	43	2,11	0,91	-,185	,083	,379**	1	(,936)
5. Marker variable: Bureaucracy	43	3,56	0,96	-,033	-,060	,276*	,208	1

* p < 0.10 ** p < 0.05

The marker variable 'bureaucracy' does not highly significantly correlate with the variables of the conceptual model, and hence there is no reason to assume Common Method Variance due to acquiescence bias, i.e. it is not likely that a respondent unconditionally has answered exactly the same to all questions. The only considerable correlation coefficient might be the coefficient of ,276 between the marker variable and perceived legitimacy losses, which is significant at $p < 0.10$. This however might be explicable, since the marker variable has been placed between the items measuring perceived legitimacy losses, and respondents could have believed that this variable somehow belongs to the perceived legitimacy losses scale.

The correlation table (see Appendix C) that provides the bivariate correlation coefficients with regard to the control variables 'sector', 'profession' and 'organization type' and the dependent variable 'Valuation of Issue Management' does not report any significant correlations, except a correlation coefficient between respondents' profession 'sales management' and 'Valuation of Issue Management' of ,321 ($p < 0.05$) and furthermore does organization size correlate significantly positive with 'valuation of Issue Management', since

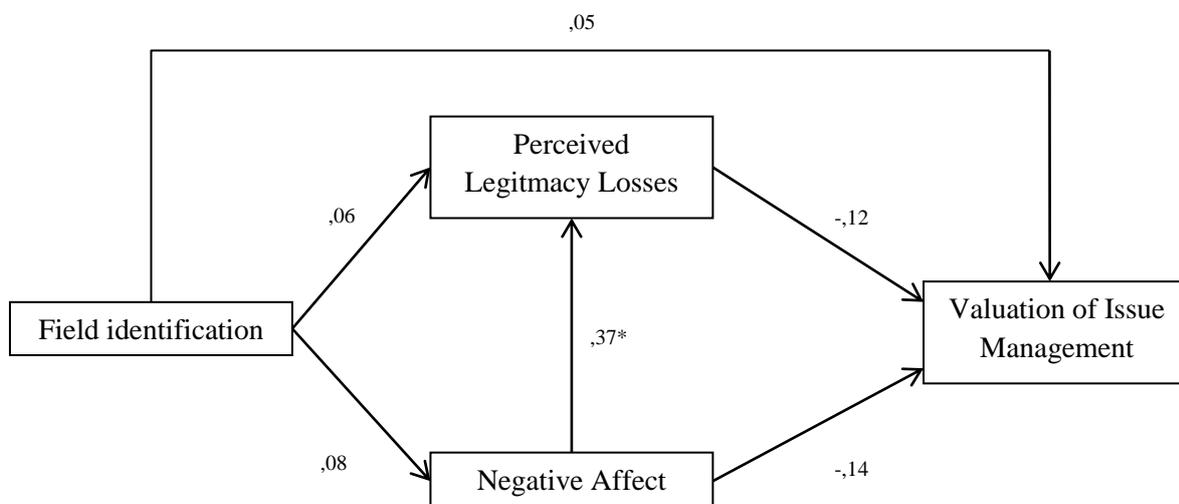
‘number of employees’ and ‘annual turnover’ respectively have correlation coefficients ,434 and ,416 (both $p < 0.01$) with ‘Valuation of Issue Management’.

4.2 Structural equation modeling

SPSS Amos software has been used in order to test the conceptual model. Table 2 provides information about the path coefficients – unstandardized and standardized – and their significance. Figure 3 represents the conceptual model with the standardized path coefficients that resulted from the analysis.

TABLE 2: Path coefficients for the conceptual model

Path	Regression weight	Standardized regression weight	S.E.	C.R.	P
Field Identification → Perceived Legitimacy Losses	,061	,057	,155	,396	,692
Field Identification → Negative Affect	,133	,083	,248	,537	,591
Field Identification → Valuation of Issue Management	,060	,052	,177	,339	,735
Negative Affect → Perceived Legitimacy Losses	,251	,374	,096	2,613	,009
Negative Affect → Valuation of Issue Management	-,101	-,142	,118	-,861	,389
Perceived Legitimacy Losses → Valuation of Issue Management	-,129	-,121	,176	-,737	,461



* $p < 0.01$

FIGURE 3: Path coefficients for the conceptual model

Respondents’ field identification, according to Figure 3, has no direct significant effect on their valuation of issue management. Hence, Hypothesis 1 – *the higher decision makers’ field identification, the greater their attempt to pursue more active issue management will be in the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event* – is not being supported, since this research’ line of thought is that a negative valuation of issue management indicates a willingness to pursue more active issue management.

