

Crisis communication and framing:

A study of the food safety issues in Taiwan

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Abstract

This study examines the three food oil crises that occurred in Taiwan between 2013 and 2014, when over a thousand food products were recalled and more than two hundred supermarkets, restaurants and food makers were affected; these crises led the Taiwanese government to revise food production regulations. The main purpose of this study is to explore how the Taiwanese government, the three companies involved (the Chang Chi company, the Chang Guann company, and the Ting Hsin company), and the Taiwanese media framed the crises and what crisis response strategies were embedded in the frames.

This study draws upon crisis communication theories and framing theory to develop a theoretical framework, and applies a qualitative framing analysis method to examine the three companies' and the Taiwanese government's official press releases and three Taiwanese daily newspapers. Five frames have been identified in the public communication of the three main actors during the crises: 'health', 'economy', 'responsibility', 'denial', and 'blame'.

The study finds that the three edible oil companies intensely relied on the 'denial', 'blame' and 'responsibility' frames to respond to the crises. The Taiwanese government focused on the 'blame', 'health' 'responsibility' and 'economy' frames when framing the crises. Besides, the 'blame', 'health' and 'economy' frames were presented in the media reports. In addition, the study finds that the three main actors in this study adjusted their crisis response on the basis of other actors' crisis responses. Finally, the study suggests redefining the crisis response strategy of 'apology', and including 'silence' as a crisis response strategy when research is based on Taiwanese or Chinese culture.

Keyword: edible oil crises, framing theory, crisis communication theories, crisis response strategy, government crisis communication

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The topic of this study is crisis communication and crisis framing. When a crisis occurs, the actors involved in the crisis may be expected to try to respond to the crisis effectively. This study seeks to examine the three consecutive food safety crises that occurred in Taiwan between 2013 and 2014, and explores how the Taiwanese government, the edible oil companies, and media framed the crises, and what crisis response strategies were presented in their official statements. The chapter opens by introducing the background of the study. The theoretical perspective, research purposes, research questions are then detailed. Following this, a structured thesis will be introduced.

1.1 Background

Food safety is imperative for public health, economic development, social stability, and organisational reputation; it may also be important for officials to demonstrate competence around food safety, and this can impact on a government's image (Ko, 2015). This study treats the three selected food oil cases as 'crises' on the basis of the following two reasons. Firstly, on the basis of Fearn-Banks' (2002) definition of crisis: 'a major occurrence with a potential negative outcome affecting an organisation as well as its publics, services, products and good name (p. 480)'. In this study, the three cases are related to adulterated food oil products with illegal ingredients. The three food oil companies not only caused many food products to be recalled or banned, but also caused consumers' doubts about food manufacturing and food safety in Taiwan (Liao, Peng, Ting, Chang, Tseng, Kao, Lin, Chiang, Yeh, & Cheng, 2017; Chen, 2018). Secondly, Li, Yu, Lai and Ko (2012) identify the key features of food safety issues that are important enough to be 'crises': they attract media attention for at least a week, and official authorities must respond to them. After the occurrence of the crises dealt with in this study, the four major daily newspapers in Taiwan not only continued to report on the edible oil crises for more than a week, but each daily newspaper had more than one hundred related news coverage items (more details will be provided in chapter 4). Most importantly, the central governmental authorities issued several press releases in response to these three

edible oil crises after they broke out (see chapter 4). Therefore, this study uses the word 'crisis' to refer the three adulterated issues, also referring to them as 'edible oil crises' or 'food oil crises.'

There have been several food safety cases over the past decade in Taiwan. A number of food crises and issues had occurred from 2010 to 2013 before the three edible oil crises in this study, such as adulteration of black tea with coumarin, adulteration of emulsifiers with plasticizer, forged expiry date labels on food materials for snacks, and expired milk powder being sold to food companies (Peng, Chang, Fang, Liao, Tsai, Tseng, Kao, Chou & Cheng, 2017).

The significant feature of the three cases selected in this study is that the cases involved food oil adulteration, and the edible oil products were produced by home-based companies. Besides, these issues happened in a relatively short period (three times between 2013 and 2014). According to the *China Times* (one of the mainstream newspapers in Taiwan), 'food safety' was the fifth most popular Google keyword search in Taiwan in 2013, and 'edible oil' in fourth place in Google's yearly keyword search rankings for 2014 (Huang, 2014); it can be seen that these food oil issues caught the general public's attention. What is interesting about these three cases is that the way the companies dealt with the crises were failures. This can be seen from the consequences the crises had on these companies: the chairmen were all sentenced to prison, two of the companies were closed and the other was withdrawn from the Taiwan cooking oil market. Thus, one of the focuses in this study is to explore how the food oil companies reacted to the crises after the crises broke out.

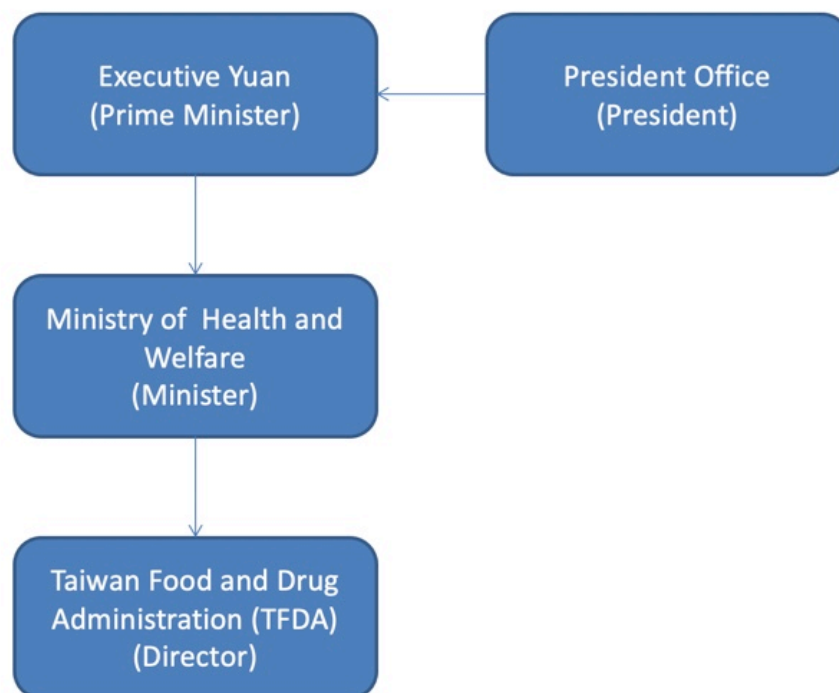
The other feature of the three cases addressed in this study is that these crises were caused by Taiwanese food oil companies. However, Taiwanese consumers and media coverage also held the Taiwanese government responsible for some aspects of these crises. Since the three crises occurred in a relatively short period of time, they raised doubts about the Taiwanese government's management oversight of food safety, and the loopholes in food safety regulations (Chiu & Yu, 2016). Furthermore, these crises pushed the Taiwanese government to revise food safety regulations, making them stricter (Cheng, 2016). This inspires this

study's contention that the Taiwanese government was the other main actor during the crises. Therefore, the other focus in this study is on examining how the Taiwanese government responded to the crises. The following section will provide more detail on the three cases presented.

1.2 Food safety contexts: three food oil crises in Taiwan

Before introducing the three cases, it is necessary to provide information regarding Taiwan's food safety authority. The Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA) is the central authority for managing food and drugs in Taiwan. TFDA is responsible for managing food safety, food quality, drugs, cosmetics, medical devices, and so on. Moreover, it plays an important role in developing official regulations as well as analytical methods to check food quality and assess whether food has been adulterated, executing government policy, supervising food and drug safety, and safeguarding national health (Peng et al., 2017; Taiwan Food and Drug Administration, 2017).

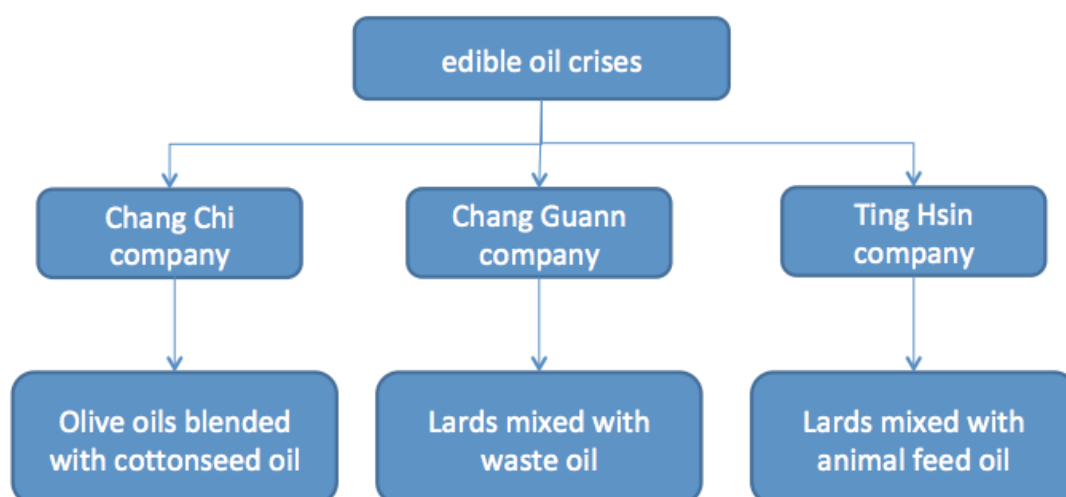
Figure 1.1 Governmental authorities for food management



TFDA was established in 1981 and was initially named the 'Food and Hygiene Department.' After governmental reorganisation in 2010, TFDA is now under the Ministry of Health and Welfare in the Executive Yuan (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2022). Figure 1.1 shows the hierarchy levels of the governmental authorities that were related to food safety management during the three crises, including TFDA, the Minister of Health and Welfare, the Executive Yuan, and the President. The study will focus on exploring how these governmental authorities responded to the three edible oil crises and on examining the Taiwanese government's management of public communication within the crises.

The following paragraphs will introduce an overview of the three cases (more background details and discussions about the three crises will be provided in chapter 5, 6, and 7). Figure 1.2 shows the three edible oil crises that broke out between 2013 and 2014. The three crises are called the Chang Chi crisis, the Chang Guann crisis and the Ting Hsin crisis.

Figure 1.2 The three food oil crises in Taiwan between 2013 and 2014



1.2.1 The Chang Chi mixed olive oils crisis

The first oil crisis (the Chang Chi crisis) erupted on 16 October 2013. The prosecutor found that the Chang Chi company had mixed low-cost cotton seed oil and cheaper sunflower oil with olive oils, and then sold olive oil products to consumers (Peng et al., 2017). The Chang Chi company used 'copper

chlorophyllin complex' to colour its olive oil products, and pretended these products were pure olive oils (Chen, 2013). However, 'copper chlorophyllin complex' cannot be safely cooked at high temperatures, because the ingredient can affect the human liver and kidneys after long-term consumption (Cheng, 2016). The Chang Chi company was a well-known domestic edible oil supplier, and they held over 10% of the market share of oil products in Taiwan (Cheng, 2016). Therefore, the company's olive oil products were distributed throughout the whole nation; it was estimated that this affected at least 17 of 23 counties and cities (Chen, 2013). After ten days (on 25 October 2013), the chairman of Chang Chi was prosecuted for fraud and violation of food safety regulations (Taiwan Judicial Yuan, 2017). Finally, the Chang Chi company was closed in March 2014 (Cheng, 2016).

1.2.2 The Chang Guann waste oil crisis

The second food oil crisis (the Chang Guann crisis) in this study regards waste oil (the oils were collected from kitchens, restaurants fryers, and street vendors). Less than a year after the Chang Chi crisis, on 4 September 2014, the prosecutor revealed that the Chang Guann company, a major lard supplier in Taiwan, had added waste oil to lard in order to decrease their costs (Chen, 2014; Lin, 2014). The company's lards were found to contain 33% waste oil, and only 67% lard (Liao et al., 2017). Chang Guann's lard had been purchased by over two hundred Taiwanese food industries, and they had used this mixed lard to make hundreds of different food products (Chen, 2014; Lin, 2014). Also, the TFDA found that 582 tons of waste oil had been eaten by consumers (Chen, 2014; Lin, 2014). The chairman of the Chang Guann company was sued on the 3 October 2014 for violating food safety regulation and fraud. The Chang Guann company was shut down on in July 2017 (Taiwan judicial yuan, 2017).

1.2.3 The Ting Hsin adulterated lard crisis

On 8 October 2014, one month after the outbreak of the Chang Guann crisis, the third edible oil crisis (the Ting Hsin crisis) occurred, when the public prosecution and TFDA found that the Ting Hsin company, the biggest food industry in Taiwan,

had purchased 1,800 tons of animal feed oil (a low-quality oil that was used as an additive in animal feed) from Vietnamese oil suppliers since 2012, and these items had been mixed with lard (Chang, 2014a). On 9 October 2014, the Vietnamese government confirmed that the animal feed oil purchased by the Ting Hsin could not be consumed by humans (TFDA, 10. 10. 2014). The Vietnamese government also explained that animal feed oil was made by fish oil and lard, and was only suitable for animal feed use (TFDA, 10. 10. 2014). According to food regulations in Taiwan, animal food oil cannot be used for any human food products; however, the Ting Hsin company imported animal feed oil and used them to manufacture lard products (Chang, 2014b). Since the company held over 40% of the market share of lard in Taiwan, more than 230 major Taiwanese supermarkets and food manufacturers, restaurants and street vendors were affected, and over a thousand food products were recalled (Wu, 2015; Liu, 2014). On 16 October 2014, the chairman of the Ting Hsin company decided to withdraw from Taiwan's food oil market (Wu, 2015).

1.2.4 The importance of the three edible oil crises

The importance of the three edible oil crises can be discussed under the following different aspects: food regulation, economy, tourism, government accountability, and politics.

Regarding the food regulation aspect, the three companies were all involved in similar issues and products; they were breaking the law as well as causing concern to consumers of edible oils. Although the crises did not immediately cause obvious health damage to consumers (at the time of writing there are no known cases of fatalities or illnesses directly linked to them), they highlighted that existing food safety regulations may contain loopholes, and that the national food inspection system may also be inadequate. These food safety cases also led to the Taiwanese government to begin to amend the law in their aftermath. Between 2014 and 2015, the government amended the 'Act Governing Food Safety and Sanitation' and enacted new food regulation four times (Law and Regulation of the Republic of China, 2015). In addition to increasing penalties for food industries and their adulterated food products, new provisions were added

to regulate imported foods and materials, food inspection and food traceability, to improve food safety supervision (Law and Regulation of the Republic of China, 2015; Ko, 2015).

In fact, the impact of this series of edible oil crises has indeed brought changes to Taiwan's food safety system. In the 2019 Taiwan food safety annual assessment report (issued by the Food Safety Office), the Ministry of Health and Welfare revealed that the Taiwanese government has progressed a lot in managing raw food materials, supervising food production processes, developing inspection systems, and strengthening the communication channels for public food safety consultation over the past few years, although the management of expired raw materials and the development of fast screening tests for pesticides still need to be improved (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2019).

As to the economic aspect, the impact of the food oil crises on the economy was most prominent in the third edible oil crisis (the Ting Hsin crisis), including international trade, the domestic market, and lard shortage. For example, after the Ting Hsin crisis broke out, countries such as Hong Kong, Macau, Japan, Singapore and Malaysia began to ban all food products that used lards from Taiwan from exporting into these regions. It was estimated that the export loss was about NT \$2.2 billion (£55 million) (*Economic Daily News*, 23. 10. 2014; *Apple Daily*, 24. 10. 2014). Besides, about the domestic market, the media mentioned that the three consecutive edible oil crises had caused the domestic sales to lose about NT \$10 billion (£250 million) in Taiwan (*Economy Daily News*, 19. 10. 2014). One of the reasons is that a high proportion of Taiwanese often eat outside, and over 70% of people eat out twice a day (Tsai, Hsu & Shih, 2017). However, because of the impact of these food safety crises, people's willingness to eat outside was affected (Chiu & Yu, 2016). The Chang Guann and Ting Hsin crisis were the two lard suppliers in Taiwan with the highest market share, and the crises occurred only a month apart (Executive Yuan, 11. 10. 2014). Therefore, after the two crises broke out, Taiwan had experienced a temporary shortage of lard, and the shortage problem also impacted the manufacture of lard and food products that used lard as an ingredient (Executive Yuan, 11. 10. 2014).

Also, after the Ting Hsin crisis broke out, both the media coverage and the government's press releases mentioned that Taiwan's edible oil crises would affect the country's international image and tourism industry. In fact, tourism is an important force for Taiwan's economic development (Ko, 2020). According to the statistics of the Taiwan Tourism Bureau in 2019, the number of foreign tourists reached 11.07 million in 2018, and 70.73% of foreign visitors came to Taiwan for sightseeing. This shows the importance of the tourism industry to Taiwan (Ko, 2020). During the Ting Hsin crisis, the media and the Taiwanese government had expressed concern that the food safety crises might impact tourism in Taiwan. For example, the *Economic Daily News* reported that the edible oil crises must influence the tourism industry that had developed in recent years (*Economic Daily news*, 18. 10. 2014). Besides, the Taiwanese government's press releases stated that the adulterated lard crises had not only impacted people's confidence in domestic food safety, but also damaged Taiwan's tourism, and international image (President's office, 13. 10. 2014; Executive Yuan, 10. 10. 2014)

Regarding the political aspect, the crises also indirectly affected the ruling party's (KMT) defeat in the 2014 mayoral election and even the 2016 presidential election (*Storm Media*, 24. 05. 2017). Yan and Heng (2016) state that the KMT's defeat involved many reasons; however, the way the KMT government dealt with the edible oil crises did highlight the government's incompetence in food safety management. When President Ma was interviewed by Storm Media in 2017, he said that the KMT's defeat in 2014 was due to the fact that before the election the food safety issues had seriously hurt the government's image. He also admitted that the crises were not handled well enough (*Storm Media*, 24. 05. 2017). The main focus of this an editorial was on understanding why the former President Ma Ying-Jeou, as the KMT party chairman, made the KMT not only lose the 2014 election of mayors, but also the 2016 presidential election, turning the KMT from a ruling party into an opposition party. Ma's statement shows the impact of the crises on politics.

Two studies suggest that although the consecutive edible oil crises were not

caused by the Taiwanese government, the government was held accountable by the general public and media. Chuang and Lin (2015) analyse 519 readers' letters from four major Taiwanese newspapers referring to the food oil crisis in 2014 (the Chang Guann crisis in this study). Chuang and Lin (2015) find that approximately 77% of readers' letters expressed views that associated the food safety crisis with insufficient government supervision, and almost 13% of readers' letters expressed distrust and blamed the food oil company. On the other hand, Chuang and Lin (2015) find that during this period, media coverage also played an important role in accountability: how the media reported on food safety put pressure on the food oil companies and the Taiwanese government, prompting them to take responsibility for the crisis.

Tsai (2017) uses content analysis for examining the four main Taiwanese newspapers, analysing the relationship between public accountability and government's responses for the two edible oil crises that occurred in 2014 (the Chang Guann and Ting Hsin crises in this study). Tsai finds that in the news coverage, the consumers, legislators and politicians were the main sources quoted. Furthermore, about 67% of news reports put blame on the government, especially focusing on the following aspects: the government's oversight in supervision (22.2%), its emphasis on the harmlessness of food oil to health (17.2%), that the minister of Health and Welfare should resign his position (14.6%), inadequate inspection system (13.8%).

Chuang and Lin's (2015) and Tsai's (2017) studies bring out that in these edible oil crises the companies were not the only main actors. The Taiwanese government also received a lot of media attention and blame by the media and the general public, especially because it had experienced three edible oil crises within a year. Besides, their studies were based on examining how media coverage presented the food oil companies' and government's accountability. In turn, this study focuses on exploring the different actors' public communication and media reports during the crises. Thus, the present work will add new valuable contributions by not only examining how the government and food companies framed their crisis response, but also by exploring how the Taiwanese

media framed these crises, and by comparing the differences and similarities of crisis framing between the Taiwanese government, the three food oil companies and the media.

1.3 Theoretical perspective

In the previous sections, this study has provided an overview of the three edible oil crises and discussed their importance. The following section will move to the theoretical framework used in this study.

Examining crisis communication can help us to understand 'how communication is used throughout the crisis management process' (Coombs, 2009, p. 99). Ray (1999) claims that it is important for organisations to alter public perceptions through crisis communication. Coombs (2010a) states that when a crisis occurs, in order to manage the crisis situation and restore the organisation to its normal state, crisis managers usually respond to the crisis in some way. Crisis response, then, focuses on what is said or done after a crisis. The last two decades have seen a growth of the importance placed on research into crisis communication by analysing applications of strategic crisis responses (Benoit, 2013). Sellnow and Seeger (2013) point out that some crisis communication researchers focus on how the strategic crisis response is used. Besides, examining the application of strategic crisis communication in research is an attempt to 'understand how crisis communication can be used to achieve a specific outcome' (Coombs & Hollady, 2010, p. 29).

Thus, communication researchers have developed theoretical approaches for responding to individual or organisational crises, and Benoit's (1995a) image restoration theory and Coombs' (2007a) situational crisis communication theory have been at the forefront of crisis communication research regarding organisational responses to crises (Maresh & Williams, 2010). Benoit and Coombs have offered complementary typologies for crisis response strategies (Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2015); both theorists have attempted to explain how individuals or organisations apply crisis response strategies during a crisis, and have examined the effect of crisis responses on individual or organisational

reputation (Fediuk, Pace & Botero, 2010). The main purpose of crisis response strategies is to prevent potential reputational harm and to repair image (Coombs, 2007b). While, as mentioned above, the chairmen of the three food oil companies were sentenced to terms in prison, the author believes that examining what crisis response strategies were reflected in their public communication can not only reveal how they dealt with the crisis, but also help us understand the process of crisis development.

The purpose of this study is to examine not only how the three food oil companies responded to the crises, but also how the Taiwanese government responded. It is necessary to note that the term 'public' in this study refers to the general public, which also includes consumers. In fact, a governmental crisis is more complicated than a general organisational crisis due to several factors, such as media scrutiny, public interest, political context, and responsibility (Boyle, 2007; Lee, 2009). Furthermore, Schultz and Raupp (2010) state that in governmental crisis communication political actors need to consider that their actions and decisions are relevant to all citizens, so they also have the responsibility to protect the public interest. Moreover, Lee (2009) states that because of the different characters and scales of crises, the application of crisis response strategies may differ between individuals, politicians, corporations and governments. However, Peijuan, Ting, & Pang (2009) find that most research on image repair is applied to examine the usage of response strategies by politicians, celebrities, and corporate entities, and fewer studies have focused on governmental crises. As mentioned above, the issue of food security is a matter of considerable public concern, and the media all closely watched the companies involved as well as the Taiwanese government. Taiwan's serious edible oil crises began with the three oil companies, but they finally became a governmental crisis (Chen, 2014). This is because the reoccurrence of the food oil crises made apparent the insufficiency of current food regulations, food safety management, and the government's negligence in supervision. Therefore, because of the different interests, media scrutiny or responsibility of the government and organisations, how the Taiwanese government and the three oil food companies framed their public communication might also be different.

Coombs and Holladay (2010) provide a term about crisis framing; they suggest that such as cause definition, attribution, actions are different elements, which construct crisis response during a crisis. Entman (1993) defines framing as 'selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communication text (p. 52).' In other words, framing highlights some features of a piece of communication, and makes them more salient, noticeable, and meaningful to the audience (Entman, 1993). With regard to framing in relation to crisis communication, Coombs and Holladay (2010) state that crisis framing occurs when crisis managers focus on some specific or relevant cues and lead people to focus on these cues towards an issue, and that the application of framing occurs in post-crisis communication, when a person or an organisation responds to the crisis; moreover, a person or an organisation will seek to offer certain frames for the interpretation of an issue when responding to the crisis (Maitlis, 2005; Schultz & Raupp, 2010). Coombs and Holladay's (2010), Entman's (1993), and Schultz & Raupp's (2010) studies inspire this study with the idea that the process of framing consists in how actors respond to a crisis. Also, their viewpoints provide this study with a conceptual framework for understanding what the Taiwanese government and the three food oil companies said and did during the crises can be considered as their crisis frames.

Sellow and Seeger (2013) state that the media has played an important role in crisis communication, because it offers a way for people to understand an issue and acquire information (Sellow & Seeger, 2013). However, the selection of information by journalists may affect the message content in news media. News framing is when 'reporters and editors routinely choose among various approaches to the presentation of news stories' (Hook & Pu, 2006, p. 169). The selection of news coverage by reporters can frame an issue positively, negatively or neutrally (Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2015), and through media coverage, the public may be informed about a crisis and make their own judgments on organisational responsibility (An, Gower & Cho, 2011). According to these scholars' claims, these provide the current study an understanding of that during a crisis, not only stakeholders will frame the crisis, media as well.

However, when actors respond to a crisis, their response might be ignored by media. For example, Holladay (2010) examines how the US local media coverage reported on some chemical accident crises in 2004, and finds that although the affected organisations had made statements after the accidents, the information and statements from the organisations' representatives were ignored: they were presented neither in news stories nor in newspapers. Holladay (2010) states that crisis management may rely on journalists' selection criteria rather than how much effort the organisational spokespersons have made. Nijkrake, Gosselt and Gutteling (2015) also state that an organisation will focus on certain cues and offer their interpretation of an issue by news releases or official statements in a crisis; the organisation can expect these frames to be distributed to various media channels and then reach a wide audience, but the question of whether the crisis frames will be supported or neglected depends on how news media frame the crisis. Therefore, the media frame a crisis on the basis of their interpretation, which may also influence how they organise information and filter messages to the general public. This inspires this study with the idea that the ways in which the companies or government framed the three edible oil crises might not correspond to the media's framings.

1.4 Significance of this study

In fact, Coombs and Holladay's crisis framing theory only provides this study with an understanding of how crisis response involves framing; it does not provide a specific concept about how to connect the framing and crisis response. This study in an attempt to contribute to crisis communication research by connecting framing theory with crisis communication theories. In the research field of crisis communication in Taiwan, most studies have focused on examining public communication, and have adopted crisis communication theories to analyse how an actor reacts to a crisis and to explore the actor's crisis management. However, examining an actor's crisis response is actually only a part of understanding crisis management process (Chang, 2013). Some scholars suggest that the examination of an actor's crisis communication should begin with understanding how the crisis is framed by the actor. How an actor frames a

crisis may affect the actor's recognition the crisis, accountability for the crisis, and construction of public communication (Kim, 2006; Coombs, 2007b; Coombs and Holladay, 2010). This can be illustrated by the image that the framing is like an umbrella, and crisis responses are like ribs supporting and underpinning the frame. Thus, this study attempts to deliver insight on crisis communication by combining framing theory with crisis communication theories, and also explores what crisis response strategies were embedded in the specific frames identified here.

As mentioned above, both Benoit's and Coombs' theories provide a list of various crisis response strategies. It is necessary to note that the term 'strategy' in this study does not imply that the government or companies intentionally put certain specific messages together to respond the crises, but that the author applied crisis communication theories to examine which of the kinds of information and crisis response strategies identified were reflected in the three organisations' and government's public communication.

In addition, both Benoit's and Coombs' theories draw upon a Western context. This study, in turn, adopts Western theories and applies them to food oil crises that occurred within Taiwanese culture. However, the development of public relations in Taiwan has been influenced by mainstream Western theories, leading to the lack of growth of localised theories (Huang, 2005). Therefore, Huang suggests that Taiwanese scholars should pay attention to the cultural presuppositions of Western theories when applying them as a theoretical framework, and consider both Western theories' explanatory power and limitations for the Taiwanese context. The present study attempts to respond to this academic call, offering insights on a non-Western context by re-examining crisis communication theories, and exploring the application of crisis response strategies in Taiwanese culture.

This study also contributes to the literature on crisis communication by focusing on various actors' frames during crises. As for the development of public relations in Taiwan, although there are many researches related to crisis communication, most of them focus on the analysis of an issue, a celebrity, or a

politician, but there is a lack of analysis of the various actors involved in the crisis (Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). This study attempts to offer insights on crisis communication by analysing the different actors' crisis framing processes during the crises, and examining how the actors framed the crises dynamically.

Another contribution of this study consists in its focus on unsuccessful cases. Crisis communication assumes that effective application of crisis response strategies can manage message, restore organisational reputation, and strategically handle relations with media and related stakeholders (Kersten, 2005). Therefore, most crisis communication studies examine successful cases, and analyse such aspects as how a crisis is to be managed effectively, how an organisation's reputation is to be restored, or how public relations are to be maintained well (Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2015). However, the consequences of the three crises in this study for the companies suggest that their responses were unsuccessful. The three chairmen of the food oil companies were sentenced to imprisonment after the trials, and these three companies no longer appear in the Taiwan food oil market.

1.5 Research purpose

Drawing on crisis communication theories and framing theory, this research has three main aims: (1) to examine how the Taiwanese government and the three companies framed the crises, and explore what crisis response strategies were reflected in their public communications. (2) to analyse how the Taiwanese mainstream newspapers framed the crises. (3) to examine to what extent the media's frames overlapped with the three food oil companies' and the Taiwanese government's.

As mentioned previously, although the Taiwanese government did not engage in making adulterated edible oil products, they did neglect to supervise food safety. Therefore, some media reports believed that the government was also an actor that led to the food oil crises. The government was held accountable for failure in legislating food safety regulations, ensuring healthy food and monitoring the food safety standards (*Economic Daily News*, 21. 09. 2014, *Apple Daily*, 15. 10.

2014). Liu & Horsley (2007) state that the main distinguishing characteristic of government as compared to private corporate organisations is that corporate organisations are established to make profits, while government agencies are established to serve citizens. Therefore, because of the different interests, media scrutiny or responsibility of the government and organisations, there may be differences between how the Taiwanese government and the three food oil companies framed their crisis responses. Thus, examining how the Taiwanese government and the companies framed the crises, and then comparing the similarities and differences of their crisis framing is a central concern of this study.

Media coverage is another focus of this study. Wu (2015) finds that after the Chang Chi and Ting Hsin crises, food safety-related news reports were covered extensively in Taiwan's media and were the top stories in 2014; there were a lot of related reports in newspapers for several weeks after they broke out. Therefore it can be seen that the media, too, provide an important source for examining the process of the food oil crises: this is the reason why this study includes media analysis. When a crisis occurs, it is not only the organisation that will frame the crisis; the media will, too. Besides, how the companies and the government frame the crises is not the end of the story. Their frames may be communicated to the media, and the media may act as a filter by reporting selectively on some aspects, and with their interpretations. Therefore, how the government and companies framed the crises may be adjusted according to how the media reported on them (Barnes, Hanson, Novilla, Meacham & McIntyre, 2008; Nijkraake, Gosselt & Gutteling, 2015). Thus, the study includes the media analysis, and explores how the media coverage framed the three edible oil crises.

1.6 Research questions

With a view to the research purpose, the research questions to be addressed in this study are the following:

RQ1: How did the three private companies and the Taiwanese government frame the three edible oil crises?

- (a) How did the companies frame their respective crises and what crisis response strategies can be detected in their official statements?
- (b) How did the government frame the crises and what crisis response strategies can be detected in their official statements?
- (c) How stable and consistent was the government's framing over the three edible oil crises?

RQ2: How did the Taiwanese media coverage frame the three edible oil crises?

- (a) How did the media frame the crises?
- (b) To what extent did media framings overlap with the three companies' and the Taiwanese government's framings? What were the main differences?
- (c) What are the similarities and differences between different media's framings in the three edible oil crises?

As per the RQs presented above, the study is interested in what frames and crisis response strategies evolved in the crises, and the dynamic process of these crises between the three main actors.

1.7 Thesis structure

This thesis is composed of nine chapters. Chapter 1, the introduction, has provided an overview of the study. Chapter 2 gives a brief overview of Taiwan and discusses the media in Taiwan. Also, the chapter reviews food safety in Taiwan.

Chapter 3 develops the conceptual framework, integrating literature on crisis definition, crisis typology, and discussing the difference between a governmental and an organisational crisis. In addition, the chapter examines definitions of crisis communication, crisis communication theories, and discusses the crisis communication theories applied in Taiwanese culture. Moreover, the chapter reviews framing literature in media and communication, especially to the extent that this provides a significant framework for this study to explore how the edible oil companies, government, and the media framed the crises.

Chapter 4 discusses methodology, selection and application of research method, and explains data collection as well as data analysis. The chapter also provides details about the philosophical standpoint and research approach, expounds the method, explains the framing analysis, and addresses how this study defines framing, and how framing will be conceptualised. Then, the chapter looks at information about the data collection and the sampling strategy for the governmental and organisational official sources and news coverage, lays out how this study analyses the data, and explains the unit of analysis and coding procedure. The final section discusses the ethics and language barrier of the study.

Chapter 5 presents the findings and discussion of the Chang Chi crisis. The chapter looks at the background of the Chang Chi crisis, then moves on to focus on how the Chang Chi company framed the food oil crisis and what crisis response strategies were presented in their official press releases. The chapter also explores the government officials' press releases, discussing how the Taiwanese government responded to the crisis, and examining what crisis response strategies were reflected in the releases. In addition, the chapter examines the media coverage, exploring how the media framed the Chang Chi crisis by analysing three Taiwanese newspapers.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings related to the Chang Guann crisis. The study first looks at the background of the crisis, then focuses on how the Chang Chi company framed the food oil crisis and what crisis response strategies were presented in their official press releases. The chapter also examines the Taiwanese government, discussing the official authorities' press releases to analyse their framing of the crisis to explore what crisis response strategies were embedded in their public communication. Also, this chapter focuses on examining how the media reported on the Chang Guann crisis.

Chapter 7 presents an analysis of the Ting Hsin crisis. The chapter begins by examining the background of the crisis, then provides a discussion of the Ting Hsin company, exploring the company's official press releases and how they framed the food oil crisis, as well as what crisis response strategies are reflected

in the releases. Besides, the chapter focuses on the Taiwanese government, examining the official authorities' press releases to explore their framing of the crisis and to analyse what crisis response strategies were presented in their official statements. Finally, the chapter analyses and compares how the three newspapers framed the food oil crisis.

Chapter 8 brings the findings together and provides a comparison of the three food oil crises. This chapter discusses how the Taiwanese corporations reacted to the crises, and compares the similarities and differences between the three food oil companies. Furthermore, the study summarises how the Taiwanese government and media framed their public communication, especially because they were the actors that had experienced the three crises. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the connection of framing theory with crisis communication theories on the basis of the research findings and explains how the three main actors' (the companies, government, and media) crisis frames interacted with one another.

Chapter 9 concludes by addressing the significance and contribution of this study. It also considers the limitations of the study and suggests avenues for future research.

Chapter 2: Background

This study focuses on the three edible oil crises that occurred in Taiwan between 2013 and 2014. The purpose of the study is to examine how the food oil companies, the central government authorities, and the media framed the crises, and to explore what crisis response strategies were reflected in their official public communications.

The chapter provides more details on background, and consists of three sections. It begins with a brief overview of Taiwan, focusing on its political environment and system. The second section is concerned with the media, especially Taiwanese newspapers, because this is related to the data selection and analysis of this study. Besides, the study looks at the features of food safety, and food safety in Taiwan.

2.1 A brief overview of Taiwan

Since this study involves keywords such as Taiwan, China, Taiwanese, Taiwanese culture, Chinese, Chinese culture, Kuomintang party (KMT), and Democracy Progressive Party (DDP), the following section provides a brief overview of Taiwan.

In 1894, because of the Sino-Japanese War between China and Japan, China was defeated and Taiwan was ceded to Japan (1895-1945). After the Second World War, due to Japan's defeat, and following the 1943 Cairo Declaration, Japan had to return Taiwan to China (Yeh, 2014; Tan, 2017). Therefore, after fifty years ruled by the Japanese, Taiwan was returned to the Republic of China and governed by the Kuomintang party (KMT) in 1945 (Lai, Cao & Zhao, 2010; Tan, 2017). However, due to the Civil War with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949 (which established the People's Republic of China, also known as PRC), KMT was defeated and Nationalist Government ruler Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Taiwan with his two million followers. Taiwan retained its official name, 'The Republic of China' (Hermanns, 2009; Yeh, 2014). Since then, China and Taiwan have separated into two political entities over 70 years across Taiwan Strait (Lai, Cao

& Zhao, 2010). In short, both mainland China and Taiwan are deeply influenced by traditional Chinese culture and Confucianism, and have the same spoken language (Mandarin), eating habits, traditional festivals, and similar written characters (the difference is that Taiwan uses traditional characters while China uses simplified characters); however, they are under two different political and economic systems (Hwang, Chen, Staley, Tsai & Chu, 2013).

The Republic of China (Taiwan) was initially one of the founding members of the United Nations, but after the establishment of the 'People's Republic of China', it emphasised that it was the representative of 'China' and tried to replace the 'China seat' owned by the Republic of China in the United Nations. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly decided to let the Beijing government replace the China seat. Taiwanese government was forced to withdraw from the United Nations, and lost its seat representing China at the United Nations (Hsieh, 2005; Lai, Cao & Zhao, 2010; Rawnsley & Gong, 2011). Since then, countries in the world, including the United States, have established diplomatic relations with the 'People's Republic of China' and severed diplomatic relations with the 'Republic of China', making Taiwan gradually fall into diplomatic isolation. So far, there are only 14 countries that have formal diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan), and they are all small countries. Moreover, because of Beijing's one-China principle, Taiwan cannot use the official country name 'Republic of China' to participate in international organisations. In order to break through the diplomatic dilemma and strive for the opportunity to participate in the international community, Taiwan can only participate in international organisations by using other names. For example, 'Chinese Taipei' is used to participate in the International Olympic Games and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Rawnsley & Gong, 2011; Tsai, 2011; Hsieh, 2005; Albert, 2016). Although Taiwan does not have formal diplomatic relations with most countries in the world, it does have close economic and trade relations with them. For example, Taiwan is the world's main semiconductor chip supplier, with a global market share of nearly 60% (Cho, 2019; Chang, 2021).

Taiwan's political system is similar to France's semi-presidential system. It is a

hybrid regime between parliamentarism and presidentialism. The characteristics of the semi-presidential system in Taiwan include: (1) the President is the head of state, directly elected by universal suffrage, and has a fixed term; (2) the Prime Minister (the chairman of the Executive Yuan) is the leader of the government, who is appointed by the President. The Prime Minister is responsible for the parliament and the President (Shen, 2011; Shen, 2013). Taiwan's constitutional design was founded in 1947 during the Civil War; although the Nationalist Government withdrew to Taiwan in 1949, this political system continues to be implemented (Shen, 2013). The executive authority is composed of the President and the Prime Minister. The President has the power to preside over cabinet meetings and promulgate laws. Also, the President directs major decisions and controls the military and diplomacy. The Prime Minister leads the operation of various administrative ministries, such as administrative affairs, internal affairs, economy, health, and education (Shen, 2011). As mentioned in the introduction chapter (Figure 1.1), the TFDA, the Minister of Health and Welfare, the Executive Yuan, and the President's office are the different hierarchy levels of the central authorities related to food safety management. During the three food oil crises, especially when the Ting Hsin crisis broke out (the third case), both the President's office and the Executive Yuan issued several press releases, which implies that the crises had become a major issue in Taiwan.

Taiwan is a new democratic country, and gradually moved toward democracy in the late 1980s (Lai, Cao & Zhao, 2010; Tan, 2017). Until then, Taiwan had experienced autocratic control under KMT for a long time. Martial law was established in 1950, and was finally lifted in 1987. From 1945 to 1988, the island was under authoritarian government by the Chiang family (Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-Kuo) (Hermanns, 2009). Democracy Progressive Party (DDP), as the main opposition party, was formed in September 1986. After that, there have been two political standpoints in Taiwan: for KMT, pursuing unification with China is the most important goal, while for DPP, pro-independence is the party's central attitude and direction (Tsai, 2011; Lin, 2016).

Taiwan's first direct presidential election took place in 1996, and Lee Teng-hui was directly elected president. Four years later, the leader of the main opposition party (DDP), Chen Shui-bian, won the presidential election; this election can be considered as an important milestone in Taiwan's democratic development, because it was the first transfer of power in the country's history. After DPP had been in power for eight years, KMT regained power with its candidate Ma Ying-Jeou, who was elected president in 2008 and again in 2012 (Tan, 2017).

However, after Ma Ying-Jeou was elected president in 2012, the ruling party KMT's support gradually declined, which was reflected in the loss of the 2014 mayoral election and the 2016 presidential election (Yan & Heng, 2016; Tan, 2017). Yan and Heng (2016) state that there may be many factors affecting the election results. However, the occurrence of certain events challenged the KMT's competence, including the Sunflower Student Demonstration¹, and the food safety crises. It can be seen that these edible oil issues tested the government's food safety management, but also indirectly affected Taiwan's political environment. This is why this study includes the government as one of the actors whose public communication during the crises should be examined. And then, in 2016, the chairman of DDP, Tsai Ing-wen, gained the election and ended the eight-year rule of the KMT; she is also the first female national leader in Taiwan. So far, Taiwan has undergone three peaceful power transitions (Yan & Heng, 2016).

2.2 The media in Taiwan

While the previous section has looked at the background of Taiwan, this section focuses on the Taiwanese media. In the past seventy years, after 1949, the government and people in Taiwan have not only strived to establish a democratic

¹ The Taiwanese government attempted to open up mainland China's investment in the service trade industry, and this policy was strongly opposed by a coalition of students and civic groups, and then the parliament was occupied by university student protesters for 24 days (they adopted the sunflower as a symbol) (Yan & Heng, 2016; Tan, 2017).

society, but also successfully created a dramatic economic development (Lai, Gao & Zhao, 2010). In addition, the media industry has flourished since the 1980s. Because of hostile relations with mainland China, the KMT government announced some laws for restricting freedom of speech based on national security considerations from 1951 to 1987, including the control of media content and media ownership (Rawnsley & Gong, 2011). Due to the deregulation of the number of licenses, there was a dramatic growth in newspapers and broadcasting stations after 1987; for instance, the number of radio stations rose from 33 to 172 between 1993 and 2009, over two thousand different types of newspapers are circulated, and six free-to-air terrestrial television stations, one public television station, and hundreds of cable television channels have been established so far (Rawnsley & Gong, 2011; Lo, 2012; Hung, 2013).

As mentioned in the introduction, this study will also focus on Taiwanese newspapers (daily and economic newspapers), examining how the media responded to the three edible oil crises. The following section will provide more details about the daily newspapers in Taiwan.

Taiwan has four major daily newspapers (*United Daily News*, *Liberty Times*, *Apple Daily* and *China Times*) and two economic newspapers (*Economic Daily News* and *Commercial Times*). The four dailies have dominated Taiwan's newspaper market since 2004, with more than four fifths of the total newspaper circulation in Taiwan (Lo, Liu & Pan, 2017). They have been the top-selling Taiwanese newspapers for nearly twenty years, and they are considered to be the most reliable printed medium available to the general public in Taiwan (Lai, 2017). These four newspapers, then, not only attract the majority of Taiwanese readers, but are also the most important media sources in the country (Chiang, Chung, Lee, Shih, Lin & Lee, 2016). This is the reason why these media were chosen for analysis.

The top four Taiwanese daily newspapers are owned by four different media groups, which account for more than 85% of all Taiwanese newspapers' advertising revenue (Hu, 2017; Lo, 2012; Hung, 2013). Both *United Daily News* and *China Times* were founded in the 1950s; they were the largest two

newspapers from the 1950s to the 1990s, and together represent more than 65% of the daily circulation in Taiwan (Li & Lee, 2010). *Liberty Times* was founded in 1980, and because of its successful marketing strategy (free short-term subscription), it has turned into one of the most important daily newspapers since the early 1990s.

The three newspapers mentioned above accounted for almost 90% of the newspaper circulation in Taiwan from the 1990s to the early 2000s, until *Apple Daily*, a newspaper from the Hong Kong media group, entered Taiwan's newspaper market (Li & Lee, 2010). *Apple Daily* brought new competition into the newspaper industry, with features of tabloid journalism such as the use of sensational content (e.g. celebrities or scandals) and of a wide range of visual elements (e.g. enlarged news headlines, colourful photographs and graphics) to gain readers' attention. For these reasons, *Apple Daily* has become one of the top-selling newspapers in Taiwan since the 2000s (Lee, 2007). Taiwan's newspapers can also be categorised into two groups in terms of the respective media organisations' political stance on the issue of Taiwan's independence. The political stance of *United Daily News* and *China Times* tends towards maintaining peace with China, so they support unity with China, whereas *Liberty Times*' political orientation leans towards supporting Taiwan's independence. *Apple Daily* shows little political alignment (Lai, 2017; Li & Lee, 2010). As to the Taiwanese economic newspapers, both *Economic Daily News* and *Commercial Times* were founded in the 1970s; they are the only economic newspapers in Taiwan. *Economic Daily News* belongs to the same media group as *United Daily News*, and *Commercial Times* is under the same media group as *China Times* (Hu, 2017). These two economic newspapers' political position, too, is to support unity with China; however, since economic newspapers focus less on political issues such as independence or unification, their political positions are relatively less obvious than the daily newspapers'. As mentioned in the introduction, since the three edible oil crises in this study involved economic issues, the study includes the analysis of economic newspapers, and explores how the frames were presented differently in daily and economic newspapers according to their different journalistic focuses.

2.3 Food safety in Taiwan

While the previous section has discussed political background and media in Taiwan, this section focuses on the food crises, and provides a background of food safety management, supervision and regulation in Taiwan.

