

## Crisis communication of fast-food industry on social media during Covid-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the article** Purpose of the article 2020 was a major challenge for the whole world. In Latvia, one of the industries that suffered the most from the restrictions of the pandemic was the hospitality industry. This study analyzes the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the crisis communication on social media posts of fast-food company brands in Latvia during first wave of Pandemic (March 2020 -June 2020), period of normalization (July 2020 -September 2020) and second wave of Covid-19 Pandemic (October 2020 -May 2021).

**Methodology/methods** Content analysis was made on social media platforms Facebook and Instagram of fast-food brands: six international brands and biggest six Baltic fast-food brands. As mainly fast-food brands are focusing communication on Facebook platform, this social media platform was analyzed.

**Scientific aim** Given the fact that the Latvian fast-food industry had not faced such a large-scale pandemic and its impact before, business owners had many unknown factors, what to do, what kind of communication to build with customers in person, what to publish on social media to provide customers with understandable and simple messages. Messages and frequency were analyzed to compare both groups and finding differences.

**Findings** Main findings can be grouped in couple categories: 1) An average post amount for Baltic and international brands during first wave are 20% higher and during second wave +8% more; 2) Most active months on COVID -19 related posts content was in March 2020 and November 2020; and it consists of 5% of all post amount. Local brands used hashtags; international brands used posts to highlight safety topics.

**Conclusions** There is no content analysis on different groups of fast-food brands in Latvia during Covid-19 Pandemic. Social media content plays as vital role in the crisis management process of the public relations or communication professionals in the organizations. Authors suggest to the fast-food brands operating in Latvia to continue posting by focusing on national security measures and restrictions during COVID-19 Pandemic. According to Hofstede, it would help for customers feel safe.

**Keywords:** COVID 19, Crisis communication, Fast-food industry, Social media, Communication, Latvia

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