Figure 3 shows a negative relationship between respondents' level of negative affect and their valuation of issue management and it also shows a negative relationship between respondents' perceived legitimacy losses and their valuation of issue management, but these relationships both are not significant. Furthermore, both 'perceived legitimacy losses' and 'negative affect' are influenced by 'field identification', however these effects as well are not significant and moreover they are very small. Hence, Hypothesis 2 – *the positive relationship between decision makers' field identification and their attempt to pursue more active issue management, in the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, is mediated by decision makers' perceived legitimacy losses* – and Hypothesis 3 – *the positive relationship between decision makers' field identification and their attempt to pursue more active issue management, in the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, is mediated by decision makers' feelings of negative affect* – are not being supported, since this research' line of thought is that a negative valuation of issue management indicates a willingness to pursue more active issue management.

A positive and significant relationship ($p \leq 0.01$) between the 'negative affect' and 'perceived legitimacy losses' has been found, as has been presented in Figure 3. Hence, there has been found support for Hypothesis 4: *In the case of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, the higher the level of a decision maker's feelings of negative affect, the greater his perceived legitimacy losses.*

4.3 Insights in the Dutch food industry's issue management

4.3.1 Reliability analysis

Besides testing the conceptual model, gaining insights in how food industry organizations practice issue management is also an objective of this research. As mentioned in chapter three, a part of the questionnaire has been used for this purpose. Respondents were being asked to state to what extent they agree with whether several issue management related organizational aspects are present in their organization, by assigning a score ranging from 1 to 5 to several items. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Descriptive statistics of issue management practices

Aspect of Issue Management	N	Mean	SD
1. Organizational preparedness	43	3,30	0,81
2. Organizational culture	43	4,06	0,70
3. Organizational knowledge sharing	43	3,38	0,75
4. Organizational communication	43	2,91	0,94
5. Organizational awareness and action	43	2,91	0,87

Whereas internal reliabilities of the scales measuring the variables of the conceptual model have been presented in Table 1, it is not known yet whether the items measuring the different issue management aspects an organization might engage in, compose reliable scales. As can be seen in Table 4, these scales all have proved to be reliable.

TABLE 4: Internal reliabilities for issue management aspect scales

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
1. Organizational preparedness	,904
2. Organizational culture	,838
3. Organizational knowledge sharing	,838
4. Organizational communication	,849
5. Organizational awareness and action	,846

Furthermore, it is interesting to know whether respondents that feel cognitively and emotionally affected by a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, assess the status quo with regard to issue management in their organization differently than respondents that do not feel cognitively and emotionally affected by a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, even though they were asked to indicate it regardless of the occurrence of such an event. In other words: it is interesting to check whether respondents have assessed the status quo objectively. A correlation table providing coefficients between 'perceived legitimacy losses' and 'negative affect' and the variables 'organizational preparedness', 'organizational culture', 'organizational knowledge sharing', 'organizational communication' and 'organizational awareness and action' should provide such knowledge. If there is no significant correlation between these variables, one can assume that all respondents objectively indicated their organization's status quo with regard to issue management, so regardless of the occurrence of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event and the cognitive and emotional feelings that event will evoke. Table 5 provides this correlation table. The numbers that are being used in the top row represent the organizational issue management aspects, like presented in Tables 3 and 4.

TABLE 5: Correlation coefficients of issue management aspects vs. negative affect and perceived legitimacy losses

Organizational size based on:	1	2	3	4	5
Negative affect	-,162	-,121	-,133	-,325*	,078
Perceived legitimacy losses	-,071	-,094	-,087	-,005	-,118

* p < 0.05

Table 5 shows that ‘negative affect’ and ‘organizational communication’ correlate significantly negative with a coefficient of $-.325$ ($p < 0.05$). This should indicate that people, who will be emotionally affected when a field-wide legitimacy threatening event will occur, beforehand believe that their organization does not engage in proper communication during the occurrence of such an event. However, respondents were being asked to assess the status quo of their organization’s issue management practices regardless of the occurrence of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event and to indicate their negative affect based on the actual occurrence of such an event. Therefore, these two variables cannot be linked properly anyway. Since besides the previously mentioned correlation, there are no significant correlations between respondents’ cognitive and emotional micro-level factors and their indication of the existence of the several issue management aspects in their organization, the correlation between ‘negative affect’ and ‘organizational communication’ might be based on a coincidence due to misinterpretation of the assignment that has been presented in the questionnaire. Hence, this research assumes that, in general, respondents objectively have indicated their organization’s status quo with regard to issue management, i.e. there are no differences among people who experience negative affect and/or perceived legitimacy losses during a field-wide legitimacy threatening event.

4.3.2 Control variable effects

It is also interesting to know whether different types of organizations in different sectors vary in their issue management practices. Appendix D presents the correlation matrices for the issue management aspects as elaborated on before and the control variables ‘sector’, ‘organization type’ and ‘organization size’. Hence, it is noticeable that there are no significant differences between the food industry’s sectors with regard to practicing issue management and as well there are no significant differences between producing organizations and service organizations with regard to the issue management practices that are present.