In fact, a crisis is a major unexpected occurrence that may accompany a potential negative outcome and then affect an organisation and its service, reputation, or general public (Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger, 2015). Zu, Duan and Qiu (2019) say that a food safety crisis may entail foods that contain toxic or harmful substances or have quality problems that may pose a threat or potential threat to consumers' health. Generally speaking, when food safety problems occur, food products will not only cause consumers' concern but may also have a negative impact on food companies and society (Zu, Duan & Qiu, 2019). In recent years, food safety problems have often been related to food fraud (or food adulteration), which is an act of deceiving consumers for economic gain by using food (Spink, Hegarty, Fortin, Elliott & Moyer, 2019). For the most part, those who commit food fraud have no intention of causing harm to the human body and want to avoid detection; the purpose of their illegal behaviour is often to reduce costs and obtain benefits. However, food adulterations are relatively difficult to detect, because they usually do not immediately cause health problems for consumers, and food quality problems are usually not easily noticed by consumers (Johnson, 2014). In this study, the three cases were involved in the production of adulterated edible oils. The food oil companies used problematic raw materials and mixed them with olive oils (in the Chang Chi crisis) and lards (in the Chang Guann and Ting Hsin crises) to reduce costs. Although the three companies' edible oil products did not cause immediate health harm to consumers, they did raise public concerns about food safety.

In particular, the globalisation of food production and distribution system has made the supply chain more complex. In fact, global trade has increased the distance of food from its production site to the consumers (Esteki, Regueiro, Simal-Ga'ndara, 2019). Many ingredients in a food product may come from different countries, which makes it relatively difficult to trace the contaminated

source and resolve consumers' concerns about food safety. Therefore, it is often hard to discover adulterated food products, especially food products with multiple ingredients and multiple suppliers. (Aung & Chang, 2014; Esteki, Regueiro, Simal-Ga'ndara, 2019). Besides, globalisation and trade liberalisation have enhanced management of food safety risks: in a food supply chain, whether it is food manufacturers, importers, or retailers, food products may be adulterated at any stage for economic benefits (Johnson, 2014; Esteki, Regueiro Simal-Ga'ndara, 2019). After the Ting Hsin crisis broke out, food products containing lards were banned from exporting to some Asian areas, such as Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Macau. This demonstrates that the food oil crises affected not only Taiwan's domestic market, but also impacted the international food trade.

Regarding food safety management in Taiwan, the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA) is the central authority for managing food and drug in Taiwan. TFDA is also responsible for developing official regulations, testing standards and analytical methods to assess the quality of foods and determine whether the foods have been adulterated through food inspection (Peng et al., 2017). At present, Taiwan's food safety-related regulations and management are mainly based on the 'Act Governing Food Safety and Sanitation'. This Act was first developed in 1975 (was initially called 'Act Governing Food Sanitation', but was changed to the 'Act Governing Food Safety and Sanitation' in 2014). By 2019, this regulation had gone through 19 amendments, especially after the edible oil crises: the government amended the 'Act Governing Food Safety and Sanitation' and enacted new regulations four times (5 February 2014, 10 December 2014, 4 February 2015, and 16 November 2015), and made them stricter (Ko, 2015). The main changes are as follows.

Firstly, since June 2015, for foods or food additives that have been adulterated or counterfeited, the maximum fine has been increased from fifty million (about £1.38 million) to two hundred million Taiwan dollars (about £5 million). Furthermore, one new article is that if food adulteration is severe and may cause harm to human health or result in death, offenders may be sentenced to seven

years of imprisonment, and a maximum fine of two hundred million Taiwan dollars (about £5 million) may be imposed (Law and Regulation of the Republic of China, 2015). However, Lai & Chen, (2017) opine that the motivation for this new law is good, but it is difficult to implement. This is because the harm caused by adulterated food to health often develops in the long term, so consumers will face difficulties in offering evidence (Lai & Chen, 2017).

Secondly, before revision, the regulations only provided that food containers or external packaging should indicate in print (using Chinese words) key information such as product name, net weight, expiry date, country of origin, a contact telephone number as well as the address of the manufacturer. Since June 2015, all food materials and food additives must also be disclosed, and this information is required to appear on the container or food packaging; anyone who violates this rule will be fined between thirty thousand (about £750) and three million Taiwan dollars (about £75,000), and in severe situations, the corporation may be ordered to terminate business, or suspend business for a certain period of time. (Law and Regulation of the Republic of China, 2015; Li & Shi, 2015).

Thirdly, since December 2015, food companies must enhance self-management and engage in food safety monitoring to ensure food sanitation and safety (Law and Regulation of the Republic of China, 2015). Food companies are required to examine their raw materials, ingredients or end products themselves (the government mandates that if a company's scale reaches to a stock-listed company, the company must establish its own food laboratory), or, in the case of a small-scale company without its own laboratory, to deliver them to a third-party professional inspection agency for rigorous testing and evaluation (Law and Regulation of the Republic of China, 2015; Liu, 2014). Furthermore, food companies should preserve the source documents of the raw materials, ingredients and end products (Law and Regulation of the Republic of China, 2015), and they should establish their own traceability system for tracking the source and tracing the flow of raw materials, ingredients and end products (Liu, 2014).

Taiwan's food safety supervision system can be divided into three parts: administrative, judicial, and social supervision (Ma, Chen & Chang, 2020). At the administrative level, the TFDA and local health departments are responsible for food inspection in Taiwan. Once a food industry is found to have violated regulations, the TFDA or local health authorities can impose penalties based on the degree of violation. However, in the cases addressed by this study, the TFDA failed to detect Chang Chi's and Chang Guann's adulterated oil products.

As to the judicial level, this means that if the food industry's illegal behaviour involves criminal liability, the TFDA or local health authorities will notify the prosecution and ask prosecutors to investigate. The three chairmen of the edible oil companies were investigated by the prosecutors after the crises broke out. It is interesting to note that according to the author's preliminary observations on the three companies' and the government's official press releases, the number of press releases issued by the three companies was relatively less than the government's. This is probably related to the regulation of judicial investigation in Taiwan. In fact, in terms of the investigation secrecy laws in Taiwan, when a prosecutor intervenes to investigate a case, to ensure a smooth investigation process and safeguard the rights of the actors involved, some actors (especially prosecutors, police, lawyers, and investigators) are required not to disclose too many details of the investigation during the judicial investigation, except information related to the public interest, which they must know (Su, 2019). This regulation does not include suspects, witnesses and the media. This means that even during a judicial investigation, the speech of suspects, witness, or media is not restricted (Peng & Hsiao, 2006). However, in order to cooperate with the prosecution's investigation and not affect the results of the judicial investigation, most suspects and witnesses will comply with the principle of secret investigation in Taiwan (Wang, 2011).

The social supervision level refers to the supervision of the general public, consumers or the media (Ma, Chen & Chang, 2020). As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the whistleblowers were important in opening the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises.

Taiwan's regulations on the protection of whistleblowers² mainly refer to the United States, and have developed the 'Witness Protection Act'. Witnesses can report the facts they have discovered to administrative or judicial authorities as a basis for unlawful disclosure (Hsu, 2015). According to the current regulations in Taiwan, after witnesses expose others' or organisations' illegal activities, their identities will be kept fully secret, and their safety will also be protected. In addition, the whistleblowers can receive a reporting bonus after the wrongdoing of others or organisations is sentenced (Hsu, 2015; Hwang, Chen & Staley, 2013). After the edible oil crises broke out, the term 'whistleblower' appeared for the first time in the 2014 amendment of 'Act Governing Food Safety and Sanitation' (the term 'witness' was used before) (Hsu, 2015). The difference between the two is that many whistleblowers are often internal employees of organisations. These people can relatively grasp the illegal facts within the organisation, and disclose organisations' illegal behaviours. Therefore, the purpose of the new protection clause for whistleblowers is not only to protect their personal safety, but also to ensure their right to work (Tsai, 2017). In addition, the 2014 amendment to the food safety regulations has increased the whistleblowers' reporting bonus to encourage the general public and organisations' employees to disclose the facts about food industries' violations (Liu, 2014). This implies that the Taiwanese government partly relies on whistleblowers' disclosure of the illegal facts in food security management.

There have been several food safety cases over the past two decades in Taiwan. Table 2.1 shows the major food safety issues in the recent history of Taiwan prior to 2013 (before the first food oil case of this study). Li, Yu, Lai and Ko's study shows that during the ten years before 2013 most food-related crises were caused by toxic chemical substances and food adulteration; the Taiwanese government's response to these food safety issues was mostly to ban the import

² The rewards and protection regulation for whistleblowers in Taiwan was first promulgated in December 1979; the purpose of this legislation is to prevent corruption. The general aim of this set of regulations is to encourage disclosure of any illegal activities or wrongdoings (Chordiya, Sabharwal, Relly & Berman, 2019)

of the adulterated products, recall the products, or impose fines on the food industries. Especially, the poisonous milk issue in 2008 caused great concern about food safety in Taiwan, because several Taiwanese food industries imported creamer from mainland China for making milk-related products (such as instant milk tea, instant coffee, and oatmeal); these products were contaminated by melamine and sold to consumers (Lyu, 2012). After this incident, the government has required all imported foods and food ingredients to have detailed information on their origin and suppliers in the 2008 amendment to food regulation (Law and Regulation of the Republic of China, 2015).

Table 2.1 Major food safety issues in Taiwan prior to 2013

Event	The main hazard involved	The occurrence of the event
American beef	Jakob disease (CJD) (prion-related disease)	Imports of U.S. beef were banned when the mad cow disease, a variant form of human CJD, was reported in the U.S. in December 2003. The imports, conditionally reopened in April 2005, were soon banned again in July 2005, but resumed conditionally in January 2006.
Grouper fish with malachite green	Malachite green (carcinogenic anti-bacterial agent)	On September 1, 2005, Hong Kong media reported that grouper fish from Taiwan was found to contain malachite green. In response, the Taiwan Fish farmers clarified that the presence of residual amounts of malachite green in the grouper fish was not a fact.
Chinese hairy crab	Nitrofurantoin (carcinogenic antibiotic)	On October 18, 2006, many press media reported that Chinese hairy crabs imported from China contained carcinogenic nitrofurantoin antibiotics. The Department of Health reinforced control measures, but most imported Chinese hairy crabs had been sold and consumed by the people. The general public was concerned over possible carcinogenicity after consumption of the crabs.
U.S. wheat with malathion	Malathion (pesticide)	Residual malathion was identified by the Department of Health in July 2007 from the samples of 7662 tons of wheat that had been imported from the United States. The regulation in Taiwan did not allow the presence of malathion in wheat, therefore wheat was recalled.
Pork with ractopamine	Ractopamine	In July 2007, pork imported from the U.S. was found to contain ractopamine, which should not be detected in the pork according to Taiwan's regulation. Under pressure from the U.S. government, the Executive Yuan then intended to revise the regulation that would allow the presence of residual ractopamine for imported pork while maintaining zero tolerance for

Poisonous milk (melamine)	Melamine	domestic pork. Being unfairly treated, the farmers took to the street to protest against The Executive Yuan reversed the decision immediately. On September 12, 2008, China officials confirmed in a press conference that melamine-adulterated San- Lu milk powder had been shipped to Taiwan as a raw material in food. On September 18, 2008, the Department of Health announced that the distribution and sale of all milk-containing products from China were banned.
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Source: Li, Yu, Lai & Ko (2012, pp. 12-14)

As can be seen in Table 2.1, most food safety issues were related to imported food and imported raw materials. However, the feature of the three selected crises in this study is that the cases involved the adulteration of edible oil products that were made by local companies in Taiwan. In other words, in contrast to the previous food safety cases that were occurred due to imported foods, the three edible oil crises in this study were caused by Taiwanese food companies. Therefore, this study, then, will focus on exploring the crisis responses of the three food oil companies, the Taiwanese government, and the media to domestic adulterated food oils. There will be a more detailed analysis in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

The previous chapter reviews the background of Taiwan. This chapter examines the theoretical framework of this study, which is based on the integration of the framing theory and crisis communication theories.

This chapter consists of eight sections. It begins with a discussion of different crisis definitions. Besides, the study discusses the concepts of crisis classification, and examines how scholars classify different types of crises. In addition, the study looks the difference between governmental and organisational crisis, and proposes insights on different actors' responsibility during a crisis. Also, the study focuses on crisis communication and crisis communication theories, which have inspired the present study to develop its taxonomy of crisis response strategy and then apply it as an analytical framework for examining the food oil crises; besides, the two sections review crisis communication theories applied to Taiwanese culture, and discuss the explanatory power of Western theories. The sixth and seventh provide details about framing (framing in crisis communication and media framing). The final section discusses the relationship between organisational framing and media framing in crisis communication.

3.1 Defining crisis

A crisis is unavoidable in our environment; every organisation at some time encounters situations that will injure people, damage the environment, cause personal, organisational or social property loss, or threaten an organisation's reputation and its future development (Yang, 2016). How an organisation manages a crisis and reduces the threat of a crisis is important to its reputation and development. For example, it might restore normal work operations, minimise damage to its reputation, decrease economic losses, and ensure the survival of an organisation (Carroll, 2010). Scholars have defined crisis from different standpoints such as crisis characters (Sellnow and Seeger, 2013), people's perception (Coombs, 2010a), or possible outcome (Both, 1998; Fink, 1986). Several scholars provide definitions of organisational crisis (Pearson & Clair, 1998; Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2015).

The term 'crisis' comes from the Greek words *krisis* and *krinein*; *krisis* is a medical term that used to define the turning point in a disease, and *krinein* means 'to judge' or 'decide' (Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). Crisis has the same meaning in the Chinese context. The Chinese symbol for crisis, *weiji*, refers to a point that needs a decision of judgment; *Wei* translates as 'a danger', 'endanger', 'jeopardise', 'hazard', 'perilous', 'precarious', and 'afraid'; furthermore, *ji* signifies a crucial point. Therefore, *weiji* means an unsafe situation and a critical point (Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2015).

Before defining 'crisis', Sellnow and Seeger (2013) suggest it is essential to examine the character of the crisis. They argue that a crisis might have three general attributes. Firstly, a crisis is unanticipated and violates expectations. Secondly, a crisis might threaten life, property, health, safety, or mental status; therefore it requires some action to respond to the threat. Thirdly, a crisis requires an immediate response by agencies or groups to minimise harms. In short, the key features of crises are their unexpected nature, the fact that they carry some threat, and that they require an immediate reaction or response.

Moreover, it is important to clarify the difference between crisis and risk before reviewing the definition of crisis. Heath (2010) offered a straightforward definition by stating that 'a crisis is a risk manifested' (p. 3). Therefore, from this standpoint, Heath claims that a risk will occur before a crisis, and a crisis is the consequence of risk with inappropriate management and development. Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2015) also claim that risk and crisis should be separated: 'risk is a natural part of life, while crisis can often be avoided' (p. 10). Consequently, crisis and risk are connected, and most of the time improper risk management can lead to a crisis. This study understands the relationship between risk and crisis as follows: risk is an assessment of the probability of what might go wrong, and what type of possible impact and magnitude might occur. Crises happen when risks manifest: for example, people may be hurt or damage may be caused to people or property. The three companies in this study practiced adulteration to reduce costs, and used unlawful ingredients. Although these edible oil products did not cause deaths, they caused public concerns about

food safety and many food industries' food products were affected and recalled.

There is no agreed definition of a crisis; scholars have their various standpoints. For example, Coombs (2010a) argues that a crisis is related to peoples' perceptions, and perception depends on the magnitude of violation of peoples' expectations. Therefore, Coombs (2010a) defines a crisis as 'the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organisation's performance and generate negative outcome' (p. 19). Similarly, Penrose (2000) states that perceptions of crises might affect their outcomes. Furthermore, he claims that although most perceived crises are negative, crises can also bring opportunities for stakeholders, for example leading to the emergence of new organisational leaders or facilitating positive changes after a crisis. In this study, although, as has been seen, the three food oil companies' attempts to manage the crises were unsuccessful, (the chairmen of the three food oil companies were sentenced to imprisonment after the trials, and these three companies no longer appear in the Taiwan food oil market); these crises brought about an improvement of food safety regulation (the analysis chapters will provide more details).

Some scholars clarify the definitions of crisis based on the outcome of an event. For example, Both (1998) defines a crisis as a situation that can cause an organisation, a group, or an individual to feel that normal routines are no longer orderly systems and cause them to feel stressed. Fink (1986) also states that a crisis may place an individual or an organisation under close public or media scrutiny, and that it may damage the public image of an individual, an organisation, or interfere with normal organisational operation. Moreover, if a crisis brings more attention from the public and media, or if it relates to public policy agenda, then it can be a crucial force in political and social change (Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). As mentioned in the introduction, Taiwan's series of food safety crises indirectly caused changes to Taiwan's political environment, which led to ruling party KMT's loss of the 2014 mayoral and the 2016 presidential elections. In addition, the food regulations have been revised to become stricter after the crises.

There are some scholars who have defined the crisis by specifically focusing on organisational crises. For example, Pearson and Clair (1998) offer the following definition: 'An organisational crisis is a low-probability, high-impact situation that threatens the viability of the organisation...ambiguity of the cause, effect, and means of resolution of the organisational crisis will lead to the shattering of commonly held beliefs and values and individuals' basis assumption' (p. 60). It is clear that the level of risk and the impact of a crisis can vary by company. Similarly, Fearn-banks (2002) defines an organisational crisis as a 'major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting an organisation as well as its publics, services, products, and good names. It interrupts normal business transactions, at its worst, threatens the existence of organisation' (p. 480).

Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2015) integrate previous crisis definitions and offer the following definition 'an organisational crisis as a specific, unexpected, and non-routine event or series of events that create high levels of uncertainty and simultaneously present an organisation with both opportunities for and threats to its reputation' (p. 8). This definition of crisis is useful for this study, as it provides a relatively complete picture of a crisis from organisational perspective. Furthermore, this definition illustrates the typical constructs of what constitutes a crisis, and the impact it has. However, in Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger's definition, their use of 'unexpected' is more likely to refer to crises that happen suddenly and accidentally as well as causing some inevitable damage, such as earthquakes, typhoons, or air crashes. Therefore, Coombs and Holladay (2010) use the term 'unpredictable' in replace of 'unexpected'. Even for the three edible oil companies in this study, the crises were predictable to a certain extent; they simply did not expect them to break out. The author supports Coombs and Holladay's viewpoint, because the food safety cases in this study are not like pure accidents. The five key components from Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger's definition can be used to examine the crises in this study. For the Taiwanese consumers, these three food oil cases were unpredictable and non-routine issues, because Taiwan had not experienced an edible oil crisis before. Afterwards, consumers' uncertainty in food safety gradually increased (Feng, Chen, Hou, 2016). Furthermore, these issues threaten the image of both the Taiwanese government and food oil

companies (Chen, 2018). However, as mentioned above, although these three companies were not successful, the crises examined in this study also brought an opportunity for improving food safety management, and related food regulations in Taiwan.

3.2 Crisis typology

In the previous section, the study reviewed the various crisis definitions. There is a wide range of diverse situations, which could be classified as crises, such as terrorism, product recall, earthquakes, disease outbreaks, product failure, and downturns in the economy (Coombs, 2010). Several scholars have developed classification systems of crisis typologies, which could help crisis managers examine crisis attribution and manage their crisis responses. The following sections will provide more details.

Lerbinger (1997) divides types of crises into three groups: 'crises of the physical world', 'crises of the human climate, and 'crises of management failure', and the dimension of 'crises of management failure' is relevant for examining organisational crisis management, which always occurs while management values or ways of organisational leadership and governance does not correspond to social condition and commitment. Lerbinger (1997) further states that there are three characters in this crisis type. The first character is 'skewed value,' in which managers have an excessive emphasis on their own interests; in order to acquire more profit organisational managers will try to challenge the bottom line of business ethics. The second is 'deception': organizational managers cause negative criticisms or complaints about their products by customers or media reports. And the third character is 'misconduct': managers who will be asked to take responsibility for organisational actions such as unethical, criminal or unauthorized behaviour. In brief, these three characters 'skewed values,' 'deception' and 'misconduct' are factors related to the three crises in this study. In order to increase profitability and remain competitive, the three edible oil companies in this study used cheaper and illegal ingredients to produce food oil products (Peng et al., 2017). As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the Chang Chi company in case one blended low-cost cotton seed oil with olive oil, and then

sold the oil products as pure olive oils. The Chang Guann and Ting Hsin companies in case two and three used waste oil and animal feed oil to mix with lard, and sold the lard products with lower price respectively (Chiu, 2016; Liao et al., 2017). These three adulterations of edible oil that caused consumers lose their confidence in the companies' products and tested organisations' and the Taiwanese government's crisis management. However, Lerbinger (1997)'s classification cannot be use to explain the Taiwanese government's crisis.

In addition, Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2015) propose that the most useful classification was to divide crises into two categories: unintentional and intentional. They suggest some crises are caused by natural or uncontrollable factors, such as natural disasters, disease outbreak, unforeseeable technical interactions, product failure and downturns in the economy, and that these crises always occur without intention. In contrast, some crises are initiated by intentional actions and harmed the organisations, and these included terrorism, sabotage, workplace violence, poor employee relationships, poor risk management, hostile takeovers and unethical leadership. However, Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger's classification for unintentional and intentional crisis is diverse for the different actors in this study. According to the author's preliminary observations of the related on the three crises, the three food oil companies argued their adulteration of edible oils were unintentional behaviours in the beginning of the crises, even though their allegations were refuted by the persecutors' investigations. In contrast, the Taiwanese government and media coverage believed that the companies' illegal actions were intentional on the basis of the persecutors' investigations. Therefore, it can be seen that how to classify a crisis also involves the diverse positions between different actors.

Coombs and Holladay (2004) further connect the crisis types with the level of crisis responsibility. In other words, crisis responsibility causes a threat to organisational reputation. The more attributions of crisis responsibility, the more damage it could affect the organisation's reputation. Coombs and Holladay (2004) classify crisis types into three clusters: victim crises, accidental crises, and intentional crises. Table 3.1 shows Coombs and Holladay's crisis classification.

The ‘victim crises’ have minimal attributions of crisis responsibility, such as natural disasters, rumours, product tampering. The ‘accidental crises’ produce low attributions of crisis responsibility, and these include challenges, technical error accidents, and technical error product recalls. The ‘intentional crises’ have strong attributions of crisis responsibility, such as human error accidents, human error product recalls, and organisational misdeeds.

Table 3.1 Crisis types and definitions

Types of crisis	Description
Victim crisis cluster	
Natural disaster	Acts of nature that damage an organisation such as tornadoes or earthquakes.
Rumors	False and damaging information about an organisation is being circulated.
Workplace violence	Former or current employee attacks current employees on-site.
Product tampering/Malevolence	External agent causes damage to the organisation.
Accidental crisis cluster	
Challenges	Stakeholders claim that the organisation is operating in an inappropriate manner.
Technical error accidents	An equipment or technology failure that causes an industrial accident.
Technical error product recalls	An equipment or technology failure that causes a product to be defective or potentially harmful to stakeholders.
Intentional crisis cluster	
Human error accidents	Human error causes an industrial accident.
Human error products recalls	Human error causes a product to be recalled and potentially harmful to stakeholders.
Organisational misdeed	Organisational management action that violates the law or places stakeholders at risk.

Source: Coombs and Holladay (2004, p.282)

Coombs and Holladay’s typology combined the advantages of previous classification: Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger’s concept of intentional crisis with the level of crisis responsibility. The food oil crises in this study involved both human error recalls and organisational misdeeds in Coombs and Holladay’ typology. Since the three chairmen of companies were all prosecuted for fraud and

violating food safety regulations, and the judges sentenced them to imprisonment (Taiwan judicial yuan, 2017, 2019, 2020). Therefore, the three crises can be seen as intentional crises. Three food oil companies produced the oil products that were adulterated and caused hundreds of food products to be recalled. Moreover, even though these three food oil suppliers knew their edible oil materials violated the laws and regulations, they still offered the oil products and put consumers at risks. These actions also caused both the Taiwanese government and media to make attributions of responsibility to the food oil companies. The analysis chapters (chapter 5, 6, and 7) will provide more details.

Moreover, this study focuses on the three edible oil crises that broke out in Taiwan. Frewer, Fischer, Brennan, Bánáti, Lion, Meertens, Siegrist and Vereijken (2016) state that the food safety crisis usually involves several aspects, such as deliberate adulteration, accidents in the production process, food supply chain impacts, chronic health risks, and new scientific knowledge of specific foods, and environmental and economic influences. Also, the complexity of the food safety crisis is that it might involve several actors, such as consumers, the food industries, legislators, and supervisors. Therefore, how to ensure effective information exchange between different actors is very important during a crisis (Frewer et al., 2016). According to the author's observation of the three selected cases, after the outbreak of the edible oil crises, issues such as food oil adulteration, potential health risks, food supply chain impact, and economic shock became the focus between food oil companies, media, and the Taiwanese authorities food safety management. Besides, the three food oil crises had eventually triggered a political crisis. Therefore, this study attempts to examine how these issues were framed by the food oil companies, the Taiwanese government, and the media by examining their public communications.

3.3 Difference between governmental crisis and organisational crisis

This section will look at the government crisis, and in particular at the difference between governmental crises and organisational crises. Toth (2010) states that crisis communication is part of the field of public relations. During a crisis, public relations practitioners may play a crucial role in managing crisis situations; failed

crisis management could cause serious damage to stakeholders and losses for organisations (Avery, Graham & Park, 2016). Therefore, how crisis teams made decisions would affect the organisations' performance (Coombs, 2007a). Crises could affect any type of organisation, which includes government or private organisations, or hybrid organisations such as a national government held majority in a national airline (Park, Bier & Palenchar, 2016). Helm, Hiebert, Naver and Rabin (1981) suggested that government's crisis management is distinguished from corporate crises in both character and scope, because the government's level of responsibility, complexity of communication, degree of public and media supervision are more complicated than the private sector's. Although many studies have contributed to crisis communication literature, Schultz and Raupp (2010) argue that most previous case studies on crisis communications, attributions of crisis responsibility, and crisis response strategies focused on the private sector (Benoit, 1995a; Coombs, 2004). As mentioned in chapter 1, the three edible oil crises were caused by the food oil companies, however consumers and media coverage also held the Taiwanese government responsible aspects of these crises (Chuang & Lin, 2015). The study expects that it might be a contribution to examine both the organisations' and the government's crisis responses during the crises, and compare the differences and similarities between their crisis frames.

Lee (2009) reviews several studies and identifies some unique characters of governmental crises, and the following points are relevant to this study: (1) A crisis might raise questions about the government authorities' oversight in preventing and containing the outbreak of the crisis. (2) When a crisis occurs, media scrutiny increases and intensifies. (3) Government crises and their crisis managements might contribute to the public's accumulated collective memories that would be used to evaluate the next government crisis. (4) The political, economic and social contexts constitute a powerful external crisis environment that often influences government decisions (Lee, 2009, pp. 74-75). These characteristics may help explain why the Taiwanese government was seen as responsible for the edible oil crises, or even received more blame than the companies in this study. The three food oil crises occurred in a relatively short

time: the consecutiveness may have intensified the attention of the general public and media on both the government and the food oil companies, and caused the public concern about food regulation and the government's competence in food safety management. Besides, the outbreak of the Ting Hsin crisis was close to the 2014 mayoral election in Taiwan, therefore how the KMT government responded to the crisis may have been related to the political situation by calculation. In addition, during the Ting Hsin crisis, the food products used lards that were banned from some Asian areas, therefore the economic impact was the other issue that challenged the Taiwanese government. Both political and economic factors may have caused the government's crisis response to be more complicated than the companies'.

As discussed above, a governmental crisis may be distinguished from an organisational crisis. In particular, the degree of public, media supervision, complexity of communication and responsibility are often more complicated than in the private sector. Gallagher, Fontenot and Boyle (2007) state that the occurrence of crises tests and challenges any government, and how governments distance themselves from criticisms and rebuild public support is critical, because governments are responsible for protecting safety, controlling damage and building public trust (Benoit, 1997). Governments have different functions when facing crises, such as playing an important role in driving response strategies, decision making and taking actions (Rosenthal, Hart, & Kouzmin, 1991). Governments can also help the public to acquire knowledge, provide information (Chen, 2009), and build a bridge with citizens for minimizing damage and repairing credibility (Chua & Pang, 2012).

Seymour and Moore (2000) explain that the following are common crisis situations in which the government would be involved: (1) The government must be responsible for rules that were broken or failed to meet the demands of the situation. (2) Health and safety officials must be accountable for updating the government about the situation. (3) Government officials have responsibility for supervising the industry or business sector (Seymour & Moore, 2000, p. 82). According to Seymour and Moore's (2000) study, setting regulations, protecting

human health, and supervising companies, are the responsibilities of the government in a crisis. However, in this case, the government failed to fulfil these responsibilities. Besides, Liu and Horslery (2007) state that during some specific crises such as public health issues, the government has more responsibility and importance than a private organisation, because the government is expected to protect public safety. The edible oil crises in this study also involved health issues. Thus, when media reports involved blaming the Taiwanese government, their focus included the government's incompetence to protect public safety, the insufficiency of current food regulations, and government's negligence in supervision.

Similarly, Booth (1993) states that a government normally outstrips any private sector in its various resources, because a government can provide assistance to firms, and can also influence private enterprise through their regulations and laws governing standards. For this reason, food safety is not only related to the private sector: when a food safety crisis arises, the government also has the responsibility to minimise the impact caused by their management malpractice. For instance, faced with a financial loss crisis or a public health crisis, the government should regulate and assist the private sector in minimising food safety concerns for the public (Booth, 1993). A characteristic of the cases in this study was that existing government regulations could not prevent the outbreak of the crises, and did not sufficiently protect consumers.

In contrast, comparing the importance of the public to the government with their importance to private companies, Sellnow and Seeger (2013) state that private organisations have different targets; when a crisis occurs, it does not only affect core organisation, but also managers, employees, stockholders, consumers, suppliers, and even competitors. Sellnow and Seeger's concept is relevant to this study. Both the Chang Guann and Ting Hsin companies were the main lard suppliers in Taiwan; after the Chang Guann crisis broke out, the government started to inspect all the edible oil products on the market, and this triggered the Ting Hsin crisis.

Furthermore, a governmental organisation has a different goal to that of private

organisations. Liu & Kim (2011) state that for a government organisation, the primary goal was to 'provide for the public good,' however, the primary goal of a private organisation was to 'generate a profit' (p. 242). Therefore, for private organisations, maintaining organisational operations or the quality of products and services for them was the most important factor (Avery & Lariscy, 2010). Similarly, Coombs (2010b) claims that it is crucial to limit potential harm and avoid negative outcomes during a crisis; negative outcome included any type of damage to stakeholders such as physical, financial or psychological harm. These negative outcomes might cause stakeholders to make attributions of crisis responsibility, and these attributions might also affect the relationship between stakeholders and organisations.

In conclusion, governmental organisations and private organisations have different targets and organisational goals in crises. In this study, the Taiwanese government needed to act in the public interest and serve its citizens, and the government was responsible for protecting public health. However, the main concern for the three food oil companies were their customers and stockholders, and how to decrease financial and reputational damage may have been their primary consideration. Furthermore, Coombs (2010a) states that how organisations respond to crises depends on how the organisations attribute responsibility for crises. Therefore, the difference between the government and the companies may be reflected in how they made different attributions of responsibility and responded to the crises.

3.4 Crisis communication and crisis communication theories

As mentioned in chapter 1, the theoretical framework of this study is within the field of crisis communication and framing. This section will examine crisis communication, and then crisis communication theories. Crisis communication can be defined as 'the collection, processing, and dissemination of information required to address a crisis situation', and it focuses on what crisis response strategies organisations use to react to a crisis (Coombs, 2010a, p. 20).

The term 'crisis response strategies' has come to be used to describe what an organisation says and does during or after a crisis; their purpose is to protect a positive reputation when facing a crisis (Coombs, 1999). However, Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2015) argue that reputation is essential to organisations, and this is regarded as the main focus by scholars. However, they claim that restoring reputation is not the only purpose of resolving a crisis. After a crisis occurs, how to maintain operation, how to obtain opportunities, and how to rebuild the organisation, all these are also important aspects of crisis communication for an organisation. Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger's perspective is relevant to this study: after the outbreak of the crises, the three food oil companies faced the recall of oil products, loss of consumer confidence, and withdrawal from the market. It can be seen that not only the reputation of these companies, but also their operations, had been affected.

Fediuk, Pace and Botero (2010) suggest that the role communication serves in organisational responses is designed to decrease the damage caused by crises, based on this concept, some crisis communication theories focus on how messages can be used to repair an organisation's reputation after a crisis (Palenchar, 2010; Park, Bier & Palenchar, 2016). Benoit (1997) and Coombs (2010a) have developed two main theories by focusing on organisational responses to crises (Maresh & Williams, 2013). Both theories attempt to provide response strategies specifically for overcoming a crisis, helping to reduce harm to an organisation, and resolving a crisis as soon as possible (Arendt, LaFleche & Limperopulos, 2017). Also, the theories are widely used in crisis communication, because they consists various typologies of communication strategies, which individuals or organisations can use to project favourable crisis responses during crises (Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively present a list of the crisis response strategies from Benoit's image restoration theory and Coombs' situational crisis communication theory (SCCT). The strategies in these two theories contain many overlaps.

Benoit's and Coombs' theories have provided various response strategies; the theories are widely used for crisis communication research, and previous studies

have engaged the crisis response strategies for analysing celebrities, politicians, organisations, governments, and political contexts. (Low, Varughese & Pang, 2011). However, some scholars have pointed out the limitations of crisis communication theories.

Firstly, these two theories are useful for analysing actors' public communication during a crisis, but both Benoit's and Coombs' theories are developed from Western culture, resulting in a lack of non-Western perspective (Hu & Pang, 2018). Huang, Lin and Su (2005) survey the public relations and public affairs managers of the top 500 companies in Taiwan and analyse their practical experience in dealing with crises. They have developed five crisis communication categories from the analysis of Taiwanese companies, including denial, diversion, excuse, justification, and concession. Furthermore, 'showing regards/sympathy' and 'building a new agenda' are two crisis response strategies which their study recommends for inclusion (Huang, Lin & Su, 2005). Also, both Yu and Wen's (2003), and Ye and Pang's (2011) studies emphasise the importance of the 'silence' strategy in crisis communication of Chinese culture.

Therefore, this study attempts to integrate Benoit's image restoration theory, Coombs' situational crisis communication theory, Huang, Lin and Su's (2005), Yu and Wen's (2003), and Ye and Pang's (2011) studies. As Table 2.3 shows, this study develops the following taxonomy of crisis response strategies, and applies it to analyse what crisis response strategies were presented in the Taiwanese government's and the three edible oil companies' official statements during the three food oil crises. As to the crisis response strategies of 'showing regards' and 'silence', these will be discussed in more detail in the following section (3.5).

Table 3.2 Taxonomy of crisis response strategies

Category and definition	Sub-strategy	Sub-strategy definition
Denial Deny the occurrence or existence of the crisis, or reject that the organisation or person is the cause of the crisis.	Simple denial	Actors opine there is no crisis.
	Shifting blame	Actors blame another person or organisation for the crisis.
	Silence	Actors provide no information.
Excuse	Provocation	Actors assert that their action was

Evade responsibility from accusation or emphasise that certain factors limit the person's or organisation's control over the occurrence of crisis.		a response to someone else's offensive behaviour.
	Defeasibility	Actors claim that they lacked information leading to a crisis situation.
	Good intentions	Actors claim that the situation was created with good intentions, and the negative impact was not expected.
Justification Stress that the negative consequence is not so bad, or question the standard for evaluating the impact of the event, saying it is not appropriate.	Bolstering	Actors remind the public of their past good qualities.
	Minimisation	Actors try to reduce of the impact of crisis.
	Attack accuser	Actors attack the accusers those who claim a crisis exists.
Diversión Distract the public's or the media's attention by creating another issue, or express regards (without apologising) to alleviate public concerns.	Differentiation	Actors make a comparison to similar or more serious situations.
	Building a new agenda	Actors create a new issue in order to divert attention by the media and the public
	Showing regards	Actors show regards or express feelings without apologising.
Concession Admit the crisis, apologise, express the willingness for remediation, change policies, and restore situation	Apology	Actors take responsibility for a crisis, and ask for forgiveness.
	Compensation	Actors offer money or gifts to those to victims during a crisis.
	Corrective action	Actors take responsibility for a crisis and try to restore the situation and make a promise to prevent a reoccurrence.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the term 'strategy' in this study does not refer to intentional strategic communication efforts in reaction to the crisis on the part of the food oil companies or Taiwanese government (this is beyond the scope of this study), but that the author applied Benoit's and Coombs' theories, and Huang et al.'s study to examine which crisis response strategies were reflected in the three companies' and government's public messages.

Furthermore, some scholars warn that crisis response strategies might provide a way for people to escape punishment for their wrongdoings; therefore, crisis response strategies may be misused (Seeger and Griffin Padgett, 2010; Sellow & Seeger, 2013). Although Benoit does not mention the situation regarding misuse

of crisis response strategies, Benoit constantly emphasises that a key assumption of image restoration theory is that any violation of ethical standards should be openly and honestly disclosed (Sellow & Seeger, 2013). The author agrees that even if the crisis response strategies can be treated as a tool for masking, confusing and diffusing responsibility to the wrongdoing, what the message used by the personal or organisational response could be verified. McHale, Zompetti and Moffitt (2007) state that crisis communication is often regarded as a linear or perspective model; however, it might be a dynamic and fluid process when a crisis involves various actors. In this study, the three food oil companies, the Taiwanese government, the prosecutors, and the media had their own voices during the crises. Their interaction during the crises was a dynamic process. The information or message about the crises provided by either party will be examined and tested by other parties. Therefore, whether there was a situation in which the truth was concealed, and how one actor's crisis responses were influenced by other actors, will also be examined.

3.5 Crisis communication theories applied to Taiwanese culture

The academic research in public relations, crisis management, and crisis strategic communication have been developed and grown in Taiwan, but most related research is influenced by mainstream Western theories, resulting in a lack of development of localised theories (Huang, 2005). In addition, some scholars raise the concern about most the analysis of previous studies that are rooted in crisis communication theories, which are originating from Western countries, and there is a comparative lack of research focus on the complexity of applying the theories in Chinese culture (Huang & Kim, 2018). As a result, the current crisis communication studies in Taiwan mainly focus on the perspectives of analysing crisis management, crisis responses strategies, and crisis responsibility attributions in a crisis situation, while neglecting the cultural context is an important factor when using Western crisis communication theories to examine the crises that occurred in Taiwanese culture (Yu & Wen, 2003; Lyu, 2012).

The concepts of collectivism and face-saving are identified as the two main

cultural characteristics that affect crisis communication practices in Chinese culture (Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). Taiwanese culture and society mainly derive from traditional Chinese values (Li & Lee, 2010; Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). Huang, et al. (2005) claim that Chinese culture is mostly collectivist in orientation. Collectivistic value affects the crisis communication practices in Chinese culture; for example, Liu, Chang and Zhao (2009) state that public relations practitioners often tend to emphasise overall interest over individual merits in Chinese culture. Similarly, Huang, Wu and Cheng (2016) find that Taiwan is influenced by collectivistic culture and therefore mostly emphasises relationship maintenance, cultivation and harmony; this strongly shapes the practices of crisis communication. Therefore, people in this culture prefer to avoid direct conflict to maintain harmony in crisis communication (Zhu, Anagondahalli & Zhang, 2017).

Regarding the face-saving, it is another unique feature that has a significant influence on crisis communication practices in Chinese culture (Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). Face in Chinese society represents the society's moral trust in individuals or organisations. Thus, it will be difficult for individuals or organisations to survive in Chinese society once it is lost (Chen, 2004). Wen, Yu and Benoit (2012) state that face-saving is important for both China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, because face is related to notions of respect, reputation or dignity, and protecting one's face can help to preserve one's dignity (Peijuan, Ting & Pang, 2009). People in Chinese culture may attempt to save face and prevent loss of face whenever possible. As a result, when someone has done something wrong, people in Chinese culture might try to cover it up rather than telling a humiliating truth in crisis communication (Yu & Wen, 2003). Similarly, Ten Brinke and Adams (2015) state that when an organisation has been charged with wrongdoing and asked to take responsibility to a crisis issue, an apology is expected; however, this also carries a risk of losing face. If crisis managers apologise, they admit that they have made a mistake, which may also cause their stakeholders to lose confidence in the organisations (Ten Brinke & Adams, 2015). Therefore, when crisis managers admit a mistake, that might cause them to lose face; therefore, in order to maintain face, they may not be willing to apologise

(Wen, Yu & Benoit, 2009). Therefore, when a crisis occurs, the 'apology' strategy is less likely to appear in Chinese culture than in Western culture. However, it also makes it easier for an actor in a crisis to deny accusations or evade the important and dwell on the trivial, in order to avoid apologising (Zhu, Anagondahalli & Zhang, 2017; Song, Eslami & Galindo, 2018; Sun, 2016). This perspective is relevant to this study, because the cultural difference may be one of the elements that affect how the Taiwanese government and the food oil companies responded to the crises.

As mentioned in previous section, Benoit (1995) and Coombs (2010a) define various crisis response strategies, however some strategies are not in the existing crisis communication theories. For example, Wu's (2005) study focuses on how the Taiwanese politicians responded to the crises; she found that Taiwanese politicians prefer to express feelings but do not admit their mistakes when facing crises. Wu (2005) claims that this strategy is a kind of strategic ambiguity. As mentioned in the previous section, Huang et al. define this strategy as 'showing regards'; this strategy seems to express sympathy for the crisis, but it does not directly acknowledge responsibility for the crisis.

In Chinese culture, showing regards is widely used in order to avoid apologising and losing face (Wu & Cui, 2019). Besides, Huang, Wu and Cheng (2016) find that 'no response' is often used in Chinese context when an actor attempts to cover up some facts. Therefore, an actor will say nothing or say as little as possible when reacting to a crisis (Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). Similarly, Lyu (2012) finds that in Chinese culture, actors prefer to keep silent or deny crises rather than apologise in the initial stages of crisis communication. The 'no response' strategy is similar to the 'silence' strategy (Lee, 2007). Dimitrov's (2015) 'silence' means the absence of speaking: actors provide little or no information. 'Silence' can be seen as a strategic communication; it is an intentional lack of communication and information (Le, Teo, Pang, Li & Goh, 2019). Ye and Pang (2011) state that the two concepts of 'face-saving' and 'uncertain avoidance' influence the application of crisis response in Chinese culture. Therefore, in order to save face or avoid uncertain situation, people prefer to remain silent. And they describe the silence

strategy as a 'golden rule' in crisis communication in Chinese culture. Similarly, Yu and Wen (2003) claim that in Chinese culture, in an uncertain situation, in order to avoid uncertainty, people tend to remain silent. They claim that unnecessary communication will only lead to unnecessary risks. The value of silence in Chinese culture is significant, therefore the less said the better.

However, the 'silence' strategy has not been included in Benoit's image restoration theory and Coombs' situational crisis communication theory. It can be seen that when the traditional Western crisis communication theories are applied to a Chinese context, such crisis response strategies as 'showing regards' and 'silence' are overlooked. As mentioned above, this study includes these two strategies to the existing crisis response strategies, develops a taxonomy of crisis response strategies (see table 2.2) that are identified in the three edible oil crises, and further analyses how the strategies work in the actors' crisis communication during the crises.

Although Taiwan has derived most of the traditional Chinese culture, the difference in the political environment is one important factor affecting crisis communication (Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). Huang, Wu and Cheng (2016) compare the application of crisis communication in mainland China and Taiwan, and find that most crisis communication research in mainland China focuses on governmental crisis communication. Since the political system in mainland China is highly authoritarian and centralised, the relationship between the government and corporates is subordinate (Lyu, 2012). For example, during the melamine-contaminated milk powder crisis, the crisis managers in Sanlu Corporation played a passive role in the crisis, and waited for the instructions from the Chinese central government (Lyu, 2012). Lyu (2012) analyses the crisis cases in mainland China and finds that most corporations initially denied crisis accusations and then remained silent when responding to the crises. This is because the corporations were expected the guidance from the central government in the crises. Control-oriented crisis management may come about more frequently within the Chinese contexts because of the centralised political system. Furthermore, in mainland China, the central government has the power

to interfere with the speech or actions of other actors such as media, corporations, or non-governmental organisations. Consequently, the Chinese government is often seen as having the primary acting role in a crisis (Cai, Lee & Pang, 2009; Huang & Kim, 2018).

As discussed above, even though China and Taiwan share a similar cultural heritage, the political system are separated. Taiwan's democratic politics has also contributed to the freedom of the press and allowed for multiple news reports (Hu, 2017); therefore, various actors (such as media or corporations) have the power to express different viewpoints in a crisis situation (Cai, Lee & Pang, 2009; Huang & Kim, 2018). This perspective provides the current study with some guidance: the analysis of multiple standpoints between various actors (the organisations, the Taiwanese government, and the media) in the crises can provide a deeper insight into the issue of what public crisis responses actors attempt to construct during crises, what statements or actions are important to the specific actors, and what the communication dynamics of the food oil crises within these various actors under the cultural and political context of Taiwan.

3.6 Framing in crisis communication

In the previous section, the study focuses on examining the application of Western theories in Taiwanese culture. As the mentioned in chapter 1, the study attempts to integrate framing theory with crisis communication theories as a theoretical framework. The following sections will discuss more details about this.

As to the definitions of framing, most definitions of framing are rather abstract to conceptualising the framing. For example, Gitlin's (1980) is that they are 'principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters' (p. 6).¹ For Druckman (2001), framing refers to when 'a speaker's emphasis (is) on a subset of potentially relevant considerations' (p. 1042). These definitions offer an understanding of the framing process, but their definitions do not provide useable guidelines for determining frames (Matthes & Korrying, 2008).

Compared with the above definitions of framing, Entman (1993)'s definition is relatively precise. He states that 'to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (p. 52)'. This definition provides the current study with an understanding of what elements construct a frame.

Frames highlight some features of a piece of communication, and make them more salient, noticeable, and meaningful to the audience (Entman, 1993). During a crisis situation, individuals or organisations involved a crisis might frame the crisis by their own interpretations (Schultz & Raupp, 2010; Meer, Verhoeven, Beentjies & Vilegenthart, 2014), which can be regarded as a 'process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward the preferred redefinition of organisational reality' (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 442). Maitlis (2005) also claims that during the interpretation process, individuals or organisations might attempt to influence people's understanding of an issue by providing them with the interpretations of realities and constituents that are favourable to the actors. Therefore, individuals or organisations will seek to offer certain frames for the interpretation of an issue. In short, organisational framing can be seen as a process for building cognitive construction (Schultz & Raupp, 2010); this could let actors select as well as focus on specific viewpoints.

Some scholars have connected the concepts of framing with crisis communication. For example, Kim (2016) states that crisis communication begins with understanding how actors recognise a crisis, and people's perception of a crisis will depend on 'how the crisis is being framed (Coombs, 2007b, p. 166)'. Crisis managers in an organisation might attempt to use appropriate response strategies to frame a crisis, and expect to alter people's negative perceptions of the organisation in a crisis (Kim, 2006). Kim's and Coombs' viewpoints are relevant to the current study. It can be seen that what actors say or do after a crisis can be seen as a part of framing, and their crisis responses are supporting

and underpinning the frame. Thus, the study attempts to analyse what crisis response strategies were embedded in the specific frames during the three edible oil crises by combining framing theory with crisis communication theories.

As mentioned above, crisis response strategy is part of framing. In fact, framing is like an umbrella, which can provide a broad examination for understanding what happens in public relations (Hallahan, 1999). Hallahan summaries a wide range of disciplines (such as psychology, speech communication, health communication, media studies, political communication, and organisational decision making) and proposes seven models of framing that might be applicable to public relations practice. Hallahan' framing categories include situations, attributions, risky choices, actions, issues, responsibility, and news. For example, what actions that might be undertaken by actors, how actors define a situation, who should be credited or blamed for an issue, or how an issue is portrayed by media (Hallahan ,1999).

In addition, several studies stress the relationship between cause, attribution, and responsibility in crisis framing. Coombs (2007b) states that crisis framing is related to how individuals or organisations define a crisis, and their definition might be with varying degrees of responsibility for the crisis. Coombs and Holladay (2010) explain that each crisis has its own features and causes; these can be seen as cues for framing a crisis, such as whether the crisis was caused by technical or human error, whether the crisis was caused by organisation's intentional or unintentional action, and whether the crisis was caused by some external agent or force. These cues will affect how actors react to a crisis and how much they attribute responsibility for the crisis, and further achieve favourable outcomes for them (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). Both Hallahan (1999)'s, Coombs and Holladay's (2010) studies have provided the current study an understanding of what elements are within a frame. Such as cause, attribution, action, responsibility are different elements that construct a frame. Therefore, how the actors framed their definitions, causes, actions, responsibility of the three edible crises might influenced how they responded

to the crises and constructed their public communications. As to how this study conceptualises framing and applies it to analysis the selected data, there will be more details in chapter 4.

However, Schultz and Raupp (2009) state that some crises such as international crises, health crises, or financial crises, are usually not related to corporates but also governments. Schultz and Raupp (2010) examine how the USA government and corporates attributed responsibilities and framed the financial crisis in 2008; they find that the different positions of government and corporates (the political actors within the government were concerned with gaining power, however corporate actors focused on their profit during the financial crisis), led government and corporates to frame the causes of the financial crisis in different ways. Schultz and Raupp (2010) find that the governmental actors attributed responsibility by mainly framing the crisis with 'macro-level objects' (global financial crisis, and environmental conditions). In contrast, cooperate actors attributed responsibility by mainly framing the crisis with 'meso-level objects' (banks, credit contraction). Schultz and Raupp's finding provides some guidelines for the current study. Framing may differ between different actors during a crisis on the basis of different purposes. For example, in this study, how the food oil companies framed the crises may be not only related to consumers' perception of the organisations' reputation saving, but also connected to subsequent judicial investigations. On the other hand, how the Taiwanese government framed the crises may related to their competence in food safety management, practice of food safety regulations, as well as public health protection. In addition, as mentioned in chapter 1, the three food oil crises had also caused media attention, thus the media may have framed the crises by emphasising certain aspects when reporting edible oil issues. In this study, how the three food oil companies and the government framed their crisis responses during the crises may differ from each other and from the framing by the news media. Therefore, it is necessary for this study to examine how the different frames were presented in corporate communication, government communication and media coverage of three edible oil crises. The following section will look at media framing.

3.7 Media framing

When a public health crisis occurs, it is not only relevant how different organisations and governments frame the crisis, but how the media frame the crisis as well. News framing focuses on how a story is portrayed by the media (Sellow & Seeger, 2013). In relation to Entman's (1993) definition of 'framing', Yang (2016: 82) further defines 'media framing' as 'how the meaning, cause, implications or treatment of an event, issue or person is presented and characterised in media stories'. Media coverage framing can affect public perception (Holladay, 2010; Feng, Berwer & Ley, 2012). Furthermore, even on the same issue, different media frames could provide different viewpoints to the public (An, Gower & Cho, 2011). In short, journalists 'do not simply report the truth or facts; they tell stories that provide frames for understanding the event" (Feng, Berwer & Ley, 2012, p. 255).

The following two studies show how the same issue was framed in different types of newspapers. Yang (2017) analyses how the Taiwanese media reported on risk- and environment-related issues, comparing various themes within five Taiwanese newspapers (four daily newspapers and one economic newspaper). Yang finds that the *Economic Daily News* has the largest number of reports on energy issues, and that it mainly focuses on themes of 'new technology and low carbon products' and on the 'economic interests and environmental development of enterprises.' In turn, four of the other dailies (*United Daily News*, *China Times*, *Apple Daily*, and *Liberty Times*) emphasise the themes of 'energy saving and carbon reduction behaviour and improvement methods' and 'energy policy.' Yang concludes that different types of Taiwanese newspapers have different perspectives on green energy and environmental issues. Yang's (2017) study provides the current study with the idea of a different news orientation between the daily newspapers and the economic newspaper. Since the study will focus on media analysis, and the three food oil crises also involved economic issues, the Taiwanese economic newspapers are worth including, in order to examine how they framed the food safety issues.

Similarly, Boukes and Vliegthart (2017) explore the issue of whether different

types of news outlets in the Netherlands (popular, quality, regional, and financial newspapers) emphasise different news factors, of which they examine seven (personification, negativity, eliteness, influence and relevance, controversy, geographical proximity, and continuity) in economic news across four different types of outlet. They find that different news outlet types have a different commercial value and target audience; these might influence journalists to assess the newsworthiness and frame a story or an event. Daily newspapers are strongly market-oriented, and aim to reach the largest possible number of readers, thus they might emphasise commercial interests in particular (Boukes & Vliegthart, 2017). The result is that popular newspapers particularly focus on some news factors, such as personification, negativity, and geographical proximity in economic news; in contrast, the financial newspapers emphasise fewer news factors in their economic news reports.

Although Boukes and Vliegthart's findings cannot directly translate to Taiwanese culture, the findings in these two studies can provide some direction for analysing the three edible oil crises in this study. Firstly, the Taiwanese daily newspapers and economic newspapers may have had a different focus in framing the food oil crises. Besides, Yang (2017)'s finding inspires the study to examine daily newspapers and the economic newspaper, and further compare the similarities and differences of the frames that were presented in their coverage during the three crises.

The Taiwanese media was also the main actor in supervising the development of the edible oil crises. Chuang and Lin (2015) find that there were more than two thousand food oil crises related news coverage in four Taiwanese daily newspapers; on average, there were six to seven food oil safety related news every day from September to December in 2014 (the same time as the Chang Guann and Ting Hsin crises in this study). This illustrates that the Taiwanese media's attention to the series of edible oil crises. Moreover, Taiwan's media is a system of liberalization of media and freedom of speech, and the media plays the role of the 'fourth power' as well as watchdog (Lyu, 2012; Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). For example, when the outbreak of melamine-tainted milk powder crisis

in 2008 in Taiwan (Taiwan's company, KingCar, imported the milk powder from mainland China and used it to produce creamer in coffee products), the Taiwanese media not only blamed the corporation, but also the government. Lyu (2012) finds that the media continued to report the investigation of the facts and inform the general public during the crisis, but their questioning of the government's incompetence in food safety management also caused the issue to turn into a government crisis. Lyu's study is similar to the current study, in that although the consecutive edible oil crises were caused by the companies, the government was held accountable for neglecting in food safety management by the general public and the media (Chuang and Lin, 2015). Therefore, examining how the Taiwanese media reported on the three crises is valuable for this study, and this is the reason why the study ought to include media analysis.

3.8 Relationship between organisational framing and media framing in crisis communication

When a crisis occurs, the general public may not receive the information about an issue immediately; therefore, they must rely on the information from the organisation itself or the media (Cho & Gower, 2006). If organisational public relations practitioners provide the media with information, they will expect that their voice will be presented in media coverage (Lee & Basnyat, 2013).

However, how much organisational framing would overlap with media framing may depend on the media's selection of source. Coombs (2007b) states that during a crisis, most of the information to the external stakeholders comes from the news media, not corporate communication. This means that traditional media play an important part as the final arbiter of crisis framing in most cases (Nijkraak, Gosselt & Gutteling, 2015).

The following section will review two studies, both of which examine how organisational source were used by the media during the crisis. An, Gower and Cho (2011) examine the major crisis events in the USA during 2006, and analyse how organisations' crisis communications were reported in the three newspapers. An, Gower and Cho (2011) find that the organisational crisis

responses were consistently being reframed by the news coverage, as the media tended to frame the crisis in terms of conflict and responsibility; however, the organisations preferred to offer some information that were favourable to them to decrease their reputational damages. Therefore, An, Gower and Cho (2011) suggest that organisational crisis managers should always check how the crisis statements are presented in the news items, media bias and news orientation when responding to crises.

Similarly, Holladay (2010) examines the US local media coverage of chemical accident crises, and finds that reporters were free to choose information sources in their report. Holladay (2010) concludes that there was a lack of statements from organisations' representatives via the newspapers, therefore the efficiency of crisis management depended on journalists' selection rather than how much effort or speaking skill spokespersons displayed.

According to An, Gower and Cho (2011) and Holladay (2010) findings, although organisations developed their crisis responses in crises, whether these statements would be used or not depended on the media's selection. It can be seen that organisational communication messages might be not accepted by the media coverage, and this perspective may be relevant to this study. During the three edible oil crises, food oil companies and the Taiwanese government could frame the crises, and their crisis frames could also be communicated through the media; however, the media could reframe their messages, or look for more sources and evidence, even engage in investigation. Thus, the study attempts to examine the alignment and divergence between the government's, the food oil companies' and the media's frames.

Several studies have focused on exploring why organisational crisis framing may be challenged by the media. Miller and Ricehert (2000) state that organisations would frame their communications by presenting their own interpretation of issues, however news media would frame issues by adopting or refuting the frames presented by organisations. For instance, when a crisis has just happened, the lack of information regarding the crisis may influence news reporters to depend on the information provided by organisations for their initial media

coverage. However, in their subsequent process of looking for facts, news reporters might interview experts, victims, or witnesses, and some information or statements from organisational spokespersons might possibly be treated as doubtful statements. Consequently, the public would be exposed to multiple frames for one particular issue (Miller & Riechert, 2000; Edy & Meirick, 2007).

Coombs (2007b) defines this process as *competing frames*. Waller and Conaway (2011) also state that it is important to understand that the dominance of an offered frame from an organisation is subject to being tested by a competing or counterframe by other actors and news media. When a more convincing counterframe by other actors or news media presents itself, it might challenge the organisation's frame and influence people's perceptions (Waller and Conaway, 2011).

Besides, the 'blame game' might also happen during different actors' interaction in a crisis. 'Blame game' often occurs when an actor frames other actor's responsibility or attribution to a crisis; an actor attempts to reduce blame or accusations during a negative situation, so that the general public will not regard the accused actor as the actor who caused the harm and should take responsibility (Ewart, McLean, 2014; Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008). In particular, Knobloch-Westerwick and Taylor (2008) state that the media converge plays an important role that may influence causal attributions in the context of public affairs and crisis communication; how media reports an issue may affect the public's attribution of responsibility to a crisis.

As discussed above, it could be assumed that an actor's frame that might be challenged by the media or other actors when the competing frame or some unfavourable information emerges. In this study, after the three crises occurred, the prosecutors were involved in the investigation, and the three chairmen of food oil companies were sued within a month; therefore, the content of the indictments might become a part of the media sources. Thus, it could be expected that what the organisational or governmental statements and crisis frames would be challenged by news framing if the food oil companies or the Taiwanese government told lies or hid some facts. Therefore, what the differences and

similarities between the different actors' frames, and how the actors' frames changed over time that requires further exploration.

In addition, crisis framing might be dynamic over time (Gerken & van der Meer, 2019), Meer and Verhoeven (2013) state that organisational crisis framing, public crisis framing and media framing might influence each other in a crisis. Therefore, even though the media might filter the government or food oil companies' crisis messages, the government or the companies might also examine how the media frame the crises, and adjust their further framing in terms of how media have reported. Similarly, Gerken and van der Meer (2019) claim that frames can be different between various actors, and different actors' frames might interact and interplay with each other during a crisis, therefore framing is a dynamic and complex process with a variety of competing voices (Gerken & van der Meer, 2019; McHale, Zompetti & Moffitt's, 2007). The viewpoint has inspired the current study with an understanding of framing is a fluid process, and that different actors' frames might be changing over time. Thus, the interaction among organisational crisis framing, governmental crisis framing and media framing needs to be explored.

This chapter has examined crisis definition, crisis typology, crisis communication theories and framing in crisis communication. It can be seen that during crises, in order to repair their reputation, actors might create their responses to the crises. From the perspective of crisis communication, Benoit (1995a) and Coombs (2007a) have developed crisis communication theories (image restoration theory and situational crisis communication theory), and the main purpose of these theories is to examine what types of crisis responses the actors use to react to the crises via news releases, statements, or speeches from the organisations. However, some scholars (Austin, Liu & Jin, 2012; Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2015) emphasise that people may receive information from the media rather than from organisations when crises occur; therefore examining how the media coverage frame the crises is the other main focus to this study. Therefore, this study attempts to integrate crisis communication theories with framing theory as a framework and examine how the Taiwanese government, the three food oil

companies and the media framed the three food oil crises, and examine what crisis response strategies were embedded in their public communication.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The main aim of this study is to explore how the frames were constructed by the different actors during the food safety crises? The focus of this study examines what kind of information was present in the three actors' (the Taiwanese government, the three food oil companies, and the media) public communication when they responded to the crises. The study draws upon crisis communication theories and framing theory as a theoretical framework. The research questions of this study are as follows:

RQ1: How did the three private companies and the Taiwanese government frame the three edible oil crises?

- (a) How did the companies frame their respective crises and what crisis response strategies can be detected in their official statements?
- (b) How did the government frame the crises and what crisis response strategies can be detected in their official statements?
- (c) How stable and consistent was the government's framing over the three edible oil crises?

RQ2: How did the Taiwanese media coverage frame the three edible oil crises?

- (a) How did the media frame the crises?
- (b) To what extent did media framings overlap with the three companies' and the Taiwanese government's framings? What were the main differences?
- (c) What are the similarities and differences between different media's framings in the three edible oil crises?

This chapter consists of seven sections. The first provides details about the philosophical standpoint and research approach in this study. The second expounds the method used in the study and explains the framing analysis. The third addresses how this study defines framing, and how framing will be conceptualised. The fourth provides information about the data collection and sampling strategy for the governmental and organisational official sources and news coverage. The fifth is concerned with how this study analyses the data,

explaining the unit of analysis and coding procedure. The sixth looks at the phases of framing analysis. The final section discusses, respectively, the limitations, ethics and language barrier of the study.

4.1 Research approach

Different worldviews rely on different assumptions about the nature of reality. This can yield different understandings of the nature of knowledge as well as of how we can obtain it. Research can enable one to understand the complexity of the world. However, the different assumptions tied to different worldviews will influence one's ways of looking at social reality (Bryman, 2016). In other words, research design is related to the philosophical worldview that the researcher adopts for the study: the researcher's decision for specific methods or research procedures will follow and then translate the chosen philosophical standpoint into practice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Lukenchuk (2013) defines six different philosophical viewpoints in the social sciences (empirical, pragmatic, interpretive, critical, poststructuralist, and transcendental); interpretive perspective (interpretivism) is one of the worldviews for looking at social reality, and this is also the philosophical standpoint of the current study.

Interpretivism believes that reality is constructed and interpreted as well as experienced by human beings, and that it differs from person to person (Kroeze, 2012). The interpretivist approach posits that people develop their subjective understanding of specific objects or things through their experience (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, according to interpretivism, individuals may construct meaning based on their social experience, and knowledge and reality will be constructed in terms of the interaction between individuals and the cultural context (Trainor & Graue, 2014).

Interpretivism emphasises that reality is constructed by humans, and this reality can be known through subjective interpretation. Due to the fact that no researchers can separate themselves from the social reality that they have experienced, it is important to pay attention to the context in order to understand the phenomena being studied and create knowledge about them.

Thus, the purpose of interpretivist research is to discern the meaning and achieve an understanding of a particular phenomenon (Mora, Gelman, Steenkamp & Raisinghani, 2012; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Research undertaken from the interpretivist perspective often explores questions by gathering and distilling multiple viewpoints of different individuals. Thus, researchers attempt to examine situations through the views of participants rather than the researchers' own (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). These studies try to achieve a pluralistic worldview on the basis of how humans construct meanings and values in their particular contexts; therefore the acceptance of various individuals' perspectives can provide a more comprehensive understanding of situations (Goldkuhl, 2012; Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This interpretive paradigm allows researchers to interpret the world drawing upon individuals' perceptions and experiences; the studies that follow the interpretive standpoint, then, explore the world by interpreting individuals' understanding from the collected data (Hay, 2011). Researchers will shape their own interpretation and develop it from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

From the interpretivist perspective, meaning and understanding will be created by researchers and research subjects. Researchers will also subjectively interpret the phenomena that they study (Mora, Gelman, Steenkamp & Raisinghani, 2012). Moreover, the interpretive approach holds that research is an interactive process that encompasses both researcher and research subject (Nelson, Groom & Potrac, 2014).

Qualitative methods are usually employed by interpretivist researchers to explore the world by investigating how humans understand reality by constructing their own interpretations (Trainor & Graue, 2014; Thanh & Thanh, 2015). In an interpretivist framework, the main purpose for researchers is to generate a small number of summary categories that can be considered to have captured the key themes from the selected data, and are important to address the research goals. Furthermore, another purpose is to acquire insight into situations, and get in-depth information, and have a grounded understanding of the

phenomena. Therefore, qualitative methods can be regarded as appropriate means to examine social problems (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

This study applies qualitative framing analysis; however, the philosophical standpoint of this study draws upon an interpretivist approach. Referring to the specific topic of this study: after the food oil crises, it was not only commercial companies that were held accountable for the crises; doubts also arose about that part of the Taiwanese government's management whose task it was to oversee food safety. Besides, the crises also attracted media attention. To understand how each of the parties framed their responses to the crises, the most appropriate approach is qualitative. Furthermore, the explanatory power and applicability of the selected crisis communication theories to Taiwanese culture is also a main focus in this study that needs to be further explored, and is highly reliant on contextualized qualitative analysis. Thus, qualitative analysis is applied in research that aims to explore and examine the complexity of a phenomenon, by interpreting the significance of the topics at hand (Schreier, 2012). This study attempts to interpret and explore the meaning of the selected data; thus, a more in-depth examination of the content of sampled organisational and governmental texts, as well as of news coverage, is used to understand the media, the government, and the private companies' framing of edible oil issues and food safety. The interpretivist approach believes that situations are varying and changing instead of stable and fixed. Situations may develop over time and may be mainly influenced by contexts. In particular, issues and participants are specific to different contexts. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). As a consequence, this perspective allows the author to investigate the dynamic relationships and diachronic processes occurring between the government, the commercial organisations and the news media when facing the crises.

In this study, then, a qualitative approach is employed to analyse the content of the organisational and governmental texts as well as of news coverage. The central goal is to interpret the frames and to explore how they were constructed by the organisations, the government, and the media. The adoption of qualitative research can help the author to examine the relevant official statements and

news articles that were generated during the specific situations; it can also provide an understanding of complex phenomena such as how the government, the three commercial organisations, and the media reacted to the crises.

4.2 Framing analysis

In the field of communication, framing is defined as a way of organising an issue or topic and making it meaningful; furthermore, framing involves various perspectives, such as public discourse, news construction, or audiences' reception (Reese, 2001; Van Gorp, 2010). For researchers, the purpose of analysing frames is to provide insight into how an issue is interpreted, and how the salience of different aspects is emphasised (Van Gorp, 2010). Regarding the methodological approaches to framing analysis, Touri and Koteyko (2015) broadly separated two categories: inductive and deductive. Deductive approaches typically follow the logic of quantitative analysis, and focus on measuring the frequency of concepts (Touri & Koteyko, 2015). Some quantitative research into framing analysis relies on coding for manifest indicators, for example: counting the terms in relation to a frame that is being employed, analysing the length of the different sources which are devoted to the texts, or examining the number of times various sources are quoted in the texts (Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Nucci, Cuite & Hallamn, 2009; Coombs & Holladay, 2010). Concepts such as keywords, sources, quotes, headlines, or themes are often counted in quantitative framing analysis. This numeric background information, along with statistical analysis, enables researchers to understand to what extent manifest indicators are applied in the texts (Tankard, 2001; Kuypers, 2010). However, Baden (2018) criticises the fact that such studies heavily focus on manifested contents, which may cause researchers to overlook the variability of subjective frame constructions, and overlook the preceding and surrounding discourse in texts.

Other studies in the same vein focus on numbering the times that certain framing categories appear in the given texts (Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Kuttischreuter, Gutteling & Hond, 2011; Hong, 2013); these studies mainly analyse the data on the basis of already established framing categories constructed by previous

studies of similar topics or issues (Touri & Koteyko, 2015; Brüggemann & D'Angelo, 2018). The advantage of these predetermined frames is that they can provide researchers with an assessment of frames based on predetermined definitions when examining similar issues (David, Atun, Fille & Monterola, 2011). However, the disadvantage is that when issues are part of a highly complex situation, researchers may be limited to the established frames, and miss other possible important frames in analysing the issues (Matthes & Kohring, 2008).

Initially, most research has applied qualitative framing analysis that emphasises the contributions of contextual interpretations of texts with rich and in-depth analysis (Baden, 2018). This approach would immerse researchers in intensive analysis and allow them to develop knowledge (Van Gorp, 2007). However, quantitative framing research that mainly focuses on manifest structures and on exploring the extent to which manifest indicators exist in the selected samples leads researchers to neglect the importance of exploring the specific discourse and cultural context of texts (Baden, 2018). Furthermore, the quantitative framing approach ignores questions such as how to detect the complexity in frames, or where the frames come from; these remain questions that can only be answered via an inductive framing analysis (Van Gorp, 2010).

There are a number of studies that extract frames by interpreting texts on the basis of a qualitative approach; the interpretations are related to the given culture contexts (Coleman & Dysart, 2005; Canel & Sanders, 2010; Meyer & Abrams, 2010). Reese (2010) claims that analyses of what frames are should be connected to the cultural context. This is because the construction of a frame is not only to do with the specific content, but also involves cultural context. Van Gorp (2010) further explains that each culture has its own symbols and worldviews, and people can use as a 'toolkit'; this can help people to contribute meanings to various issues with which they are faced. Thus, the association between an issue and a given culture (such as shared narratives, social values, worldviews) may provide a particular perspective in relation to how reality can be perceived by people (Van Gorp & Vercruyssen, 2012). Therefore, qualitative and interpretive framing analysis will depend on the researcher's interpretation of

the text, and the frames of an issue are to be analysed and discussed in depth. The qualitative approach to framing analysis allows researchers to apply their cultural observations and then examine the significance of texts. This method can afford researchers new insights when they are in the interpretive coding process of frames (Hertog & McLeod, 2010).

This is relevant to the current study, because the strength of qualitative framing analysis as a research approach is that it can be valuable for an in-depth, socio-contextual and detailed description and interpretation of the research topic. The aim of this study is not only to explore how the three commercial companies, the central government authorities, and the media framed the crises, but also to analyse how the crises were framed in relation to the situations that caused public concern due to food safety issues. Referring specifically to how the government and the media went through the three edible oil crises, it is the dynamic process between frame and context that needs to be further interpreted. The current study attempts to examine the texts closely and reveal important frame-relevant elements that may have occurred in the specific contexts by means of a qualitative framing analysis. The application of qualitative analysis has the benefit of illustrating the range of meanings of the phenomena, extracting the important frames within the texts, and offering a rich discussion of the phenomena at hand.

Hertog and McLeod (2010) also suggest that researchers should explore and compare the framing differences between various actors, such as organisations, media, business spokespersons, or government officials. This is because different actors involved in an issue may intentionally or unintentionally seek to emphasise their frames on issues of interest to them. Similarly, Boesman and Van Gorp (2018) claim that there may be various actors involved in an issue, such as reporters, sources, or audiences: each actor can choose different parts in the process of understanding the problem, and then further clarify their arguments and take a course of action. Framing construction may derive from 'any participant at any stage of the process, which is essentially a contest involving different actors with competing goals, interests, or messages' (Pan & Kosicki,

2001, p. 48); therefore, different actors may provide insights in confronting frames. Scheufele and Scheufele (2010) state that frames may be constructed and change over time. For example, news media tend to use frames provided by their sources when the situation they meet is unfamiliar, but after gaining a greater understanding of the issue, they construct their own frames on the basis of new knowledge and information (Van Gorp, 2005). It can be seen that the framing construction is a diachronic process (Entman, 2004). These perspectives offer the current study some guidance: the analysis of multiple frames between various actors (the organisations, the Taiwanese government, and the media) in the crises can provide a deeper insight into the issue of what frames actors attempt to construct during crises, and what frames are important to specific actors. In sum, qualitative framing analysis as applied in the current study cannot only be used to identify how the Taiwanese government, the three commercial organisations, and the Taiwanese media framed the messages and responded to the crises: it can also be used to examine and analyse the public communication of the food oil crises by these various actors.

Validity and reliability, too, are important criteria that are used to assess research quality (Bryman, 2016). Validity is 'the extent to which interpretations of data are warranted by the theories and evidence used' (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavich, 2002, p. 267), while reliability is defined as follows: 'If the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable' (Joppe, 2000, p. 1). Reliability is about the measurement of consistency by using such as same instrument or a similar sample (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). More details on how reliability and validity were considered in the method of qualitative framing analysis used in the current study are offered in the following sections.

4.3 Conceptualising framing

The focus of the present study is to examine how the three main actors (the Taiwanese government, the three food oil companies, and the media) framed the crises. Although research on framing has increased over the past decades, some scholars have raised questions about how to detect and determine the frames in

a rigorous way. (Matthes & Korring, 2008; Matthes, 2009; Vliegenthart & Zoonen, 2011).

Hertog and McLeod (2010) state that most definitions of framing are rather abstract to conceptualise the process of frame building; thus, without a clear idea of what constitutes the core concept of framing, there may be a tendency for scholars to generate unique frames for every social issue or phenomenon in related framing studies. This means that, due to the absence of an identified research approach for analysing and interpreting data, it becomes too easy for researchers to find evidence to support their claims about what frames they have found in the texts. Therefore, how to identify frames, and how to assess and analyse them should be further defined. This problem is also addressed by Matthes (2009), who observes that the fact that most of the framing definitions are rather general and the lack of information about how to operationalise framing. Furthermore, Matthes and Korring (2008) claim that from a methodological point of view, some studies which have conducted qualitative analysis remain unclear about how researchers have defined and determined their frames. Thus, in most studies, there is no criterion for identifying and assessing what the frame is. For this reason, Matthes and Korring suggests that Entman's (1993) definition can offer more precise operational steps for an empirical method with a rigorous assessment of framing. Matthes and Korring 's viewpoint has inspired the current study, and Entman's definition provides it with an understanding of what key elements are within a frame.

One feature of Entman's (1993) definition of a frame is that it contains different elements: definition, problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. They are key elements that embedded within a frame. The central issue under investigation is one of problem definition. Causal interpretation consists in identifying what factors or actors have created the problem. Moral evaluation consists in offering a moral judgment of the involved agents and their effects. Finally, treatment recommendation consists in offering treatments or improvements for the problem or problematic situation (Entman, 2003; Matthes & Korring, 2008).

Matthes and Korrying (2008) introduce the methodological approach for framing analysis. They draw upon the widely used definition of frames provided by Entman (1993), and suggest that researchers systematically analyse the frame elements (problem definitions, causal attributions, moral evaluations and treatment) included in Entman's definition. They examine each frame element within a particular definition of what constitutes a frame, and make certain patterns apparent. Then, they apply these patterns to analyse texts, these patterns can be described as frames (Matthes & Korrying, 2008; Matthes, 2009). David, Atun, Fille and Monterola (2011) claim that Matthes and Korrying's research procedure to extract frames based on frame elements does offer a method to examine and reveal the frame. Moreover, this conceptual and operational practice may offer support for the applicability of research methods used in examining different kinds of issues. The advantage of this systematic analysis is that it provides the current study with a better analytical framework and understanding for the rationale of detecting the frames in the texts under consideration. Thus, the study uses Entman's categories as the foundation to conceptualise frames. The following sections contain more details about the data collection in this study.

4.4 Data collection and sampling strategy

Applying framing analysis, this study analyses the published press releases from the three companies and the Taiwanese central government authorities, and the news coverage from Taiwanese media. Public relations practitioners have long relied on press releases to construct the messages and information being given to the general public (Gilpin, 2008; Lewis, Williams & Franklin, 2008). The organisational press releases were selected to examine how the organisations responded to the crises; these responses were the message and information coming directly from the organisations, rather than the messages that were reported and (re)framed by the media. Also, Stephens and Malone (2010) state that how actors respond to a crisis can be understood through examining their 'direct statements', such as press release, pages on websites, official blogs; this illustrates that these materials represent the framing of public communication.

The main reason for choosing organisations' messages to analyse is that their official statements provide a direct way to examine how they framed the crises. However, the author acknowledges this is one of the limitations of this study, because the press releases may not give a full picture of their crisis framing.

No interviews were conducted, for two main reasons. Firstly, since the three case studies occurred, six to seven years ago, two of the food oil companies closed down after the crises and one withdrew from Taiwan edible oil market, and all employees were dismissed from their jobs, so it might take too much time to find interviewees from the food oil companies. Secondly, regarding to the Taiwanese government authorities, due to the shift in political power in 2016, most of the main officials who were responsible for food safety in the governmental departments at that time are no longer in their positions, therefore it is relatively difficult to access the officials for interviews. The study acknowledges it is one limitation of this study. Besides, the author chose instead to analyse the official public press releases and media articles, and to explore how the various actors framed and responded to the crises through an analysis of the texts. The author acknowledges this is another limitation of this study, because the actors' public statements do not represent the full picture of the content of crisis response.

The following section addresses the details of the sampling strategy and the selection of texts. The data were collected from three sources: the Taiwanese central authorities, the food oil companies, and Taiwanese media.

4.4.1 Sampling strategy

With specific regard to governmental press releases, organisational press releases and media coverage, the current study uses the text as the unit of analysis. Purposive sampling was applied across the study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) point out that purposive sampling is often used in qualitative research; researchers can assemble the sample in order to meet their specific needs and the requirements of their research questions. Therefore, researchers can best decide what needs to be known and then set out to find how they can access data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). The main objective of purposive

sampling is to select a sample that can ensure strength and richness in the data, and that these available data be relevant to the research questions (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) and Flick (2009) provide typologies of several kinds of purposive sampling; 'criterion sampling' is one of these, and this is the one the study has adopted. This sampling selects contexts or cases on the basis of criteria established by the researchers. Researchers can set criteria in relation to the kinds of contexts or cases indicated by their research questions, and then sample those cases or contexts that they have identified (Bryman, 2016). The current study has applied criterion sampling to sample the sources that fit particular criteria aimed at better assisting the research. The following sections will provide more details about what criteria have been selected for this study.

4.4.2 The food oil companies

As to the sampling criteria, three sampling criteria were considered in the collection of the three food oil companies' press releases. First, the full text of the press releases should be available. Second, the press releases must be officially issued. Third, the press releases must be published within the timeframe examined.

The time frame for the research includes the day when the adulterated food oil products broke out and the following six weeks. The reasons are as follows: preliminary analysis had identified this period as appropriate because it includes media reactions after the government released their final official statements on the respective crises. The chosen time frame can ensure a relatively comprehensive data collection relative to the media coverage of these crises. Besides, a crisis lifecycle is not only related to the length of an acute crisis event, but also to the media's attention to the crisis (Holladay, 2010). The author searched by keywords in the 'Taiwan News Smart Web' media database, and found there was a significant decrease in the number of news reports after one and a half months in each crisis. More details will be provided in the following subsection on media data collection.

In case one (the Chang Chi crisis), the data were collected from the period between 16 October 2013 to 27 November 2013. In case two (the Chang Guann crisis) data collection focused on the period between 4 September 2014 and 16 October 2014. In case three (the Ting Hsin crisis), the timeframe was from 8 October 2014 to 20 November 2014.

The study has aimed to collect press releases from the companies' official websites; however, two of them (Chang Chi company and Chang Guann company) were closed after the crises, and their official websites are no longer available. Thus, the corpus of press releases for these two companies was collected from the news media (*United Daily News* and *China Times*), where they remained available in their entirety. The limitation of the approach is that the study might possibly have missed some press releases. Therefore, in order to ensure that the press releases issued by the organisations could be collected as completely as possible, the study has also reviewed the contents of the governmental press releases and the media coverage, examined whether the messages of organisational press releases were quoted by the government or the media, and then checked the time of the reference. After repeated review and confirmation, it appeared that no other press releases were issued at the time. As for the food oil organisations, in case one, the Chang Chi company released 4 press releases (17/10/2013, 18/10/2013, 20/10/2013, 28/10/2013) during the crisis. In case two, there were 2 press releases (04/09/2014, 11/09/2014) from the Chang Guann company.

In case three, 3 press releases (10/10/2014, 13/10/2014, 06/11/2014) were issued by the Ting Hsin company. Since the Ting Hsin's official website is still available, the press releases were all retrieved from the website. However, in order to confirm that no press release has been missed, the author also checked Ting Hsin's Facebook page (which, in addition to posts about food products, also includes every press release issued by the company). This suggests that there are no missing press releases issued by the Ting Hsin and the sample here is complete.

4.4.3 The Taiwanese government

Three sampling criteria were followed in the collection of the government authorities' press releases. First, the full text of the press releases should be available. Second, the press releases must have been released by the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA), the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Executive Yuan, and the Taiwanese President's office. Third, the press releases must be issued within the timeframe.

The governmental press releases, too, were acquired from their official websites. In case one, the search retrieved 18 news releases from the TFDA, and 1 from the Ministry of Health and Welfare. In case two, 18 press releases were issued by the TFDA, and 6 by the Executive Yuan. In case three, 27 press releases were released from the TFDA, 2 news releases from the Ministry of Health and Welfare, 7 from the Executive Yuan, and 2 press releases from the Taiwanese President's office. The central authorities' press releases were 81 in total (19 for case one, 24 for case two, and 38 for case three). It can be seen that due to the repeated occurrence of food oil crises, the number of press releases released by the authorities was on the rise. Also, the governmental press releases were relatively more than the three companies'.

4.4.4 The Taiwanese media

The following sections will provide information about the Taiwanese newspapers, and outline sampling strategy and data collection applied to the media coverage.

4.4.4.1 Selected media

All newspapers analysed in this study have scanned editions (the newspapers' archives with the same full texts and pictures as the original printed versions), which are collected through the 'Taiwan News Smart Web' media database (which the following paragraphs will introduce in detail). With regard to sampling strategy, the decision to analyse coverage from traditional news media platforms rather than social media has been taken for several reasons. Firstly, the three cases in this study occurred in 2013 and 2014; at that time, the popularity

of social media was limited to Facebook, and the users of Twitter, Instagram, or blogs were less than 15% of internet users in Taiwan (Chang, 2015). Secondly, even though the popularity of social media in Taiwan has gradually increased in recent years, traditional print media still provides important news content with a relatively higher level of content credibility in Taiwan (Liu & Lo, 2017). Thirdly, although Schultz, Utz and Goritz (2011) claim that social media play an increasing role in crisis communication, they also find that newspapers do have higher credibility in crisis-related information. In Taiwan, print media has a higher credibility than other media. Also, people are more likely to trust a newspaper article than a tweet or blog post, and they rely more on newspapers during crises (Chiang, Chung, Lee, Shih, Lin & Lee, 2016). Therefore, the scanned files of the newspapers have been selected as the data for analysis.

Also, as mentioned in the literature review chapter, it is important to include different newspapers in the analysis as according to Yang's (2017) and Boukes and Vliegenthart's (2017) studies. They suggest that different types of news outlets may have different journalistic standards and newsworthiness criteria, depending on their journalistic orientation. The issues of adulterated food oil products not only involved political and social aspects, but also caused a great economic impact in Taiwan. Because of the significant economic impact, this study analyses not only daily newspapers, but also one economic newspaper for the purpose of frame comparison. In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Taiwan's news coverage on the crisis issues, two main daily newspapers (*Liberty Times* and *Apple Daily*) and one economic newspaper (*Economic Daily News*) in Taiwan are analysed. The following section will provide more details about the media's data selection.

After assessing the feasibility of the study, the author selected two daily newspapers (*Liberty Times* and the *Apple Daily*) and one economic newspaper (the *Economic Daily News*) for analysis. Among the four Taiwanese daily newspapers, the *Liberty Times* and *Apple Daily* have relatively more readers than the *China Times* and the *United Daily News*. According to a survey conducted by the Taiwan Media Association in 2017, the *Liberty Times* has the highest reading

rate in Taiwan, followed by the *Apple Daily*. Moreover, Wang and Chiu (2013) examine the development of the Taiwanese newspaper industry and find that readers regard the *Liberty Times* and *Apple Daily* as the two most reliable and in-depth newspapers for news coverage. This is why the author has selected these two among the daily newspapers to be included in the analysis.

As for the economic newspapers, there are two in Taiwan: the *Commercial Times* and the *Economic Daily News*. The news content of the *Commercial Times* pays more attention to the Taiwan stock market and investment analysis, while the news content of the *Economic Daily News* is focused on industrial trends and international finance (Li & Lee, 2010; Hu, 2017). The reason for the author's choice of the *Economic Daily News* is that compared with the *Commercial Times*, it provides more informative and relevant news reports on economic issues and industrial trends (Lee, 2007; Li & Lee, 2010). It also allows an examination of how this newspaper, from its economic perspective, reported on the impact of the edible oil crises on the related industries, which can be usefully compared to the daily newspapers' reports.

4.4.4.2 Data collection of news articles

Three sampling criteria were considered in the collection of media items. First, the news items were from 'Taiwan News Smart Web' media database. The scanned versions of news articles were found by searching the 'Taiwan News Smart Web' media database. The database collects a digitized version of the archives of all Taiwanese original newspapers, providing free access for academic research and non-commercial use. The archives include both full texts and pictures. The archives of news articles for *Liberty Times* start from 2003, as do those for the *Economic Daily News*; those for the *Apple Daily* start from 2004.

The second criterion is that the media coverage must have been published within the timeframe. As mentioned earlier, the time frames of data collection in each case are: for the Chang Chi crisis, 16 October 2013 to 27 November 2013; for the Chang Guann crisis, 4 September 2014 to 16 October 2014; and for the Ting Hsin crisis, 8 October 2014 to 20 November 2014.

News coverage was collected by keyword search, using the names of the three food oil companies ('Chang Chi,' 'Chang Guann,' and 'Ting Hsin'), the names of the people involved in the crises (such as the names of the three companies' chairmen, TFDA's director, minister of health and Welfare department, prime minister and president), the names of regulatory agencies (such as 'the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration,' 'the Ministry of Health and Welfare,' or 'Executive Yuan') with 'food oil,' 'edible oil,' 'recycled oil,' 'food safety' or 'food safety management'. In order to avoid the omission of news reports, the author only entered one keyword at a time when searching. By using different keyword-searched results, the author found that many of the news reports are repeated, so the author reviewed each news article and excluded the repeated news items. No analysis of images in the newspapers was conducted, because after reviewing the photos in the news articles, most of the photos turned out to represent edible oil products or the leaders of the three companies, so they did not significantly contribute or add informative value to the content and framing of the articles.

In case one (the Chang Chi crisis), the search retrieved 135 results from *Liberty Times*, 58 from *Apple Daily*, and 30 from *Economic Daily News*. In case two (the Chang Guann crisis), there were 117 results from *Liberty Times*, 74 from *Apple Daily*, and 35 from *Economic Daily News*. In case three (the Ting Hsin crisis), the search found 181 items from *Liberty Times*, 106 from *Apple Daily*, and 74 from *Economic Daily News* (see Table 3.1). The number of news reports reached the highest number of cases in case three across the three newspapers; it can be seen that due to the repeated occurrence of similar crises, the media's attention to and focus on this matter had also increased and extended.

The three newspapers are all issued daily; however, there is a significant difference in the number of articles between dailies and economic newspaper. This is because of limitations in page number; the dailies in Taiwan have more pages than economic newspapers, the former reaching about 16 pages while the latter are about 8 pages on average. This caused a significant difference in the number of news reports. For an important news issue, the dailies can usually

provide more than one related news item. In these three edible oil issues, each daily has an average of six to seven related news reports per day; in contrast, there are only one or two related news items on average in the economic newspapers.

Table 4.1 Number of news reports

		Case1 16/10/2013- 27/11/2013	Case2 04/09/2014- 16 /10/2014	Case3 08/10/2014- 20 /11/2014	Total
Daily Newspaper	<i>Apple Daily</i>	58	74	106	238
	<i>Liberty Times</i>	135	117	181	433
Economic Newspaper	<i>Economic Daily News</i>	30	35	74	139
Total		223	226	361	810

The primary sampling of the news coverage for six weeks yielded more than 800 news articles (see Table 4.1). However, such a large amount of news articles was unmanageable for the author to undertake an in-depth qualitative analysis.

Therefore, the author set further criteria to select news items in order to make the sample size more manageable. The chosen criteria for further sampling are as follows.

Firstly, this study excludes news reports that are less relevant to analysing and exploring how the media framed the crises. For example, after the outbreak of the crises, hundreds of food manufacturers, restaurants, vendors etc., were affected. Quite a significant amount of news articles were focused on providing details and information about the affected food industries, companies, stores, restaurants, and food products (for example, which food store's products used

adulterated food oil in the manufacturing process). However, the main foci of this study are on the framing of the crises as well as on responses by the media, the government, and the three edible oil suppliers; details and information about the affected food industries are not among these. Therefore, such content is not included in this study.

Secondly, the study focuses on the news and editorial comments and excludes readers' comments (generally speaking, Taiwanese daily newspapers often provide about one page for the general public to express their views on current affairs). Public opinion is not among this study's main foci, therefore readers' columns are not included in the sample.

Thirdly, the study excludes short news articles of fewer than 400 words, because these items are relatively lacking in information and discussion, and do not have a great framing value. Information given in these news items mainly focused on which food products were affected by the adulteration of food oil, how many tons of adulterated products had been recalled and destroyed, or which stores could offer consumer refunds. These news reports do not contribute much to answering the research questions.

Fourthly, duplicated and similar news items are excluded, if the different news articles expressed the same point or provided similar information.

After sampling according to these criteria, 150 news items were left in total (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Number of purposive sampling

		Case1 16/10/2013- 27/11/2013	Case2 04/09/2014- 16 /10/2014	Case3 08/10/2014- 20 /11/2014	Total
Daily Newspaper	<i>Apple Daily</i>	20	18	22	60
	<i>Liberty Times</i>	22	17	21	60

Economic Newspaper	<i>Economic Daily News</i>	9	10	11	30
Total		51	45	54	150

There are recognised limitations to the use of purposive sampling, some of which apply directly to this study. Firstly, regarding the selected daily newspapers, the author has chosen to analyse the *Liberty Times* and *Apple Daily*, and to exclude the *China Times* and the *United Daily News*. This may cause the study to ignore the different viewpoints of other newspapers on the three crises reports. For example, news comments on the Taiwanese government or the three food oil companies may vary based on the different editorial standpoints or the specific political positions of each newspaper. Perhaps different dailies may provide various focuses of the crises due to different perspectives. Future research could compare further news reports between different newspapers to gain a deeper understanding of Taiwanese printed media coverage of these food safety issues.

Secondly, this study excludes the news reports related to the food industries that have been victimised by the use of adulterated edible oil. This may cause the study to overlook the views of the affected food industries. According to the author’s preliminary observations on relevant news reports, this type of news content includes stressing that they were also victims but did not receive any compensation, or that the food products’ recall damaged their reputation. Although the study mainly focuses on analysing the Taiwanese government, the three edible oil companies and the media, the affected food-related industries were another set of actors during the food oil crises. The study acknowledges that the exclusion may have caused the other actors’ voices in the crises to be ignored, and limited the exploration of multiple dynamic process between different actors.

4.5 Framing analysis phases

This section addresses the study’s analysis procedures.

4.5.1 Rationale of framing analysis

The main focus of this study is on the framing: how the Taiwanese government, food oil companies, and media constructed frames around the food oil crises. In this study, a qualitative analysis of official press releases and news coverage, i.e. framing analysis, is applied to examine the news media's, the organisations' and the government's frames applied to the oil adulteration crises. The main focus is on the frames in texts. Entman (1993) states that a text is a dimension whereby one can examine the content of communication, because a text may contain frames, by means of certain keywords, phrases, images, sources of information, or sentences used to reinforce facts. So, researchers can explore what content is excluded or salient within a text by conducting framing analysis. This study applies a qualitative method of framing analysis designed by Boesman and Van Gorp (2018)'s model for investigating frame building. This method is explicitly based on an understanding of frames as social constructions and is designed to identify frames. Four phases were used for investigating frames, as follows.

4.5.2 Procedures of analysis

The first phase investigated frames via primary observation of the selected data, and this could drive the study identifies the frames from the selected data. The main purpose was to understand how the facts were related, and to identify possible frames (Van Gorp 2010; Tankard, 2001). The author initially read all the official press releases and news coverage, and then took notes on what the Taiwanese government, food oil companies, and Taiwanese media focused on in the texts that they released. The most important rationale for this phase was that this procedure can offer a preliminary knowledge of the main concepts that could evoke a frame.