However, there are differences noticeable when taking organizational size into account. When organizational size is based on number of employees, it correlates significantly positive with ‘organizational preparedness’, coefficient $.366$ ($p < 0.05$), ‘organizational communication’, coefficient $.371$ ($p < 0.05$) and ‘organizational awareness and action’, coefficient $.478$ ($p < 0.01$). When organizational size is based on annual turnover, it correlates significantly positive with ‘organizational preparedness’, coefficient $.409$ ($p < 0.01$), ‘organizational knowledge sharing’, coefficient $.309$ ($p < 0.05$), ‘organizational communication’, coefficient $.310$ ($p < 0.05$) and ‘organizational awareness and action’, coefficient $.487$ ($p < 0.01$). Table 6 provides an overview of all these correlation coefficients

with regard to organizational size (i.e. number of employees and annual turnover) and the organizational issue management aspects. The numbers that are being used in the top row represent the organizational issue management aspects, like presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5. It is noticeable that organizational culture is not subject to organizational size, so this can be regarded as an organization-specific issue management aspect. Furthermore, the correlation between number of employees and knowledge sharing is not significant, which can be explained by the fact that an increase in number of employees could hamper knowledge sharing across the organization and thus not will increase knowledge sharing significantly. However, the coefficient is not negative, which indicates that an increase in number of employees in any case does not reduce knowledge sharing in the organization.

TABLE 6: Correlation coefficients of organizational size vs. issue management aspects

Organizational size based on:	1	2	3	4	5
Number of employees	,366*	,217	,277	,371*	,478**
Annual turnover	,409**	,179	,309*	,310*	,487**

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

5. Conclusion and discussion

5.1 Conclusion

Within the context of the Dutch food industry, this research' goal was to investigate how micro-level factors explain differences in organizational issue management regarding a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, i.e. an incident that is caused by a single organization in the field or even without a provable responsible organization, but which threatens the whole sector's legitimacy. Organizational action regarding such events comprises issue management activities. By means of micro-level variables – i.e. decision makers' personal characteristics – this research aimed at explaining differences in organizational issue management.

The theoretical assumption was, that decision makers' field identification would increase their willingness to pursue active issue management (Hypothesis 1); a relationship that was assumed to be mediated by decision makers' perceived legitimacy losses and their negative affect (Hypotheses 2 and 3). The results of this research did not find support for these hypotheses. More specifically, no significant effect from decision makers' field identification on organizational issue management has been found in the data, just like significant effects from decision makers' field identification on both his perceived legitimacy losses and negative affect. Furthermore, significant effects on issue management by both perceived legitimacy losses and negative affect also have not been found. However, despite the insignificance of the effects that have been found, the direction of the relationships hypothesized in hypotheses 2 and 3 is in line with these hypotheses.

In Hypothesis 4, the assumption is that the level of a decision maker's negative affect would increase the level of his perceived legitimacy losses. There has been found support for this hypothesis, since this effect significantly appeared to exist. Emotions thus matter: they affect how decision makers in the Dutch food industry perceive the situation during a field-wide legitimacy threatening event.

Another interesting finding of this research emerged by controlling for the effect of organizational size on the dependent variable. It appeared that decision makers that work for a large organization – whereby organizational size is being expressed in both annual turnover and number of employees – have a more positive opinion about the sufficiency of their organization's issue management in the case of occurrence of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event. This can imply that large organizations engage in active issue management, i.e. they prepare themselves for the arising of issues, they put effort in the early identification

of issues and they aim to respond quickly to issues that are relevant to the organization, regardless of the actual occurrence of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event. This seems to be not that rare, since large organizations often have more resources (i.e. people, budgets) that can be applied to issue management activities, rather than smaller organizations do.

This presumption has been justified by gaining insights in to what extent Dutch food industry organizations practice issue management, regardless of the occurrence of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event. Respondents were asked to assign a score varying from 1 to 5 to whether certain aspects of issue management are present in their organization, regardless of the occurrence of a field-wide legitimacy threatening event. Again, there is a significantly positive correlation noticeable between the existence of these issue management activities in an organization and organizational size, which, as previously elucidated, makes sense. Only ‘organizational culture’ seemed not to be affected by organizational size and thus is being considered as an organization-specific characteristic. Although organizational size thus appeared to have influence on the level of issue management, on average, respondents’ scores on the existence of issue management in their organization have been ‘sufficient’ to ‘good’, since scores on the issue management aspects varied from 2,9 to 4,1 in a range from 1 to 5. Organizations in the Dutch food industry thus do practice issue management.

5.2 Discussion

Although the relationship between negative affect and perceived legitimacy losses has proved to be significant and insights have been gained in the Dutch food industry’s issue management, support for hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 has not been found. When comparing to similar research, this seems odd. Raaijmakers (2013), for example, does have found significant relationships between micro-level factors and organizational response with regard to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event in the Dutch childcare industry. The fact that this research did not find such relationships can be considered in several ways.

This absence of significant relationships between micro-level factors and willingness to pursue active issue management might be related to the context of this research, namely the Dutch food industry. One could argue that – specifically – Dutch food industry managers their field identification, negative affect and perceived legitimacy losses do not affect their willingness to pursue active issue management, for instance because their average valuation of issue management is already ‘sufficient’ tot ‘good’ (3,5 in a range from 1 to 5), i.e. respondents thus might believe that there is not much need for improvement of their organization’s issue management at all.

However, the absence of significant influence of micro-level factors, in this research, might also be due to the choice for ‘willingness to pursue active issue management’ as dependent variable. This is a more specified variable than ‘organizational response’, since one asks respondents to indicate how the event affects their willingness to change specific practices in the organization, instead of asking for how the organization would respond anyhow, regardless of the type of response. Nevertheless, it is believed that issue management is a form of organizational response and thus would be influenced by micro-level factors as well.

Moreover, it is possible that something else, with regard to the choice for this dependent variable, has resulted in the fact that the hypothesized relationships have not appeared to be significant. Respondents namely might have kept something in mind during their valuation of their organization’s issue management (which is believed to indicate respondents’ willingness to pursue active issue management, as mentioned earlier: this research’ line of reasoning is that a respondent’s negative valuation of his organization’s issue management, implies a willingness to improve it, i.e. pursue more active issue management). Respondents might believe that only their individual willingness to change cannot result in actual change, since decision making in organizations often is being executed in teams. In other words, respondents might believe that consensus in the decision making team is necessary for actual improvement of issue management. This could have influenced respondents’ valuation of their organization’s issue management in such a way that, since they might have believed that inducing change in their organization is hard to individually achieve, they have valued their organization’s issue management for instance as more sufficient than they would have done if they had the belief that they are more easily able to realize improvements. Hence, if a group dynamics variable like ‘decision making team support’ had been taken into account in the conceptual model, perhaps significant relationships would have been found. This variable could be a positively moderating variable on the relationships between field identification, negative affect and perceived legitimacy losses and willingness to pursue active issue management. For example, if a respondent (i.e. decision maker) receives high support of the decision making team, his willingness to pursue active issue management will not be hampered by feelings of inability to actually realize issue management improvement.

With respect to this research’ independent variables, compared to other research, the absence of significant relationships can be interpreted as well. Although in Raaijmakers’

(2013) research field identification affected organizational response, this effect is quite small (i.e. ,13 on organizational control and ,18 on organizational culture). This might indicate that field identification is not an important predictor of organizational response and/or issue management at all. The same counts for negative affect. The effect Raaijmakers (2013) found from negative affect on organizational response namely is ,09 and it only affects organizational control. Combined with this research' results, this could indicate that emotions solely do not predict organizational response and/or issue management.

Raaijmakers (2013), although, notes that negative affect does really affect organizational response through perceived legitimacy losses. Also in this research this could make sense, since it has been found that negative affect does influence perceived legitimacy losses. Nevertheless, in this research perceived legitimacy losses has not proved to significantly affect respondents' willingness to pursue active issue management. This however thus might be explicable due to the dependent variable, as mentioned earlier.

The aspect that remains unclear is the fact that, in this research, field identification does not significantly influence negative affect and perceived legitimacy losses, whereas Raaijmakers (2013) has found such relationships. Again, this might be due to the context of this research. As is noticed earlier, field identification does not significantly affect managers' willingness to pursue active issue management in the Dutch food industry. In the previous, this has been considered as due to the fact that field identification might not be an important predictor of organizational response at all. On the other hand, it might also be that field identification just is not a relevant phenomenon in the Dutch food industry, which could explain why it does not significantly influence any of the variables in the conceptual model of this research. However, a clear reasoning why this should be the case cannot be provided, since respondents' average score on field identification is 3,20 on a range from 1 to 5, so Dutch food industry managers on average do identify with their field.

5.3 Relevance

The relationship between negative affect and perceived legitimacy losses that has proved to be significant, contributes to the literature on affective science: in the Dutch food industry do emotions play a significant role in predicting how actors perceive situations.

Other scientific relevance lies in the fact that insights in the extent to which Dutch food industry's organizations practice issue management have been gained. This research pointed out that organizations in this industry do practice issue management, but the larger the organization, the more issue management activities are present. Subsequently, this results in

practical relevance. Small Dutch food industry organizations can learn from the larger ones and hence can improve and/or expand their issue management activities, which enables them to be more defensible to field-wide legitimacy threatening events.