For example, the author found that there were several news reports and the government's press releases focused on food safety and health issues, such as the potential kidney or liver diseases after consuming the adulterated edible oils, or possible health risks might cause by the adulterated food oils in the long term. News reports and official press releases involved public health, which the author

initially classified as the 'health'. In addition, there were some news reports and official press releases from governments and food oil companies discussing how to improve food safety management and take responsibility, including a re-examination of food safety inspection systems, amendment of food regulations, compensation to victims or consumers. The author initially categorised these issues into the 'responsibility. Moreover, several news items and governmental press releases emphasised the possible economic losses caused by the edible oil crises, such as the shortage of lards, the impact on the domestic food market, and foreign sales. These can be classified as the 'economy'.

In the second phase, the study developed keywords, terms and catchphrases to discover frames. This phase was an initial, inductive phase of frame analysis, and applied open coding. This is usually the earliest and initial coding procedure undertaken by researchers, and it allows them to label a piece of text, define it and categorise it (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; Bryman, 2016). When examining texts, Entman (1993) states that when identifying frames, one possible first step is to pinpoint particular words or images. Similarly, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) suggest that such elements as keywords, catchphrases and symbols can help to detect frames. Boesman and Van Gorp (2018) call these 'framing devices', it can be exemplars, metaphors, depictions, word choices or and arguments.

The second phase consisted of two steps. Firstly, the author developed the keywords, terms and phrases to elicit the frames by examining the government's and food oil companies' press releases, and the media reports. In this phase, the open coding procedure enabled the author to understand how the food oil issues were presented by the relevant parties; furthermore, this procedure offered an understanding of what key words, terms, and phrases were instrumental in constructing representations of the food oil issues on the part of the various actors involved. For example, taking responsibility, health risks, compensation, food recalled, food safety, food safety management, food regulation, economic loss, denied the accusations. These terms often appear in the selected data, and have helped the study to detect frames (see table 4.3). Secondly, the author

grouped the codes into various categories. The criteria for classification into the five possible frames were based on similar words, terms, phrases and meanings. Table 4.3 shows the primary classification.

Table 4.3 Keywords and terms

	keywords and terms
Health	Disease, public health, injury to the human body, health risk, chemical ingredients, symptoms, potential harm, public safety.
Economics	Economic loss, product export, refusal to buy, economic impact, trading, economic negative growth, stock market.
Responsibility	Recall, refund, compensation, acceptance of judicial investigation, apology, policy improvement, admission of mistakes, modification of regulations, reform inspection, feeling regret.
Denial	Misunderstanding, unintentionality, denial, something not being a fact, not knowing, misinterpretation.
Blame	Being held accountable for the crisis, taking responsibility, avoiding responsibility, being responsible for the crisis.

In the third phase, the author developed reasoning devices. Reasoning devices form a route of causal reasoning that may be evoked when an issue is associated with a particular frame; they are not explicitly included in a message, but they can come up in the message through causal inferences (van Gorp, 2010, p. 91; Van Gorp & Vercruysse, 2012, p. 1275; Touri & Koteyko, 2015). Reasoning devices can be latent or manifest. Boesman and Van Gorp (2018) suggest developing reasoning devices on the basis of Entman's (1993) frame elements. Therefore, the author observed the selected data and then developed reasoning devices according to the four frame elements defined by Entman (1993): problem definition, causal attribution, moral evaluation, and treatment.

The reasoning devices can be found in the text; however, they may also be implicit statements (Van Gorp, 2007, p.71). Due to the three food oil crises were the specific cases that happened in Taiwanese culture, the frames in this study that were emerged from the selected data. Therefore, the identification of frame elements and the development of frame packages might depend on the analysed data in this study with open coding.

This study follows Van Gorp's (2010) suggestions by reviewing selected materials, including the three edible oil companies' press releases, the government authorities' press releases, and several news items from two daily newspapers and one economic newspaper. The main purpose of this step is to examine how the identified devices promoted the frames. In addition, the author examined the moments in the course of the crises at which specific framing and reasoning devices were selected, emphasised, downplayed or ignored by the Taiwanese government, food oil companies and Taiwanese media, and explored potential reasons for these developments through cultural interpretation. This is because how these actors framed their crisis responses was not only connected to the situation at the time, but also related to Taiwan's cultural context.

For example, there were several selected data involved 'health'. In the Chang Guann crisis, the media reported that the Chang Guann's waste oil may contain heavy metals, such as lead is neurotoxic and can damage the kidneys, or arsenic can cause skin lesions or carcinogenesis, and after high-temperature frying has a phenylhydrazine residue, which may carry a risk of lung cancer (*Apple Daily*, 05.09.2014). Also, in the Ying Hsin crisis, the media coverage mentioned that feed oil may contain carcinogens and heavy metals, as well as aflatoxin that may threaten the liver and kidney function of the human body. These ingredients may increase the risk of cancer and cause damage to liver functioning (*Apple Daily*, 20.10.2014). These news items emphasised the ingredients in the adulterated oil products might cause possible health risks. They were relatively explicit and could be grouped into the element of causal interpretation in the 'health' frame. However, not all news reports related to health issues contain prominent four frame elements, such as the element of moral evaluation was often implicit in the 'health' frame. Therefore, this requires the author to make a causal inference by examining the text based on the knowledge of the food safety crises and specific cultural contexts.

The fourth phase involved two steps. Firstly, the author combined framing devices and reasoning devices and clustered them into a frame package (frame), and labelled each frame package. Frame package is 'a cluster of logical organised

devices that function as an identity kit for a frame' (Van Gorp, 2007, p. 64). Since both devices are capable of evoking a frame, Van Gorp (2010) suggests that researchers should integrate framing devices and reasoning devices as a 'frame package', and that this could help to demonstrate how the frame functions to represent a particular issue. Frame packages are created by identifying a logical chain of framing and reasoning devices that attempt to offer a coherent overarching understanding of an issue (Touri & Koteyko, 2015).

After identifying the elements (problem definition, causal attribution, moral evaluation, and treatment) of each frame, the author constructed the frame matrix, which contains frame packages (frames). Table 4.4 shows that there were five frame packages in the frame matrix. Then, the author coded official press releases and media coverage of content into these categories. The author regarded the frames as the main categories, and four frames' elements as sub-categories. These categories' definitions have helped the study to code the selected material.

Table 4.4 Frame matrix

No	Frame	Definition of problem	Causal interpretation	Treatment/ Solution	Moral evaluation
1	Health	Long-term consumption of adulterated food oil can cause diseases.	Potential harm caused by chemical additives in food oil products.	Recall, removal and destruction of adulterated oils and associated food products, and imposition of sanctions on the food oil companies.	The government and food oil companies have an obligation to ensure people's health and welfare.
2	Economy	Adulterated food oil leads to economic losses in the food industry supply chain, product exports and the stock market.	Consumers' loss of confidence in Taiwanese government authorities and food products, which may lead to decline in sales of affected products.	Inspection of oil suppliers' products on the market and stricter measures to ensure products are not contaminated, restoring consumer confidence and	The affected food industries are innocent.

				purchase.	
3	Responsibility	Admittance of responsibility for the food oil crises.	Evidence or accusations brought against the actors.	Actors need to take corrective action to repair the damage caused.	The actors' crisis management measures are too late and inefficient.
4	Denial	The actors deny/reject the accusations, conceal facts or resort to silence.	The actors seek to avoid losing face and do not admit mistakes or wrongdoing.	The oil products can continue to be consumed and are not dangerous to health.	Denial may lead to a loss of public trust and legitimacy.
5	Blame	The actors blame others for the crises or shift attention to other actors' involvement or wrongdoing during the crises.	The outbreak of the crises is the fault of others.	The actors provide evidence to support their accusations.	The actors blame each other just to reduce their responsibility.

4.6 Ethical issues in analysis

Regarding the ethics involved in the data analysis, there was a risk of the following misrepresentations occurring in this study: firstly, being unfair to the data, and misrepresenting what the data show; secondly, over-interpreting the phenomena or overstating the findings. Cohen, Manion and Morrison point out that researchers have an ethical duty to ensure that the research results will be reported fairly without misrepresentation or unfairly selecting the data, or overinterpreting data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). In the current study, the author has avoided manipulating the data, and been vigilant with the data analysis as well as truthful about the results. The study presents the acquired data and findings from the analysis accurately and holistically without hiding any details. Furthermore, the study keeps the work visible and open to comments; this will give the appropriate peers the opportunity to challenge the study and give suggestions.

4.7 Language barrier

In this study, the data were collected in a language other than English, while the findings need to be presented in English. Therefore, language differences may impact this study in that collected data have had to be translated to English. This may well have consequences, because some concepts or terms in one language may be understood differently in another language or cannot be easily translated. The possible barrier in this study pertains to the translation of texts or quotes, because it may be difficult to translate some concepts for which specific culture-bound words were used by non-English language speakers. Therefore, how to handle language differences and how to avoid the potential threat of losing meaning in translation are challenges in this study. However, the following considerations were taken into account (Smith, Chen & Liu, 2008; Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki & Welch, 2014). Firstly, if there is no equivalent English word that could translate the word literally, the better way is to retain the word used in the original language, and further explain and discuss its meaning in English. For example, the term 'bu hao yi si' is a frequently used Mandarin phrase, but there is no literal translation for it. The researcher, then, should provide the appropriate meaning of this phrase in English (feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed) instead of translating literally, because this can offer a better way to examine the text (Smith, Chen & Liu, 2008). Secondly, Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki and Welch (2014) suggest that a researcher could work with another bilingual researcher. After an independent translation of the extracts or quotes undertaken respectively by the researcher and by the bilingual researcher, they should examine the translation differences, and then discuss further until a consensus is reached. If translation differences cannot be solved, the better way is to look for another bilingual researcher for assistance. In this study, the author faces some challenges in translating certain words, such as 'frankly' (*tan ran*), 'bravely' (*yong yu*), 'not in place' (*bu dao wei*), 'evil-minded' (*Hei Sin*) that are featured in the selected data. In order to minimise the problems caused by the fact that these translated words cannot fully comply with their meaning in English, the author will provide an explanation for the meaning of these words in Taiwanese context when analysing the texts (see chapter 5, 6, and 7). Besides, the author has

cooperated with a Chinese doctoral student who is studying English at the University of Stirling to ensure that the author could obtain assistance when encountering difficulties in the translation process.

Chapter 5: The Chang Chi adulterated olive oils crisis

After examining the methodology, from this chapter onwards the study will work on research findings and empirical analysis. The Chang Chi crisis was the earliest in Taiwan's series of edible oil issues. The case of the Chang Chi company, which manufactured and distributed adulterated olive oil products. These oil products were mixed with cheaper oils (cottonseed and sunflower oil) and with an additive that was prohibited for human consumption. This chapter will explore the Chang Chi crisis, setting out to show the findings relative to the first and second research question, obtained by using a qualitative framing analysis for examining both governmental and organisational press releases, and the news items in the two Taiwanese daily newspapers and one economic newspaper.

This chapter includes five sections. The first will provide background information about this crisis. The second will focus on the Chang Chi company, discussing the company's official press releases to analyse how the food oil crisis was framed and what crisis response strategies were presented in the company's public communication. The third will focus on the Taiwanese government, discussing the official authorities' press releases to analyse their framing of the crisis and to explore what crisis response strategies were embedded in them. The fourth will analyse and compare how the three newspapers (*Apple Daily*, *Liberty Times*, and *Economic Daily News*) framed the food oil crisis. The fifth will discuss the similarities and differences between the Taiwanese government's, the Chang Chi company's and the Taiwanese newspapers' frames.

5.1 Background

As mentioned in literature chapter, although various food safety issues had occurred in Taiwan, Chang Chi's case was the first eruption of an edible oil crisis. The Chang Chi company had been established in Taiwan for nearly 40 years, so it was an old brand for edible oil products in the country. Moreover, the edible oil products of the company had a market share of 10% in Taiwan's relevant market (Chen, 2013).

The crisis was started by a whistleblower (a citizen whose name was never

publicly revealed by the authorities or the media), who bought a Chang Chi olive oil product, and subsequently accused the Chang Chi company of selling adulterated oil products. This person bought olive oil from Chang Chi in September 2012, but found that the oil's taste and colour was not like that of normal olive oil products, and so reported the matter to the local government authority in October 2012 (Lin, 2014). At the end of that month, the local authority took samples from the company and sent them to the central government authority for inspection. The central authority found that the value of palmitic acid in Chang Chi's olive oil was low, and asked the local authority to check Chang Chi's oil material in November 2012; however, the local government health inspector did not find any problem in the samples provided by the company (Lin, 2014). In April 2013, the same whistleblower reported the Chang Chi company to the local government authority again: the result of the oil inspection by the central government authority was the same as the first time, with the value of palmitic acid being low. The central government authority informed the prosecution that Chang Chi's olive oil products might have been subjected to adulteration in July 2013; this case triggered a lawsuit (Cheng, 2016). The prosecution became involved in the investigation in September 2013, and the crisis broke out shortly afterwards, with the first media coverage reported on 16 October 2013 (Cheng, 2016). The prosecutor found that the company had mixed low-cost cottonseed oil and sunflower oil with chlorophyllin copper complex and then sold the resulting oil products as 100% olive oils (Cheng, 2016). The next day, the company's chairman declared that the company was willing to accept returns unconditionally. He claimed that the reason the olive oil products were impure was that the production pipeline was contaminated, and alleged that the additives in their oil products were harmless to human health (Chen, 2013).

According to the investigation by the prosecutor during the crisis, all the olive oil products of the Chang Chi company were made up of low-quality salad oil, sunflower oil, and cottonseed oil; furthermore, these oils were coloured with chlorophyllin copper complex, which is potentially carcinogenic (Cheng, 2016). Besides olive oil, other edible oils produced by the company including peanut oil,

grape seed oil, black sesame oil and salad oil were also affected. The prosecutor found that a total of more than 90% of the edible oil products produced by the Chang Chi company were mixed with a low-priced salad oil, cottonseed oil. These products had been on sale in Taiwan for seven years, with an average annual profit of NT\$500 million (about £12.5 million) (Cheng, 2016).

The main problem with the Chang Chi company's edible oils was the illegal addition of cottonseed oil and chlorophyllin copper complex. The long-term use of gossypol, contained in cottonseed oil, will destroy cells, affect the secretion of hormones, and may thus affect the human reproductive system (Lin, 2014). Even if the cottonseed oil is refined, gossypol may still remain in the oil. As for chlorophyllin copper complex, copper ions are released during high-temperature cooking. This substance is not easily excreted from the body. Long-term consumption can cause liver and kidney damage. According to Taiwan's food safety regulations, only bubble gum can use this additive (Liang, Huang & Chuang, 2015). The company illegally added chlorophyllin copper complex for colouring in order to make the adulterated oils look more like 100% natural olive oil (Lin, 2014; Cheng, 2016).

The chairman of Chang Chi was prosecuted for fraud and violation of food safety regulations on 25 October. On 24 July 2014, the Taiwan high court judge sentenced him to 12 years in prison. The Chang Chi company was dissolved and sold to others in March 2014 (Taiwan judicial Yuan, 2017).

5.2 Framing the crisis: the perspective of the Chang Chi company

Figure 5.1 summarises the different actors' frames in the process of the Chang Chi crisis development. It can be seen that compared with the Chang Chi company chose to focus on denying the occurrence of the edible oil crisis in the initial stages of the crisis, the Taiwanese government and media paid more attention to health issues and blame. In addition, Figure 5.2 shows that the government and the media had more interactions with each other when they framed 'health'. The following sections will provide more details about research findings.

Figure 5.1 The timeline of the three main actors' frames in the Chang Chi crisis

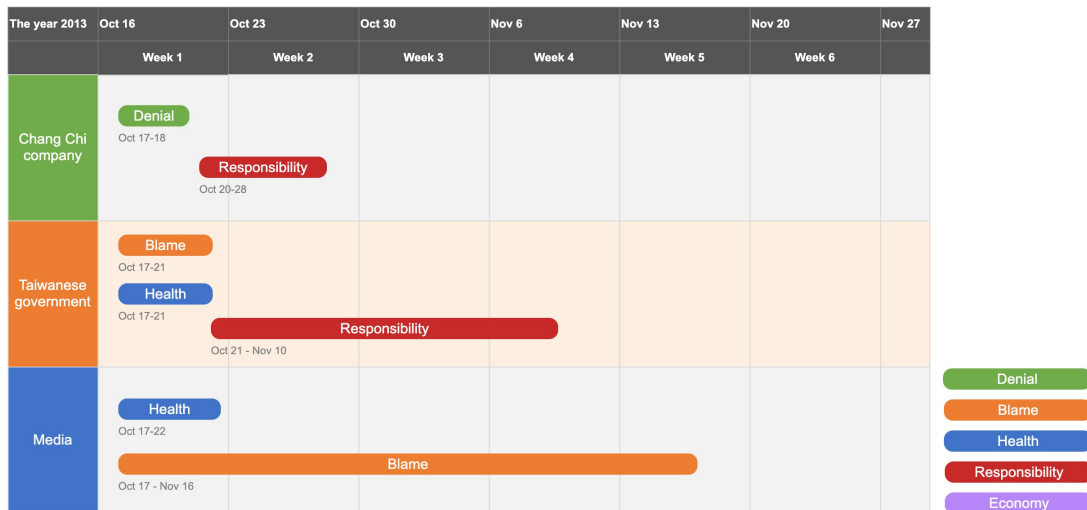
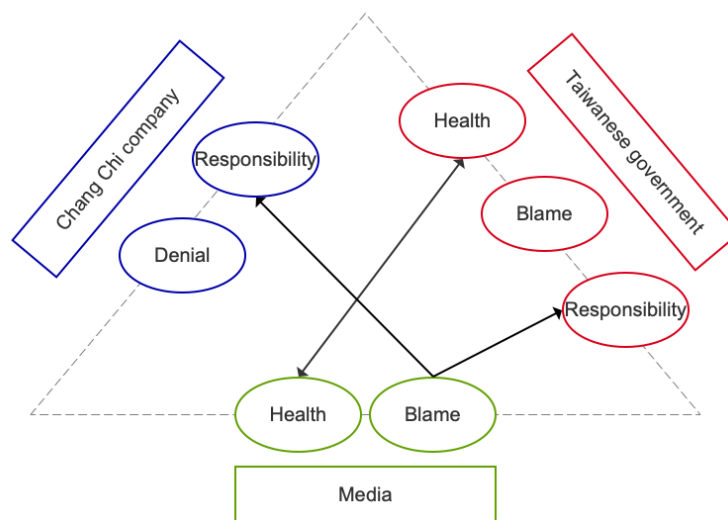


Figure 5.2 The interaction of the three main actors' frames in the Chang Chi crisis



This section examines how the Chang Chi company framed the food oil crisis by means of a qualitative framing analysis of the company's official press releases, applying the four frame components (definition of problem, causal interpretation, treatment recommendation, and moral evaluation) identified by this study in the methodology chapter (see table 4.4). Alongside the company's crisis frames, this section also explores how the company framed their public crisis communication response strategies, following the taxonomy of crisis response strategy identified by this study (see table 3.2), which integrates Benoit's (1995) image restoration theory, Coombs's (2010a) situational crisis communication theory, and Huang,

Lin and Su's (2005), Yu and Wen's (2003), and Ye and Pang's (2011) studies. There were four press releases, issued by the Chang Chi company on 17 October 2013, 18 October 2013, 20 October 2013 and 28 October 2013 respectively. The following paragraphs will analyse how the company framed the crisis as it developed. The company's press releases articulated two main frames in dealing with the crisis: the 'denial' frame and the 'responsibility' frame (see table 5.1). Table 5.1 shows the findings about the Chang Chi company, and demonstrates the different crisis response strategies embedded in the two frames. The following subsections provide more detail on this.

Table 5.1 The Chang Chi company's framing and crisis response strategies

Frame	Crisis response strategy
Denial (the company rejected accusations, and claimed their olive oil products were not harmful to human health)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 'Simple denial' (the company denied the allegation and claimed the adulterated oil was an accident) * 'Bolstering' (the company emphasised its good history in order to reduce the negative perception caused by the crisis) * 'Silence' (the company remained silent on the evidence uncovered by the prosecutor)
Responsibility (the company tried to take responsibility and repair the damage caused by food oil crises)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 'Apology' (the company apologised for the oil products that caused concern to the consumers) * 'Compensation' (the company committed to compensating consumers) * 'Shifting the blame' (the company attempted to shift the responsibility onto the prosecution.)

The study finds how prominent the 'denial' frame was for the Chang Chi company in the beginning of the crisis. As presented in the frame matrix, the 'denial' frame occurs when the actors reject accusations and attempt to save face. This frame was dominant in the Chang Chi company's first press release. The release attempted to bring across the company's disapproval of allegations of adulteration, and alleged that their additives were not illegal additions. The company denied the accusation, alleged that the adulterated oil was an accident, and claimed that the raw material of their olive oil products was not harmful to

human health. The day after the outbreak of the crisis, most news coverage focused on the company's having used illegal additives to mix with olive oils: for instance, the *Apple Daily* used the term 'deceived consumers' as a news headline on 17 October 2013. Therefore, the company's focus on the 'denial' frame was an attempt to highlight the harmlessness of their edible oil products. The following statement from Chang Chi illustrates how they sought to explain their initial position:

Our company's olive oils have been sold for many years. The alleged mixed oil incident was caused by the production pipeline being contaminated. It is accidental because the production of olive oil occurs just after the production of sunflower oil. The company did not intend to mix different oils together. As for the accusation of adding chlorophyllin copper complex for colouring olive oils, this is not factually correct. The oil additive is chlorophyll, not chlorophyllin copper complex. Chlorophyll is a high-grade health food that is used in other countries and is very expensive. This ingredient is less used in Taiwan due to its high cost. (The Chang Chi company, 17 October 2013)

The study illustrates that the 'denial' frame is associated with 'simple denial', 'bolstering', and 'silence' as crisis response strategies. 'Simple denial' can be detected in the Chang Chi company's first press release. According to the definition, 'simple denial' occurs when the actor asserts that there is no crisis (Benoit, 1997). In the press release, the company chose to focus on defining the issue as an accident, by claiming that they had not intended to mix the different oils. They claimed that the company's olive oils were found to be impure because the pipeline was contaminated; moreover, that the additive in the olive oil products was not harmful to human beings: what they had added to the olive oil was the high-cost chlorophyll, healthy for the human body.

'Bolstering' can also be found in Chang Chi's first press release. The 'denial' frame did not only consist in a direct denial of the accusations: the above excerpt's emphasis on the company's history in Taiwan implies an attempt to suggest that

the fact that the company had been operating in the Taiwanese oil market for many years meant that it was a brand worth trusting. This is also relevant to the 'denial' frame: the findings show that Chang Chi's denial of allegations and emphasis on the brand's history were related to reducing reputation damage and maintaining face.

In order to reinforce the 'denial' frame, the Chang Chi company provided false information. The emphasis on the additives in the oil products was within the 'denial' frame. While chlorophyll and chlorophyllin copper complex are in fact quite different, it is likely that the general consumer does not know the difference between the two additives. Chlorophyll is a natural pigment extracted from plants, but chlorophyllin copper complex is a synthetic substance made by chemical means, and is usually used for colouring purposes (the prosecutor found that the Chang Chi added chlorophyllin copper complex for colouring their olive oil products, but the company claimed that the additive was chlorophyll in the beginning of the crisis). According to the food regulations in Taiwan, chlorophyllin copper complex can only be used for bubble gum colouring in a very small amount, and it is not legal for other food products (Chen, 2014). Although Taiwan had experienced many food safety issues caused by other food products (Li, Yu, Lai & Ko, 2012), this was the first crisis centred on edible oil; therefore, most people did not know what kinds of additives were harmful and what the impact of eating adulterated oil on the human body might be.

As mentioned in the background chapter, Taiwan has a different political system from mainland China, and the Taiwanese believe that the country's economic and political development is more open and democratic than China's. However, Taiwanese culture mainly inherits Chinese cultural traditions (Li & Lee, 2010; Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). In particular, face (*Meinzi*) is emphasised in culturally Chinese contexts: face-saving is essential for a person or an organisation, because losing face means loss of credibility, reputation, and honour. Therefore, face-saving is a key Chinese cultural feature that significantly influences crisis communication practices in culturally Chinese contexts (Cheng, Huang & Chan, 2017). As mentioned in the literature review, Yu and Wen (2003)

claim that in Chinese crisis communication, when someone has done something wrong, people would prefer to cover the mistake, deny the wrongdoing, instead of telling the truth. 'Covering-up' is another common situation in relation to face-saving in the practice of crisis communication in Chinese culture. When the situation is unfavourable to an actor, the actor may try to hide the 'ugly bits' to avoid them being known to the general public, and then cover up some facts as much as possible in order to maintain face (Yu, Wen, 2003; Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). The study illustrates that the misinformation provided by Chang Chi was an attempt to conceal the facts and to save face.

Chang Chi's claim was refuted by the prosecutor three days after the crisis broke out. On 19 October 2013, the *Liberty Times* reported that the prosecutor had declared that the company had used chlorophyllin copper complex as an additive, instead of the chlorophyll they had claimed. The prosecutor also found that in the olive oil products that were examined, the olive oil content was only 40% (*Liberty Times*, 19. 10. 2013). The persecutor's investigation that against the company's 'denial' frame. As mentioned in literature chapter, 'competing frame' means an organisation's frame might be tested or challenged, when a more convincing counter frame was presented by other actor or media (Coombs' 2007b; Waller & Conaway, 2011). The Chang Chi company faced the prosecutor's investigation results, but in their following press release, issued on 20 October, they did not provide any explanation for the ingredients of the additives in the olive oil products. The 'silence' strategy can be detected within the 'denial' frame. As explained in the literature chapter, the 'silence' strategy is not included in Coomb's situational crisis communication theory and Benoit's image restoration theory. However, this strategy is commonly applied in Chinese cultural contexts (Le et al., 2019). Thus, this study's data analysis includes 'silence' as a crisis response strategy. Dimitrov (2015) states that strategic silence can be seen as an intentional absence of speech in organisational communication. Strategic silence is not only a lack of speech, but also a statement that provides no information (Dimitrov, 2015). The actors' intentions in responding to the food oil crises are not the main focus of this study. However, as discussed in the literature review chapter, Ye and Pang (2011) state that in Chinese culture, silence is often

considered a wise choice when one is in an unfavourable situation. During a crisis, if a Chinese organisation is not sure what comments should be made, it is better for the organisation to provide few messages or remain silent than publishing comments (Ye & Pang, 2011). The study finds that even when the prosecutor revealed the adulteration of Chang Chi's olive oils, the company did not admit their wrongdoing. Thus, Chang Chi's response to the prosecutor's investigation was selective. In this case, Chang Chi only indicated that they would cooperate with the prosecutor to investigate the edible oil products that were under suspicion, but remained silent on the prosecutor's claims. Lee (2007) finds that during the SARS crisis, the Hong Kong government applied the silence strategy to prevent media attention. The application of this strategy is more likely to be found when an actor is likely to be proved guilty in the lawsuit (Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). A similar situation can be found in the Chang Chi crisis: the company chose to be silent during the prosecutor's investigation to avoid more talk and more mistakes.

After the crisis broke out, the company followed its initial 'denial' frame with a 'responsibility' frame to respond to the crisis in their third and fourth press releases. The main turning point was due to the prosecutor's investigation, and the seizing of more evidence. The following sections will provide more detail.

On 20 October 2013, the media reported that the prosecutor's investigation had revealed a handwritten note written by the head of the Chang Chi company when the prosecutor was investigating the company's purchase and shipment records, which detailed the formulas of all edible oil products, including the proportion of chlorophyllin copper complex and cottonseed oil (*Apple Daily*, 20. 10. 2013). Under the prosecutor's investigation, employees of the Chang Chi company admitted that their oil products were indeed impure. All the edible oil products, then, had been produced in accordance with the formula provided by the chairman of the company (*Apple Daily*, 20. 10. 2013).

The company eventually attempted to take action to recover from the crisis. On 20 October a press release was issued, which stated that 'the company will take responsibility with a humble and responsible attitude.' It seems clear that Chang

Chi's change of course was due to the prosecutor's uncovering of evidence on 19 October, and to the daily newspapers *Apple Daily* and *Liberty Times*' reporting on the fraudulent behaviour of the company on 20 October. It was these elements that forced the company to address their unlawful actions. Therefore, the prosecutor's investigation was critical in making the company change their frame and crisis response strategies. In this case, how the Chang Chi company responded to the crisis was related to the prosecutor and the media reports. This finding shows that an actor's frame may be influenced by another actor's frame. The process of crisis framing between different actors is dynamic and interactive. This is also consistent with McHale, Zompetti and Moffitt's (2007) contention: crisis communication is a dynamic and fluid process constructed by the various actors' actions.

The 'responsibility' frame occurs when the actors take responsibility for a crisis. This frame was prominent across Chang Chi's third and fourth press releases. The 'responsibility' frame adopted by the company presented the impact of the crisis as something that could be minimised through actions taken by the company itself. This falls under the 'responsibility' frame: the actors needed to take action to repair the damage caused by the food oil crises. The findings show that the Chang Chi company attempted to do this. For example, they apologised to consumers and to society in general: this was intended to recover from the negative perception that was elicited by the initial denial. In addition, the company promised to compensate consumers. These actions seem to indicate an assumption of responsibility on the part of the company for its illegal actions; however, the reason why the company acted in this way was that the results of the prosecutor's investigations were becoming increasingly clear, and that the media was reporting and updating the available information almost every day. It was the discovery of the company's illegal actions that forced them to address the crisis.

The study also illustrates that the crisis response strategies of 'apology', 'compensation' and 'shifting the blame' were presented in the company's press releases and articulated through the 'responsibility' frame. 'Apology' is when

actors accept full responsibility for a crisis and ask for forgiveness (Benoit, 1997). The 'apology' strategy was reflected in both the third and the fourth press releases, but its content was different in each case.

The first apology statement occurred after the prosecutor investigated the company and found handwritten notes from the company's chairman detailing the formula and ingredients of all the company's edible oil products. The press release stated:

The company apologises for the edible oil problem that caused concern to the consumers. The company will take responsibility with a humble and responsible attitude and will be willing to respect the findings of the inspection. (Chang Chi company, 20 October 2013)

Chang Chi did not explain whether the food oil products had illegal additives. At that time, the prosecutor had obtained evidence of the company's wrongdoing, but the test results of the edible oil products had not been released yet. The study demonstrates that this apology was an attempt to temporarily stop the controversy caused by the crisis. Its ambiguity allowed the company to maintain a space for changing their responses. If the test results were beneficial to the company, they could find further excuses to defend their behaviour, without needing to explain whether or not the additives were harmful to human health.

The second apology occurred after the test results of the adulterated food oil products were released by the prosecutor. The prosecutor found that the company had indeed added the illegal additives deliberately, and so prosecuted the chairman of the Chang Chi company on 25 October 2013. The company issued the company's fourth official press release on 28 October 2013, which claimed:

The edible oil products sold by the company were tested over an adulteration issue. In addition to apologising to the consumers, the company is also ashamed of the social cost to the country. The

person in charge of the company will face the judicial investigation frankly and bravely. Furthermore, we hope the community, and the public can understand us. (Chang Chi company, 28 October 2013)

The word 'frankly' (*tan ran*) in Chinese means that someone's attitude towards things is honest and easy, without showing guilt or embarrassment. The meaning of '*tan ran*' is similar to that of 'honest'; however, the strength of this word is greater than that of 'honesty'. In addition to expressing honesty, the word also includes the meaning that one's honesty will let one achieve a perfect peace of mind; therefore, the author uses the word 'frankly' to translate it, rather than 'honestly'. As for 'bravely' (*yong yu*), the word has a positive meaning in Chinese, meaning that someone is willing to face up the difficulty and can stand the test. In this researcher's interpretation, in this text the word means that the chairman of Chang Chi would not evade the upcoming judicial process, but would be willing to accept it when he faced judicial investigation. Since the excerpt needs to be translated verbatim, the researcher considers that the meaning of 'bravely' is more precise than other words. Interestingly, although Chang Chi is obviously a perpetrator, it tries to show the image of courage to face difficulties.

The findings show that if the 'responsibility' frame was dominant throughout the company's fourth press release, it was because the company had just acknowledged that the food oil products they had sold had included additives that were not allowed by the food regulations, and promised to take legal responsibility. In this statement the object of the apology had expanded to include society and the public, not just the consumers mentioned in the first apology. So, in a situation in which conclusive evidence had been gathered, the company apologised specifically for the suffering undergone by the wronged persons, in order to obtain forgiveness from the wider public, and possibly continue its licence to operate as an edible oil company.

The 'compensation' strategy was another crisis response strategy, which strengthened the 'responsibility' frame, and displayed that the company wanted to compensate victims. The application of a 'compensation' strategy also differs between the third and the fourth press release. In Benoit's (1997) image

restoration theory, 'compensation strategy' refers to an actor's providing victims with money or other means of compensation. In the press release issued on 20 October 2013, in addition to the 'apology' strategy, the Chang Chi company also committed to providing consumers with returns. For example:

The company has already recalled the problematic cooking oil products. Consumers can get a refund through the original retailer (such as a supermarket or grocery store) with invoice, purchase receipt or oil container. The company will not refuse the return requirements of any retailer. (The Chang Chi company, 20 October 2013)

The compensation mentioned in this official press release included both general consumers and retailers. However, according to media reports, after the crisis broke out, consumers' refunds were all borne by the retailers, but when the latter sent the recalled oil products to the Chang Chi company, they did not get a refund for more than a month (*Liberty Times*, 17. 11. 2013). On 3 April 2014 (half a year after the crisis broke out), a total of 3,776 consumers (who had claimed that the company's oil products caused them to bear possible health risks, and so asked for compensation) and 50 retailers that had not got a refund from Chang Chi filed for a group lawsuit, claiming about £8.5 million as compensation (*China Times*, 03. 04. 2014).

The chairman of the Chang Chi company claimed in the press release issued on 28 October that the chairman's assets and real estate were all being detained by the prosecutor; he was not unwilling to pay compensation, but his property was all frozen by the prosecutor. It can be seen that 'compensation' and 'shifting the blame' were connected. A 'shift the blame' strategy occurs when the actor blames some outside person (Benoit, 1997). The company tried to shift responsibility onto the prosecution. The chairman alleged that the prosecution had seized all his property, making him unable to pay compensation to all the victims. The company stated that the chairman would submit a compensation plan to the prosecutor and the court, and expressed a hope that everyone would give him time to handle the crisis properly. They did not, however, specify the details of

the object of compensation, the scope of compensation, and the time frame. This illustrates that although a ‘compensation’ strategy is implied in the actor’s attempt to take responsibility, whether or not the promise can be fulfilled needs to be further verified after a period of crisis. In this study, while the ‘compensation’ strategy is seen as a responsible way to respond to crises, in fact, even if a company’s promise to compensate, this does not guarantee that they will perform the action. In this case, although the company promised compensation for the crisis, this promise was not fulfilled until the group lawsuit. The court finally ruled that the company had to compensate over 2,800 victims for a total of £2.3 million (*United Daily News*, 23. 05. 2015).

5.3 Framing the crisis: the perspectives of the Taiwanese government

There were 19 official press releases from the Taiwanese authorities: 18 of these came from the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA), while 1 was issued from the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The Taiwanese government mainly focused on three frames in framing the crisis: ‘blame’, ‘health’ and ‘responsibility’ (see table 5.2). Table 5.2 shows the Taiwanese government’s framing, and demonstrates the different crisis response strategies that were embedded in the three frames. The following subsections will discuss this in more detail.

Table 5.2 Taiwanese government’s framing and crisis response strategies

Frame	Crisis response strategy
Blame (the government condemned the company’s illegal behaviour and highlighted that the government was not the actor that had caused the crisis)	* ‘Shifting the blame’ (the government blamed the company for breaking food regulations and ignoring public health)
Health (the government stressed that the additives that the company had used to mix with olive oil products could not be consumed)	* ‘Bolstering’ (the government stressed that food regulations had referenced the norms of other countries and were not relatively loose)
Responsibility (the government attempted to take action to repair the crisis)	* ‘Corrective action’ (the government committed to correcting the wrongdoing and establishing a preventive mechanism)

The ‘blame’ frame was dominant in the beginning of the crisis. According to the

press release issued by the TFDA on 17 October, the focus of the Taiwanese government was on condemning the company's illegal behaviour. This was on the same day that the Chang Chi company issued the first press release which denied the accusation of adulterating food oil. The outbreak of the Chang Chi crisis on 16 October triggered both the TFDA and the company to issue press releases the next day. As presented in the frame matrix, the 'blame' frame was manifested through the TFDA's direct statement of calling the company's illegal actions to account, according to evidence that the prosecutor obtained from the company on 16 October.

The Taiwanese government established that the addition of the illegal additives to the olive oil products was due to Chang Chi's unlawful action (TFDA, 17. 10. 2013). The government also emphasised that, while the company had claimed that the products they had sold were 100% olive oils, these oils were mixed with other low-cost oils and with chlorophyllin copper complex, which could not be consumed by human beings. This not only impugned the integrity of the food industry, but also jeopardised the right to safe food that consumers should have (TFDA, 20. 10. 2013). As to crisis response strategy, 'shifting the blame' was displayed in the TFDA's press release and articulated through the 'blame' frame. The TFDA stated that 'the Chang Chi company should not break the regulation and ignore the public health for their profit' (TFDA, 17. 10. 2013). It can be seen that the 'blame' frame was connected to the 'health' frame here. The TFDA stressed that the Taiwanese government believed that the adulteration of the oils was caused by the company's wrongdoing: the government had legislated that the additive was not suitable for human consumption, and was therefore not to be added to any edible oil due to considerations of public health (TFDA, 20. 10. 2013). The company had ignored food safety regulations and thus caused the crisis.

In fact, a few days after the crisis broke out, the media reported that the government had known that the Chang Chi company's olive oils were not pure in 2012, but had not announced this to the public. The government, then, was accused of intentionally concealing the risk. The government was also criticised

because their concealment led to the adulterated oil products' flowing into the market for one year and being consumed by the public (*Apple Daily*, 21. 10. 2013). This issue also caught the attention of the media; the study will discuss this below.

The TFDA issued its press release on 21 October. Its 'blame' frame was focused on the constraints of the government's inspection capability. The government alleged that the formula of the Chang Chi company's adulterated oil was too complicated to be detected by existing equipment. Thus, the government had not attempted to conceal the company's adulterated oil issue (TFDA, 21. 10. 2013). The press release shows that the government did not acknowledge the media's allegation and criticism. At the same time, the government emphasised that it had been the company's illegal adulteration that had challenged the limitations of equipment used by inspectors and regulators (TFDA, 21. 10. 2013). It can be seen that the 'blame' frame was prominent. The government's statement tended to highlight that the government was not the actor that had caused the crisis.

When the government responded to the concerns about whether additives used by the Chang Chi company would constitute a hazard for human health, the 'health' frame was involved. Through this frame, the government stressed that the additives that the Chang Chi company had mixed with olive oil products could not be consumed (TFDA, 17. 10. 2013). The TFDA established that neither chlorophyllin copper complex nor gossypol in cottonseed oil were to be consumed by humans, and that they could not be added to edible oil (TFDA, 17. 10. 2013). Gossypol is not suitable for consuming, and long-term consumption of this substance would cause difficulty in fertility (Liang, Huang & Chuang, 2015). This also instances the definition of 'health' frame developed in the frame matrix: harm may be caused by chemical additives in food oil products. The government's focus was on explaining that the use of additives did not comply with the existing food regulations.

At the same time, interestingly, the government focused less on the aspect of what might happen or what possible diseases might occur after consuming olive oil with illegal additives (TFDA, 17. 10. 2013). It appears from the TFDA's press

release that the government did not explain the relationship between the additives and possible disease. The finding shows that the government attempted to avoid addressing what impact these additives would have on health after eating. In contrast, when framing 'health' the media mainly focused on the possible health risks that might occur after consuming Chang Chi's oil products. This will be discussed in the following section.

As to crisis response strategy, the study demonstrates that the crisis response strategy of 'bolstering' strengthened the 'health' frame. The Taiwanese government stressed that Taiwan's food standard with respect to chlorophyllin copper complex was the same as those of other countries around the world, and that the regulation was not relatively loose. The TFDA emphasised the perspective of other countries' regulations on additives, and then compared those to Taiwan's food safety regulations. For example, with regard to the chlorophyllin copper complex used for colouring in Chang Chi's olive oils, the response from the TFDA was:

The regulation of the chlorophyllin copper complex additive in the United States, the European Union, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, China and other countries states that the additive is not allowed in edible oils. The Taiwanese regulation, too, is in line with international norms. According to the information from the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), the daily intake tolerance (ADI) for chlorophyllin copper complex is 15mg per kilogram in the human body. For example, if the body weight is 60 kg, the allowable amount of chlorophyllin copper complex in the body is 600 mg. (TFDA, 17 October 2013)

A 'bolstering' strategy is in place when an actor focuses on past positive actions in order to balance the negative perception caused by a crisis (Benoit, 1997; Coombs, 2010a). It can be seen that the TFDA stressed that the government had referenced the norms of other countries in establishing Taiwan's food-related regulations: there was no problem with the regulations themselves; the problem was with the persons and organisations who violated them.

However, in fact, setting the regulations and supervising food safety management are two different things. It can be seen that the government tried to avoid focusing on the relationship between the violation of regulations and the question of whether the government had neglected supervising and managing food safety. This is because, alongside the Chang Chi company, the government, too, was the object of criticism by Taiwanese consumers during the crisis. The study demonstrates that the government attempted to downplay their supervisory responsibility in food safety management.

Whether refined cottonseed oil is edible or not was the main divergence between the government and the media in framing 'health'. When the government expanded on the information about the Chang Chi company's mixing the low-cost cottonseed oil with olive oils:

Refined cottonseed oil can be used as edible oil in all countries in the world [...] Due to the fact that refined cottonseed oil is considered safe to consume, there are no regulatory standards for cottonseed oil in countries around the world, and the same is true in Taiwan. However, unrefined cottonseed oil cannot be used as edible oil because it contains high levels of gossypol. (TFDA, 21 October 2013)

The government, then, stressed that cottonseed oil can be divided into refined and non-refined, the latter being inedible because it has gossypol. Since the government did not find gossypol in the Chang Chi company's mixed olive oils, it believed that the cottonseed oil used by the company was refined cottonseed oil. As for this type of oil, the government invoked regulatory standards in the EU and countries around the world to contextualise its actions: because there were no related regulations, refined cottonseed oil was regarded as consumable (TFDA, 21. 10. 2013). It can be seen that whether chlorophyllin copper complex or gossypol were concerned, the government was mainly focused on providing information on the additives and comparing other countries' regulations with Taiwan's. However, when the media framed 'health', they opined that if the EU and the other countries mentioned did not have a regulation for refined

cottonseed oil, it was because humans should not consume them at all. What follows will discuss the divergence in framing between the government and media below.

This analysis of the governmental press releases shows that the Taiwanese government emphasised that as long as cottonseed oil is refined, it can be consumed. From the government's standpoint it was more advantageous to stress that refined cottonseed oil is edible, because, if so, then the government's responsibility for the adulterated food oil crisis merely consisted in its failure to detect the inconsistency between the actual composition of the oil products and their packaging labels.

After this, the government's response to the crisis turned to a more active approach through proposing various food safety management improvements. The 'responsibility' frame involves actors taking corrective action to reduce the damage caused by a crisis. There were 6 press releases involving the 'responsibility' frame. The government attempted to take measures against the crisis by providing different treatments. The 'responsibility' frame was dominant throughout the government's provision of different treatments for the crisis. These included: comprehensive inspection of edible oil manufacturing factories and all edible oils sold in the market; proposals for upgrading inspection equipment and oil databases; amendments to increase fines for offenders; investing more manpower and funding in food safety management; and seeking cooperation with university students in the departments of food nutrition to do volunteer work checking food labels (TFDA, 21. 10. 2013). The different treatments strengthened the 'responsibility' frame and brought across the government's willingness to repair the damages caused by the food oil crisis.

As to crisis response strategy, a 'corrective action' strategy was implied by the government to frame their assumption of responsibility. A 'corrective action' strategy occurs when an actor commits to correcting the wrongdoing or to establishing a preventive mechanism to stop a similar situation from happening again (Benoit, 1997). As is evident from the press releases, the government clearly attempted to put mechanisms in place to improve food safety

management in various ways, such as reforming the food regulations, investing more human, financial, and material resources on food safety management, upgrading the testing equipment, and strengthening supervision and management (TFDA, 21. 10. 2013). The study demonstrates that the various 'correct actions' proffered by the government were embedded in the 'responsibility' frame. The government aimed to show a willingness to bear supervisory responsibility and to improve its procedures to prevent a similar crisis from happening again.

In addition, this study finds that the statistical information was prominent in TFDA's press releases, and that this was in order to support a 'responsibility' frame. The government attempted to demonstrate that they were taking action for the Chang Chi crisis, and to show their efforts in crisis management by updating the information daily after the crisis broke out from 22 October 2013 to 10 November 2013 (not including weekends). The TFDA issued press releases every day for two weeks. 18 press releases were eventually published, 14 of which centred on providing information on such matters as the amount of oil products recalled, the number of the affected food manufacturers, the number of affected food products, and the results of the inspection of the edible oils on the market.

Actually, although the government published a press release every day, the contents of the press releases were similar, only updating the numbers, without providing information on the Chang Chi company's investigation or the government's crisis management progress. Perhaps the press releases tried to demonstrate to the public that the government was accountable for engaging in supervision and inspections after the crisis. However, the media critically stated that the most important issue for the public, compared with the information that was updated every day and announced which foods could not be eaten, was how to avoid repeated food safety problems and how best to protect consumers' safety (*Apple Daily*, 26. 10. 2013).

5.4 Framing the crisis: the perspectives of the Taiwanese newspapers

The following sections will examine how the Taiwanese media framed the Chang Chi oil crisis. There were 51 relevant news items in the three newspapers in relation to this case: 20 came from the *Apple Daily*, 22 from the *Liberty Times*, and 9 from the *Economic Daily News*. The Taiwanese media coverage adopted two frames with regard to the crisis: the 'health' frame, and the 'blame' frame (see table 5.3). The following sections will provide more detail about this.