5.4 Limitations and future research

Although both scientific and practical relevance are present, this research does have some limitations. First, the research population that could be analyzed consisted of only 43 respondents. It is expected that there is a possibility that certain hypothesized effects could be uncovered to be significant when the analyses will be executed on a larger research population. Second, the several sectors in which respondents' organization is active are not distributed equally over the research population (see Appendix B). The hotel and catering sector and the drinks sector represent a large part of the research population, which hampers the ability to generalize the research results to the entire food industry. Finally, the research design could possibly have biased the results. As mentioned in the methods section, respondents had to imagine a field-wide legitimacy threatening event in their sector. Although very clear examples of such events in several sectors have been given, and the expectation thus was that respondents could imagine the occurrence of such an event in their sector well, the chance remains present that respondents' expected reactions to such a potential event differ from how they would react if they actually would be confronted with a field-wide legitimacy threatening event.

Hence, a suggestion for further research is to investigate this research' conceptual model in a food industry sector, which actually has been confronted with a field-wide legitimacy threatening event, like the meat sector (i.e. the horse meat scandal) for instance. Another possibility in future research is to (partly) repeat this research, assuring a larger research population which is more heterogenic with regard to respondents' backgrounds. In addition to both of these suggestions, a group dynamics variable 'decision making team support' could be included in the conceptual model, as a moderator on the relationship between 'field identification', 'negative affect' and/or 'perceived legitimacy losses' and 'willingness to pursue active issue management'. If even then no significant effect from decision makers' field identification, negative affect and/or perceived legitimacy losses on issue management is being found, it might be interesting to investigate to what extent these independent variables play a role in decision making processes in Dutch food industry organizations, regardless of whether decisions are being made with respect to issue management. Or, if a significant effect of the previously mentioned micro-level factors on

issue management will not be found, one could also research why these micro-level factors exactly do not affect issue management in the Dutch food industry. Furthermore, future research could elaborate more specifically on how food industry organizations actually do practice issue management, i.e. what specific issue management actions are relevant in this industry, as this research only elucidated what general issue management practices food industry organizations execute. Finally, in future research, other industries than the food industry, like the healthcare industry for example, could be subject to testing to what extent micro-level factors explain differences in organizational issue management regarding a field-wide legitimacy threatening event. As mentioned earlier, Raaijmakers (2013), who examined the Dutch childcare industry, did find significant relationships between micro-level factors and organizational response with regard to a field-wide legitimacy threatening event and although the present research did not notice such significant relationships (possibly due to sample size concerns, the research context or the dependent variable, as mentioned earlier), this research' theoretical assumption still is that micro-level factors matter in how organizations handle (field-wide) legitimacy threatening events. This thus should be examined in other industries as well by which organizational issue management procedures in several industries can be improved. Organizational legitimacy is a great good, so every organization in each industry should be able to foster and preserve this asset.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Full questionnaire

Note: the questionnaire has been conducted in Dutch.

Inleiding op de vragenlijst

In de afgelopen jaren hebben er in de voedings- en levensmiddelenindustrie regelmatig incidenten plaatsgevonden. Te denken valt hierbij aan gebeurtenissen zoals paardenvlees dat verkocht wordt als rundvlees, babymelkpoeder dat besmet blijkt te zijn met een kankerverwekkende stof, kiemgroenten die besmet zijn met de EHEC-bacterie, vogelgriep in de pluimveesector, tekortkomingen m.b.t. hygiëne in de horeca etc. De overeenkomst tussen dergelijke gebeurtenissen is dat, ongeacht of er opzet in het spel is of niet, de legitimiteit en concurrentiepositie van een sector in het geding is. De vragen die nu gaan volgen gaan over hoe u een dergelijk incident persoonlijk heeft ervaren. Let op: het betreft een incident dat binnen uw sector speelt, niet binnen uw eigen bedrijf. U dient deze vragen dus te beantwoorden op basis van het gegeven dat een dergelijke situatie zich in uw sector heeft voorgedaan. Vervolgens zullen er een aantal vragen worden gesteld over het managen van incidenten.

Legitimiteit sector

Er volgen nu een aantal stellingen waarvan u telkens aan dient te geven in welke mate u het er mee eens bent (1 = totaal mee oneens, 2 = grotendeels mee oneens, 3 = neutraal, 4 = grotendeels mee eens, 5 = totaal mee eens).

Sinds het incident... (let op: de volgende stellingen betreffen uw sector)

Twijfelen mensen die werkzaam zijn in mijn sector of ze de integriteit van producten/diensten uit mijn sector nog wel kunnen garanderen.

1 2 3 4 5

Is de waardering voor producten/diensten uit mijn sector verminderd.

1 2 3 4 5

Is de 'professionele trots' van mensen die werkzaam zijn in mijn sector geschaad.

1 2 3 4 5

Is het belang van professionaliteit toegenomen binnen mijn sector.

1 2 3 4 5

Is de publieke opinie over de integriteit van producten/diensten uit mijn sector onder druk komen te staan.

1 2 3 4 5

Vragen mensen zich af of de algemeen geldende richtlijnen binnen mijn sector worden gevolgd.

1 2 3 4 5

Ervaart mijn sector meer bureaucratie.

1 2 3 4 5

Is werken in mijn sector minder aantrekkelijk geworden.

1 2 3 4 5

Moet de wijze waarop bedrijven te werk gaan binnen mijn sector veranderen.

1 2 3 4 5

Zijn de bedrijven in mijn sector gedwongen meer aandacht te besteden aan het aantonen van de integriteit van de producten/diensten.

1 2 3 4 5

Zullen mensen minder graag werkzaam blijven in mijn sector.

1 2 3 4 5

Is het vertrouwen van consumenten in de producten/diensten uit mijn sector onder druk komen te staan.

1 2 3 4 5

Persoonlijke beleving

We vragen u nu om aan te geven wat het incident persoonlijk met u doet, in uw rol als manager in uw bedrijf.

In mijn rol als manager voel ik mij naar aanleiding van het incident (1 = een heel klein beetje of totaal niet, 2 = een klein beetje, 3 = redelijk, 4 = behoorlijk, 5 = enorm) ...

Boos

1 2 3 4 5

Prikkelbaar

1 2 3 4 5

Angstig

1 2 3 4 5

Van streek

1 2 3 4 5

Verdrietig

1 2 3 4 5

Rusteloos

1 2 3 4 5

Nerveus

1 2 3 4 5

Beschaamd

1 2 3 4 5

Schuldig

1 2 3 4 5

Bang

1 2 3 4 5

Vijandig

1 2 3 4 5

Persoonlijke houding ten opzichte van uw sector

De volgende items gaan over uw persoonlijke houding ten opzichte van uw sector, ongeacht of het incident heeft plaatsgevonden of niet. Er volgen een aantal stellingen waarvan u aan dient te geven in welke mate u het eens bent met die stelling (1 = totaal mee oneens, 2 = grotendeels mee oneens, 3 = neutraal, 4 = grotendeels mee eens, 5 = totaal mee eens).

Mijn sector bepaalt voor een groot deel wie ik ben.

1 2 3 4 5

Wanneer iemand kritiek uit op mijn sector dan voelt dat als een persoonlijke belediging.

1 2 3 4 5

Ik ben erg geïnteresseerd in wat mensen denken over mijn sector.

1 2 3 4 5

Wanneer ik praat over mijn sector dan zeg ik vaker 'wij' dan 'zij'.

1 2 3 4 5

De successen van mijn sector beschouw ik als mijn successen.

1 2 3 4 5

Wanneer iemand mijn sector prijst dan voelt dat als een persoonlijk compliment.

1 2 3 4 5

Wanneer mijn sector word bekritiseerd in de media dan schaam ik me.

1 2 3 4 5

Hieronder zijn een aantal cirkels weergegeven. Wij vragen u om uzelf in te beelden dat de witte cirkel u als persoon representeert en de grijze cirkel uw sector. In hoeverre kunt u zichzelf met uw sector identificeren? Geef hier een indicatie van op basis van onderstaande opties. Hoe meer overlap tussen de cirkels, des te hoger de mate van uw persoonlijke identificatie met uw sector.



Het managen van incidenten

Er volgen nu een aantal stellingen over wat er binnen uw bedrijf gebeurt, ongeacht of het incident heeft plaatsgevonden of niet. Wanneer er desalniettemin over incidenten gesproken wordt, gaat het dus om incidenten binnen uw sector die van invloed kunnen zijn op de legitimiteit en het voortbestaan van bedrijven in uw sector. Wij vragen u om aan te geven in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling (1 = volledig oneens, 2 = oneens, 3 = neutraal, 4 = eens, 5= volledig eens).

Onderstaande stellingen gaan over de weerbaarheid van uw bedrijf. Mijn bedrijf...

Reserveert budget om in te kunnen zetten wanneer zich een incident voordoet.

1 2 3 4 5

Beschikt over de middelen (mensen, materiaal, kennis) om een incident te kunnen managen.

1 2 3 4 5

Heeft duidelijke afspraken over rollen en verantwoordelijkheden van personen om een incident te kunnen managen.

1 2 3 4 5

Heeft een team paraat dat onmiddellijk kan worden ingezet om een incident te kunnen managen.