Table 5.3 Taiwanese newspapers' framing

Frame	
Health	The media emphasised the possible health risks that might occur after consuming the Chang Chi's adulterated oil products.
Blame	The media opined that the company should be accountable for malpractice, and that the government should be responsible for negligence in food safety management.

As mentioned in the previous sections, TFDA focused less on the aspect of what possible health consequences might occur after consuming Chang Chi's oil with illegal additives. In turn, the media emphasised the possible health risks that might occur after consuming Chang Chi's oil, in order to reinforce the 'health' frame. In particular, the *Apple Daily* and the *Liberty Times* issued several news items and highlighted the health risks that consumers might face after consuming adulterated food oils, also by interviewing doctors and professionals in their news articles. This demonstrates the 'health' frame identified by this study: long-term consumption of adulterated food oil can cause diseases. The following is a quote from an interview that the *Apple Daily* conducted with a nephrologist and used as a source in its news articles. It is necessary to note that the media used the information from experts such as nephrologists, doctors, and professors to present them in their media coverage, not media framed them all.

If the cottonseed oil cannot be refined completely, the gossypol will remain in the cottonseed oil. Long-term intake can cause damage to the male reproductive system and cause irregular menstruation in females. Animal experiments have brought out that mice

exposed to large amounts of gossypol can experience difficulty breathing, loss of appetite, and even kidney failure and death... The acceptable intake of gossypol in the EU has not been regulated; this means that gossypol is an additive that should not be consumed by human beings at all. (*Apple Daily*, 22 October 2013)

The other quote is from the *Liberty Times*, which identified chlorophyllin copper complex as harmful to humans in an interview with a biotechnology professor:

If copper chlorophyll is consumed for a long time and excessively, it will harm the liver, cause cirrhosis, and even damage the sensory nerves and the digestive system. (*Liberty Times*, 20 October 2013)

Both excerpts show the reporters used experts' insight to reinforce the 'health' frame, by emphasising the possible health disease that might be caused by the consumption of Chang Chi's olive oil products.

Two more things can be found in the media coverage. Firstly, although both the *Apple Daily* and *Liberty Times* highlighted that consumption of illegal additives might result in diseases, they also allowed a margin of doubt. Due to the uncertainty of the science, they did not explicitly state how many doses would cause physical harm; instead, the frame emphasised that long-term consumption of adulterated food oil would cause diseases. Both quoted sources mentioned 'long-term intake' in an attempt to avoid hasty conclusions. This implies that the food safety issue with edible oils was to do with illegal additives; this is different from a food product representing an acute health hazard.

Secondly, the study finds that the government and the media gave different interpretations to the same phenomenon. As mentioned in the previous section, Figure 5.2 shows the dynamic process between the Taiwanese government and the media when they framed the 'health'. Both the TFDA and the *Apple Daily* referred to the European Union's norms for refined cottonseed oil, and stated that the EU had not defined an acceptable amount of gossypol. The government believed that the fact that the EU did not have a regulation for refined cottonseed

oil meant that refined cottonseed oil can be consumed by humans (TFDA, 21. 10. 2013). However, when the *Apple Daily* interviewed a public hospital's doctor, the doctor claimed that the reason why the EU had not regulated refined cottonseed oil was that even if cottonseed oil is refined, it retains gossypol; therefore human beings should not consume it at all. The news reports also mentioned that the toxic gossypol in cottonseed oil would cause infertility (*Apple Daily*, 22. 10. 2013). The TFDA press release then responded that the experts and scholars interviewed in the media report should show appropriate evidence to support their arguments. Furthermore, the TFDA stated that no medical evidence had been found that consuming cottonseed oil could lead to infertility so far (TFDA, 24. 10, 2013).

From the above, it can be seen that the different interpretations between the government and media concerned whether refined cottonseed oil can be eaten or not. The European Food Safety Authority's website, which states that according to the EU regulations 1223/2009, refined cottonseed oil is not suitable as food, but is suitable for cosmetic application. The EU does not regulate safe dosages acceptable to humans. The USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) website mentioned in the TFDA press release, finding that refined cottonseed oil has a market share of about 5-6% in the US oil market. Therefore, whether refined cottonseed oil is allowed as food depends on the regulations in different countries. In fact, refined cottonseed oil is edible, but only if the gossypol is removed. However, the refining process is complicated, difficult and costly (Liang, Huang & Chuang, 2015; Lin, Wedegaertner, Mao, Jing & Roa-Espinosa, 2015). The study illustrates that the problem is that the Chang Chi company adulterated and mixed the cottonseed oil with olive oil to save costs; thus whether it would have cost the company more to refine cottonseed oil was questioned. Besides, since the TFDA did not find gossypol in Chang Chi's mixed olive oils, it believed that the cottonseed oil used by the company was refined. The study illustrates that the government's test result did not indicate that the company's additive was refined cottonseed oil. This was probably because the government's existing test equipment could not detect the gossypol in Chang Chi's oil products.

The 'blame' frame was also presented in the media coverage. The findings show that the media held both the Chang Chi and Taiwanese government accountable for their responsibility for the crisis. This falls in the 'blame' frame identified by this study. There were only 4 news reports involving blaming the Chang Chi company: 2 from the *Liberty Times*, 1 from the *Apple Daily*, and 1 from the *Economic Daily News* respectively. The *Liberty Times* articulated the company's unscrupulous behaviour with the 'blame' frame, and opined that the company had lost its moral conscience for its own interests, and that it had abandoned social responsibility (*Liberty Times*, 25. 10. 2013). The *Apple Daily* and the *Economic Daily News* had a similar standpoint; both presented a connection between the 'blame' and the 'health' frame.

The oil manufacturer is very immoral in order to make a profit, and completely ignores consumers' health. It is a deception that the product's ingredients and packaging labels do not match [...]
(*Apple Daily*, 19 October 2013)

The excerpts show that the media seriously criticised the fact that a small number of food manufacturers in Taiwan had hurt the image of Taiwan's food safety for their own benefit. In order to reduce costs, some industries had used low-priced and illegal ingredients to deceive consumers and ignore public health. It can be seen that the 'blame' frame was articulated with the 'health' frame here. In fact, when the TFDA blamed the company, its standpoint was similar to those of the *Apple Daily* and the *Economic Daily News*. The TFDA claimed that 'the Chang Chi company should not break the rules and ignore the public health for their profit' (TFDA, 17. 10. 2013). The 'blame' and the 'health' frame were present in the emphasis on the view that the company neglected the regulation and people's health and welfare.

The above section focuses on how the media blamed on the company, however the study demonstrates that when media coverage involved the 'blame' frame, most of the newspapers focused on accusing the government. Therefore were 8 news reports involving blaming the Taiwanese government: 4 from the *Liberty Times*, 3 from the *Apple Daily*, and 1 from the *Economic Daily News* respectively.

In this crisis, alongside the accusations against the Chang Chi company, the Taiwanese authority was also called out for its oversight in managing food safety. This was because Taiwan had been experiencing food safety crises involving products such as formula milk with melamine, plasticisers, and poisoned starch since 2008; the Taiwanese government had promised to improve the management of food safety after every food safety crisis, but food safety crises continued to occur (Chen, 2018). Chang Chi's adulterated oils set off food safety storms, because this highlighted the government's negligence in food safety management. For the media, the governmental authority was one of the actors who must bear responsibility for the crisis. Thus, it can be seen that the media blamed the government more than the company. Three aspects can be seen within the 'blame' frame.

The first is that the media believed that the government had known about the Chang Chi crisis, but had not let the public know. On 21 October 2013, the three newspapers *Apple Daily*, *Liberty Times* and *Economic Daily News* all alleged that the TFDA had received a whistleblower's report that the Chang Chi company's olive oil was impure as far back as October 2012, but the government had not been able to detect the actual ingredients of the company's oil product in their tests (the source of disclosure was from an unnamed researcher who had helped the Ministry of Health and Welfare conduct food safety related research projects in 2012). The media believed that the government knew this and had remained silent until the outbreak of the crisis. On the same day, the TFDA explained that this was because the Chang Chi company's edible oil formula made the adulterated oils appear the same as real ones, so that existing technology could not detect the adulterations. The following quote is from the *Liberty Times*:

The government's concealment of the adulterated edible oils from the Chang Chi company involved dishonesty. (*Liberty Times*, 21 October, 2013)

It can be seen that the issue of the government's integrity was presented in media coverage within the 'blame' frame. The above excerpt alleges that the government knew there was a problem with the Chang Chi company's olive oil in

2012, but did not announce it, which led the media to believe that the government was involved in concealing information (*Liberty Times*, 21. 10. 2013). The TFDA responded immediately on the day the report was published, but perhaps the TFDA's response was not accepted by the media. In the next three days, the issue of the government's concealment was mentioned when the *Liberty Times* and *Apple Daily* reported on the Chang Chi crisis.

The second aspect to do with the 'blame' frame is the government's disregard for food safety and lack of effective management. Both the *Apple Daily* and the *Economic Daily News* focused on the government's long-standing disregard for managing food safety and on its lack of progress. The following quote is taken from the *Apple Daily*:

The government has ignored food safety for many years, it has been lazy and has not reformed. This has not only caused public officials in the food safety department to be accused: it has also caused the people to lose confidence in the government [...] If the government does not want to reform, it will only make the food safety problem more serious. (*Apple Daily*, 26 October 2013)

It can be seen that the media's focus was on the Taiwanese government's negligence in its food safety management. In particular, as mentioned above, a whistleblower had reported to the government about the Chang Chi company's olive oil's impurities as far back as October 2012, but due to the insufficiencies of the existing testing equipment, the government did not disclose the fact that the Chang Chi company had adulterated its oil. The *Apple Daily* presented the government as lacking diligence in managing and supervising food safety.

The third aspect to do with the 'blame' frame is the allegation that the minister of Health and Welfare's supervision of food safety management was at fault. Thus, the minister should assume political responsibility and hand in his resignation. Among the three newspapers, the *Liberty Times* was particularly concerned with this aspect, and opined that the minister of Health and Welfare should be replaced for dereliction of duty, whereas the *Apple Daily* and *Economic Daily*

News did not pay attention to it. The following quote is taken from the *Liberty Times*:

Life is like Taiwan's cooking oil. You never know what adulterated oil will be bought in the next bottle. The outbreak of adulterated oil products has made Taiwan lose face over food safety. The minister of Health and Welfare, Qiu Wen-da, must apologise to the people and take political responsibility. (*Liberty Times*, 2 November 2013)

It can be seen that the *Liberty Times* emphasised that the minister had an overseer's responsibility in managing food safety but had not fulfilled this duty. Besides, the food safety issue has caused Taiwan to lose face. Therefore, the minister should not only be held responsible for indulging dishonest businessmen, but also be held politically accountable for the government in charge of food safety. In the event, the minister did not resign during this crisis; but he did resign during the second (Chang Guann) edible oil crisis. This will be discussed in Chapter 6.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined how the Chang Chi company, the Taiwanese government and the media framed the first of three consecutive edible oil crises in Taiwan by analysing the company's and government's official press releases, and the news coverage. The key findings can be summarised in several points:

Firstly, as mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the main purposes of study is to explore the interaction between the various actors' frames. Scheufele and Scheufele (2010) state that frames may be constructed and change over time. The study finds substantial support for the idea by analysing the three actors' crisis framing during the crisis: both the government's and company's frames changed in a relatively short period of time because of specific events (the results of prosecutors' investigations, and the media's exposure of the government's concealment). In this case, two frames were used by the Chang Chi company: 'denial' and 'responsibility'. Initially, the company did not accept the accusations

and attempted to frame this crisis as an accident (the olive oils were impure because of the contamination of the pipeline) in order to avoid responsibility.

However, the 'responsibility' frame was to become prominent in Chang Chi's third and fourth press releases. The findings show that this was related to the outcome of the prosecutor's investigation: the prosecutor had obtained more evidence of the company's wrongdoing, and this was reported by the media on 20 October 2013. At the same time, the 'blame' frame was present in the media's emphasis on the viewpoint that the company should take responsibility for malpractice, on the basis of the prosecutor's uncovered evidence. Besides, the 'blame' frame was also dominant with the TFDA: the focus of the government was on blaming the company's breaking of food regulations and its illegal actions. Both the media and the TFDA pressured the company to express an apology to the public (Chang Chi company, 20. 10. 2013; Chang Chi company, 28. 10. 2013); their actions included apologising to consumers and promising to pay compensation. But even though the company later tried to adopt these strategies to deal with the crisis, this cannot erase the company's initial deception. A 40-year-old edible oil brand, the company was finally dissolved in 2014 because of their adulterated oil products. As mentioned earlier, Taiwan has experienced several food safety crises; most food companies have survived the crises and continue to operate, but this is not the case for the three edible oil companies in this study.

Similarly, after the crisis broke out, the media reported the government had actually known that the olive oil products of the Chang Chi company were not pure in 2012, but they had not informed the public. The government responded immediately to the report, stating that this was because the additives in the oil products were too complicated to be detected by the existing equipment. The government's press releases at this stage presented a 'blame' frame, the government tending to emphasise that the crisis had been caused by the Chang Chi company. The government had established the regulations, but the company had not complied with them. It can be seen that framing is a dynamic process: the various actors' frames may influence with each other. In this case, when the

media framing is unfavourable to the organisation or government, this will pressure the organisation or government to adjust the way they have framed the crisis and crisis responses.

Secondly, according to the research purpose, the study attempts to integrate framing theory and crisis communication theories. The findings show that the 'denial' frame is related to the 'simple denial' and 'silence' crisis response strategies. This indicates that when the situation is unfavourable to actors and then the actors attempt to reject outside accusations, the actors may deny the allegation or remain silent. Besides, the 'blame' is related to 'shifting the blame' crisis response strategy. This happens when actors allege that the responsibility for the issue is not theirs; the actors will attempt to emphasise other actors' wrongdoing and then transfer the responsibility to them.

In addition, the findings show that crisis response strategies such as 'compensation', corrective action', 'apology' were reflected in the 'responsibility' frame. In crisis communication theories, 'apology', 'compensation' and 'corrective action' are defined as accommodative response strategies, which can inspire the public to care more about the crisis-involved actor and become amenable to extending forgiveness (Davis & Gold, 2011). 'Compensation' can diminish negative feelings by offering money or goods to victims. 'Corrective action' tries to take some action and makes a promise to prevent the recurrence of similar crises (Coombs, 2010a; Benoit, 1997). Bradford and Garratt (1995) claim that accommodative strategies are most effective when an actor is accused of being responsible for a crisis. However, the study finds that the Taiwanese actors involved in the crisis preferred to make promises without putting them in practice in a crisis. In this case the actors involved in the crisis only used these response strategies verbally: the company's 'compensation' and the government's 'correct actions' were not fulfilled. For example, two of the Chang Chi company's press releases stated that the company would compensate the victims, but the official press releases did not reveal either the details of the compensation or the compensation method, and some of the retailers and affected food industries did not get a refund for more than six months after the

crisis broke out, which eventually caused them to file their group lawsuit in April 2014 (*China Times*, 03. 04 2014). Similarly, the government proposed various food safety management improvements to prevent a similar crisis from happening again, but after the outbreak of the Chang Chi crisis, two more edible oil crises (the Chang Guann crisis and the Ting Hsin crisis) occurred within a year. In fact, these measures had been implemented after this Chang Chi crisis (Chen, 2016); however, it is obvious that the government failed to prevent the occurrence of the following two food oil crises effectively. Although it takes time to advance and reform policies, it is clear that the government's commitments in this crisis were not fully fulfilled until the second food oil crisis broke out.

Taiwan had experienced various food safety incidents since 2011, which had involved, for example, melamine, plasticiser and chemical starch (Feng, Chen & Hou, 2016). The government had promised to strengthen food safety management after each outbreak of food safety incidents, but problems had occurred again. So, past experience had led the public to question the government's commitment. Even if the government proposed solutions to improve food safety, these would not be effective if the strategies could not be implemented seriously. For example, after the outbreak of the Chang Chi crisis, the government promised to upgrade inspection equipment and the oil database. However, the government could not detect the Chang Guann company's adulterated oil during the second case. It can be seen that at least one year after the Chang Chi crisis, the government's inspection system had not visibly improved.

Thirdly, the study illustrates that the 'apology' strategy has different meanings in Taiwanese culture. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, Taiwanese culture is similar to Chinese culture, because it mainly inherits traditional Chinese culture (Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). In Western culture, an 'apology' means that the actor admits wrongdoing and personal responsibility (Avruch & Wang, 2005; Maddux, Kim, Okumura & Brett, 2011). However, in Chinese culture, due to fear of losing face, actors will not apologise as easily as is the case in Western culture. Therefore, it is more common for a person to express regards

than to apologise, in order to maintain face (Wu & Cui, 2019). Showing regards occurs when an actor expresses feeling bad about a crisis (Huang, 2006). In Chang Chi's first and second apology, the company apologised because its oil products had caused concern to the consumers, but they did not directly admit their illegal behaviour, and they did not explain whether the food oil products had illegal additives. Thus, the study illustrates that the boundary between apology (bao-qian) and expression of regards (guan-xin) is blurred in Chinese culture. In this study, the term 'apology' (bao-qian) is used to refer to Chang Chi's press release, but the meaning conveyed by the company is closer to showing regards. The company's apology can be seen as an acknowledgment of the wronged persons' suffering, rather than an admission of mistake (as in 'I am sorry that you feel bad' rather than 'I am sorry that I made you feel bad'). In other words, Chang Chi's apology only signified that the company expressed compassion for the victims. Therefore, this study illustrates how the 'apology' strategy can be redefined when applying it to Taiwanese culture (actors ask for forgiveness and acknowledge victims' suffering rather than admitting wrongdoing).

Chapter 6: The Chang Guann waste oil crisis

In previous chapter, the study focuses on the Chang Chi crisis. However, one year after the outbreak of the Chang Chi crisis, the second food oil crisis occurred. This chapter focuses on the case in which the Chang Guann company, the oil company used waste oil as raw material, mixing it with lard, and finally selling the lards to consumers. The purpose in this chapter is to explore how the three main actors (the company, the Taiwanese government, and the media) framed the crisis by examining the company's and government authorities' official press releases, and three Taiwanese newspapers.

In fact, the Chang Guann issue is not an isolated case, but the latest link in a chain of food crises in Taiwan. Before the Chang Guann waste oil crisis, Taiwan had experienced a serious slew of food safety crises hinging on such materials as plasticiser, poisoned starch, fake rice and Chang Chi's adulterated olive oil since 2011 (Feng, Chen & Hou, 2016). The Chang Guann oil crisis started with individual complaints to the company (Chen, 2014), and finally became a governmental crisis. This is because the outbreak of the Chang Guann crisis made apparent once again the problem of Taiwan's food safety management. Accumulating factors such as the loopholes in the current food regulations and the inadequate testing system had led to the recurrence of similar edible oil crises.

The chapter includes five sections. To provide an overview of the chapter, the study begins by providing a background of the Chang Guann crisis. The second section, focuses on the Chang Guann company, and analyses the company's framing of the food oil crisis by examining their official press releases. Also, the study discusses what crisis response strategies can be detected in their public communication, on the basis of taxonomy of crisis response strategy developed by this study. The third section, focuses on how the Taiwanese government responded to the crisis, and explores what crisis strategies were reflected in the central authorities' press releases, including the TFDA, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Executive Yuan, and the President's office. The fourth tackles the role of Taiwanese media, focusing on selected news items, analysing how three

newspapers (two dailies and one economic newspaper) framed the food oil crisis, and making a comparison between them. This study concludes with a discussion of the comparison between the frames used, respectively, by the Taiwanese government, the Chang Guann company, and the selected Taiwanese newspapers.

6.1 Background

The first edible oil crisis (the Chang Chi company's mixed oil crisis) erupted on 16 October 2013. Less than a year afterwards, the Chang Guann company's waste oil crisis broke out on 4 September 2014. This crisis again originated from a whistleblower's disclosure. At the beginning of 2009, in Pingtung (southern Taiwan), a farmer who retired from northern Taiwan and gone back to Pingtung to farm and raise chickens and ducks found that Kuo Lieh-Cheng (the chairman of the unregulated oil factory) (the 'unregulated' means that this company did not have a business registration and permission) had bought the land nearby and set up an unregulated oil factory. This factory was located in a sparsely populated area in southern Taiwan, and it had neither a name nor a business license permitted by the government. Also, the factory specialised in collecting and selling waste oil since 2009 (Liao, Peng, Ting, Chang & Tseng, 2017). There was a bad smell, so the old farmer and other local residents repeatedly reported this to the Pingtung government, but the report was regarded as invalid because there was no evidence. From 2012 on, the farmer spent over two years to collecting evidence by using monitors. He installed monitors on the roof of his house toward the unregulated factory, and recorded some evidence such as lorries entering and leaving the factory to transport waste oils, oil tanks appearing of a black colour, the factory's employees pouring waste oils into oil tanks, and the surrounding environment polluted by the unregulated oil factory. The farmer handed in the evidence to the police in early 2014, and the police then reported this case to the Pingtung prosecutor's office. This case was investigated by the prosecutor in April 2014; the Chang Guann edible oil crisis was exposed by the prosecutor on 4 September 2014 (Chen, 2014; Liao et al., 2017).

The Chang Guann company was an old brand and a major lard supplier based in Taiwan. The prosecutor found that the chairman (Yeh Wen-Hsiang) of the

company had purchased waste oil (also called 'gutter oil') from Kuo Lieh-Cheng's unregulated oil factory, and then mixed it with lard in order to decrease production costs. This unregulated factory specialised in collecting waste oil from kitchens, restaurant fryers and street vendors (Lin, 2014). The prosecutor also found that the head of this unregulated factory had years of experience in the food industry and therefore knew where to collect waste oil (Chen, 2014).

On 4 September 2014, the prosecutor revealed that Chang Guann's lard products were found to contain only 67% lard, with waste oil making up 33% of the product (Liao et al., 2017). Moreover, the prosecutor found that the Chang Guann company had purchased 243 tons of waste oil from the unregulated factory, and then reproduced and sold 51,981 cartons (782 tons) of mixed lard to hundreds of food companies, cake bakeries, restaurants and street vendors (Lin, 2014). The company had bought waste oil from this underground factory for up to six months, dating back to February 2014 (Liao et al., 2017).

Due to the fact that the Chang Guann company was the main lard supplier in Taiwan, according to the TFDA investigation, Chang Guann's lard had been purchased by over two hundred Taiwanese food companies, several well-known bakeries, restaurants, and street vendors in the night market (235 in total) (Yen, 2014). They had used this mixed lard to make a total of over four hundred different products, such as pastries, dumplings, pineapple buns and moon cakes; TFDA also claimed that 582 tons (Chang Guann had sold a total of 782 tons of waste oil to consumers) of waste oil had been consumed (Yen, 2014; Lin, 2014).

The prosecutor was involved in the investigation in April 2014 after the police reported this case, and then interrogated Yeh Wen-Hsiang and Kuo Lieh-Cheng several times in September 2014. The chairman of the Chang Guann company and the chairman of the unregulated factory were sued on 3 October 2014. The Chang Guann company was dissolved on 13 July 2017. After years of judicial process, on 13 September 2017 and 12 February 2020, the Taiwan high court judge sentenced Yeh Wen-Hsiang and Kuo Lieh-Cheng to 22 and 20 years in prison, respectively, for fraud and violating of food safety regulations respectively (Taiwan judicial Yuan, 2019).

Whistleblowers played an important role in opening the crisis, rather than the Taiwanese government. This indicates the Taiwanese government's negligence in food safety management, and insufficient inspection of food quality. The outbreaks of the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises were caused by whistleblowers rather than the government's initiative. Moreover, these two whistleblowers did not succeed in their first report because of lack of evidence (Lin, 2014; Chen, 2014; Liao et al., 2017). In the first oil crisis, the whistleblower's second report succeeded, because the government tested the samples again and found the value of palmitic acid was low in Chang Chi's olive oil, and instructed the prosecution to investigate (Lin, 2014). In the second oil crisis, since Chang Guann's adulterated oil product could not be detected by the existing testing system in Taiwan, the whistleblower spent over two years to collect evidence by himself, which he then handed in to the police (Chen, 2014). From the whistleblowers' reports to the prosecutors' exposure, it took one to two years for these two crises to develop. This caused the adulterated oils not to be found earlier, and the scandal only to be disclosed years later. These two edible oil crises highlight the Taiwanese government's failure in the inspection of food products and in its supervisory management of food safety, and indicates its incompetence in protecting public health and food safety (Liao et al., 2017). After these crises broke out, the government promised to increase the rewards for whistleblowers (TFDA, 21. 10. 2013; Executive Yuan, 11. 09. 2014). The Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises exposed the government's inspection system as insufficient, even when working with information supplied by whistleblowers.

6.2 Framing the crisis: the perspective of the Chang Guann company

Figure 6.1 illustrates the timeline of the company's, the Taiwanese government's and the media's frames during the Chang Guann crisis. Similar to the first case, according to Figure 6.1, the Chang Guann company's 'denial' frame was presented in the beginning of the crisis, and followed by the 'blame' frame. In contrast, the Taiwanese government and media focused on the 'blame' and 'health' in the early stage of the crisis. Interestingly, it can be found from Figure 6.2 that the interaction between the three main actors was more complicated

than in the first food oil crisis, especially when they framed the 'blame'. More details will be provided in the following subsections.

Figure 6.1 The timeline of the three main actors' frames in the Chang Guann crisis

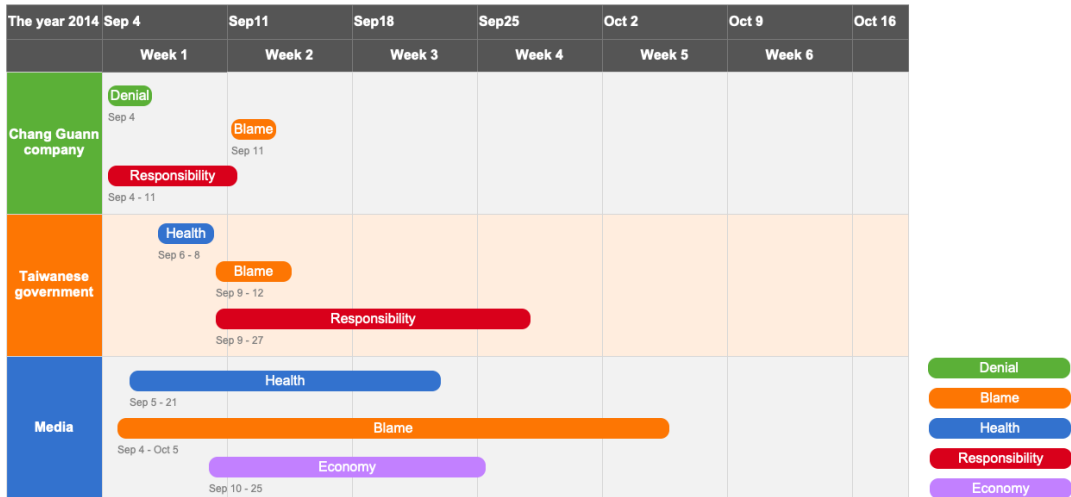
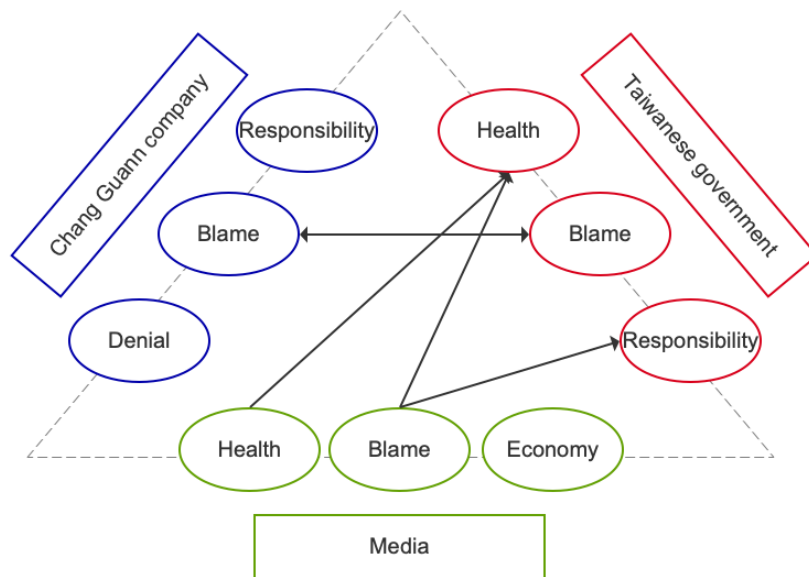


Figure 6.2 The interaction of the three main actors' frames in the Chang Guann crisis



This section examines how the Chang Guann company framed the edible oil crisis by applying the frame matrix identified in the methodology chapter (see table 4.4). Alongside the company's crisis frames, the section also explores how the company framed their public crisis response strategies, on the basis of integrating Benoit's image restoration theory, Coombs' situational crisis

communication theory, Huang et al.'s, Yu and Wen's, Ye and Pang's studies (see table 3.2). As mentioned in the literature review chapter, the study treats crisis response strategies as a part of the crisis framing. Table 6.1 shows the findings about the Chang Guann company, and illustrates the different crisis response strategies embedded in the three frames. The company mainly focused on three frames in dealing with the crisis: 'denial', 'blame' and 'responsibility'. The following subsections provide more detail on this.

Table 6.1 The Chang Guann company's framing and crisis response strategies

Frame	Crisis response strategy
Denial (the company emphatically rejected accusations, and declared that they had not adulterated their oil products).	* 'Silence' (the company avoided mentioning some aspects that were not good for it). * 'Simple denial' (the company denied the prosecutor's allegation of adulteration).
Blame (the company accused the oil material supplier and the Taiwanese government of being responsible for the crisis).	* 'Shifting the blame' (the company transferred the responsibility to the chairman of the unregulated factory and the government). * 'Bolstering' (the company stressed its good history in order to minimise the negative impact caused by the crisis).
Responsibility (the company conveyed its willingness to take action to address the crisis).	* 'Compensation' (the company would compensate the affected food industries and consumers). * 'Apology' (the company declared that it felt sorry for the food manufacturers and consumers who had bought the problematic oil products).

The edible oil crisis caused by the Chang Guann company broke out on 4 September 2014. During the Chang Guann crisis, two press releases were issued by the Chang Guann company, on 4 and 11 September 2014 respectively. The number of Chang Guann's press releases was significantly less than the government's during the crisis. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, this might be related to the regulation of judicial investigation in Taiwan. In fact, the investigation secrecy law does not regulate suspects, witnesses or media, however most suspects and witnesses in Taiwan choose to comply with this

regulation in order not to affect the results of the judicial investigation (Peng & Hsiao, 2006; Wang, 2011). This implies that as a suspect, the Chang Guann company's public communication was not restricted by regulation of investigation secrecy. The intention of the three main actors is not the focus of this study. The reason why the company issued only two press release might be related to the regulation. However, from another perspective, this regulation is likely to become an excuse for the companies in this study not to publish their official statements to avoid more talk and more mistakes.

The company released its first press release on 4 September 2014, this was on the same day that the crisis broke out. The data illustrates how dominant the 'denial' frame was for Chang Guann in the beginning of the crisis. The frame emphasised the company's rejection of accusations, and declared that the company did not adulterate their oil products. This corresponds with the 'denial' frame defined in the frame matrix. However, the day after the crisis broke out, the prosecutor claimed that the investigation team had evidence to prove Chang Guann's wrongdoing, and then interrogated both the chairman of Chang Guann and the waste oil supplier (*Liberty Times*, 05. 09. 2014). Similar to the Chang Chi crisis, the Chang Guann's 'denial' frame was refuted and challenged by the prosecutor's investigation that was reported by the media against the Chang Guann's denial. The first press release, whose focus was on refuting the accusations, was only about 100 words long. As explained in the frame matrix, the 'denial' frame occurs when actors reject accusations and attempt thus to avoid losing face. This frame was prominent in the press release. In it the company focused on alleging that the Chang Guann company's oil products did not contain illegal additives and that illegal behaviour had not been involved. The following statement illustrates how the company tried to explain their position at the beginning of the crisis.

Absolutely no inferior raw oil materials or illegal additives have been added to our company's oil products. The quality of the oil products conforms to the national standards and food regulations. If the company is found to have done anything illegal, it will take

responsibility for the crisis. (Chang Guann company, 4 September 2014)

It can be seen that the 'denial' frame and the 'responsibility' frame are connected. The company denied the accusations, however they expressed the willingness to take responsibility if the oil products were found to be adulterated at the same time. The company's initial position was that their products were safe and in compliance with food-related regulations. However, the press release avoided mentioning the source of the ingredients. This corresponds to the definition of the 'denial' frame developed in the frame matrix: the actors will present false information, conceal facts or remain silence in order to refute the accusations against them. The Chang Guann emphasised the oil products' alleged legality to reinforce the company's rejection of allegations of illegal behaviour.

The 'denial' frame is associated with 'silence' and 'simple denial' as crisis response strategies. As discussed in literature review chapter, Le et al. (2019) claim that the application of 'silence' strategy is more common and acceptable during a crisis in Chinese cultural contexts. Thus, this study includes 'silence' as a crisis response strategy in examining the data. As mentioned earlier, salience means that actors provide no information (Dimitrov, 2015). Le et al. (2019) opine that silence can be seen as a deliberate lack of organisational communication, and intentionally making the crisis response ambiguous. Le et al's claim can be used to explain the finding of this study. The study finds that the Chang Guann company avoided talking about the source of the raw materials and did not explain whether the raw materials were waste oils. The company tried to hide information that was not good for them, and they chose to remain silent on the issue of additives.

This study also demonstrates that the strategy was reflected in the company's first press release, which was focused on 'simple denial.' This occurs when the actor asserts that there is no crisis (Benoit, 1997; Coomb, 2010a). The response strategy was embedded in the 'denial' frame, in that the company denied the prosecutor's allegation of adulteration. The press release stated that the Chang Guann company absolutely did not add inferior oil materials and illegal additives

to its oil products, although their claims were refuted by the prosecutor's investigation (*Apple Daily*, 05. 09. 2014). 'Absolutely' conveys a 100% certainty. This implies that the company used this vocabulary in order to foster confidence in their oil products. Furthermore, as mentioned in the literature review chapter, when the situation is unfavourable to an actor, the actor may try to hide adverse information to avoid them being known to the public and then losing face (Yu, Wen, 2003; Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). Ye and Pang (2011) state that in culturally Chinese contexts, actor's admission of guilt is to lose face. The finding is that the company's initial denial was an attempt to save face.

The company's second press release was published on 11 September 2014. Interestingly, even after the outbreak of the crisis on 4 September, when the prosecutor stated that the investigative team had seized some evidence against the Chang Guann company, and the media had reported much negative news about the company (*Apple Daily*, 05. 09. 2014; *Liberty Times*, 07. 09. 2014), Chang Guann's second press release still claimed that their raw materials complied with the established inspection standards, and that the products had been inspected by the governmental food authority with no problems being found (Chang Guann company, 11. 09. 2014). The company followed its initial 'denial' frame with a 'blame' frame. Through the 'blame' frame, the company accused the oil material supplier and the Taiwanese government of being responsible for the crisis. The 'blame' frame was prominent across the second press release, in which the company attempted to shape itself as an innocent actor in the crisis.

At the beginning of the second press release, it is mentioned that the company had unintentionally used the inferior oil products provided by Kuo Lieh-Cheng's unregulated factory (Chang Guann company, 11. 09. 2014). This implies that Chang Guann believed that their oil products would not have been involved in an adulteration issue if Kuo Lieh-Cheng had not provided them with waste oil as raw material. The 'blame' frame was also manifested in emphasising the government's negligence in supervision. The press release stated:

The company has always adhered to the principle of good faith to provide consumers with quality products for 26 years. The company's raw oil materials are all edible, and there is no deliberate purchase of low-priced inferior oil to make oils. Moreover, the raw oil materials used by the company are inspected according to the regulations before entering the factory. After passing the inspection, they are sent to the production line to prepare the oil products. In addition, the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration and relevant government departments have also conducted random inspections, and the oil products have met the established standards. Therefore, the company has no way of knowing that the raw oil materials used are from collected waste oil. (Chang Guann company, 11 September 2014)

In this excerpt, the 'blame' frame is adopted by the company. It appears that the Chang Guann company alleged that their oil products had been tested by the government authorities in order to suggest that those products had already been guaranteed by the government. This implies the company believed that the responsibility for the crisis was the Taiwanese government's, for their oversight in food inspection. As to crisis response strategy, this study illustrates that the strategies of 'shifting the blame' and 'bolstering' were presented in the company's second press release and prominently presented through the 'blame' frame. 'Shifting the blame' occurs when an actor blames some outside persons or entities for the crisis (Benoit, 1997; Coomb, 2010a). The company stated that the TFDA and relevant government departments had conducted many inspections on the allegedly problematic oil products, but they had not found any problems with them: therefore, the company had no way of knowing that the raw oil materials had resulted from waste oil. (At the time, relevant food regulations did not require that oil products produced by oil manufacturers must be self-tested before being sold). For the company, all this implied that the government had already guaranteed that the oil products could be sold and eaten. If the company was accused of selling inferior oils, this showed that the government's inspection system was untrustworthy. It is obvious that Chang Guann did not want to bear

responsibility for any mistakes, and so suggested that the unregulated factory that supplied the raw oil materials and the government were responsible for the crisis. The company's role was constructed as that of a victim.

A 'bolstering' response strategy occurs when an actor focuses on past positive actions in order to balance the negative perception caused by a crisis (Benoit, 1997; Coombs, 2010a). The Chang Guann emphasised that the company had provided quality oil products to consumers for 26 years in good faith. As an old brand and one of the main lard providers in Taiwan, the company's oil products had never been questioned. The company stressed their good history to minimise the negative impact caused by the crisis. This study also finds that although the prosecutor had revealed evidence to prove the company's illegal behaviour after the crisis broke out on 4 September, the company did not acknowledge their mistake, because this might cause a loss of face. As discussed in the literature review chapter above, Chen (2004) shows that 'face' in Chinese culture represents reputation, which is usually acquired through social achievement or compliment. This study illustrates that the Chang Guann company, considering its accumulated organisational reputation of more than 20 years, tried to maintain face and prevent their reputation from being harmed. In Chinese culture, face also involves a communal check for any violating and deviating from social norms. Therefore if an individual or an organisation loses face, this indicates that they must bear the pressure of social sanctions (Young, 2014). Young's (2014) claim can be used to explain this case: for the Chang Guann company, losing face could endanger their relations with consumers, lose the general public's confidence in the brand, and impact the company's position in society.

Besides the 'blame' frame, the 'responsibility' frame also appeared in the company's second press release. As mentioned above, after the crisis, the prosecutor's investigation brought to light more and more evidence against the company, but the company still insisted that their oil manufacturing process did not involve illegal activities. But since the media reported that more than 440 different food products had used the company's oil products, the consumers and

affected food manufacturers were asking for a refund (*Liberty Times*, 07. 09. 2014). Under pressure from the media coverage, the company had to express willingness to take responsibility.

The 'responsibility' frame conveyed the company's willingness to take measures to the crisis, this was similar to the first press release. However, interestingly, Chang Guann emphasised that the premise must be that the judicial investigation found them guilty. The following is an excerpt from this statement:

After the incident in which the company's raw oil materials were suspected of being inferior oils, in addition to the legal procedures against the supplier, the company will also wait for the results of judicial investigations in an honest and responsible manner. The company and its chairman (Yeh Wen-Hsiang) will not hide the assets (including the chairman's money, stocks, lands, and houses). If we have to compensate the affected manufacturers or consumers, we will not evade responsibility. (Chang Guann company, 11 September 2014)

It can be seen that the company used the term 'suspected' to describe the oil crisis. This study indicates that this was because, as is brought out by Chang Guann's press release, the company had always presented itself as an innocent actor, and did not think that it should take full responsibility.

For example, *Apple Daily* reported that the Chang Guann chairman (Yeh Wen-Hsiang) had always insisted that he had never seen the leader of the unregulated factory (Kuo Lieh-Cheng) that supplied raw oil materials, but after the prosecutor uncovered evidence to refute Yeh Wen-Hsiang's claim, the chairman changed his version and claimed that he had forgotten they had met (*Apply Daily*, 12. 09. 2014). In another example, *Liberty Times* reported that the chairman told the prosecutor that he did not know the source of the raw oil materials because the person responsible for purchasing the raw materials was another company employee. However, the prosecutor found the chairman's signature on the account book for purchasing the raw materials, and the

transaction record had lasted for more than six months (since February 2014), so the prosecutor thought that the chairman, as the person in charge of the company, could not have known nothing about it (*Liberty Times*, 12. 09. 2014). Thus, although the prosecutor continued to find evidence that the Chang Guann chairman might have been involved in the illegal action, the company tried to ascribe the occurrence of this crisis to their unwitting use of raw oil materials of inferior quality for manufacturing their products. Chang Guann, then, attempted to convey an image of innocence in order to save face and escape responsibility.

The 'responsibility' frame was manifested in the company's statement that if the final result of the judicial investigation was that they were guilty, the company would take responsibility. The company had a similar statement in the first press release. However, in the second press release, the company attempted to downplay the crisis by using terms that had presumably been carefully and deliberately selected. In addition to the term 'suspected' mentioned in the previous section, the term 'inferior oil (*lie-zhi-you*)' was also used by the company to dilute the severity of the crisis. However, when the Taiwanese government, the public, or the media referred to the crisis, they mainly used the terms 'waste oil (*sou-shui-you*)' or 'gutter oil (*di-gou-you*).' These terms refer to cooking oil directly made from restaurant waste. In contrast, 'inferior oil' is more likely to mean that the quality of the oil is not good. Obviously, in this press release, the company avoided these terms to try to reduce the public's negative perception of their oil products.

Furthermore, the 'compensation' and 'apology' response strategies were embedded in the 'responsibility' frame: Chang Guann expressed their willingness to be held responsible after the results of judicial investigations. Although the press release stated that the company would compensate the affected food industries and consumers for their losses, and would not evade responsibility, Chang Guann did not mention any specific means of compensation, its amount, who could be compensated, and so on. 'Compensation' response strategy occurs when an actor or organisation offers money or goods to victims during a crisis (Benoit, 1997; Coombs, 2010a). In this case, although the company promised

compensation if any irregularity was found in the official statement, its specific content was vague.

As to the 'apology' response strategy, in the second press release the company apologised to the consumers for causing them to feel uneasy:

The company's oil products were suspected of accidentally using the inferior oil products provided by Kuo Lieh-Cheng's unregulated factory, causing unrest among the affected food manufacturers and general consumers, and also causing the public to misunderstand the company as a 'dishonest food maker'. The company is deeply sorry and will take responsibility for the incident... For many years, the chairman of the company, Yeh Wen-Hsiang, and the company's employees have also used the company's oil products as household cooking oil. Therefore, it is a misunderstanding if the public opinion believes the company is deliberately buying inferior oils. (Chang Guann company, 11 September 2014)

The company, then, expressed apology for the food manufacturers and consumers who had bought the problematic oil products, but also reiterated that the company had not intentionally purchased inferior oil but had 'accidentally used' the raw oil materials. By so doing, the company hoped to seek consumers' understanding. Moreover, as can be seen, Chang Guann once again used the term 'suspected' to make stress that no illegal behaviour has been confirmed. Besides, Chang Guann attempted to clarify that the company was not a 'dishonest food maker'. As mentioned above, Chen (2004) shows that in Chinese culture 'face' mainly involves morality. This demonstrates why Chang Guann emphasised this point: it is believed that businessmen, too, must have a conscience. For example, if a businessman is found to have done something contrary to his conscience, this may immediately affect consumers' confidence in his company's products and goodwill, and even cause them to refuse to buy the company's products (Chen, 2004). In this case, the word 'dishonest' in 'dishonest food maker' in Chinese means that the individual's or organisation's actions seriously violate the norms and values of society. The finding shows that in order to maintain the face of a

26-year-old oil brand in Taiwan, Chang Guann felt that mentioning 'feeling sorry' in the press release was a necessary step to attempt to restore the company's reputation.

In addition, in the excerpt the company mentioned that 'the company's employees have also used the company's oil products as household cooking oil.' The Chang Guann company, then, attempted to downplay the seriousness of situation, exposed to the same risks as consumers and the general public. This attempt to construct the company was innocent to highlight that it was unlikely to have deliberately and intentionally adulterated food oil products.

Since the prosecutor believed that the person in charge of the Chang Guann company had made inconsistent statements, and that he might collude with someone in making false statements, he was detained on 13 September; the company did not issue any press release to explain the oil crisis after that day. On 3 October, the prosecutor sued the chairman of the Chang Guann company as well as the leader of the unregulated factory that had sold the oil raw oil materials to Chang Guann for violating food regulations and fraud (*Apple Daily*, 04. 10. 2014). The day before the prosecution, the media reported that due to Chang Guann's inability to continue operations, the company had decided to lay off 103 employees (*Liberty Times*, 02. 10. 2014).

6.3 Framing the crisis: the perspective of the Taiwanese government

24 official press releases were issued by the Taiwanese authorities in relation to this case, and this was relatively more than 19 press releases issued in the Chang Chi crisis. 18 of these came from the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA), while 6 were issued by the Executive Yuan. The Taiwanese government focused on three frames to frame the crisis: 'health', 'responsibility' and 'blame' (see table 6.2). Table 6.2 shows the Taiwanese government's framing, and illustrates the different crisis response strategies that were embedded in the three frames. The following subsections will discuss this in more detail.

Table 6.2 Taiwanese government's framing and crisis response strategies

Frame	Crisis response strategy
Health (the government recalled and prohibited the selling of the company's lard products in order to protect consumers).	* 'Minimisation' (the government attempted to downplay the possible impact of waste oil on the human body).
Responsibility (the government took action to restore the crisis).	* 'Corrective action' (the government proposed a number of different solutions to prevent a similar crisis from happening again).
Blame (the government alleged that the adulteration of the mix oils was caused by the company's deceptive behaviour, and that the company should be held accountable for the crisis).	* 'Shifting the blame' (the government blamed the company for defrauding consumers and breaking regulations for the sake of profit).