1 2 3 4 5

Monitort en evalueert systematisch of de noodzakelijke kennis en middelen toereikend zijn om een incident te kunnen managen.

1 2 3 4 5

Heeft een management dat snel tot overeenstemming weet te komen wanneer zich een incident voordoet.

1 2 3 4 5

Heeft een draaiboek paraat dat voorziet in het snel kunnen reageren op een incident.

1 2 3 4 5

Traint medewerkers om beter te kunnen inspelen op incidenten (cursussen, simulaties, workshops, etc).

1 2 3 4 5

Traint medewerkers om beter te kunnen omgaan met de persoonlijke en emotionele gevolgen van een incident.

1 2 3 4 5

Onderstaande stellingen gaan over de cultuur binnen uw bedrijf. Mijn bedrijf...

Vindt het belangrijk dat binnen het bedrijf gezamenlijk wordt gesproken over professioneel gedrag.

1 2 3 4 5

Vindt het belangrijk dat informatie wordt gedeeld binnen het bedrijf.

1 2 3 4 5

Stimuleert dat medewerkers ongepast gedrag bespreekbaar maken.

1 2 3 4 5

Betrekt medewerkers actief bij hoe om te gaan met incidenten.

1 2 3 4 5

Onderstaande stellingen gaan over kennisdeling in uw bedrijf. Mijn bedrijf...

Legt ervaringen en geleerde lessen die zijn opgedaan met het managen van een incident vast.

1 2 3 4 5

Deelt de ervaringen die zijn opgedaan met het managen van een incident binnen het bedrijf.

1 2 3 4 5

Deelt de ervaringen die zijn opgedaan met het managen van een incident met klanten en leveranciers.

1 2 3 4 5

Deelt de ervaringen die zijn opgedaan met het managen van een incident met autoriteiten en andere relevante partijen.

1 2 3 4 5

Onderhoudt relaties met externe deskundigen over het managen van incidenten.

1 2 3 4 5

Onderhoudt relaties met toezichhoudende instanties over het managen van incidenten.

1 2 3 4 5

Onderstaande stellingen gaan over communicatie in uw bedrijf. Mijn bedrijf...

Beschikt over een communicatieplan waarin staat aangegeven door wie, wanneer, hoe en welke stakeholders worden geïnformeerd wanneer zich een incident voordoet.

1 2 3 4 5

Heeft persberichten klaarliggen om direct te kunnen reageren op een incident.

1 2 3 4 5

Heeft een lijst van klanten, leveranciers, autoriteiten en andere relevante partijen die moeten worden geïnformeerd wanneer zich een incident voordoet.

1 2 3 4 5

Maakt gebruik van allerlei verschillende communicatiemiddelen (sociale media, persberichten, infolijnen, radio en tv) bij het communiceren over een incident.

1 2 3 4 5

Gebruikt verschillende communicatiemiddelen voor verschillende doelgroepen bij het communiceren over een incident.

1 2 3 4 5

Onderstaande stellingen gaan over het bewust zijn van het kunnen ontstaan van incidenten en beheersing ervan door uw bedrijf. Mijn bedrijf...

Is voortdurend actief op zoek naar signalen die kunnen duiden op een mogelijk nieuw incident.

1 2 3 4 5

Tast voortdurend (sociale) media af op berichtgeving die kan wijzen op een mogelijk incident.

1 2 3 4 5

Controleert signalen en berichtgeving over een mogelijk incident op waarheid.

1 2 3 4 5

Voert analyses uit om de impact van een incident voor het bedrijf te kunnen inschatten.

1 2 3 4 5

Categoriseert incidenten op basis van de kans dat deze zich voordoen en de impact ervan.

1 2 3 4 5

Maakt op basis van de situatie een actieplan om te reageren op een incident.

1 2 3 4 5

Beoordeling van het managen van incidenten

Wij vragen u nu om de volgende vragen wederom te beantwoorden op basis van het gegeven dat een incident, zoals eerder in deze vragenlijst genoemd, heeft plaatsgevonden binnen uw sector (1 = slecht, 2 = onvoldoende, 3 = voldoende, 4 = goed, 5 = zeer goed).

Hoe waardeert u dan de wijze waarop uw bedrijf er in slaagt voorbereid te zijn op het daadwerkelijk plaatsvinden van een dergelijk incident?

1 2 3 4 5

Hoe waardeert u dan de wijze waarop uw bedrijf er in slaagt om dit soort incidenten vroegtijdig te signaleren?

1 2 3 4 5

Hoe waardeert u dan de wijze waarop uw bedrijf er in slaagt om de gevolgen van gesignaleerde incidenten voor uw bedrijf in kaart te brengen?

1 2 3 4 5

Hoe waardeert u dan de wijze waarop uw bedrijf er in slaagt om snel te reageren op de voor uw bedrijf relevante gevolgen van een incident?

1 2 3 4 5

Afsluitende algemene vragen

Tot slot nog een aantal algemene vragen. De informatie die u verstrekt wordt vertrouwelijk en anoniem behandeld en enkel voor wetenschappelijke doeleinden gebruikt.

In welke sector binnen de voedings- en levensmiddelenindustrie is uw bedrijf actief?
Meerdere antwoorden zijn mogelijk.

- Zuivel
- Vlees
- Vis
- Aardappelen, groente en fruit
- Graanproducten
- Suiker, zoetwaren, koek, snacks
- Vetten en oliën
- Dranken
- Groothandel en supermarkten
- Horeca
- Anders, namelijk: _____

Bij welk bedrijf bent u werkzaam?

In welke functie binnen uw bedrijf bent u werkzaam? Meerdere antwoorden zijn mogelijk.

- Eigenaar / directeur
- Algemeen management
- Inkoopmanagement
- Verkoopmanagement
- Productiemanagement
- Kwaliteitsmanagement
- Risicomanagement
- Anders, namelijk: _____

Is uw bedrijf producerend of dienstverlenend? Meerdere antwoorden zijn mogelijk.

- Producerend
- Dienstverlenend

Hoeveel werknemers heeft uw bedrijf in Nederland?

- < 25
- 25 - 100
- 101 - 250
- 251 - 500
- 501 - 1000
- > 1000

Wat is de jaaromzet van uw bedrijf?

- < 1 miljoen euro
- 1 - 49 miljoen euro
- 50 - 99 miljoen euro
- 100 - 499 miljoen euro
- > 500 miljoen euro

Appendix B: Respondent demographics

Sector	Percentage
Dairy	7,0
Meat	9,3
Fish	4,7
Vegetables & Fruit	11,6
Grain products	2,3
Sugar products, snacks	9,3
Oil products	2,3
Drinks	27,9
Wholesale business and supermarkets	11,6
Hotel and catering industry	62,8
Other	14,0

Profession	Percentage
Owner / director	34,9
General management	39,5
Purchase management	0,0
Sales management	14,0
Production management	0,0
Quality management	2,3
Risk management	0,0
Other	11,6

Organization type	Percentage
Producing organization	46,5
Service organization	81,4

Number of employees of the organization	Percentage
< 25	27,9
25 - 100	34,9
101 – 250	14,0
251 – 500	2,3
501 – 1000	9,3
> 1000	9,3
Missing values	2,3

Annual turnover of the organization (€)	Percentage
< 1 million	18,6
1 – 49 million	58,1
50 – 99 million	0,0
100 – 499 million	11,6
> 500 million	9,3
Missing values	2,3

Appendix C: Correlation table – dependent variable vs. control variables

Control variable	Valuation of Issue Management
Sector – Dairy	,086
Sector – Meat	,013
Sector – Fish	-,042
Sector – Vegetables & Fruit	-,045
Sector – Grain products	,062
Sector – Sugar products, snacks	-,030
Sector – Oil products	,062
Sector – Drinks	,168
Sector – Wholesale business and supermarkets	-,026
Sector – Hotel and catering industry	-,166
Sector – Other	,064
Profession – Owner / director	-,105
Profession – General management	-,241
Profession – Purchase management	. ^b
Profession – Sales management	,321*
Profession – Production management	. ^b
Profession – Quality management	,123
Profession – Risk management	. ^b
Profession – Other	,117
Producing organization	-,006
Service organization	-,202
Number of employees	,434**
Annual turnover	,416**

* p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01

b: cannot be computed; no values for the control variable

Appendix D: Correlation table – issue management practices vs. organization characteristics

Control variable	Preparedness	Culture	Knowledge sharing	Communication	Awareness and action
Sector – Dairy	,254	,064	,097	,155	,067
Sector – Meat	,027	-,009	,002	-,098	-,135
Sector – Fish	,069	-,112	-,099	-,085	-,063
Sector – Vegetables & Fruit	-,153	-,119	-,256	-,051	-,101
Sector – Grain products	,154	-,088	,078	,098	,046
Sector – Sugar products, snacks	,199	-,269	,153	,018	-,045
Sector – Oil products	,154	-,088	,078	,098	,046
Sector – Drinks	,202	,233	,124	,114	,154
Sector – Wholesale business and supermarkets	,003	,003	-,158	,110	,009
Sector – Hotel and catering industry	-,124	-,072	-,143	,093	,069
Sector – Other	,157	,086	-,031	,126	-,008
Producing organization	-,036	-,002	-,034	,006	-,174
Service organization	-,265	,128	-,209	-,095	-,118
Number of employees	,366*	,217	,277	,371*	,478**
Annual turnover	,409**	,179	,309*	,310*	,487**

* p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01