The study finds that only two press releases from the TFDA involved the 'health' frame, and both of them were issued at the beginning of the crisis. Through the 'health' frame, the government stated that some of the substances in the waste oil did exceed the standards (TFDA, 08. 09. 2014). However, the government focused less on what might happen, i.e. what diseases might appear after consuming these substances.

In fact, in the usual inspection procedures for oil products in Taiwan, TFDA only tests the oil products, not the raw oil materials (Peng et al., 2017). So, if the Pingtung farmer had not reported to the prosecution that the unregulated factory was fetid, the mixed oil sold by the Chang Guann company would not have been discovered (Chen, 2018). This situation was similar to the Chang Chi crisis, both cases were not common, because they were an individual action that eventually led to the outbreak of the crises and aroused the general public's awareness of the food safety issue. From the Chang Chi and Chang Guan crises, it can be seen that whistleblowers played an important role in opening the crises, but the Taiwanese government did not. This indicates the Taiwanese government's negligence in food safety management, and insufficient inspection of food quality.

After it became known that the Chang Guann company had used raw oil materials from the unregulated factory, the TFDA collected two samples for

testing on the next day (5 September): one was of the raw oil material imported from the unregulated factory; the other was of a lard product made by Chang Guann.

TFDA tested for five values: heavy metals (arsenic, lead, mercury, copper, tin, aluminium), acid value, aflatoxins, total polar compounds, benzo(a)pyrene, and animal ingredients (cow, pig, chicken, and fish). The test results showed that the acid value and the benzo(a)pyrene value of the unregulated factory's waste oil exceeded the standard; in the case of Chang Guann's lard product, only the acid value exceeded the standard. ('Acid value' is an indicator of the content of free fatty acids in oil fat. The lower the acid value, the better the quality of the oil. 'Benzo(a)pyrene' is toxic to genes and can cause cancer in humans.) (TFDA, 08.09.2014).

The 'health' frame in the TFDA's press release emphasised that the government prohibited the sale of the company's related lard products in order to protect consumers. This falls under the 'health' frame. In the terms of the definition developed in the frame matrix: recalled and destroyed the adulterated oils and associated food products. The adopted frame presented the government as caring about public health. This study finds that the government's supervision of companies' recalling and destroying of the adulterated oils and associated food products, and its imposition of sanctions on the companies. The companies had followed the government's directive to recall related food products affected by adulterated oils. The following statement is from the TFDA's press release:

The assessment of oil quality cannot be based solely on the test results; the most important thing is to control the raw materials. If unallowable raw materials are used in the food manufacturing process, according to Article 15 of the Food Safety and Health Management Law, the food product will be irregular, and so the food product should be recalled and destroyed. (TFDA, 8 September 2014)

The government stated that the consumption of waste oil might cause consumer concern about food safety and health, but it did not mention the possible health implications of consuming Chang Guann's mixed oil. In contrast, the media coverage framed the health by emphasising the potential health risks might occur after eating the Chang Guann's oil products (the 5.4 section will provide more detail about this). As to crisis response strategy, the findings show that 'minimisation' were presented within the 'health' frame. 'Minimisation' occurs when an actor alleges that the damage from the crisis is not as serious as it is being described (Benoit, 1997; Coombs, 2010a). This study finds that the government attempted to minimise the possible impact of waste oil on the human body. The government recalled the media's criticism by minimising the possible health risks. On 6 September, the press release issued by the TFDA claimed: 'There is a lack of evidence showing that eating these inferior oils can harm human health. Therefore, according to the TFDA's health risk light classification, it should now be a green light with the lowest risk' (TFDA, 06. 09. 2014). (Health risk lights are divided into four levels: red, yellow, blue, and green; the red light coincides with the highest risk and the green light with the lowest risk.) It seems likely that the government minimised the impact of Chang Guann's oil products on the basis of two aspects. The first is that, as mentioned by the TFDA, there was a lack of relevant scientific research supporting the relationship between inferior oil consumption and possible diseases. The second is that after the outbreak of the crisis, the government had found no case of serious illness or death caused by waste oil consumption in Taiwan so far. Therefore, the government's statement implied that there was no immediate health hazard from consuming the waste oils. However, the media stated that the government did not provide the evidence to convince consumers that the waste oil is harmless. Besides, the media believed that the effects after consuming the Chang Guann's oils are not discoverable in a short time (*Liberty Times*, 07. 09. 2014). However, the government's response 'always no problem' (*Liberty Times*, 07. 09. 2014).

The press releases issued by the Executive Yuan and by the TFDA had different focuses. Rather than the 'health' frame manifested by the TFDA at the beginning

of the crisis, the 'responsibility' and 'blame' frames were mainly present in the Executive Yuan's press releases. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, there are four central authorities for managing food and health in Taiwan. From the lowest to the highest level (see figure 1.1), these are: the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA), the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Executive Yuan, and the president. The Chang Guann mixed oil crisis was the second crisis about edible oil within a year. In addition, the government was directly involved in the problem of neglecting the management of edible waste oil. This may be why the higher governmental departments than in the first crisis responded to the crisis in this case.

The 'responsibility' frame was dominant throughout the Executive Yuan's provision of different treatments for the crisis. The press releases issued by the Executive Yuan took measures to strengthen food safety regulations and policies, and to prevent similar food safety issues from happening again. This corresponds to the 'responsibility' frame: the actors needed to take action to repair the damage caused by food oil crises.

As to the crisis response strategy, 'corrective action' was presented by the government in framing their assumption of responsibility. The 'corrective action' strategy occurs when an actor restores the situation and makes a promise to prevent a reoccurrence of similar situation (Benoit, 1997). The government proposed a number of different solutions after the crisis, such as increasing penalties for unscrupulous manufacturers, raising rewards for whistleblowers who reported illegal behaviour to the government authority, strengthening the food tracking system, and improving the management of waste oil (Executive Yuan, 09. 09. 2014; Executive Yuan, 11. 09. 2014). This study illustrates that the various 'corrective actions' proposed by the government were an attempt to reinforce the 'responsibility' frame. The government tried to show that it was not evading its responsibility by modifying and improving the current policies, and that it was attempting to prevent similar crises from happening again.

However, it is notable that the government did not mention improving the inspection system and the oil database. A year earlier, in the first oil crisis related

to the Chang Chi company, one of the strategies proposed by the government had been to upgrade the inspection system and database (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 29. 10. 2013). In this edible oil crisis, the government still could not effectively test the adulterated oil and prevent the outbreak of the crisis and protect public health. As mentioned above, after the crisis broke out, Chang Guann mentioned that the company's oil products had been tested by TFDA and the relevant government departments, but no problems had been found (Chang Guann company, 11. 09. 2014). This study finds that neither TFDA nor the Executive Yuan responded to the Chang Guann company's claims. The Chang Guann company had used waste oil as raw oil material, and then sold it after mixing lard with it. This illegal behaviour and deception had been confirmed by the prosecutor's investigation. However, the government did not provide a reasonable explanation for the dispute about their inability to immediately discover and prevent the Chang Guann company's mixed oils from reaching the market. It can be seen that although Taiwan had experienced the Chang Chi crisis only a year earlier, the Taiwanese food safety inspection system was still insufficient.

The 'blame' frame was also present in the Executive Yuan's three press releases. As presented in the frame matrix, the 'blame' frame means that the actors blame others for a crisis. These press releases stressed that the responsibility for the crisis was the company's, and stated that the government would not allow unscrupulous people to seek their own interests disregarding the health of the general public and the rights of consumers. The government, then, highlighted that the adulteration of the mix oils was caused by the company's illegal behaviour, and that the company should be held solely accountable for the crisis. This study finds that a 'blame game' took place between the government and the Chang Guann company during the crisis (Figure 6.2). A blame game occurs when an actor attempts to 'deflect, deflate or diffuse' blame or accusations during a negative situation, so that the general public would not regard the actor as the main cause of the negative issue (Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008). In this case, the company and the government obviously had different positions on who should be responsible for the crises. The government alleged that the company's

adulteration of oil products had resulted in an impact on food safety in Taiwan. In turn, the Chang Guann opined that the Taiwanese government's poor management of food safety had caused the loopholes in the existing inspection system.

In addition, the government reinforced the 'blame' frame by severely condemning the company's misleading action. As to crisis response strategy, 'shifting the blame' can be detected in the government's press release and articulated through a 'blame' frame. The following excerpt illustrates how the government blamed the company for defrauding consumers and breaking regulations for their profit.

In order to gain benefits, the unscrupulous industry has taken a risk, completely disregarding the health of the general public, consumers' rights, and the hard-earned reputation of the gourmet kingdom in Taiwan. The [Chang Guann] company's illegal behaviour has hit Taiwan's food industry. The government will condemn this deceptive action and will require related departments to impose heavy penalties in accordance with the law to implement the government's determination to combat illegal food products (Executive Yuan, 11 September 2014).

In this excerpt, it also can be seen that the 'blame' frame and the 'responsibility' frame are connected. In addition to stressing Chang Guann's guilt for its unlawful deception, at the same time, the government attempted to show an active attitude in reacting to the crisis, for example by strictly supervising the situation of the recalled Chang Guann oil products, and tracking the destruction of these oils, as well as imposing a heavy penalty on the company (Executive Yuan, 10. 09. 2014; Executive Yuan, 11. 09. 2014). The actions strengthened the 'responsibility' frame and highlighted the government's role in combating illegal actions after the crisis, in an attempt to downplay public criticism of the government's failure to properly manage food safety.

Besides these, similar to the Chang Chi crisis, this study finds that statistic information was prominent in TFDA's press releases in order to underpin the 'responsibility' frame as well. By issuing updated information daily, the government tried to show that they were taking action against the crisis, and highlighted that their crisis management had been continuous since the crisis had broken out. There were 18 press releases from the TFDA, 15 of which involved updating statistic information. The government focused on the provision and update of information, including the amount of oil products recalled, the number of the affected food manufacturers, and the number of the affected food products. After the crisis broke out, the TFDA issued these numbers every day for two weeks in a row. The following statement is from the TFDA press release:

Regarding the production and sale of inferior lard by the Chang Guann company: until 2:00 pm on 9 September 2014, the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration and local health department dispatched 1631 people to inspect a total of 7339 food factories, night markets, vendors, restaurants and supermarkets, and the inspection results were as follows: the Chang Guann company had provided 782 tons of oil to 235 related food manufacturers, and TFDA had traced 703 tons of oil, of which about 161 tons of oil had been sequestered, and 222 food products had been recalled. (TFDA, 9 September 2014)

After the outbreak of the crisis, and until the end of September 2014, the affected food-related industries and food products were over two hundred (TFDA, 22. 09. 2014). The TFDA published a press release every day to let the public know the relevant facts and to update information. The media stated that by providing information on edible oil markets' inspection, the government attempted to push the affected food industries to replace the edible oils they used, let the unaffected food manufacturers secure a safe source of edible oils, and encourage the general public to inspect the food products they consumed, however this could not really solve the problem of food safety management (*Liberty Times*, 07 .09. 2014).

6.4 Framing the crisis: the perspective of the Taiwanese newspapers

There were 45 relevant news items in the three newspapers in relation to this case: 18 came from the *Apple Daily*, 17 from the *Liberty Times*, and 10 from the *Economic Daily News*. The Taiwanese media coverage mainly focused on three frames with regard to the crisis: 'health', 'blame' and 'economy' (see table 6.3). The following sections will provide more detail about this.

Table 6.3 Taiwanese newspapers' framing

Frame	
Health	The media emphasised the possible health risks related to the chemical residues in the waste oil after consumption.
Blame	The media blamed the government's oversight in food safety management, the company's illegality for its own benefit, and opined that the government should be held accountable for the crisis.
Economy	The media stressed the economic losses and impacts caused by the adulterated food oil.

Compared with the Taiwanese government's attempts to minimise the impact of waste oil on the human body, the 'health' frame in media coverage emphasised the possible health risks that might occur after consuming Chang Guann's oils. As mentioned in the previous section, in the inspection of the company's oil the TFDA found only one value that exceeded the standard. So, the TFDA concluded that even if the waste oil was consumed, it would not be harmful to human health immediately. In turn, the media focused on the negative consequences that could occur after consuming Chang Guann's oil products in order to connect possible health problems with the 'health' frame. In particular, the *Apple Daily* published several reports that contained interviews with doctors and scholars, and which highlighted the health risks consumers might face after eating problematic oils. The following quote is from the *Apple Daily*:

Waste oil can cause at least five possible hazards to the human body. First, it may be contaminated with bacteria or microorganisms, causing acute gastroenteritis in mild cases and sepsis in severe cases. Second, it may contain heavy metals: for

example, lead is neurotoxic and can damage the kidneys; arsenic can cause skin lesions or carcinogenesis. Third, it may cause liver cirrhosis or liver cancer due to contamination of mould or aflatoxin. Fourth, the oil after high-temperature frying has a phenylhydrazine residue, which may carry a risk of lung cancer. Fifth, oxidised oil can easily cause cardiovascular disease. The manufacturer is unconscionable. Last year, the Chang Chi company's adding chlorophyllin copper complex with olive oil was abhorrent. However, the damage was not as serious as this time. This is the kind of oil "even pigs will not eat"! (*Apple Daily*, 5 September 2014)

It can be seen that the *Apple Daily* framed 'health' by emphasising the potential human health consequences that may occur as a result of the chemical residues contained in waste oil as a raw material. The media even used the expression 'pigs will not eat it' to stress the risks of waste oil to human health. In fact, in Taiwan, most of the kitchen waste will be collected daily. Approximately 7% of the kitchen waste is recycled and made into feed for pigs (93% is composted) (Bell & Ulhas, 2020) Therefore, the media's claim means that the Chang Guann's edible oil was worse than the kitchen waste. Also, This description implies that the both the media and experts believed that Chang Guann's oil products were not suitable for human consumption. It can also be observed that in this media report the word 'possible' is repeatedly mentioned. The *Apple Daily*, then, tried to avoid too conclusive claims with definite words, though it is also true that since Taiwan had never experienced a case of using waste oil as raw material, the media could not be 100% certain of what specific chemical substances were contained in the waste oil; therefore, they could not be sure of what kinds of negative consequences might occur after consuming Chang Guann's oil products.

Moreover, the media questioned TFDA's testing system and the results of the inspection of the Chang Guann oil that thus reinforcing the 'health' frame. The media believed that the government's oil inspection could only detect chemical or metal components commonly found in oil production; however, if oil

producers deliberately violated regulations and mixed oil, the composition would be complex (*Liberty Times*, 10 September 2014): so, there were too many chemical and carcinogenic species, and the complexity of the composition might cause the government's inspection to fail to detect these substances. So, even though the results of the government's inspection showed that the values did not exceed the standard, this did not mean that the oil was without any health concerns and could be eaten by the public. The following example is from the *Economic Daily News*:

Examining the inspection result of the TFDA does not solve the fears of consumers, but raises more doubts. ... The inspection method is according to the Article 38 of the Law Governing Food Sanitation: it is a 'listed-target' test method, but the serious incidents of melamine, plasticiser, chemical starch, and waste oil show that this test method is not enough to cope with the ever-changing adulterations and fraudulent behaviours. Furthermore, the method is also unable to detect additives which are not on the listed targets. In the future, we should accelerate the development of the 'non-target' test method, and allow multiple chemicals to be tested simultaneously, so that unconscionably produced foods can be discovered... (*Economic Daily News*, 21 September 2014)

So, this study finds that from the government's point of view, when the value of the existing inspected item does not exceed the standard, the product is considered to be edible, but from the media's perspective (to be precise, the media used the information provided by experts, doctors, or professors to present them in news reports), the existing Taiwan inspection procedures and standards are insufficient. Even if the results of the government's inspection did not exceed the standard, this did not mean that the oil was safe to eat, because there might be various chemicals and metal substances that could not be detected under the current system.

As mentioned above, the director of TFDA stated that food safety was a 'green light' issue for the Chang Guann crisis, because there was no direct evidence showing that waste oil could cause cancer, and so these oil products posed no immediate danger to health (TFDA, 06. 09. 2014). However, the media believed that the use of waste oil as a raw oil material was inherently contrary to common sense, and that the harm to the body caused by unsafe food might be seen only after a long period of time: it could not be reasoned that the waste oil was edible because there was no immediate harm to the human body. One can see the divergence in framing health between the government and media. The following quote is taken from the editorial comments of the *Liberty Times*:

Taiwan has experienced many food safety incidents. The government's response will always be 'no problem', and we really don't know how the government has defined the green light. ... In the past, the government required that fast food industries not reuse the oil for making fries, and regulated that the oil should be replaced within a certain period of time. If the repeated use of oil is harmless to the human body, then why should the government ask the fast food industries to replace oil? Government authorities must have evidence to convince the public that the waste is harmless to the human body, because some potential hazards are not visible now. (*Liberty Times*, 7 September 2014)

In fact, on the basis of the press releases issued by the TFDA, the data shows that when the government published the results of the inspection and classified Chang Guann's oil products under a green light, the government did not explain how they defined the green light and why the health risks of eating waste oil were low. This study demonstrates not only that the government's response to the crisis was questioned by the media with concerns about its testing system, but also that the media believed that the government was trying to minimise the crisis, evade responsibility and even intentionally protect the Chang Guann company. The following is an excerpt from the editorial comments of the *Apple Daily*:

The TFDA's statement was very odd. It raises questions about the government's evasiveness, or its attempt to cover for the industry, even its escaping responsibility. A food crisis is when people are afraid of what they eat, and they are worried that their health will be affected. The influence of waste oil may not emerge immediately; the harm may have a long-term period of latency, even decades. The director of TFDA has claimed that waste oil does not cause immediate harm to the human body, but the statement is too simplistic. Is the director of TFDA willing to try to eat waste oil for a year?" (*Apple Daily*, 7 September 2014)

The above excerpt shows that the government's response to the crisis was questioned by the media. As motioned in the literature review chapter, food adulteration is relatively difficult to detect, because they usually do not immediately cause health (Johnson, 2014), unless it is deliberately mixed with poison, or if someone eats something poisonous. Taiwan's series of food safety crises from formula milk with melamine, plasticisers, Chang Chi's adulterated oils to Chang Chi's waste oil. Although these crises did not directly lead to deaths, this does not mean that the government can allow them to exist. For this reason, the TFDA director's claim that the waste oil does not cause an immediate danger is misleading.

Also, the media framing of the TFDA director's claim was similar between the three newspapers. As can be seen from the news quotes from *the Apple Daily* and the *Liberty Times*, the media did not accept the statement from the TFDA director, and criticised the government by saying that although its role should have been to stand for the people, it had actually tried to downplay the seriousness of the waste oil concerns. The TFDA's statement on the crisis not only failed to alleviate people's doubts about the waste oil, but also prompted the line of questioning from the media that the government was trying to reduce its responsibility for oversight in supervision.

The 'blame' frame was also present in the media coverage, and was mainly focused on blaming the Taiwanese government, with 19 news items (8 from the

Apple Daily, 7 from *Liberty Times*, and 4 from the *Economic Daily News*). Only 3 new reports involved blaming the company. This study illustrates that the food oil crisis was caused by the Chang Guann company, but the Taiwanese government received more blame for the crisis by the media. There were two main focuses that reinforced the 'blame' frame in media coverage. The first is that the media believed the government should be held accountable for the crisis, and should effectively fulfil its commitments and practice the proposed policies or implement reforms. In this case, both the *Economic Daily News* and *Liberty Times* declared that the reason why repeated food safety incidents in Taiwan had occurred was that the government had never seriously solved the food safety issue. For some time after the crisis, consumers strongly criticised the government and the industry. However, once the issue cooled down, the government, the industry and the people began to forget the food safety problem – until the next food safety incident occurs, and then the problem will be raised again. The following quote is from the *Economic Daily News*:

When the government encounters a food safety incident, it often has an attitude of 'reducing a big trouble into a small one, and a small one into nothing.' Until the incident becomes too serious, at which point the government will be forced to face the incident and declare its plans for managing food safety. However, the government's reforms are always difficult to implement, so that the food safety incidents will be repeated again and again, making the government's public power and credibility disappear. (*Economic Daily*, 17 September 2014)

As can be seen from the above, the 'blame' frame was present in the media's emphasis on the view that the government did not fulfil their promises completely after each food crisis, and caused food safety issues to occur repeatedly. The Taiwanese government would only begin to deal with the crisis when the crisis had got more and more attention from the public, and the procedures were similar every time, such as publishing illegal products and affected foods, recalling the problematic products, punishing the offenders, and

proposing relevant improvements. It appears that the purpose of these actions was to make consumers feel that the food they ate was safe thanks to a series of efforts on the part of the government after the crisis. Although the government usually tried to put forward various policies after the crisis, it was uncertain whether these policies could be practiced in the future, and the general public might not even remember exactly what the government had proposed.

The second aspect articulated with the 'blame' frame is that someone should take responsibility. In the Chang Chi crisis (first case), only the *Liberty Times* paid attention to this aspect, and had several related news reports to comment that the minister of Health and Welfare should take responsibility for the crisis, because he had failed to supervise the food industries and protect human health. However, in the Chang Guann crisis, the *Apple Daily*, *Liberty Times* and *Economic Daily News* all blamed the minister, stressing that he had not fulfilled his duty in supervising, and had related news reports on this issue. The media believed that the minister of Health and Welfare, the highest executive of the food administration, could not prevent a crisis of problematic edible oil from happening again; this brought across his lack of management of food safety. The following example is from the *Apple Daily*:

The minister was too slow to resign. The ministry of Health and Welfare should really have a profound reflection about why food safety incidents occur so frequently in Taiwan, and then reform the situation. For the government, it is not possible to blame the problematic food product every time on the fraudulent behaviour of the industry, and then declare that the product is harmless to the human body... When the crisis of waste oil occurred, the minister should have resigned immediately, but he has had to be dragged out. It was really disgraceful. (*Apple Daily*, 4 October 2014)

After the crisis broke out, the TFDA revealed the test result of the Chang Guann oils, and alleged that eating waste oil caused no obvious harm to the human health (*Apple Daily*, 04. 10. 2014). The media reported that the TFDA test results

made people wonder if the TFDA intended to convince consumers that the waste oil was edible. The minister of Health and Welfare, as the superior of the TFDA, did not clarify whether the TFDA's interpretation was correct or not, which made people lose confidence in the government's food safety management (*Liberty Times*, 13. 09. 2014). Under the pressure of public opinion, the minister was finally held responsible and had to resign within one month of the outbreak of the crisis.

As shown above, this study demonstrates that when media coverage involved blame, most of it focused on accusing the government. Only 3 news reports blamed the company, 2 from *Liberty Times* and 1 from *Apple Daily* respectively. These 3 news articles had a similar standpoint, being mainly focused on blaming the company for having no conscience and disregarding consumers' health for its own benefit. In terms of the number of media reports on imputation, the media blamed the Taiwanese government more than the company. This may be due to two reasons. Firstly, as mentioned above, the Taiwanese government has experienced several food safety crises; this has led consumers and general public to question the government's food safety management. Secondly, the Chang Guann's oil crisis broke out on 4 September, and the TFDA issued the press release and 'green light' statement on 6 September. This statement can easily lead general public and media to seeing the government's avoidance of responsibility. So, in this case, the TFDA's response to the crisis resulted in more media accusations against the government.

Alongside the 'blame' frame, the 'economy' frame also appeared in the *Liberty Times* and *Economic Daily News*. The media coverage stressed economic losses in the food industry supply chain, product exports, and the stock market. This study illustrates that the 'economy' frame is connected to the 'blame' frame. For example, the *Liberty Times* reported that some edible oil manufacturers had taken the opportunity to raise the price of lard after the crisis broke out, even doubling the price before selling it to consumers (*Liberty Times*, 15. 09. 2014). The media attempted to highlight the government's responsibility for stabilising the price of edible oil products and ensuring an adequate supply of lard, by

stressing the fluctuation in the price of lard after the crisis. Besides, the 'economy' frame in the *Economic Daily* consisted in emphasising that the stock market had undergone a negative impact. A report from the *Economic Daily* mentioned that due to the edible oil crisis, 'food stocks in stock market have been affected, and 'investors have sold thousands of stocks, causing food stocks to continue to fall in stock market. It is expected that food stocks may lose profits this year.' (*Economic Daily News*, 10. 09. 2014). The adopted frame presented investors who lost confidence in Taiwanese food industries as causing the volatility of stock price.

However, one month after the Chang Guann crisis broke out, a third edible oil crisis (the Ting Hsin crisis) broke out. This series of oil crises not only impacted the Taiwan food industry, but also highlighted the long-term failure of the Taiwanese government's food safety system.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the Chang Guann crisis and presented the findings of the how the three main actors responded to the crisis. The key findings are as follows:

Firstly, similarly to the Chang Chi crisis in the previous chapter, the findings show that the 'denial' frame is correlated to the 'simple denial' and 'silence' crisis response strategy. The study illustrates that when a situation is unfavourable to actors, they attempt to deny the allegation instead of admitting responsibility and/or apologising. Both the Chang Chi and the Chang Guann company tended to react to crises by denying rather than apologising in the initial stages of crisis communication. In addition, similar to the Chang Chi company, 'silence' strategy was present in the 'denial' frame, the Chang Guann company remain silent on their adulterated food oil products and waste oils they used to mix with lards.

Besides, the 'blame' frame was articulated with 'shifting the blame' crisis response strategy. This happens when actors allege that the responsibility for the issue is not theirs; the actors will attempt to stress other actors' wrongdoing and

then shift the responsibility to them. In this case, the finding shows that a 'blame game' was played between the Chang Guann and the Taiwanese government. The company blamed the government because, although it had conducted inspections on their oil products, the insufficient inspection system had not detected the problematic additives. In turn, the government blamed the company for being involved in adulteration, which had led to the outbreak of the crisis.

Another finding is that the 'health' frame is correlated to the 'minimisation' crisis response strategies. However, the company, the Taiwanese government and the media framing of the health aspect of the situation differed on the basis of their varying perspectives on whether waste oil would cause health hazards. This study demonstrates that the company's crisis response was aimed at avoiding mentioning the relationship between waste oil and health. The Taiwanese government stressed 'consequence' and the media highlighted 'process' in framing health. For the government, when the tested result of Chang Guann's mixed oil samples did not exceed the regulated standard, the oil products were regarded as causing no immediate harm to health and therefore as being edible (TFDA, 08. 09. 2014). The government, then, focused less on the impact of waste oil on human health.

In contrast, unlike the Taiwanese government's attempted to downplay the possible consequence of consuming the adulterated oil products. The media mainly focused on the possible health risks related to illegal additives in the adulterated oils at the both Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises. In the media, waste oil was recognised as oil that had been collected from restaurants, street vendors and food stores. There were some harmful chemicals and heavy metal components in it. This kind of oil was regarded as something that could neither be recycled nor eaten (*Economic Daily News*, 21. 09. 2014). Especially when the waste oil was repeatedly fried at a high temperature, questions such as what chemical substances would be released after reheating and what influence this would have on the human body could not be assessed over a short time (*Apple Daily*, 07. 09. 2014). Thus, unlike the government, which had tried to minimise the possible impacts, the media's reports emphasised the diseases that might be

caused by the consumption of waste oil in order to stress the government's neglect of food safety management.

As to the connection between the frames and crisis response strategy, the study finds that the 'apology' strategy was present in the company's 'responsibility' frame. Moreover, this study finds that the Chang Guann company showed a lack of sincerity: the company's apology was superficial, and it felt more like a commercial performance. As long as an apology is given, the negative impact and guilt can be reduced, regardless of whether the apology is sincere or not. Western culture regards sincere 'apology' as something that happens when the actor acknowledges the wrongdoing and seeks forgiveness. However, due to fear of losing face, public apologies are less common in Chinese culture, which may cause the actor to be insincere even while making a public apology (Zhu, Anagondahalli & Zhang, 2017). This claim can be supported in this case. Firstly, the Chang Guann's apology was for its mismanagement of raw oil material rather than its deceptive behaviour even when the prosecutor had uncovered evidence to prove the company's deceptive action. This is similar to the Chang Chi company's apology. Chang Guann used the word 'sorry (bao-qian)' and the Chang Chi adopted the word 'apologise (dao-qian)' in their official statements respectively. These two words have same meaning in Chinese: expressing apology to someone. However, what's interesting is that both companies apologised for the inconvenient consequences rather than their illegal actions. This implies that the companies did not admit their wrongdoings; rather, they acknowledged negative consequence caused by the food oil products. Even though the two companies used the 'apology' words to respond to the crises, the meaning is more like an expression of sympathy.

Secondly, the Chang Guann company did not express a desire to seek forgiveness from the general public, but expressed the hope that the general public could wait for the judicial investigation result. Afterwards, the company did apologise and show a willingness to pay compensation for the consumers and affected industries; however, the premise was that court judgment must find the company guilty. The 'apology' strategy was like a tool for Chang Guann. The company

applied this strategy and expected it could help them reduce external accusations. The application of the 'apology' strategy only highlights that Chang Guann was probably trying to save its damaged reputation, rather than acknowledging that its mistake had affected many consumers.

Another interesting finding is that although the food oil crisis was caused by the Chang Guann company, the Taiwanese government received more blame for the crisis on the part of the media, including the *Apple Daily*, *Liberty Times* and the *Economic Daily News*. This study demonstrates that this was because Chang Guann's waste oil was not a single crisis for the government, but only the latest food safety problem in Taiwan. Taiwan had already experienced serious food incidents, as related above, and Chang Chi's adulterated oil crisis had occurred only a year earlier. The waste oil crisis highlights the government's lack of management in food safety. Moreover, Chang Guann claimed that their oil products had been inspected by the governmental food authority with no problems being found (Chang Guann company, 11. 09. 2014), and the government did not deny this. During the Chang Chi crisis, the government had inspected all the edible oils on the market. Chang Guann's oils, too, were among them, but no problems were found at the time. For these reasons, it can be inferred that the government's inspection system for oil products was insufficient, or even lacked credibility. It was because the insufficiency of database system, which caused to many chemical databases could be tested. This led the media to focus on the government's responsibility, and then the issue became a governmental crisis, especially because when the situation of the second food oil crisis (Chang Guann) had not completely subsided, a third oil crisis (Ting Hsin) happened in less than a month.

Chapter 7: The Ting Hsin adulterated lard crisis

One month after the outbreak of the Chang Guann crisis, a third edible oil crisis (the Ting Hsin crisis) broke out. This crisis was triggered by the government's inspection of food oil products on the market after the Chang Guann crisis. This chapter will focus on the case of the Ting Hsin company, which manufactured and sold adulterated lard products. These oil products were mixed with animal feed oil that was only allowed for animal use and prohibited for human consumption. On the other hand, for the Taiwanese government, the Ting Hsin crisis was more complicated than the previous two, because this crisis involved the pressure of the political environment and the impact of international trade. In addition, the three consecutive crises had become an important food safety issue in the Ting Hsin crisis, rather isolated cases. For example, among the 38 governmental authorities' press releases, 7 mentioned the Chang Chi, or the Chang Guann, or both. Besides, among the 54 media coverage, 15 involved the Chang Chi, or the Chang Guann, or both.

This chapter includes five sections. The chapter will begin with the background of the crisis, and provides the details about the outbreak of the crisis. The chapter is followed by the Ting Hsin company, discussing the company's official press releases and how they framed the food oil crisis as well as what crisis communication response strategies are reflected in them. In addition, the study will focus on the Taiwanese government, examining the governmental press releases to analyse their framing of the crisis and to explore what crisis communication response strategies were presented in their public communication. Besides, the study will analyse and compare how the three newspapers framed the food oil crisis. The chapter concludes with comparison of the main actors' frames.

7.1 Background

The Ting Hsin crisis, broke out on 8 October 2014 in Taiwan. Unlike the eruptions of the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, which were due to whistleblowers' revelations, the outbreak of the third crisis was initiated by a

public prosecution and TFDA's (Taiwan Food and Drug Administration) investigation. This investigation was conducted in the aftermath of the Chang Guann crisis, to avoid other adulterated edible oils on the market. The following section will provide more detail about this.

After the Chang Guann oil crisis broke out, the TFDA started to conduct a comprehensive check of the sources of edible oil on the market, because the government intended to inspect whether the other edible oil companies on the market were involved in the production of illegally adulterated edible oil products. After the investigation, the TFDA found that the Ting Hsin company not only purchased animal feed oil from domestic oil manufacturers, but also imported a large amount of animal feed oil from Vietnam, and then mixed it with lard for sale. The TFDA stated that Ting Hsin had imported 1,800 tons of animal feed oil from a Vietnamese oil supplier since 2012 (Chang, 2014a). On 9 October 2014, the Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs received confirmation from the Vietnamese government that the oil purchased by Ting Hsin in Vietnam was animal feed oil and not suitable for human consumption (TFDA, 10. 10. 2014). On 10 October 2014, the TFDA and the state prosecutor went to Ting Hsin's oil factory to conduct a search. Following the food regulations, the Taiwanese government then ordered Ting Hsin's oil factory to close and stop selling related edible oil products. Furthermore, the TFDA's disclosure drove the state prosecutor to ask the investigation judiciary to investigate what illegal behaviour the Ting Hsin was involved in (Chen, 2018).

In fact, Ting Hsin had also been involved in the Chang Chi and Chang Guann edible oil crises. In the Chang Chi olive oil crisis, Ting Hsin purchased Chang Chi's oil and used it to make 21 related food products. In the Chang Guann waste oil crisis, Ting Hsin also bought Chang Guann's oil and manufactured 12 food products with it. However, in the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, Ting Hsin argued that they had been a victim, because they did not know the oils bought from these companies were adulterated (Chen, 2018). Unexpectedly, a month later, the TFDA found that Ting Hsin's food oil products consisted of imported animal feed oil from Vietnam, mixed with lard, and then sold to consumers. Ting

Hsin had gone through three edible oil crises within a year; this triggered more criticism of the company from the media and consumers after the third crisis broke out (Feng, Chen & Hou, 2016). Therefore, after the outbreak of that crisis on 8 October, many general consumers, schools, and businesses began a campaign to boycott Ting Hsin and refused to buy the company's food products, for example milk, instant noodles, biscuits, puddings, etc. (Chen, 2018). At the same time, even though the TFDA discovered the Ting Hsin company's illegal behaviour this time, the government was still criticised by the media for failing to fulfil its responsibility for food safety supervision in Taiwan (Feng, Chen & Hou, 2016).

Ting Hsin is the biggest international food company in Taiwan. The company was established in Taiwan in 1958, starting in the business of manufacturing edible oil, and then became the country's largest food company. Ting Hsin was also the most successful Taiwanese company in mainland China. The manufacture of edible oils was only a part of Ting Hsin's business. This company had been in Taiwan for 56 years as of 2014. It held over 40% of the market share of lard (Wu, 2015). During the crisis, it was discovered that the company had sold tainted oil products to more than 230 major Taiwanese supermarkets and food makers, restaurants, street vendors and bakeries, meaning that the tainted oil was consumed throughout the nation (Liu, 2014). Subsequently, more than 20,000 kilograms of tainted oil products were removed from supermarket shelves, and over a thousand food products were recalled or banned, including instant noodles, biscuits, pork floss, pineapple cake, pork steak, chicken nuggets and dumplings (Executive Yuan, 11. 10. 2014; Chiu, 2016). On 16 October 2014, Ting Hsin's chairman announced the company's full withdrawal from Taiwan's food oil market (Wu, 2015). However, they still have other food products on the market, such as instant noodles, cookies, cakes, fruit juice, and milk. On 30 October 2014, Ting Hsin's chairman was prosecuted for fraud, forgery, and violation of food safety regulations (Feng, Chen & Hou, 2016). On 6 November 2019, the Taiwanese high court sentenced him to 5 years and 9 months in prison (Taiwan judicial Yuan, 2019; Taiwan judicial Yuan, 2020); this means that the company had done something illegal, and caused the crisis with their adulterated lards.

After the outbreak of the Ting Hsin crisis, the chairman of the Taiwan Food Industry Development Association (TFIDA) stated that the Taiwanese people had become accustomed to the occurrence of the food safety crises in Taiwan, where food safety problems had occurred several times in a year (*China Times*, 09. 10. 2014). He pointed out that the Ting Hsin company had started in the business of manufacturing edible oil, and claimed that it would have been impossible for them not to know what raw materials they used to make edible oils. The company had problems with food safety management. The food safety issues in Taiwan should depend on the relevant food industries' management of food quality, and all food manufacturers had the responsibility to ensure food safety (*China Times*, 09. 10. 2014). In addition, the chairman also stated that after this series of food safety crises, the government had spent a lot of effort to improve the inspection capability, but the core issue of food safety should be 'traceability management.' He criticised the poor vertical and horizontal communication between different government departments, and suggested that the central government and local governments should strengthen cooperation to improve management efficiency (*China Times*, 09. 10. 2014). This suggested that both the government and food companies should be responsible for ensuring food safety.

7.2 Framing the crisis: the perspective of the Ting Hsin company

Figure 7.1 shows the development of the company's, the Taiwanese authorities' and the media's frames in the Ting Hsin crisis. According to Figure 7.1, the Ting Hsin company's 'denial' and 'blame' were presented in the initial stages of crisis communication, and followed by the 'responsibility' frame. In addition, the Taiwanese government and media mainly focused on the 'blame' and 'economy' frames after the outbreak of the crisis. Figure 7.2 illustrates how the 'blame' frame interacted between the Ting Hsin company, the Taiwanese government and the media during the crisis. More details will be provided in the following sections.

Figure 7.1 The timeline of the three main actors' frames in the Ting Hsin crisis

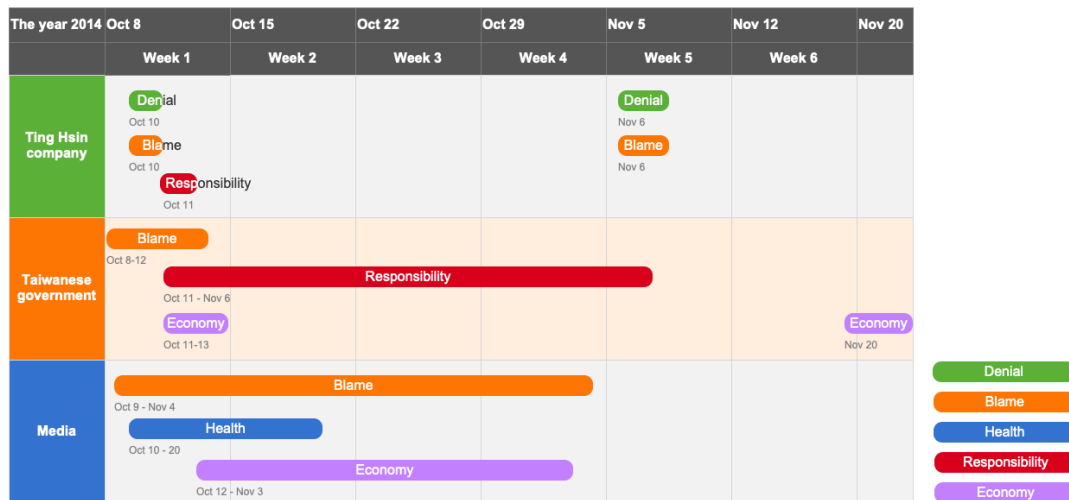
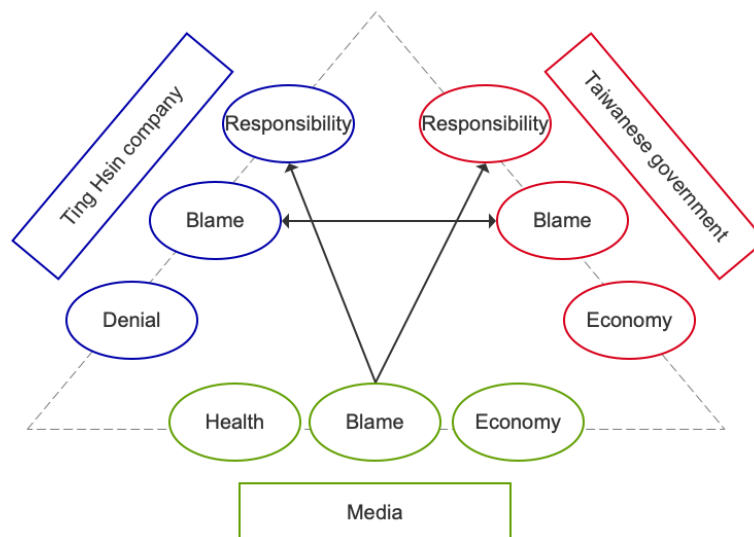


Figure 7.2 The interaction of the three main actors' frames in the Ting Hsin crisis



This section examines how the Ting Hsin company framed the edible oil crisis by examining the company's office press releases. There were only three press releases issued by the Ting Hsin company during the crisis, on 10 October 2014, 11 October 2014, and 6 November 2014 respectively. It can be seen that the number of press releases issued by Ting Hsin was much smaller than that of the Taiwanese government (38). Regardless of whether the three companies' fewer press are related to the principle of secret investigation, this situation is similar to the earlier Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises. The company mainly focused on three frames in dealing with the crisis: 'denial', 'blame' and 'responsibility', which

can be found in their three official press releases. Table 7.1 shows the findings about the Ting Hsin company, and illustrates the crisis response strategies embedded within the three frames. The following subsections provide more detail on this.

Table 7.1 Ting Hsin company's framing and crisis response strategies

Frame	Crisis response strategy
Denial (the company denied accusations, and stated that their lard products could be consumed safely).	* 'Simple denial' (the company rejected the allegation, and declared the raw materials were edible).
Blame (the company alleged the Taiwanese government was responsible for the crisis).	* 'Shifting the blame' (the company attempted to transfer the responsibility to the government for negligence in supervising the imported raw materials).
Responsibility (the company expressed its willingness to take responsibility, and repair the crisis).	* 'Apology' (the company's chairman apologised for the lard products' having caused inconvenience to the consumers, government, and employees). * 'Compensation' (the company's chairman promised to compensate the affected consumers and food industries).

The Ting Hsin food oil crisis broke out on 8 October 2014; the company issued its first press release on 10 October 2014. The data show that the 'denial' frame was prominent in the company's initial communication. This frame was manifest in Ting Hsin's first and third press release. The frame emphasised the company's rejection of accusations: Ting Hsin asserted that they did not adulterate their lard products, and declared that their oil materials were suitable for human consumption. That is, actors rejected accusations in order to save face.

The first press release was about two hundred words in length, and briefly stated that the company had not done anything wrong. The company focused on declaring that they had not added any illegal additives, and that the oil materials were edible. Unlike Chang Chi and Chang Guann, which responded to the crisis immediately after the outbreak of the crisis, Ting Hsin published the first press release three days after the crisis outbreak. The findings show that the media's

news headlines were mostly negative for the company's late reply. For example, the *Liberty Times* used the headline 'The chairman of Ting Hsin, Wei Ying-Chung, is hiding' at the beginning of the crisis (*Liberty Times*, 10. 10. 2014). Similarly, after Ting Hsin issued its first press release, the *Economic Daily* headlined that 'The head of the company has finally come out after disappearing for many days' (*Economic Daily News*, 11. 10. 2014). It can be seen that Ting Hsin's late response left room for the media's speculations and accusations at the beginning of the crisis. The following statement from Ting Hsin illustrates how the company sought to explain their initial position:

Firstly, the Ting Hsin company imported the raw material of lard oil from the Dai Hanh Phuc company in Vietnam. This company stated that the raw materials were 'fit for human use' on its export document, because they were inspected by the Vinacontrol notary office in Vietnam. This office issued a certificate and confirmed that the raw materials were 'fit for human use.' Secondly, the Ting Hsin company declared the raw materials were for food use when importing, and then passing the inspection by the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration of the Ministry of Health and Welfare. They issued the 'food imported permission' to us, which can prove that the raw materials (lard) imported by Ting Hsin company are edible, not animal feed oils (Ting Hsin company, 10 October 2014).

In order to strengthen the 'denial' frame, Ting Hsin also provided three appendices to prove that their lard products were edible, including the export document of the Vietnamese company, the inspection certificate of the notary office in Vietnam, and the permission to import food from the TFDA. However, the TFDA also issued a press release on the same day, which stated that they had contacted the Vietnamese government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan. The Vietnamese government replied to the Taiwanese government on 9 October and stated that the Dai Hanh Phuc company in Vietnam only produced animal feed oil, not edible oil, and mentioned that the raw materials purchased by Ting Hsin were animal feed oil and not suitable for use in foods meant for

human consumption (TFDA, 09. 10. 2014). This reply also revealed that the Dai Hanh Phuc company forged the food label when the animal feed oil was being imported.

As the excerpt shown above shows, Ting Hsin's initial position was that their lard products were safe, and that the raw oil materials they imported from Vietnam were edible. According to the definition of the 'denial' frame developed in the methodology chapter, actors may try to present false information in order to refute accusations against them. The study finds that the company attempted to reject the accusations by concealing the facts. In the prosecutor's investigation, it turned out that the documents (import document and inspection certificate) presented by Ting Hsin had been forged, and that the company had attempted to provide false information to mislead the public.

The study illustrates that the 'denial' frame is associated with 'simple denial' as a crisis response strategy. The study demonstrates that 'simple denial' can be detected in the Ting Hsin company's first and third press release. 'Simple denial' occurs when the actor asserts that there is no crisis (Benoit, 1997). This response strategy constructed a 'denial' frame, in that the company attempted to reject the prosecutor's allegation. Ting Hsin emphasised that the imported raw oil materials used were not harmful to human health (Ting Hsin company, 10. 10. 2014; Ting Hsin company, 06. 11. 2014).

At the same time, the 'denial' frame was accompanied with the 'blame' frame. In the second point of Ting Hsin's first press release, it is specifically mentioned that when the company imported these oil raw materials, they were declared as 'food'. Furthermore, the imported raw materials of lard were alleged to have been approved by TFDA. This implies that Ting Hsin's position was that since the TFDA had approved the import of raw lard materials in the 'food' category, these materials were edible (the fact is that the raw materials were only for animal feed) and that the Taiwanese government had neglected their duty to manage raw material imports. (Ting Hsin company, 10. 10. 2014). However, the TFDA rejected the company's allegation and claimed that the information provided by Ting Hsin misled the public (TFDA, 10. 10. 2014). The details of TFDA's response

will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The study illustrates that the 'blame game' (Knobloch-Westervick & Taylor, 2008) came about between the two actors, and was focused on who should be accountable for the crisis. This is similar to the Chang Guann crisis that has been discussed in the previous chapter. In both cases, the study finds that the commercial companies first blamed the government's food safety management system for faulty overseeing, and then the government pointed to the organisations' illegal behaviour as the cause of the crises. They passed the buck to each other to reduce their responsibility for the crises. Moreover, it can be found that Ting Hsin attempted to blame the Dai Hanh Phuc company in Vietnam for stating that the raw materials were 'fit for human use' on the export document and labelling them as 'food'.

As to the crisis response strategy, 'shifting the blame' was applied by the Ting Hsin company and articulated through a 'blame' frame in the first press release 'Shifting the blame' occurs when an actor blames some outside persons or entities for the crisis (Benoit, 1997; Coombs, 2010a). Ting Hsin attempted to transfer responsibility to the TFDA for permitting the import of raw oil materials as 'food'. If the oil materials did not meet the requirements, the TFDA should have prevented the import. For the company, this implied that the government had already guaranteed that the oil materials could be eaten. If the company was accused of selling adulterated lard products, this showed that the government's inspection system for food import was untrustworthy. It is obvious that Ting Hsin did not want to bear accusations, and so alleged that the government was responsible for the crisis.

In fact, the 'denial' frame and 'blame' frame are not found only in Ting Hsin's first press release, but also in their third press release. The third press release has a very similar content to the first, and its timing (6 November 2014) was after the chairman of company was prosecuted on 30 October 2014. One of the prosecutions was for forging documents. The prosecutor found that the Ting Hsin and Dai Hanh Phuc companies had forged inspection documents of edible oils, and that Ting Hsin had falsified the Vinacontrol notary office's inspection documents of the raw oil materials and then produced the false documents at the

customs when they imported the materials (*Apple Daily*, 31 October 2014). However, in their third press release (November 6), the company still repeatedly alleged that the imported oil raw materials were edible and harmless to humans. The press release stated:

The raw materials imported by the company were verified by the Food and Drug Administration of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and then the certification was issued. Also, we have paid the 20% edible oil tariff. All procedures are in compliance with regulations. In addition, the refined lard and butter produced by our company have been inspected by the notary office SGS and TUV Rheinland in Germany. The oil products have been confirmed not to contain any heavy metals and dioxin exceeding the standard. Therefore, Ting Hsin's oil products do not endanger human health. Please help find out the truth. (Ting Hsin company, 6 November 2014).

In this press release, Ting Hsin claimed the passage ‘The raw materials imported [...] oil tariff’ in bold, to emphasise that the raw oil materials had been imported after passing the food inspection by the TFDA. So, Ting Hsin stated that they had applied to import ‘edible oil’. Even though they insisted that the oil products had been inspected by the relevant inspection organisations (such as Vinacontrol notary office, SGS notary office, and TUV Rheinland), the prosecutor found that all the inspection documents of food oil products provided by Ting Hsin involved forgery (*Apple Daily*, 31. 10. 2014). In addition, Ting Hsin prompted people to ‘help find out the truth’. This implies that the company questioned the prosecutor’s investigation and appealed to the general public to look for the truth. In fact, when the chairman entered the Investigation Bureau on October 11, the media asked him what he thought of the investigation. At that time, he responded to the media that he had no idea that the company's edible oil had a problem (*Apple Daily*, 12. 10. 2014). Therefore, the ‘truth’ here was, according to the company’s position, that they did not deliberately sell adulterated lards to reduce costs, rather than the TFDA’s allegation that they were intentional.

The company followed its initial 'denial' and 'blame' frames with a 'responsibility' frame to respond to the crisis in their second press release. The following sections will provide more detail.

After Taiwanese consumers started to boycott all the Ting Hsin products (Feng, Chen & Hou, 2016), the company eventually took action to attempt to repair the crisis (this was the first crisis with a boycott action). On 11 October, the second press release was issued. The chairman of Ting Hsin stated that 'I was deeply saddened, and was very sorry for the entire Taiwanese society. I will face the anger of the people with the most humble attitude and take all the responsibilities sincerely.' The 'responsibility' frame was prominent across Ting Hsin's second press release. The 'responsibility' frame conveyed that in addition to apologising to consumers, the government, and employees, Ting Hsin's chairman stated he would resign his position and would also bear the responsibility for compensation and close the food oil factory. Ting Hsin's crisis response changed significantly within two days. However, similar to the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, the chairman apologised without admitting their wrongdoing of adulterated lards. The media opined that the chairman's apology made it seem like the chairman only intended to meet consumers' expectations, pleasing them so that they could believe in the company's sincerity and end the boycott (*Liberty Times*, 12. 10. 2014). The following statement from Ting Hsin's chairman illustrates how he chose to take responsibility for the crisis:

Ting Hsin has been operating in Taiwan for decades. I feel really sorry for the inconvenience caused by the food safety issue. I promise I will take full responsibility... I will resign as company chairman. Furthermore, I would like to emphasise again the challenges and difficulties of traceability management in Taiwan's food industry. If the management is out of place, an enterprise will be at stake. I have deeply understood the cruel facts. Therefore, I would like to solemnly announce that the Ting Hsin oil company will be closed from now, until consumers can be assured of consumption... In the face of the vast number of consumers'

boycotts, I fully understand the anger of the people. After all, we are hurting the public trust. However, I will face the problem and be willing to bear all the criticism. I will serve as a lifelong volunteer for food security in Taiwan, and promise to make a contribution to society. Finally, I look forward to all consumers giving our food industry a chance to stand up again (Ting Hsin company, 11 October 2014).

Two points of this excerpt will be discussed. Firstly, the word 'out of place' (*bu dao wei*) in Chinese is more commonly used in sports terminology, where it means that someone fails to pass the ball to the designated position. The implied meaning in the press release is that the management does not fulfil the expectations. The meaning of 'out of place' is similar to that of 'insufficient' or 'inappropriate'; however, the connotation of 'out of place' is relatively neutral compared to that of 'insufficient': therefore, the author uses the word 'out of place' to translate it. Ting Hsin's chairman expressed that the company failed to achieve the goal of food safety due to the traceability management. The company's statement implied that traceability management was a problem tied to the overall food safety circumstances, and not the fault of the company. The food safety issue, then, was caused by the insufficient food safety system in Taiwan. In fact, the food traceability system is managed by the TFDA, according to the chairman's claim, 'challenges and difficulties of traceability management in Taiwan', this implies he believed that the government should be responsible for the traceability system. Here it can be seen that the 'responsibility' frame is connected to the 'blame' frame in the company's second press release. In it, although the chairman expressed his willingness to take responsibility for the crisis, his statement also implied an accusation directed at the government of neglecting the management of the food tracking system, resulting in an inadequate food safety circumstances.

Secondly, unlike Chang Chi and Chang Guann, which issued press releases in their respective company names after the crisis, Ting Hsin's second press release was issued by the chairman in his own name through the company's official website.

In the previous two crises, Chang Chi and Chang Guann mainly manufactured food oil products. However, the manufacture of edible oils was only a part of Ting Hsin's food business. After the Taiwanese people launched a boycott, they refused to buy all the food products made by the Ting Hsin company. This also caused the company's stock to fall sharply (Feng, Chen & Hou, 2016). The chairman's statement makes it clear that the boycott action by the Taiwanese people did indeed put pressure on Ting Hsin (*Liberty Times*, 12. 10. 2014).

As discussed in the literature review chapter, Chen (2004) shows that in Chinese culture the interests of the group are more important than those of the individual. Therefore, if there is a conflict between personal goals and the group's goals, the individual will usually be willing to sacrifice himself in order to seek the best interests of the group (Chen, 2004). Therefore, actors tend to pursue the overall prosperity of the group rather than individual merit (Liu, Chang, & Zhao, 2009; Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). This study has found that this standpoint can be used to explain the Ting Hsin crisis. The company's second press release shows that the chairman attempted to separate himself from the company. He also tried to separate Ting Hsin's edible oil company from the rest of the Ting Hsin food industry. According to this press release, he decided to resign as company chairman and announce the closure of the food oil factory to reduce the impact of the crisis on the Ting Hsin food business. It also can be seen that the chairman used the word 'I' very often and repeatedly emphasised his willingness to take responsibility and bear criticism. He made it seem as if he were sacrificing himself in exchange for the public's understanding towards Ting Hsin.

This study illustrates that the crisis response strategies of 'apology' and 'compensation' were applied by the company, and articulated through the 'responsibility' frame. Both the 'apology' and the 'compensation' strategy are detectable in the company's second press release. 'Apology' is when actors accept full responsibility for a crisis and ask for forgiveness (Benoit, 1997; Coombs, 2010a). The following is an excerpt from Ting Hsin's second press release:

I want to apologise to consumers, the government, shareholders and employees, and our business group. I want to apologise to the

23 million Taiwanese people. The company's management problems caused a food safety issue and panic as well as anxiety among the public. I feel really sorry about it... Especially for the frontline employees, who must face blame from consumers. I fully understand their hard work and the pressure they face. I want to express my deepest apologies, and I will also be willing to bear all the responsibilities (Ting Hsin company, 11 October 2014).

The chairman apologised for causing public anxiety and panic about food safety, but he did not explain why the company had purchased animal feed oils from Vietnam and mixed them with lard for sale, how long it had imported animal feed oil from Vietnam, or why it had purchased animal feed oils but declared that they were food oils when importing. It can be seen that the framing here excludes key facts and issues; instead, Ting Hsin focuses much more on the consumer impact and human costs of the edible oil crisis. The company, then, attempted to downplay the causes of the crisis, and only acknowledged and apologised for the consequences of the crisis. The media accused Ting Hsin's chairman of hiding after the outbreak of the crisis, and stated that his apology was an attempt to stop the consumers' boycott and save the Ting Hsin food business (*Apple Daily*, 11. 10. 2014; *Liberty Times*, 12. 10. 2014). However, the chairman rejected the media's allegation, and explained that 'I am definitely not a person who evades responsibility, and I am not hiding. Since I need to solve the problems and improve the management, I recently went to different factories to strengthen the quality of food safety'. In his press release, he did not specify what problems he had solved or what management improvements he had made. Also, it seems that closing the edible oil manufacturing factory did not fundamentally solve the food safety problems caused by the Ting Hsin company.

Similar to the Chang Chi and Chang Gusnn companies' apology, the Ting Hsin company's apology was for the consumers' inconvenience and anxiety that were caused by their oil products, not for the wrongdoing of adulterated oils. However, the difference is that from the word count and content of the three companies' apology statement, the Ting Hsin's apology was relatively sincere than the

previous two companies. In Ting Hsin chairman's statement, he also expressed his apologies to the employees, which did not appear in the press releases of the Chang Chi and Chang Guann companies.

The 'compensation' strategy was another crisis response strategy which reinforced the 'responsibility' frame, and pointed out that the company was willing to compensate victims. In the second press release issued on 11 October 2014, in addition to the 'apology' strategy, the company's chairman also promised to provide consumers with returns:

We are absolutely responsible for the rights and interests of consumers, and the company will fully deal with the compensation of affected consumers and manufacturers in accordance with the regulations. The company will never evade responsibility for the recall, return or refund of products (Ting Hsin company, 11 October 2014).

Even though Ting Hsin promised to refund or recall the oil products, the media believed that the damage this company had caused to Taiwan could not be calculated with money. After this series of food oil crises in the country, the main problem was that the number of people eating out had decreased (*Apple Daily*, 18. 10. 2014). The biggest victims were food manufacturing and catering industries. This was not a problem that could be solved simply by refunding or recalling products.

7.3 Framing the crisis: the perspective of the Taiwanese government

After the outbreak of the crisis on 8 October 2014, the government issued more press releases than the Ting Hsin company, which only issued three. In the first edible oil crisis (Chang Chi's) the governmental press releases were 19, and mainly from the TFDA (Taiwan Food and Drug Administration). In the second food oil crisis (Chang Guann's), there were 24 press releases issued by both the TFDA and Executive Yuan. But in the third oil crisis, there was a significant increase in the governmental press releases, now 38 in number, and the TFDA,

minister, prime minister, and president all responded to the crisis. 27 of these came from the TFDA, while 2 were issued by the Ministry of Health and Welfare; 7 came from the Executive Yuan and 2 from the President's office. The hierarchical level of the government's response also increased. The President's office, too, issued press releases, which highlights the importance the Taiwanese government attached to food safety after the third edible oil crisis. Therefore, as the crisis escalated, the highest governmental level got involved.

In addition, as mentioned in the background section, in the government authorities' press releases, there were 7 press release involved in mentioning the previous companies: Chang Guann, Chang Chi, or both. This shows that the Ting Hisn is not an isolated edible oil crisis, the Taiwan's serious food oil crises had become a major food safety issue.

The Taiwanese government focused on three frames in communicating the crisis: 'blame', 'responsibility' and 'economy' (see table 7.2). Table 7.2 shows the Taiwanese government's framing, and demonstrates the different crisis response strategies connected with the three frames. The following subsections will discuss this in more detail.

Table 7.2 Taiwanese government framing and crisis response strategies

Frame	Crisis response strategy
Blame (the government criticised the company's wrongdoing and stated that the company should be accountable for the crisis).	* 'Shifting the blame' (the government condemned the company for violating the food regulations and overlooking corporate ethics) * 'Bolstering' (the government stressed that the exposure of the crisis was due to the government's investigation)
Responsibility (the government suggested various improvements to repair the crisis).	* 'Corrective action' (the government proposed different solutions to prevent the edible oil crisis from occurring in the future)
Economy (the government stressed the negative economic impact on consumers and food industries).	* 'Minimisation' (the government attempted to decrease the perceived damage caused by the crisis)

The 'blame' frame presented in the TFDA's press releases mainly focused on refuting Ting Hsin's allegation, and blamed the company for misleading the public with false information. The finding shows that the TFDA responded to the Ting Hsin after the company's initial denial on the same day. As mentioned earlier, the Ting Hsin alleged that their imported raw materials for producing lard products had been approved by TFDA after the outbreak of the crisis (Ting Hsin company, 10. 10. 2014). However, the TFDA stated that they had verified the documents presented by the Ting Hsin with the Vietnamese Dai Hanh Phuc company through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Vietnamese government replied to them that the oil material purchased by Ting Hsin in Vietnam was feed oil, and not suitable for human food use (TFDA, 10. 10. 2014). The TFDA also stated that the Ting Hsin company had violated the food regulation by providing false information and certificate (TFDA, 10. 10. 2014). The TFDA confirmed that the information provided by Ting Hsin in their first press release was incorrect. It can be seen that the Ting Hsin's disinformation involved the deception of the company in in the crisis. From the content of the three companies' chairmen prosecuted by the prosecutors, they were all prosecuted for fraud, and violation of food safety regulations, however the Ting Hsin also involved forgery (Feng, Chen, Hou, 2016).

In addition, the TFDA emphasised that the company should not sell adulterated lard products for profit, which violated the food regulation. Therefore, in order to protect the rights and interests of consumers, the company's oil products should be suspended from production and sale (TFDA, 08. 10. 2014; TFDA, 11. 10. 2014). From the TFDA's standpoint, the raw oil materials imported from Vietnam were simply animal feed oils, and could not be consumed by humans. In order to reduce costs, the company had mixed feed oils with lard and then sold them to consumers. It was an illegal behaviour. As discussed above, a 'blame game' took place between the government and the Ting Hsin company at the beginning of the crisis. In this blame game, it can be seen that the media stood with the government. The *Apple Daily*, *Liberty Times* and *Economic Daily* all used the TFDA sources to emphasise that Ting Hsin's initial denial was not based on facts and truth (*Apple Daily*, 12. 10. 2014; *Liberty Times*, 12. 10. 2014; *Economic Daily News*,

13. 10. 2014).

The press releases issued by the Executive Yuan and the President's office were relatively harsh in accusing Ting Hsin. Both press releases, from the Executive Yuan and the President's office, used the word 'evil-minded' (*Hei Sin*) to describe the Ting Hsin company. The following is the excerpt from the Executive Yuan's:

The Prime Minister, Jiang Yi-Hua, emphasises that the evil-minded food oil manufacturer involved in this crisis apparently violated the regulation prohibiting adulteration, which not only endangered human health, but also defied the government's authority. The prosecutor should not be subject to any restrictions when investigating, and should strictly carry out investigation (Executive Yuan, 10. 10. 2014).

The other one is from the President's office:

President Ma Ying-Jeou states that the government will definitely make the public feel the strength and determination to exercise governmental authority. Besides, the government will completely wipe out evil-minded companies, and let people's lives return to normal. President Ma strongly condemns the illegal behaviour of evil-minded manufacturers such as Ting Hsin and Chang Guann. He also calls on the public to cooperate with the government; we should not only investigate the truth of adulterated oils, but also boycott the malicious food products and food enterprises (President office, 13. 10. 2014).

The word 'evil-minded' (*Hei Sin*) in Chinese is usually used to refer to a person's or an organisation's intention that is sinister, evil, vicious, and malicious. In Western culture, a person can also be described as 'evil-minded', although it is an unusual expression. In Chinese culture, 'evil-minded' (*Hei Sin*) can describe either people or ideas with malicious intent; however, this word is relatively uncommonly used in describing illegal food products or food industries. This is a

term that the government had not used in response to the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crisis. Compared with the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, the number of affected food industries and food products were more than previous two, and international trade had been impacted, making the Taiwanese government's attitude towards the Ting Hsin crisis tougher (Chen, 2018).

In the two previous crises, most governmental press releases and media press releases used words such as 'unconscionable,' 'dishonest' or 'unscrupulous' to describe the edible oil companies that had caused the crises. Compared with these words, 'evil-minded' (*Hei Sin*) has a more negative meaning in the Chinese language. Yet, this word appeared many times in the government's press releases during the Ting Hsin crisis. This indicates that the language the government used to respond to the repeated edible oil crises had correspondingly become critical. In the above excerpt, the government's press release used 'evil-minded' not only to describe Ting Hsin, but also Chang Guann. It can be seen that the government's stronger word was not only directed at Ting Hsin company, but at edible oil manufacturers involved in illegal behaviours. After the Ting Hsin edible oil crisis, the term 'evil-minded' (*Hei Sin*) has become more commonly used by media in food safety, especially to describe harmful, unhealthy or illegal food products or food businesses (Chueh & Chen, 2016).

As to crisis response strategy, 'shifting the blame' was applied by the government and connected with a 'blame' frame. Both the TFDA and the Executive Yuan's press releases mentioned that the Ting Hsin company should not have violated the regulations and ignored corporate ethics as well as public health (Executive Yuan, 11. 10. 2014; TFDA, 08. 10. 2014). The Taiwanese government believed that the adulteration of lard products was caused by the company's illegal behaviour. In particular, the Ting Hsin company knew that the raw oil materials they imported were animal feed oils, but declared them as destined for food use at the customs (TFDA, 11. 10. 2014). In contrast, the Ting Hsin company claimed that the food safety problem had been caused by the insufficient food safety inspection system in Taiwan (Ting Hsin company, 11. 10. 2014). Here it can be seen that the government and the company each opined that the other should

take responsibility for the crisis, the 'blame game' took place between these two actors in attributing the causes of the crisis (Figure 7.2).

Interestingly, at the same time as the Executive Yuan and the TFDA condemned the Ting Hsin company's adulterated lards in their press releases, they also emphasised that Ting Hsin's wrongdoing had been exposed and become public by the Taiwanese authority. After the Chang Guann crisis, the Taiwanese government and the prosecution actively cooperated to investigate the raw materials of edible oils on the market (TFDA, 09. 10. 2014). When they were tracing the sources of raw oil materials, they found that the company's lard products were made of animal feed oil mixed with lard. The following is an excerpt from the Executive Yuan's press release:

According to the latest investigation result by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, it has been verified that the Ting Hsin company imported non-edible animal feed oil from Vietnam and then adulterated their lard products. The government and the Vietnamese government have confirmed that the Vietnamese oil factory does not produce edible oil, so the government has blocked the company's oil tank in southern Taiwan (Executive Yuan, 11. 10. 2014).

In the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, the crises broke out due to whistleblowers. This caused criticism of the Taiwanese government by the general public and the media for neglecting food safety management, and for failing to fulfil its supervisory responsibility. At the beginning of the Ting Hsin crisis, the government emphasised that the exposure of the wrongdoing was due to the government's actively tracing the raw materials of edible oils on the market after the Chang Guann crisis (Executive Yuan, 09. 10. 2014). As to crisis response strategy, 'bolstering' was applied by the government and articulated with the 'blame' frame. The findings show that the Executive Yuan's press release stressed that the Taiwanese government had fulfilled their responsibility of supervision and management (Executive Yuan, 09. 10. 2014). The government, then, focused on their positive role in disclosing the Ting Hsin crisis. In fact, after

the the Chang Guann crisis, the government doubted whether there were other factories that collect recycled oils and then sold them to other edible oil companies, so the central government cooperated with local governments and prosecution to investigate the flow of recycled oil in Taiwan and the raw materials imported by various oil factories. Therefore, without the outbreak of the Chang Guann crisis, Ting Hsin's import of animal feed oil and used it as a raw material for manufacturing lard would not have been discovered (Feng, Chen & Hou, 2016).

In addition to the 'blame' frame, the 'responsibility' frame was also prominent in the TFDA's, the Executive Yuan's and the President's office's press releases (5 from the TFDA, 2 from Ministry of Health and Welfare, 4 from the Executive Yuan, and 2 from the President's office). The 'responsibility' frame was reinforced throughout the government's provision of different treatments for the crisis. In the Ting Hsin crisis, the government proposed more improvement measures than in the previous two crises. These included, firstly, strengthening the management of imported oils: the government classified imported oil products into three categories (edible oil, feed oil, and industrial oil), and attempted to control the flow of these oils to prevent oil manufacturers from mixing non-edible oils with food oils and then selling them. Secondly, improving the management of waste oil: after the Chang Guann crisis, the government's policy was to collect only waste oils for restaurants and food stores, but after the Ting Hsin crisis, the government decided to expand the collection to general households. Thirdly, enhancing the food oil traceability system: the government mandated that all edible oil manufactures, no matter whether they imported or exported their oil products, should upload all information to the government's cloud system within three days so that the government could track the flow of their products (Executive Yuan, 11. 10. 2014; Executive Yuan, 06. 11. 2014; TFDA, 14. 10. 2014; President's office, 20. 10. 2014).

As to the crisis response strategy, a 'corrective action' strategy was applied by the government to frame their expectation of responsibility. The government attempted to improve food safety management in various ways and the different

'correct actions' suggested by the government were an attempt to strengthen the 'responsibility' frame. However, on the other hand, these proposed policies also demonstrate that the management of the food safety system in Taiwan was inadequate (Chen, 2018). In fact, before the outbreak of these food safety crises, the public in Taiwan rarely paid attention to the issue of edible oil, but after they broke out, the numerous media reports caused the concern about food safety crises to gradually increase, and forced the government to react to the crises actively as well as to improve food safety efficiently (Tsai, 2017). In the Ting Hsin crisis, even if the government proposed several improved policies, the media reports were mostly negative and insufficient. The media pointed out that food safety is connected to the management of each stage, such as making regulations, importing raw materials, manufacturing foods, selling products, and collecting waste (*Economic Daily News*, 20. 10. 2014; *Apple Daily*, 15. 10. 2014). Therefore, *Apple Daily* stated that if the government could not thoroughly supervise and control every stage, the loopholes in the food safety chain could not be stopped (*Apple Daily*, 15. 10. 2014).

Another point that can be discussed is that after the outbreak of the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, the President's office did not issue any press releases about the crises. But during the Ting Hsin crisis, the President's office issued two press releases. This indicates that edible oil crises in Taiwan have become an important national security issue. Three points can be examined from Taiwan's political environment.

First, as mentioned in the literature review chapter. Taiwan's political system is similar to France's semi-presidentialism. The executive authority is composed of the President and the Prime Minister. The President is the head of the country. The Prime Minister's appointment or removal is decided by the President. The President directs major decisions and controls the military and diplomacy. The President is directly elected by the people, but the Prime Minister leads the operation of various administrative ministries, such as administrative affairs, internal affairs, economy, health, and education (Shen, 2011). Therefore, generally speaking, the Taiwanese President will hold a press conference or issue

a press release only when the country is facing a major issue or when the government has to make important decisions about national interests and security. Since Ting Hsin's was the third edible oil crisis breaking out in a year, and since Ting Hsin was the largest edible oil supplier in Taiwan, the crisis had affected more than 200 catering and food industries in Taiwan, and thousands of food products were recalled. In addition to affecting a large number of consumers in Taiwan, the countries that had food trade with Taiwan, such as Hong Kong, Japan, and Malaysia had also announced their decision to ban the import of certain Taiwanese food products. Ting Hsin's was a major food safety crisis, and was not limited to Taiwan but had international dimensions, so the President's office's press release mentioned that this crisis had already become a national security issue (President's office, 20. 10. 2014). This shows the severity and importance of the Ting Hsin food oil crisis.

Secondly, the President's office's press release also stated that 'in order to enhance administrative function for food safety and effectively promote food safety management, the government will set up a 'Food Safety Office' to foster the inter-departmental food safety management' (President's office, 13. 10. 2014). The 'Food Safety Office' is similar to a central command centre: it is an organisation that is sometimes temporarily established because of some major events. This organisation can dispatch and coordinate human and material resources within different ministries. The Taiwanese government sets up the central command centre only when it encounters serious incidents, especially natural disasters, such as the 921 earthquake (the earthquake happened on 21 September 1999), SARS, and typhoon Morakot (Low, Varughese & Pang, 2011); however, the government had never set up this mechanism for dealing with food safety issues. Through the establishment of the 'Food Safety Office' after the outbreak of the Ting Hsin crisis, the government attempted to show that they were concerned with food safety, and that their intervention was stronger than in the previous two crises. Nevertheless, this action was criticised by the media for just pretending to solve the problem and for being simply unable to effectively do so (*Liberty Times*, 17. 10. 2014). This office still exists today, and in order to let the public understand the government's efforts on improving the food safety

system, it publishes food safety assessment reports every year (as mentioned in the previous section, the 2019 Taiwan food safety annual assessment report was issued by the Food Safety Office). This can be seen as one of the impacts of the food oil crises.

Thirdly, as discussed in the literature review chapter, before the outbreak of the crises, the ruling party (KMT) faced a severe support decline (Ho, 2015; *Apple Daily*, 14. 10. 2014). The media alleged that President Ma Ying-Jeou had stressed that the government attached importance to food safety only for the purpose of election and to save the ruling party's (Kuomintang, also called KMT) momentum, since one month after the Ting Hsin crisis (November 2014), there would be an election of mayors in Taiwan. As the leader of the ruling party, President Ma Ying-Jeou was under pressure to effectively deal with the food oil crises before the election (in the event, the ruling party lost the election) (*Apple Daily*, 14. 10. 2014) In the end, the KMT lost the majority. It can be seen that since Ma must take responsibility for the election results, he attempted to rescue the KMT party's momentum by showing active crisis management. This indicates that for President Ma, the Ting Hsin crisis was not only a matter of food safety management, but also full of political calculations and considerations.

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, Ma admitted that he did not deal with food safety issue well when he was interviewed by Storm Media in 2017 (*Storm Media*, 24. 05. 2017). Ma emphasised that the food safety issues caused the people to lose confidence in the government's ability. This was also one of the reasons why the KMT lost the elections (2014 mayoral election, and 2016 presidential election). The other main reason was that when Ma dealt with the relationship between China and Taiwan, his proposed policies were too pro-China, which made some voters unable to accept KMT's political inclination (*Storm Media*, 24. 05. 2017). Although he admitted that he did not handle the food safety crises well, he did not further explain why he thought so and what had caused him to fail at dealing with the crises. This indicates that the people's distrust of the government is ultimately reflected in the election results. The cumulative edible oil crises were not only food safety issues, but also political

issues. Lee (2009) states that political, economic, social contexts, these would compose a powerful external crisis environment and then influence the government's decision-making. The Ting Hsin crisis indirectly caused changes in Taiwan's political environment. In the end, the KMT has changed from the ruling party to the opposition party, and the DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) has become the ruling party.

Alongside the 'responsibility' frame, the 'economy' frame also appeared in the Executive Yuan and President's office's press releases. (3 from Executive Yuan, and 1 from the President's office). The 'economy' frame was presented in the government's press releases for the first time during the three edible oil crises. Two aspects reinforced the 'economy' frame.

The first aspect articulated within the 'economy' frame is that the Ting Hsin food oil crisis had caused a negative economic impact on consumers because of the shortage of lard products.

In the Executive Yuan's press releases, the Taiwanese government mentioned that Chang Guann (the company that had used waste oil as raw material, mixing it with lard) and Ting Hsin were both domestic lard factories with a high market share, which caused a great impact on Taiwan's food and oil industries, especially because these two crises occurred only a month apart. Therefore, there occurred a temporary shortage of lard, and consumers faced the problem of not being able to buy lard or even food products that used lard as a raw material in the short term. Although this situation could not be avoided, the government promised that they would take supporting measures: for example, importing lard from other countries, and reducing tariffs on lard imports (Executive Yuan, 11. 10. 2014; Executive Yuan, 12. 10. 2014). It can be seen that the 'blame' frame was connected to the 'economy' frame here. When the government framed the economic impact on the general consumers, they once again emphasised that these economic difficulties were caused by the food oil companies.

The second aspect connected to the 'economy' frame is that the Ting Hsin crisis caused a huge impact on Taiwan's economy. The Ting Hsin's adulterated lards

had not only led to economic losses in the food industries, but also influenced Taiwan's food exports and the decline in the stock market. The findings show that the Taiwanese government emphasised this in their press releases. The following statement from the President's office illustrates how the government responded to the crisis:

In the past two months, there have been major food safety incidents in the country. It is estimated that the overall output value of the food industry will be reduced by NT \$ 17.7 billion (£440 million), of which the export value is about NT \$ 6.4 billion (£160 million)... The President believes that evil-minded manufacturers should be condemned; however, the affected food industries are the victims. Therefore, the government will help them resurge (President's office, 20 November, 2014).

As to the crisis response strategy, the 'minimisation' strategy was employed by the government and articulated through the 'economy' frame. 'Minimisation' occurs when an actor attempts to dilute the perceived damage by the crisis, or alleges that the crisis is less serious than it appears (Benoit, 1997). The above excerpt shows that the government responded to the economic losses and economic impact caused by the edible oil crises. At the same time, the President's office also emphasised their supporting measures and policies to reduce the consumers' and food industries' negative perception and minimise the perceived damage caused by the crises in their press release. However, the fact is that many food companies had suffered more than once. Some food manufacturers originally used Chang Guann's lard products, but after the outbreak of the Chang Guann crisis, they replaced them with Ting Hsin's lards. They did not expect another adulterated oil crisis to occur again within a month, and this seriously affected the quality and reputation of their food products (*Liberty Times*, 14. 10. 2014). It can be found that for the government, the Ting Hsin crisis was more complicated than the previous two crises, because this crisis triggered more issues, including politics and economics and food safety policies.

7.4 Framing the crisis: the perspective of the Taiwanese newspapers

54 relevant news items appeared in the three newspapers in relation to the Ting Hsin crisis: 22 in the *Apple Daily*, 21 in the *Liberty Times*, and 11 in the *Economic Daily News*. The Taiwanese media coverage mainly focused on three frames with regard to the crisis: 'blame', 'health' and 'economy' (see table 7.3). There were 51 in the Chang Chi crisis, and 45 in the Chang Guann crisis. The number of media reports in Ting Hsin was relatively more than the previous crises. Table 7.3 shows the findings of Taiwanese media's framing. The following sections will provide more detail about this.

Table 7.3 Findings about the Taiwanese newspapers

Frame	
Blame	The media blamed the government's failure in food safety management, and accused the company's adulterated oil products of being unconscionable.
Health	The media stressed that health risks might obtain after the consumption of Ting Hsin's mixed lards.
Economy	The media emphasised the economic losses and economic impacts caused by the adulterated food oil.

In the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, when the media coverage involved the 'blame' frame, most of the news reports focused on accusing the Taiwanese government. However, in the Ting Hsin crisis, the media blamed not only the government, but the Ting Hsin company as well. The 'blame' frame was prominent in the media coverage throughout the crisis. The following sections will first focus on exploring how the media blamed the Ting Hsin company, and then on examining how the media coverage condemned the Taiwanese government.

This study finds that 16 news items (7 from the *Apple Daily*, 5 from *Liberty Times*, and 4 from the *Economic Daily News*) involved blaming the company and accusing the Ting Hsin company of illegal behaviour. The company was accused on two main grounds, which strengthened the 'blame' frame in media coverage. The first was that this was not the first time that the Ting Hsin company had been involved in an edible oil crisis. As mentioned in the background section, Ting Hsin purchased Chang Chi' and Chang Guann's oil and used to make food

products. However, during the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, the Ting Hsin company alleged that they did not know the edible oils used in the manufacture of food products were problematic. They cast the company as a victim that knew nothing about the adulterated oils. In this case, the *Economic Daily News* and *Apple Daily* both reported that Ting Hsin, a large Taiwanese food industry, had been found to use adulterated oils three times a year. However, Ting Hsin was itself found to have imported animal feed oils from Vietnam since 2012 and mixed lard with them, and then sold lard products to consumers. The following quote is from the *Apple Daily*:

Three major food safety incidents a year, each related to Ting Hsin. A year ago, in Chang Chi's case, Ting Hsin declared that the company bought the adulterated olive oil that was mixed with copper chlorophyll by mistake. At that time, Wei Ying-Chung³ immediately apologised to the general public. However, this time he hid, and then issued an inexplicable press release that responded perfunctorily. Ting Hsin was not only a recidivist, but a habitual offender. Do the Taiwanese deserve this? (*Apple Daily*, 11 October 2014).

When the *Apple Daily*, *Economic Daily* and *Liberty Times* reported on Ting Hsin's illegal action, they all emphasised that it was the third time that the company had been involved in edible oil crises. The media appeared to agree that in order to reduce their costs and make profits, Ting Hsin had neglected public health. Besides, the news reports also focused on Ting Hsin's having been found to have imported feed oil from Vietnam since 2012 (making it absolutely impossible for the company not to know that their raw material was animal feed oil rather than edible oil), thereby highlighting that Ting Hsin's illegal behaviour was intentional, and misleading customers.

The second aspect articulated within the 'blame' frame is that Ting Hsin's apology was deemed untrustworthy by the media. The Ting Hsin chairman's

³ The Ting Hsin company's chairman.

apology statement was issued on 11 October. Media reports on this were mostly negative, stating that the apology was not credible at all. Both the *Liberty Times* and the *Apple Daily* mentioned that although the chairman had apologised, he had not said anything about the adulterated lard. The media criticised him for evading the crucial point and his integrity was questioned.

Although Wei Ying-Chung emphasised that the company's executives have no excuses for avoiding their duties, and promised that he would never evade subsequent judicial investigations, he still did not make the issue clear. In addition, last year, Ting Hsin Food used Chang Chi's adulterated olive oil. Wei Ying-Chung held a press conference to apologise, but then changed his mind and said that his apology had been due to criticism from the outside world. He said he did not know that there was a problem with Chang Chi's oil products. It can be seen that his integrity needs to be tested. Ting Hsin had been repeatedly involved adulterated oil issues. Although the company repeatedly apologised, it was no longer trustworthy. Ting Hsin alleged that they were a conscientious company, but they sold malicious oil products. This company has no business ethics and is not benevolent. Ting Hsin's managers should relearn proper business ethics education. (*Liberty Time*, 12 October 2014)

In fact, according to the press release issued by Ting Hsin's chairman, his apology was intended to acknowledge the inconvenience caused by the adulterated lard products, but he did not mention whether the imported raw oil materials were feed oils, and whether they were suitable for consumption. The *Liberty Times* also paid attention to this aspect, and declared that Wei Ying-Chung avoided all key questions and did not propose any specific measures. His apology was insincere, and the public would not accept it. The *Liberty Times* called on the prosecutor to immediately detain Wei Ying-Chung, confiscate his illegal profits, and compensate the consumers (*Liberty Times*, 12. 10. 2014). It can be seen from this that the chairman's apology not only did not help to clarify the facts and gain

public understanding, but was accused by the media of being incredible.

In the previous two crises, Chang Chi and Chang Guann both issued apology statements in their press releases after the crisis, but the media did not comment on their apology. However, in the Ting Hsin crisis, the media opined that the chairman's apology was not trustworthy (*Apple Daily*, 12. 10. 2014), and even used the word 'fake' to describe his apology (*Liberty Times*, 12. 10. 2014). The main reason for this is that although Ting Hsin had apologised when the company's food products were found to be made with Chang Chi's adulterated olive oil, Ting Hsin was successively involved in the Chang Guann crisis, and finally the prosecutor even found that the company had also made mixed oils (*Apple Daily*, 12. 10. 2014). This company, then, had purposely broken the rules; this caused the chairman's apology to be seen as a performance by the media.

The media also accused the Taiwanese government of incompetent management in food safety. The study finds that 20 news items (9 from the *Apple Daily*, 7 from *Liberty Times*, and 4 from the *Economic Daily News*) involved blaming the government. Three aspects can be seen within the 'blame' frame.

The first is that the media believed that the government had been negligent in managing oil products. On 13 October 2014, the three newspapers *Apple Daily*, *Liberty Times*, and *Economic Daily News* all reported that the Ministry of Health and Welfare had confirmed that the Ting Hsin company had imported about 3,216 tons of feed oil from Vietnam over more than three years. It means that although the company had mixed the animal feed oil with lards since 2012, the government had been unaware of these practices (*Liberty Times*, 13. 10. 2014). Obviously, the problem of Taiwan's oil products was the government's insufficient management of the food supply chain, such as raw materials, oils inspection, or direction of goods flow (*Liberty Times*, 13. 10. 2014). In fact, the raw material for producing edible lard is healthy pigs; however, the raw material for making feed oil is slaughtered livestock and poultry. The two sources are not the same, and the costs are also different. Feed oil accounts for about 2-6% of finished animal feed (*Apple Daily*, 13. 10. 2014). Therefore, it is reasonable to estimate how many animals such as pigs, cattle, and sheep are in Taiwan, and

how much feed is needed; after deducting domestically produced feed oil, a reasonable amount of imported feed oil in the country for one year can be calculated (*Apple Daily*, 13. 10. 2014). It can be seen that the media believed that if the government had been able to inspect oil products, improve a tracking system for flow direction, and manage imported raw oil materials, the edible oil crisis could have been prevented.

The second aspect to do with the 'blame' frame is that the media regarded the 'Food Safety Office' established by the President as pointless and ineffective. As mentioned above, the press release issued by the President's office stated that the President had decided to organise a 'Food Safety Office' in response to the food oil crises. This office can coordinate and integrate human and material resources of various ministries to solve food safety problems (President's office, 13. 10. 2014). However, *Apple Daily* and *Liberty Times* questioned the purpose of establishing the 'Food Safety Office'. The following quote is taken from the *Apple Daily*:

The purpose of the current TFDA (Taiwan Food and Drug Administration) is very similar to the 'Food Safety Office'. The goal is to mobilize human and material resources to deal with problems when a food safety incident occurs. The president's statement shows that the government does not understand food safety management at all, which has caused the whole country to fall into a food safety crisis and caused the collapse of Taiwan's gourmet industry. It's really hard to understand why the president announced such a ridiculous office with a great fanfare. (*Apple Daily*, 15 October 2014)

According to one line of media commentary, every time a food safety incident occurs, the government never has an overall plan for a fundamental transformation, and lacks comprehensive planning for food safety management. This caused to the reoccurrence of the food safety issues. (Tsai, 2017). The *Liberty Times* disapproved of the government's action, and opined that solving the food safety crisis did not depend on the establishment of a temporary

organisation; the President simply wanted to rescue the upcoming election (*Liberty Times*, 14. 10. 2014). This implies that the outbreak of crisis also influenced the political environment in Taiwan. It can be seen that the government's solution to the Ting Hsin crisis was not recognised as worthwhile by the media, which alleged instead that what the government had done was aimed at a different goal. The government's crisis response was framed in the context of the upcoming election of mayors, but the media believed that the government's action in response to the crisis had other political purposes. Here it can be seen that the Taiwanese government's 'responsibility' frame was challenged by the media's 'blame' frame. The government attempted to establish 'Food Safety Office' to integrate resources and manage food safety, however the media opined that their purpose was only for the election.

The third aspect articulated within the 'blame' frame is that the Prime Minister should be accountable for the crises. Since the Ting Hsin crisis had occurred only one month after the Chang Guann crisis, the *Apple Daily*, *Liberty Times*, and *Economic Daily News* all had the same emphasises, namely, that Taiwan had experienced three edible oil crises in a year. The government's management and inspection capabilities were being increasingly questioned. In particular, after the Chang Guann crisis, on 23 September, several members of Parliament from the opposition party, DPP (Democratic Progressive Party), stated that the Ting Hsin had the largest market share in Taiwan's edible oil products, so its raw oil materials should be investigated (*Apple Daily*, 09. 10. 2014). At the time, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health and Welfare replied that the raw material imported by Ting Hsin was edible oil, and the Prime Minister even promised that non-edible oil did not flow into the food chain. However, two weeks later, the government confirmed that Ting Hsin imported animal feed oils as raw materials for lards (*Apple Daily*, 09. 10. 2014). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Minister of Health and Welfare resigned his position after the Chang Guann crisis. Therefore, as reported by the media, suggesting that the Prime Minister should also resign in response to the continual edible oil crises:

From the occurrence of the Ting Hsin's edible oil crisis to the present, we have not seen any government officials under investigation, nor have any administrative officers assured the people that there would be no more illegally oil products on the market... After the Ting Hsin crisis, the most worrying thing is whether the edible oils on the market can be eaten, but [President] Ma Ying-Jeou's countermeasure is to set up a 'Food Safety Office'. The government's incompetence is revealed here. Ma Ying-Jeou should not only think about his position, but of the people. He should let Jiang Yi-Hua resign as Prime Minister. (*Liberty Times*, 18 October 2014)

Although the Prime Minister did not resign, this series of crises did indeed challenge the government's competence and capability. After the Chang Guann crisis (the second crisis), due to criticism and accusations of negligence in food safety management from the outside world, the Minister of Health and Welfare resigned on 3 October 2014 (*Apple Daily*, 04. 10. 2014). However, the food safety problem had not been solved. Instead, a third edible oil crisis occurred a month later. It can be seen that the reform of food safety is not a problem that can be solved in a short period of time, nor can it be solved by replacing a minister with a new one: it requires a systematic reform of the entire food industry chain in Taiwan. After the Chang Chi and Chang Guann food oil crises, the government tried to strengthen food safety management and improve food quality, but they still failed to prevent the malpractice from happening.

The 'health' frame was also present in the media coverage. Compared with the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, several media reports involved the 'health' frame, with 8 and 9 news articles respectively. In the Ting Hsin crisis, the 'health' frame was less present in the media coverage. There were only 4 news items related to the 'health' frame (2 from the *Apple Daily*, and 2 from *Liberty Times*). Similar to the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, the 'health' mainly focused on highlighting the potential health risks that might occur after the consumption of Ting Hsin's lard products, by interviewing doctors in their news reports (most of

the interviewees were interviewed during the previous two crises).

Both the *Liberty Times* and *Apple Daily* reported that animal feed oil was inedible for human beings, because the ingredients of animal feed oil include dead animals, animal organs, and even many chemical components. If Taiwanese people consumed these adulterated oils for a long time, and were exposed to unhealthy substances, this increased the risk of cancer. The following is an excerpt from the *Apple Daily*, which interviewed a toxicologist and used this as a source in its news items:

How much animal feed oil do the Taiwanese swallow? Our country's office in Vietnam confirmed that the Vietnamese oil company that sells feed oil to Ting Hsin has sold a total of 48 million kilograms of feed oil to Ting Hsin, which has then imported it into Taiwan in the past three and a half years (since 2012). These oils must have been eaten by consumers. It is estimated that of 23 million people in Taiwan, each person has consumed about two kilograms of adulterated oil... The toxicologist, Hung Tung-Jung, stated that feed oil may contain carcinogens and heavy metals, as well as aflatoxin that may threaten the liver and kidney function of the human body. These ingredients may increase the risk of cancer and cause damage to liver functioning. This is probably one of the reasons that the incidence of colorectal cancer and liver cancer in Taiwan is higher than in other countries. (*Apple Daily*, 20 October 2014)

This excerpt shows that the reporter used the doctor's insight to reinforce the 'health' frame, by stressing the possible disease that might be caused after consuming Ting Hsin's lards. In fact, during the three crises, when media's reports involved the discussion of the relationship between the adulterated edible oils and potential health risks, three newspapers were mainly relied on experts' opinions. They included the experts' allegations in media coverage and used them to support the health frame.

The study finds that when *Apple Daily* and *Liberty Times* framed 'health', their reports also emphasised that the Ting Hsin had imported animal feed oil from Vietnam for more than three years. Due to this fact, the media blamed the government and the company. The connection between the 'health' and the 'blame' frame is evident. The media blamed the government by stressing its failure to supervise and inspect edible oil products for a long time. If it had not been for the Chang Guann crisis, the government would not have begun to check the raw materials for the edible oil on the market, and Ting Hsin's mixed oil would not have been discovered. The media also put blame on Ting Hsin's customs declaration and inspection documents, which had all been forged since 2012 (*Apple Daily*, 20. 10. 2014; *Liberty Times*, 10. 10. 2014). Therefore, for more than three years, both the Taiwanese government and company have put consumers health at risk. This highlights the government's negligence in food safety management, inspection, supervision. Also, it can be seen that the relationship between the the Chang Guann and Ting Hsin crisis is that the outbreak of the Chang Guann crisis triggered the Ting Hsin crisis occurred.

Alongside the 'blame' and 'health' frames, the 'economy' frame also appeared in the *Economic Daily*, *Apple Daily*, and *Liberty Times*. 12 news items (3 from the *Apple Daily*, 4 from the *Liberty Times*, and 5 from the *Economic Daily News*). The 'economy' frame in the media coverage consisted in emphasising the various economic shocks that were caused by the company, especially the impact of export, domestic demand and the stock market. This accords with the 'definition of problem' element of the 'economy' frame that has been presented in the frame matrix. The 'economy' frame was more prominent than the previous two crises in the media It was because the the economic impact caused by the Ting Hsin company was more serious than the Chang Chi and Chang Guann companies. Two aspects articulated within the 'economy' frame can be discussed.

First, the media emphasised that Ting Hsin's adulterated oil crisis had hit Taiwan's economy, including domestic demand, foreign sales, and the stock market (*Economic Daily News*, 18 October 2014; *Economic Daily*, 23. 10. 2014; *Apple Daily*, 24. 10. 2014). Also, the *Economic Daily News* mentioned that the

edible oil crises had impacted the tourism industry that Taiwan had developed in recent years (*Economic Daily News*, 18. 10. 2014)

Over the years, the government has worked hard to develop the tourism industry and to improve the visibility of Taiwan. From mixed olive oil and waste oil to adulterated oil, Taiwanese food is not reassuring. How can Taiwan claim to be a gourmet kingdom? Moreover, the damage has now spread to the whole world, and many countries have recalled Taiwan's food products. This disaster may be difficult to recover in a short period of time. (*Economic Daily News*, 18 October 2014).

After the outbreak of the Ting Hsin crisis, several regions in Asia closed food trade with Taiwan, including China, Hong Kong, Macau, Japan, Singapore and Malaysia, which successively blocked Taiwan's food from entering their countries. Except for lard products, all foods that used lards were banned from exporting into these areas. It was estimated that the export loss was about NT \$ 2.2 billion (£55 million) (*Economic Daily News*, 23. 10. 2014; *Apple Daily*, 24. 10. 2014). As shown in the section above, the government also mentioned this point when it framed the economy, while emphasising that the government would propose relevant policies to minimise economic shocks. However, media reports focused on the negative effects, and opined that Taiwan's adulterated oils not only shamed Taiwan, but also affected its international reputation.

The above excerpt shows that the Ting Hsin adulterated oil crisis brought not only economic shock, but also a potential loss of consumer trust, including both the domestic market and foreign markets. As mentioned in the literature chapter, in the era of globalization, any single food issue may have a major impact on a global scale. The globalisation of the food supply chain has caused the food industry to gradually increase various risks and vulnerabilities in the entire process of raw material procurement, manufacturing, transportation, distribution and final sales to consumers. Therefore, when there is a problem in any process of the food supply chain, the problem may have a wide range of effects (Maruchek, Greis, Mena & Cai, 2011). The Ting Hsin company imported

animal feed oil from Vietnam, which was then mixed into lard products for sale. But some food industries in Taiwan also used Ting Hsin's lards for manufacturing their food products, and eventually these products were prohibited from being exported to other countries. The food oil crisis caused not only domestic consumers to lose confidence in Taiwan's food safety, but also foreign consumers. The Taiwanese government and oil manufacturers had long ignored public health and consumer rights, which led to consumer's boycott and distrust of Taiwanese food products, and ultimately affected the overall economic and political situation.

The second aspect connected with the 'economy' frame in the news coverage is that food oil crisis also affected Taiwan's domestic demand market. *Apple Daily*, *Liberty Times*, and *Economic Daily News* all mentioned that the continuous edible oil crises had caused Taiwan's food domestic sales to lose about NT \$ 10 billion (£250 million), and the overall food output value had been reduced by NT \$ 16.66 billion (£417 million). It can be seen that the loss of domestic sales was greater than that of foreign sales. One of the reasons is that a high proportion of Taiwanese often eat outside, and over 70% of people eat out twice a day (Tsai, Hsu & Shih, 2017). However, because of the impact of these food safety crises, people's willingness to eat outside has also been affected (Chiu & Yu, 2016). The crises have caused consumers to lose confidence in Taiwan's food industries and the government, but it is undeniable that the hundreds of food and catering companies are the most impacted (*Economy Daily News*, 19. 10. 2014). These crises not only impacted Taiwan's food industry, but also highlighted the fragility of the country's food safety system.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the Ting Hsin crisis, and this crisis had a wider impact than the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crisis. The following sections discuss the main findings can be summarised in several points:

Firstly, the findings show that the Ting Hsin's 'denial' frame was challenged by the government's and media's 'blame' frame. The government and media stood

together and rejected the company's 'denial' frame, on the basis of prosecutor's investigation. It can be seen that the prosecutor's investigation was a credible source for the media when they clarified the whole story. Besides, the study finds that a 'blame game' took place between the Ting Hsin company and the government: the company's and the government's 'blame' frames interacted with each other by focusing on the discussion about who was responsible for the edible oil crisis. The findings illustrate that the government's and the Ting Hsin company's public communication did not affect how the media framed the crisis, because the media's 'blame' frame revealed that both actors should take responsibility for the outbreak of the crisis. The media accused the government of neglecting food safety management, and blamed the company on ignoring social responsibility for pursuing its own interests at the same time. However, the government blamed on the Ting Hsin company had different focus by stressing that the Ting Hsin misled the public with false information.

In addition, the study finds that most of the news items were mainly focused on the 'blame' frame by accusing the government and the company of neglect of duty. In contrast, in the Ting Hsin crisis, the number of media items involving the 'blame' frame was higher than in the previous two crises (21 in the Chang Chi crisis, 22 in the Chang Guann crisis, and 36 in the Ting Hsin crisis). Even though the company and government proposed measures to respond to the crisis, the media reports were still negative.

Secondly, in terms of the number of media reports involving blaming, the government received more blame from the media (respectively 16 and 20 news items involved blaming the company and the government). In particular, the Taiwanese government had experienced three edible oil crises within a year, and the media's negative comments on the government were also reflected in the news headlines or choice of words in their news reports, such as 'go to hell', 'unscrupulous government', 'vicious' or 'evil-minded'. As mentioned in literature review chapter, Lee (2009) states that the governmental crisis and their crisis management might contribute to the public's accumulated collective memories, and these memories would influence how they evaluate the next governmental

crisis. Lee's allegation can be supported in this study; the media opined that the consecutive food oil crises highlight the government's incompetence in food safety management and loopholes in food safety regulations (*Economic Daily News*, 18. 10.2014).

Thirdly, the finding is that the media believed that some crisis responses within the Ting Hsin's and the government's 'responsibility' frames were purposeful. For example, the media opined that the company's apology was an attempt to stop the consumers' boycott, while the certain policy proposed by the government was for the upcoming mayoral election. Besides, both the government's and the media's 'economy' frames focused on the economic impact caused by the adulterated food oil, but the difference was that the government stressed the negative impact on consumers, while media reports emphasised the economic losses in domestic and foreign markets.

In addition, the government avoided the 'health' frame, but emphasised the 'blame' frame when responding to the Ting Hsin crisis. During the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, the government's press releases involved the 'health' frame, although during these two crises, the government's and the media's health frames were different (the government avoided focusing on possible health risks after consuming adulterated oils, while the media stressed the possible impact on the human body). However, in the Ting Hsin crisis, none of the governmental press releases involved this frame. After the crises, the Vietnamese government had directly responded to Taiwan's office in Vietnam by stressing that the raw oil materials purchased by Ting Hsin were animal feed oil and not suitable for human consumption (*Liberty Times*, 12. 10. 2014). In the previous two crises, the government emphasised that there was no evidence to prove the relationship between the additives in the adulterated oil and health issues, thereby playing down the possible health risks after consumption. In the Ting Hsin crisis, the government did not lay stress on the question of the connection between Ting Hsin's oil products and public health. In addition, the press releases of the Executive Yuan and the President's office focused on the 'blame' frame. Similarly, the media coverage used stronger words in this crisis. Examining the

governmental press releases, the study illustrates that when the government blamed the Ting Hsin company, their wording was stronger than in the previous two crises as well, with terms such as 'evil-minded', 'malicious' or 'malevolent' being used (Executive Yuan, 11. 10. 2014; President's office, 20. 10. 2014). It seems that the government, then, attempted to put up an appearance of standing with the general public and consumers. Thus, they condemned Ting Hsin harshly in order to reduce external criticism. The three consecutive food safety crises had eventually become a political crisis.

Chapter 8: Discussion

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 have analysed the three edible oil crises one by one. This chapter will answer the research questions of this study. Also, the chapter will compare the similarities and differences of the three cases. Especially, the study will focus on the how the three main actors reacted to the crises, and further look at how their frames. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss the findings resulting from integrating framing theory and crisis communication theories to examine what crisis response strategies were embedded in the specific frames. The chapter will also look at the discussion of applying Western theories to Taiwanese culture.

Before answer the research questions of this study, the study attempts to present the results of integrating framing theory with crisis communication theories.

Table 8.1 Findings of relations between the frames and crisis response strategies

Frame	Crisis response strategy
Denial (the actors rejected accusations, and did not admit wrongdoing).	'Simple denial' (the actors denied the allegations and claimed there were no crises).
	'Silence' (the actors remained silent on some aspects that were not good for them).
Blame (the actors accused the other actors of being responsible for the crisis).	'Shifting the blame' (the actors alleged that the crises had occurred because of some other actors' actions).
	'Bolstering' (the actors stressed their past good behaviour and track record)
Health (the actors attempted to emphasise their concern with public health).	'Minimisation' (the actors attempted to dilute the possible impacts).
Responsibility (the actors conveyed their willingness to take action to ameliorate the crises).	'Apology' (the actors apologised for causing concern).
	'Compensation' (the actors promised to compensate affected parties).
	'Corrective action' (the actors proposed different solutions to prevent similar crises from happening again).
Economy (the actors stressed the economic issues caused by the crises).	'Minimisation' (the actors attempted to weaken the perceived damages).

Table 8.1 organises the actors' frames and their crisis response strategies. Five frames have been identified in the public communication of the three main actors during the crises: 'health', 'economy', 'responsibility', 'denial', and 'blame'. The study has found that when the actors attempted to 'deny' allegations, they would directly refute that any crisis was happening or even remain silent on certain accusations and refuse to respond. The 'blame' frame was significantly connected to the crisis situation, which was not sufficient evidence to prove the actors' wrongdoing. Besides, when the actors intended to accuse other actors of being accountable for the crises, the 'shifting the blame' crisis response strategy can be always detected within the 'blame' frame. When the crisis situation was that the actor could not evade responsibility and must take responsibility for the crisis, strategies such as 'apology', 'compensation' and 'corrective action' often appeared under the 'responsibility' frame. The study also finds that the 'minimisation' crisis response strategy was reflected in the 'health' and 'economy' frames, as the actors tried to reduce the negative impacts of the crises on both public health and economy.

In traditional crisis communication research in Taiwan, most studies have focused on examining crisis communication, and have adopted crisis response strategies to analyse how an actor reacts to a crisis and to examine the actor's crisis management (Chang, 2013). However, examining an actor's crisis response is actually only a part of understanding crisis management process. Table 8.1 implies that the crisis response strategies were integral to constituting and underpinning specific frames. Therefore, the findings suggest that examining what crisis response strategies were presented in the actors' public messages and exploring their connection with frames can provide a more extensive understanding of the process of crisis development as well as of how the actors framed the crises. The following sections will provide more details about research findings.

8.1 Corporate crisis responses to the Taiwanese food crises

This section is addressed to the RQ1 (a) How did the companies frame their respective crises and what crisis response strategies can be detected in their

official statements?

The study finds that the 'denial', 'blame' and 'responsibility' frames were prominent in the companies' public communication. The following subsections will provide more details.

(1) Denial frame

As to the companies' detail frame, the study finds that they all focused on the 'denial' frame by rejecting the accusations ('simple denial' crisis response strategy), alleging that their companies had not been involved in illegalities, and shifting the blame to the Taiwanese government at the beginning of the respective crises (Chang Chi company, 17. 10. 2013; Chang Guann company, 04. 09. 2014; Ting Hsin company, 10. 10. 2014). Nonetheless, their versions were conclusively refuted by prosecutors. The Chang Chi and Ting Hsin companies even provided false information that was likely to mislead the general public, but underpinned their claims of innocence and strengthened the 'denial' frame. For example, Chang Chi declared that the additive in their olive oil was chlorophyll instead of chlorophyllin copper complex (Chang Chi company, 17. 10. 2013), and Ting Hsin presented forged inspection documents (Ting Hsin company, 10. 10. 2014). The media criticised the companies for choosing to deny the accusations and blaming the government for failing to fulfil its supervisory responsibility in order to mislead the general public and avoid their legal responsibility (*Liberty Times*, 12. 10. 2014; *Economic Daily News*, 20. 10. 2014).

Also, the study finds that the companies' denial was connected to the 'silence' strategy. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, silence involves intentionally providing no information (Dimitrov, 2015). Besides, this strategy is commonly used in Chinese culture, when under an unfavourable situation or when one is not sure what to say, remaining silent is more useful than publishing comments (Ye & Pang, 2011). Especially, Huang, Wu and Cheng (2016) claim that when an actor is under the process of judicial investigation and the actor's behaviour is likely to be proved guilty, the silence strategy is more likely to be seen in the communication. The findings are correspondent with the above

studies: this study finds that the companies (Chang Chi and Chang Guann) rejected the accusations, but at the same time they remained silent on some aspects, such as the facts exposed by the prosecutors, whether the raw materials were illegal, or whether the oil products involved adulteration.

(2) Blame frame

The study finds that the crisis responses of the three companies all involved the 'blame' frame, and the 'blame' frame was connected to the 'denial' frame in their initial crisis response (Chang Chi company, 28. 10. 2013; Chang Guann company, 11. 09. 2014). From the three companies' public communication, the study finds that all of them attempted to shift their responsibility onto the Taiwanese government (the 'shifting the blame' crisis response strategy) in the process of responding to the crises, and then let the government share the blame from the outside world to reduce the criticism caused by the adulterated oils. All the companies focused on blaming the Taiwanese government's inspection and certification.

However, the Taiwanese government rejected their accusations and blamed the companies back in all three cases. As discussed in the literature review chapter, Knobloch-Westerwick and Taylor (2008) claim that the 'blame game' happens when an actor attempts to turn an accusation away in a negative situation, so that the public will not regard the actor as a cause of the negative thing. The findings show that a 'blame game' took place between the government and the three companies. The companies and the government had different positions on who should be held responsible for the crises. The government believed that the companies' adulteration of oil products had resulted in an impact on food safety in Taiwan. In turn, the companies supposed that the Taiwanese government's poor management of food safety had been caused by the loopholes in the existing inspection system.

(3) Responsibility frame

The study finds that the initial 'denial' and 'blame' frames were followed by the

'responsibility' frame, and the turning point was the prosecutors' intervention in the investigation (Chang Chi company, 20. 10. 2013; Chang Guann company, 11. 09. 2014; Ting Hsin company, 11. 10. 2014).

Later, under pressure from prosecutors' investigative results, the 'apology and 'compensation' crisis response strategies can be found in the content of their press releases. The three companies' initial 'denial' and 'shifting the blame' strategies became unsustainable, and 'apology' and 'compensation' became prominent after the prosecutors intervened in the investigation (Chang Chi company, 20. 10. 2013; Chang Guann company, 11. 09. 2014; Ting Hsin company 11. 10. 2014). Thus, the decisive element that led the companies to change their approach to crisis response was the prosecution's investigation, which had uncovered evidence against them. This demonstrates that the prosecutors' investigation was a critical factor that influenced how the companies constructed their crisis responses. The findings also show that although these three companies apologised as the crises progressed, the media reports on them were mostly negative. For example, in the Chang Guann crisis, one of the media reports mentioned that the results of the prosecutor's investigation and further uncovered evidence highlighted that the company's initial denial had deceived consumers and ignored public health (*Liberty Times*, 25. 10. 2013), even though the company had already apologised at the time. This implies that the crisis response strategies of 'denial' and 'shifting the blame' in an initial response may reduce the effect of the apology.

In addition, the study finds that 'compensation' and 'apology' crisis response strategies were reflected in the three companies' 'responsibility' frame. As discussed in the literature review chapter, saving face is an important action during a crisis in culturally Chinese contexts (Chen, 2013; Wu & Cui, 2019). Thus, in order to maintain face, actors will not easily apologise (Zhu, Anagondahalli & Zhang, 2017; Wu & Cui, 2019). The study finds that the three companies eventually apologised, but that their apologies were prompted by the prosecutors' investigations and by the pressure of the media. In the companies' public statements, the terms 'apologise (*dao-qian*)' and 'sorry (*bao-qian*)' were

adopted. However, according to the analysis results presented in the previous chapters, they did not apologise for their wrongdoing, but for causing inconvenience to the general public, consumers, government and shareholders. In addition, none of the three companies admitted in their press releases that they had added illegal additives and adulterated food oil products to be sold to consumers (Chang Chi company, 20. 10. 2013; Chang Guann company, 11 .09. 2014; Ting Hsin company, 11. 10. 2014).

The study finds that even though the companies used 'apologise' or 'sorry' to express an apology, the meaning was more similar to 'regards' (showing empathy for people involved a crisis or expressing feelings without apologising) (Huang et al., 2005; Huang, 2006). The study finds that the three companies' 'apologies' had a different meaning, and this differs from the theoretical definition by Benoit (1995) and Coombs (2010a). The companies apologised for the negative consequence caused by the edible oil products, rather than acknowledging their illegal behaviours. This study finds that the application of the 'apology' crisis response strategy during the three crises in Taiwan's culturally Chinese context was different.

As shown in previous chapters, Figure 5.1, Figure 6.1, and Figure 7.1 presented the timeline of the three main actors' frames during the three food oil crises. It can be found that the sequence of three edible oil companies' frames was similar. According to Benoit's (1995a) image restoration theory, it mentioned that when denial strategy is unavailable, then an actor is likely to shift the blame to other actor, or escape their responsibility, and finally to express regret. The findings of this study are consistent with Benoit's allegation. Even though the definition and application of these crisis response strategies still have cultural and contextual limitations, the traditional crisis communication theories identify common crisis situations and crisis response strategies.

However, Hearit (2018) examines crisis communication and emphasises that each crisis is different; thus, an effective crisis response must connect narrative approach. Hearit (2018) claims that when facing a crisis, the rhetorical process of narrative allocation, guilt, and absolution can be more effective in resolving

crises than through crisis response strategies. Hearit (2018) opines that in addition to emphasising coherence and narrative fidelity, the most important is that the actor's crisis response must be voluntarily delivered rather than out of coercion or political necessity. Otherwise, other stakeholders must think that the actor's confession is not carried out freely, and its motivation lacks narrative fidelity.

Although Benoit's (1995a) and Hearit (2018) have different viewpoints on how to effectively respond to the crisis, they both propose the way to claim to end the crisis. Benoit emphasises the 'modification' that is actors admit their responsibility, and ask for forgiveness. In contrast, Hearit believes that the goal of crisis management is not to seek forgiveness, rather it is to account for the problem of guilt through social performance.

The study finds that the companies' initial denials were contradicted the prosecutors' investigations, which made their sincerity of expressing apology had been tested. Besides, as mentioned above, the three companies did not admit their mistakes when apologising, and the companies did not deal with their guilt well in terms of the narrative approach. Therefore, it can be seen that the main point of crisis response is not to construct a good performance, but to ensure the content of the response can be consistent and gain the public trust. Secondly, it was difficult for the food oil companies to respond voluntarily and avoid consideration of interests. For example, as analysed in Chapter 7, the Ting Hsin company's crisis response became active after the boycott was launched, so the company's follow-up commitment to take responsibility was questioned, because the Ting Hsin company's response was likely related to their commercial interests.

8.2 Governmental crisis responses to the Taiwanese food crises

This section attempts to answer RQ1 (b) How did the government frame the crises and what crisis response strategies can be detected in their official statements?

The study finds that the Taiwanese government focused on the 'blame', 'responsibility', 'health, and 'economy' frames when responding to the three edible oil crises.

(1) Blame frame

The government's 'blame' frame was presented in the three crises. Similar to the three food oil companies, the 'blame' frame was prominent at the beginning of the three crises. The finding is that the government and the companies blamed each other to reduce accusations (the 'shifting the blame' crisis response strategy). During the three crises, the government responded to the companies' adulterated by accusing them of wrongdoing for their own benefit, and further used the prosecutors' investigation results to highlight the companies' illegal behaviour and their responsibility for causing the crises (TFDA, 17. 10. 2013; Executive Yuan, 11. 09. 2014; Executive Yuan, 10. 10. 2014).

However, the study finds that the government's blaming of the three companies differed in extent. In the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, the government mainly focused on the accusations about the companies' illegal behaviours, such as adding illegal substances to the edible oil products, violating the food regulations, and ignoring public health for their benefit (TFDA, 17. 10. 2013; TFDA, 20. 10. 2013; (Executive Yuan, 10. 09. 2014; Executive Yuan, 11. 09. 2014). In the Ting Hsin crisis, the government used even harsher words to blame the company after the outbreak of the crisis, appealed with the prosecutor to strictly investigate the company's illegal actions, and supported consumers' boycott activity against the Ting Hsin company's food products such as instant noodles, milk, biscuits, cakes, fruit juice (Executive Yuan, 10. 10. 2014; President's office, 13. 10. 2014). As mentioned in previous chapter, Ting Hsin was also involved in the previous two crises for buying Chang Chi's and Chang Guann's oil products and then using them to manufacture various food products. Thus, the government's accusations against Ting Hsin were stronger than those against the previous two companies. In fact, as to the boycott activity, both the government's and media's attitudes were supportive, their position was that the Ting Hsin as the biggest food industries in Taiwan, it had responsibility for their food products.

The company was the third of its kind that had got involved in edible oil crises in a year (Chen, 2018). Thus, the government condemned Ting Hsin's wrongdoing seriously and showed a determination to fight illegal behaviour. In addition, both the government and the media used harsher wordings when accusing the Ting Hsin company, such as 'evil-minded', 'malicious', 'badly-intentioned' (*Liberty Times*, 14. 10. 2014; *Apple Daily*, 20. 10. 2014).

(2) Health frame

When the government framed 'health', compared with the media's stress on the potential health risks after consuming adulterated food oil, the focus was less on the health impact of consumers' consumption. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, Liu and Horslery (2007) states that when a crisis involves a health issue, the government may bear more responsibility than a private organisation, because the government is expected to be responsible for protecting public safety.

However, the study finds that comparing the media focused on the adulterated food oils' potential risks that they might cause to humans after consumption during the three crises. The government's response attempted to 'minimise' the severity of media reports and emphasised that there was no direct evidence to prove the relationship between additives and potential health diseases (TFDA, 21. 10. 2013; TFDA, 06. 09. 2014). The government claimed that as long as the adulterated oil products were not taken for a long time, there was no immediate danger to the human health.

(3) Responsibility frame

The government's 'responsibility' frame was prominent in the three food oil crises. The study finds that throughout the crises the government tried to demonstrate its involvement in food safety by proposing improvement policies and amending regulations (the 'corrective action' crisis response strategy). After the Chang Chi crisis, the government tried to implement various policies to improve food safety management, such as comprehensive inspection of edible oil

manufacturing factories and all edible oils sold in the market; proposals for upgrading inspection equipment and oil databases; amendments to increase fines for offenders (TFDA, 21. 10. 2013), but still this could not prevent the Chang Guann and Ting Hsin crises from breaking out. In fact, since the crisis of mainland China's melamine milk powder had occurred in Taiwan in 2008, food safety issues were gradually starting to get attention by the Taiwanese government and consumers, Taiwan's food safety regulations have been revised every year or two since 2008 (Quan & Lee, 2018).

However, after the outbreak of the edible oil crises, the food safety regulations underwent the most significant changes from 2014 to 2015, for example, an increase of penalties and fines for food adulteration, a requirement for food factories not to engage in non-food manufacturing, and improvements in the traceability system so that, whether in the case of a finished product, semi-finished product or raw material, the food industry must provide the government with complete information (Ko, 2015; Quan & Lee, 2018). The consecutive crises highlight the loopholes in food safety regulations and the easing of law enforcement in the past, which is what led to the inadequacy of the Taiwanese government in establishing a system of food safety management. But these crises also triggered changes in policies and regulations. For example, all food materials and food additives must also be disclosed, and this information must be shown on the food packaging since 2015 (until then, only key information, such as product name, expiry date and country of origin had to be shown) (Law and Regulation of the Republic of China, 2015; Li & Shi, 2015).

This study also finds that the media, too, responded to the government's 'responsibility' frame with a distrustful attitude. As mentioned above, after the three edible oil crises, the government tried to propose different solutions to strengthen the 'responsibility' frame, but the media questioned the government's proposed solutions. For example, after the occurrence of the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, several media reports mentioned that after each food safety issue had broken out, the government had proposed various solutions to prevent the next crisis; but food safety crises still happened repeatedly (*Economic Daily*

News, 17. 09. 2014). This highlighted that the solutions proposed by the government after each crisis had only been insufficient, temporary commitments, and had not been fully implemented. During the Ting Hsin crisis, since the election of the mayors was approaching, the media were even more critical, saying that the government's action of proposing solutions to the food oil crisis was like a deceptive show. The government's action was only for the purpose of election and political consideration, and had not thoroughly reviewed the fundamental issues of food safety management in Taiwan (*Apple Daily*, 14. 10. 2014; *Apple Daily*, 20. 10. 2014).

From the above it can be seen that the four frames: 'blame', 'responsibility', 'health, and 'economy' frames were presented in the Taiwanese government's official responses. In fact, during the three consecutive crises, the Taiwanese government played the role of both the supervisor and the supervised. The government had the responsibility to oversee the food oil companies, and at the same time, the government was supervised by the media in its food safety management. This made the government sometimes need to stand in line with the media, and sometimes need to defend its position independently when responding to the crisis. For example, the Taiwanese government's 'blame' frame was similar to the media's, they both focused on blaming the companies' unscrupulous behaviour and disregarding the health of the general public. However, as mentioned above, the government and media had a different focus when they framed 'health' issue.

The following section will address to the RQ1 (c) How stable and consistent was the government's framing over the three edible oil crises?

The Taiwanese government was the actor that had experienced all three edible oil crises. The study finds that during the Ting Hsin crisis, none of the government's press releases referred to health issues; instead, the government focused on the 'economy' frame.

As to the absence of the 'health' frame in the government's crisis response, two points can be discussed. First, as mentioned above, in the Chang Chi and Chang

Guann crises, there was a divergence between the Taiwanese government and the media about whether or not the additives in the companies' edible oil products could be eaten, and whether the edible oils might have potential health risks for the human body (TFDA, 06. 09. 2014; *Apple Daily*, 05. 09. 2014). However, in the Ting Hsin crisis, the government itself had verified this with the Vietnamese government, and found that the raw materials imported by Ting Hsin were animal feed oils and could not be consumed by humans (TFDA, 11. 10. 2014). Therefore, if the government had stressed the additives in Ting Hsin's lards or the potential health risks after human consumption, this might have highlighted its negligence in inspection.

Second, the study finds that how the media framed the crisis may have influenced the government to adjust their focus of crisis response. As discussed in the literature review chapter, Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2015) claim that organisational messages in a crisis may be influenced by the media, because an organisation may examine how the media frame a crisis, and further adjust its own framing on the basis of media reports. The finding shows compared to the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises, the media coverage emphasised both blame and health as frames. However, this study has found that during the Ting Hsin crisis, media reports were mainly focused on accusing the government and food oil companies, and relatively few reports involved health issues. This caused the government's crisis statement to be focused on their proposed policies in response to media criticism.

In addition, the 'economy' frame was present in the government's press releases during the Ting Hsin crisis, and this was also the first time when the 'economy' frame was presented in the government's public communication since the crises. As mentioned earlier, how a government responds to a crisis may be connected to the external situation, such as economic, political or social factors (Lee, 2009). The study finds that the fact that the government's 'economy' frame had become prominent was related to the impact that the crisis caused by the Ting Hsin company had on international trade and the domestic market.

8.3 The media's crisis responses in Taiwanese food scandals

In this section, the study will answer both the RQ2 (a) How did the media frame the three edible oil crises? and (b) To what extent did media framings overlap with the three private companies' and the Taiwanese government's framings? What were the main differences?

The study finds that the media focused on the 'health', 'blame' and 'economy' frames when framing the three crises. The following subsections will provide more details.

(1) Health frame

The study finds that media, government and companies emphasised different aspects of the 'health' frame. The three companies responded to the crisis by deliberately avoiding issues related to health and potential risks. The government, in turn, emphasised that although the additives used by the companies were not permitted, as long as they were not taken for a long time and in high doses, the risk to health was low. The media reports stressed that the different additives added by the companies might cause different levels of harm and negative impacts on humans.

The study finds that the media and the Taiwanese government overlapped in the health frame, including the fact that they agreed that the food oil companies and the government had a responsibility to ensure public health, and that they believed that the chemical ingredients in the adulterated oil products might cause potential health risks. However, the government and media diverged on whether the additives in adulterated edible oils had health risks in the Chang Chi and Chang Guann crises.

For example, in the Chang Chi crisis, the different interpretations between the government and media hinged on whether refined cottonseed oil could be eaten or not. The government believed that refined cottonseed oil was consumable (TFDA, 21. 10. 2013). In contrast, the experts in the media claimed that it could not be eaten, because the EU does not regulate safe dosages acceptable to

humans (*Apple Daily*, 22. 10. 2013). Similarly, in the Chang Guann crisis, although the Taiwanese government explained that the ingredients in Chang Guann's adulterated oil product were too complicated to be detected by the inspection system (TFDA, 06. 09. 2014), the media used the experts' opinions and alleged that the database of Taiwan's oil inspection system was inadequate because only a few heavy metals were tested on whether they exceeded the standard. In fact, many substances could not be detected by the existing detection system; it did not mean that there was no problem with the products (*Liberty Times*, 07. 09. 2014). The science and technology around food testing and inspection equipment are developing all the time; thus, even if there was no evidence to prove that additives used by the edible oil companies were harmful at this stage, it did not mean that these additives are safe and have no potential health risks.

(2) Blame frame

The study finds that the 'blame' frame was the main focus by the media when they framed the three food oil crises. The media blamed both the companies and the Taiwanese government. The media criticised the companies for choosing to deny the accusations and blamed the government for failing to fulfil its supervisory responsibility in order to mislead the general public and avoid their legal responsibility (*Liberty Times*, 12. 10. 2014; *Economic Daily News*, 20. 10. 2014).

The media alleged that companies were unscrupulous and had not fulfilled their corporate social responsibilities. This is similar to how the government blamed the three food oil companies. On the other hand, the media also blamed the government by alleging that it had managed food safety negligently, and by stressing the inadequacy of the food inspection system and loopholes in food regulations. Comparing how the media and the companies blamed the government, the study finds that the media's and the companies' blame frames only overlapped when they criticised the government's inspection system. However, the difference is that the media's blame focused on more aspects of the government's incompetence, such as responsibility of supervision, insufficient regulation, and negligence of food safety management.

As mentioned in the literature review, a government's crisis management is distinguished from corporate crisis management in both character and scope, because a government's level of responsibility, complexity of communication, degree of public and media supervision are more complicated than the private sector's (Helm et. al, 1981). Lee (2009) states that how a government deals with a crisis may influence the public's accumulated memories, and this will be connected to how people evaluate the government in the next crisis. Although the media blamed both the food oil companies and the government, in terms of the number of the reports, this study demonstrates that the Taiwanese government received more blame (in the first oil crisis, 14 news items involved blaming the government and 4 blaming the company; in the second, 19 news reports involved blaming the government and 3 blaming the company; in the third, 20 news reports involved blaming the government and 16 blaming the company).

As has been mentioned, Taiwan had experienced various food safety issues before these edible oil crises (Peng et al., 2017); thus, every outbreak of a crisis in food safety called into question the supervisory management ability of the Taiwanese government. Reoccurring crises have highlighted the fragility of Taiwan's food security system, including regulation loopholes, insufficient detection systems, a malfunctioning management system, and ineffective supervisory capabilities (Feng, Chen & Hou, 2016). Therefore, the accumulation of the crises caused the government to get more and blame during the three crises.

(3) Economy frame

This section will look at the 'economy' frame, and answer to the RQ2 (c) What are the similarities and differences between different media's framings in the three edible oil crises?

Since the three edible oils involved the economy, this study includes an economic newspaper in the analysis. In fact, the 'economy frame' had become prominent since the outbreak of the Ting Hsin crisis. The study finds that the *Economic Daily*

News provided more related economic news reports than the other daily newspapers (the *Apple Daily*, and *Liberty Times*). In the Chang Guann crisis, there were 3 new items that involved economic issues, and 2 from the *Economic Daily News*. In the Ting Hsin crisis, 12 news articles focused on the economy, and there were 5 from the *Economic Daily News*. As discussed in the literature review, Boukes and Vliegthart (2017) and Yang (2017) claim that different news outlets have a different commercial value and target audience, which may affect the journalists in how they assess the newsworthiness of an issue and how they frame it. The study finds that the *Economic Daily News* focused on different economic issues when framing Taiwan's edible oil crises, such as economic loss in the food industry supply chain, the stock market, domestic market, products' exports, and international trade. The *Economic Daily News* provided more economic perspectives of the impact caused by the food oil companies.

In fact, this study finds that during the three edible oil crises, news items were mainly based on different objective facts and scientific information. For example, the media's 'health' frame, which included information from doctors, scientists, experts; furthermore, the 'blame' frame contained information from prosecutor's investigations and government authority. Bru'ggemann (2014) classifies journalistic framing practices into two concepts: 'framing setting' and 'frame sending'. The framing setting is that journalists mainly frame their news reports based on their interpretation. Frame sending implies the frame is provided by different public actors (Bru'ggemann, 2014). In this study, the media's framing of the edible oil crises was more like the concept of 'frame sending'.

Due to the selected cases were specific issues, the study finds that the three newspapers had similar needs for sources. Also, the finding of this study reveals that there was not much difference between the three selected newspapers when they framed 'health'. In addition, because of the different political stance of the three Taiwanese media, compared to the other two newspapers, the *Liberty Times* mainly blamed the government's incompetence and failure of food safety management.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This chapter will conclude with an overview of the findings and contributions of the study. The main purpose of this study has been to explore how the Taiwanese government, the three companies involved (the Chang Chi company, the Chang Guann company, and the Ting Hsin company) and the Taiwanese media framed the three edible oil crises and their responses to them. While most crisis communication studies look at the successful cases, and explore how crises can be well managed (Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2015), this study contributes to the literature by looking at companies whose communication strategies were unsuccessful. Although Taiwan had experienced several food safety issues before, these serious food oil crises were a first for the Taiwanese.

Besides, previous research on crisis communication in Taiwan has mainly focused on analysing public communication, and has adopted crisis communication theories to examine the application of crisis response strategies, to analyses actors' public communication, and to explore crisis management (Huang, 2005). However, if one only analyses crisis response strategies, it is easy to fall into the situation of seeing the trees but not the forest, because examining an actor's crisis response strategy is actually only a part of understanding the crisis management process (Chang, 2013). Some scholars suggest that the examination of an actor's crisis communication should begin with understanding how the crisis is framed by the actor. How an actor frames a crisis may affect the actor's interpretation of the crisis, accountability for it, and construction of public communication (Kim, 2006; Coombs, 2007b; Coombs and Holladay, 2010).

This study has attempted to integrate framing theory and crisis communication theories as a theoretical framework, applying the method of qualitative framing analysis to analyse these crises. The study has applied Entman's (1993) four frame elements (definition of problem, causal interpretation, treatment, and moral evaluation) to develop frames. Considering that the three crises selected in this study belong to specific food safety issues rather than general crises, this study has contributed to develop issue specific frames by examining the selected materials and completing the definition of the frame matrix (Table 4.4). Five

identified frames have been developed in this study: health, economy, responsibility, denial, and blame.

The finding illustrates that the different actors had different emphasised frames when responding to the edible oil crises. For example, the Taiwanese government and the media, these two actors had gone through the three food oil crises. The Taiwanese government's and the media's frames were consistent in the three crises. The 'blame' and 'health' frames were presented in the news items throughout the crises. In particular, the Taiwanese government played the role of both the supervisor and the supervised. The 'blame' and 'responsibility' frames were prominent in the Taiwanese government's crisis response. The three edible oil crises were caused by the food oil companies; however, consumers and media coverage also held the Taiwanese government responsible aspects of these crises (Chuang & Lin, 2015). Therefore, during the three crises, the government not only blamed the edible oil companies, but also took on the criticism from the media, which even finally turned into a government crisis.

As to the three food oil companies, the study finds that the three companies' framings of the crises were similar: the 'denial' and 'blame' frames were reflected in their public communication at the beginning of the crises, and were followed by the 'responsibility' frame. The research findings of this study correspond with previous studies (Benoit, 1995b, Benoit, 1997, Benoit, 2013). Most companies tend to respond to negative allegations by denying them in order to maintain their operations and reputation. Previous research suggests that in certain crisis situations, such as when evidence is insufficient, the actors may choose to respond with denial. However, few studies have analysed the consequences that organisations should bear when their denials are contrary to the facts. This study does not explore the efficiency of the crises, however examining the findings of the three edible oil companies' crisis responses, it reveals the failure and unsuccessful public communication. In particular, the three selected crises in this study show that the crisis situations are not fixed, therefore the response model of traditional crisis situations and crisis responses strategies should be further examined.

In addition, the 'blame' frame appeared in the companies', the Taiwanese government's, and the media's crisis responses. According to Figure 5.2, Figure 6.2 and Figure 7.2 in this study, these figures reveal that the companies and the government blamed each other, and the media blamed both the food oil companies and the government. Especially in the third food oil crisis, the interaction between the three actors was more complicated. In terms of the number and content of media coverage in the third case, media scrutiny increased and intensified to the Ting Hsin crisis, this might be caused by the accumulation of several edible oil crisis memories.

Furthermore, this study also contributes to the literature on crisis communication by focusing on the dynamic process developed by actors' frames during crises. As for the development of public relations in Taiwan, although there are many studies related to crisis communication, most of them focus on the analysis of an issue, a celebrity, or a politician, but there is a lack of analysis of the multiple actors that can be involved in a crisis (Huang, Wu & Cheng, 2016). This study has attempted to offer insights on crisis communication by examining the various actors' crisis framing processes during the crises, and by exploring how the actors' frames dynamically influenced one another. The relevant finding is that the process of crisis framing between different actors is dynamic. The study finds that the three companies changed their 'denial' frame to the 'responsibility' frame due to some specific issues (such as prosecutors' investigation, and boycotting activity). This is also consistent with McHale, Zompetti and Moffitt's (2007) contention that crisis communication is a dynamic and fluid process. However, among different actors, the role of some actors seems more dominant. The media played such a role in the events treated in this study. Even though China and Taiwan share a similar cultural heritage, Taiwan's democratic politics has also contributed to the freedom of the press and allowed for multiple news reports; therefore, Taiwanese media has the power to express different viewpoints in any issue (Hu, 2017; Cai, Lee & Pang, 2009, Huang & Kim, 2018). The study finds that the Taiwanese media had the advantage for its supervisory responsibility; thus, how the media reported on the crises significantly affected how other actors responded to them. In other words, the

media reports on the edible oil crises dynamically caused Taiwanese government and the food oil companies to have different assessments of the development of the crises, which in turn affected their responses to the food safety crises.

The study contributes to crisis communication theories by re-examining them in a non-Western context. Benoit's (1995) image restoration theory and Coombs' (2010a) situational crisis communication theory provide a list of various crisis response strategies. These theories are widely used in the research on crisis communication (Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2015), but they draw upon a Western context. This study has adopted Western theories and applied them to crises that occurred within Taiwanese culture. Huang (2005) states that the development of public relations in Taiwan has been influenced by mainstream Western theories, leading to a lack of growth of localised theories. The study has offered insights on crisis communication theories by paying attention to the cultural presuppositions of Western theories when applying them as a theoretical framework, and considering their explanatory power for the Taiwanese context. This study contributes to the literature by combining Benoit's (1995), Coombs' (2010a), Huang et al. (2005), Yu and Wen (2003)', and Ye and Pang's (2011) studies, and has developed the taxonomy of crisis response strategy to examine what crisis response strategies were reflected in the specific frames identified by this study.

The study finds that the 'silence' strategy was applied by the companies and connected with the 'denial' frame. The finding corresponds with previous studies. Some scholars claim that 'silence' is the golden crisis response in Chinese culture to avoid uncertain situation (Yu & Wen, 2003; Ye & Pang, 2011). The companies, in a situation when the result of the judicial investigation had not yet been released, chose to remain silent on their adulterated food oil products and the raw materials they used. The current crisis communication theories do not include the 'silence' strategy. However, this strategy did appear in the cases examined by this study when actors intentionally avoided some fact or item of information and said as little as possible. The study suggests that when crisis communication theories are applied in Taiwan's culturally Chinese culture,

'silence' should be considered as a crisis response strategy.

Furthermore, the study finds that the crisis response strategy of 'apology' has different meaning in the Taiwanese context. The terms 'apologise' and 'sorry' were used by the three edible oil companies, but the meaning they conveyed was closer to that of showing regards (they apologised for the negative consequences or expressed sympathy, rather than admitting wrongdoing). The finding is consistent with the previous study, Wu and Cui (2019), in which the authors claim that in Chinese culture, due to fear of losing face, actors will not apologise as easily as is the case in Western culture. Thus, the study finds that in this case 'apology' is different from how Benoit and Coombs defined 'apology'. This suggests that when research is based on the Taiwanese or Chinese culture, researchers should evaluate this redefinition of the 'apology' strategy.

The author also acknowledges some limitations of this study: firstly, the limitation of research method. The research design of this study has been to examine how the Taiwanese government, edible oil companies, and the media responded to the food oil crises by analysing official press releases of the government and companies, as well as media reports. However, the author finds that some of the key questions that arose during the research process cannot be answered because of the limitations of existing data. For example, why did the companies or government respond to the crises in a certain way? What motives and purposes influenced the companies' and the government's responses to the crises? How did the media evaluate the companies' and the government's responses? How effective were the companies' and the government's crisis response strategies and crisis management? If a future research design can make use of different research methods, such as interviews, it may be able to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the construction of crisis response by different actors, and of the processes of crisis development.

Besides, possible frames, such as 'politics', 'legal', or 'scientific' may exclude by this study. When examining the data, this study finds that some news reports involved political issues, such as the development after Hong Kong and Macau banned all food products that used lards from Taiwan, or discussion and

comparison of the waste oil issues in China, such news content involved discussions of political aspects, they are excluded from this study. However, due to the small number of such news reports, the impact on the analysis results is not significant. In addition, some of the selected data in this article are related to legal and scientific issues, such as the regulations and penalties violated by the three edible oil companies, the details of prosecutors' investigations and prosecutions, the chemical composition of ingredients used in adulterated edible oils, and chemical testing of ingredients. Most of these contents were factual information, and they appeared in news reports, therefore this study believes that these contents are relatively not enough to develop into a frame package (frame).

Another element that is missing is an analysis of other actors in the crises. This study has focused on exploring how the three main actors (the Taiwanese government, the food oil companies, and the media) responded to the crises. However, other actors, such as consumers, affected food industries, shareholders, companies' employees, etc. were also involved in the crises. Since the three case studies occurred, six to seven years ago, two of the companies have been closed, and the other has announced its withdrawal from the Taiwanese edible oil market. Therefore, it is relatively difficult to contact the employees or shareholders of the companies at that time. In addition, due to limited time, the author has not been able to examine all actors involved, so only the three main ones have been selected for analysis. The study, therefore, could not include the voices of other actors. This is a limitation. Future research could explore the complexity of the framing process further by examining more actors' involvements in these crises.

Furthermore, this study lacks an analysis of the effect of crisis management. The study has combined framing theory and crisis communication theories to examine the public communication of companies, government, and media, but it has not focused on analysing their communication effects. The attempt has been made to examine how the media reported on the government and the companies through both positive and negative reports, but the analysis of the effects has

been limited. Future research could conduct a more comprehensive discussion of the effects of this crisis management, for example through interviews or questionnaire surveys with consumers or affected food companies.

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Appendix 1: Image restoration theory

Strategy	Definition
Denial	
Simple denial	Actors claim there is no crisis.
Shift of blame	Actors place the responsibility on someone else.
Evasion of responsibility	
Provocation	Actors assert that their behaviour is a response to someone else's offensive action.
Defeasibility	Actors argue that they lack information to make an assessment about a crisis situation.
Accident	The situation is not under control, and that lead to a crisis.
Good intentions	Actors claim that the situation is created with good intentions, and the negative impact is not expected.
Reducing offensiveness of event	
Bolstering	Actors remind the public of their positive qualities.
Minimisation	Actors try to assert that the damage from the crisis is not severe by saying it is minor.
Differentiation	Actors make a comparison to similar or more severe situations.
Transcendence	Actors place the action in a more favourable context.
Attack Accuser	Actors show that the accuser is not trustworthy, and attempts to harm the organisation.
Compensation	Actors offer money or gifts to those who are affected during a crisis.
Corrective Action	Actors take responsibility for a crisis, and try to restore the situation and make a promise to prevent a reoccurrence.
Mortification	Actors admit their responsibility, and ask for forgiveness.

Source: Benoit (1997, p.179)

Appendix 2: Situational crisis communication theory

Strategy	Definition
Denial	Actors assert there is no crisis.
Attack the accuser	Actors confront a person or group who asserts the wrongdoing against the organisation.
Scapegoat	Actors blame a person or group outside the organisation for the crisis.
Excuse	Actors minimise the organisation's responsibility by denying intent to cause harm, or assert their inability to control the events that caused a crisis.
Justification	Actors reduce the damage caused by a crisis.
Compensation	Actors give money or presents to victims.
Apology	Actors take responsibility for a crisis, and ask for forgiveness.
Reminder	Actors stress on the organisation's past good works.
Ingratiation	Actors praise stakeholders for their help with the crisis.

Source: Coombs (2010a, p.36)