

The Impact of Demographical Variables on Perceived Corporate Reputation

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Abstract

Over the past few decades, the topic of reputation management has arisen as one of the most popular fields of study. Hence, investigating the main causes and consequences of reputation has also been of much interest for a great many academicians from various disciplines. However, among numerous variables used to determine the way reputation is perceived, the impacts of demographics seem to have been neglected. Therefore, in order to fill a gap deserving the attention of quantitative research, in this survey, which is an attempt to enhance the understanding of the way reputation is perceived by different individuals, we aimed at determining whether such demographical variables as age, gender, educational status and level of income have a significant effect on the way reputation is perceived. Consequently, it was found that some of the demographic variables were closely associated with the way reputation is perceived by different individuals.

Keywords: Anova, multiple regression, Non-parametric analysis, Corporate governance, Perceptual and interpretive processes, Managing diversity

1. Introduction

Since Fombrun and van Riel (1997) set forth a number of reasons why reputation could not simply be defined as the general estimation in which one is held by the public, the term corporate reputation as a relatively novel conflux of converging disciplines has progressively been acknowledged as a crucial intangible asset of organizations by a great many scholars from various disciplines. Management scholars are taking on an ever-increasing interest in the area who, together with marketers, include those maintaining research in organizational behaviour, human resources, strategic movement, public relations and communication studies (van Riel and Balmer, 1997:350). Indubitably, such an academic variety including several domains like marketing, accounting, finance, psychology, history, management, economics, organization theory and communications has contributed much to the knowledge regarding this field. However, it has still been a matter of debate for some scholars whether such a diversity is an advantage to enhance the understanding of corporate reputation or not. According to some researchers in the field, because the term corporate reputation is a cross-road for numerous domains, it focuses on the distinctive facets of the term and this leads to a lack of theoretical and systematic consistency. Though it is still emphasised perseveringly in some surveys that there is no single definition of corporate reputation, or is questioned whether the concepts of identity and image are the same as the term corporate reputation, scholars today have a broader scanning as they are mostly aware of these diverse perspectives. This survey is structured as follows: in the first section, the reputation management literature is presented briefly within a conceptual framework. In section two, the methodology including data collection and measurements is clarified within the scope of a causality principle. In the third section an empirical research design is presented, where data is analysed to see whether demographical divergences have a significant impact on the reputation perceptions of the participants or not. Subsequently, the main findings are discussed in section four.

1.1 Conceptual Framework

As noted above briefly, one of the most important obstacles that poses a reason for a lack of a theoretical, systematic consistency, therefore a lack of an integrative approach, is the theoretical confusion among the somewhat relevant interdependent and interrelated nature of such notions as identity, character, image and reputation as these terms are often used interchangeably (Wartick, 2002). In an effort to elucidate the issue, Fombrun and van Riel (1997) put a stake in the ground by means of asserting an integrative perspective in which they propound the two terms image and identity as the fundamental components of corporate reputation, which is basically defined as “the accumulated impression that stakeholders form of the firm resulting from their interactions with and communications received about the firm” Fombrun and Shanley (1990: 253). Accordingly, when it comes to stakeholders, while image is considered as the perception of external observers of the organization, identity is the perception of such inner stakeholders as managers and employees. Nonetheless, one should keep in mind that despite the distinctions such as the one above, defining the term reputation

or at least marking out the scope of it has still been a field of study arousing much interest among academicians. In their research which was carried out on online books and scientific articles published on the topic of corporate reputation between 2000 and 2003, Barnett *et al* (2006) determined three different clusters of meaning in the definitional statements. In this direction, they found that reputation was defined either as a state of *awareness* or as an *assessment* or as an *asset*. For example, Balmer (2001), who defines it as the latent perception of the organization, and Roberts and Dowling (2002), who define it as the perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects, are in the group of state of awareness. In addition, Bernstein (1984), who defines the term reputation as the evaluation of what a company does, and Herbig and Milewicz (1995), who define it as the estimation of consistency, are in the second (*assessment*) group. In the third and final group, on the other hand, for Fombrun (2001) reputation is an economic asset, and for Drobnis (2000) it is intangible, and for some others it is also fragile as well as being intangible.

2. Methodology

2.1 Data Collection

In this study, the questionnaire method, which is often utilised in quantitative research, was used, since this method provides a large amount of data from a large group and it is also possible with this method to collect data in a relatively short time. Also, with this method a sample can be provided by presenting the survey questions in the same way for each participant. Particularly, data analysed in the survey were collected in Afyonkarahisar which is a central Anatolia City of Turkey. The total number of the participants composed of general consumers is 400, and while some of these participants were reached via online questionnaires, some others were interviewed face to face through random sampling.

2.2 Measurements

With broad strokes, it is commonly agreed within corporate reputation management literature by a great many scholars that organizations need two main bases in order to measure their reputation. The first one is the factors that make up their overall reputation, and the second is the perspective from which they will measure their reputation (employees, customers, media, investors, local community, etc.). In this survey, the second base perspective from which reputation is measured is general customers. The first base, on the other hand, is composed of seven factors (dimensions) asserted by Fombrun *et al* (2015). These seven factors are: products/services, innovation, workplace, governance, citizenship, leadership and performance. Normally, the scale of the researchers is composed of 23 items in total. However, a recent survey conducted by Yuncu (2016) suggests that very close results to the overall conclusion can be achieved through applying only 7 items, each of which has the greatest representation value within its own dimension.

3. Data Analysis and Results

Main Problem: Perceived corporate reputation for different individuals of divergent

demographical features.

Sub-problems:

Sp1- Does the perception of corporate reputation shift with regard to gender factor in the sample?

Sp2- Does the perception of corporate reputation shift with regard to age factor in the sample?

Sp3- Does the perception of corporate reputation shift with regard to educational status factor in the sample?

Sp4- Does the perception of corporate reputation shift with regard to income level factor in the sample?

Table 1. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		High Quality Products	Adapts to Change	Equal Opportunities in Workplace	Open and Transparent	Supports Good Causes	Strong and Appealing Leader	Profitable
N		400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	5,98	4,08	5,43	5,47	5,62	4,98	4,29
	Std. Deviation	1,435	2,021	1,614	1,497	1,361	1,649	1,866
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,323	,195	,224	,278	,291	,183	,175
	Positive	,239	,160	,165	,153	,154	,110	,113
	Negative	-,323	-,195	-,224	-,278	-,291	-,183	-,175
Test Statistic		,323	,195	,224	,278	,291	,183	,175
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,000 ^c	,000 ^c	,000 ^c	,000 ^c	,000 ^c	,000 ^c	,000 ^c
a. Test distribution is Normal.								
b. Calculated from data.								
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.								

In Table 1, Asymp. Sig. (Significance) values are greater than 0.05, which is the limit value in the statistical significance calculations, indicating that the distributions of the examined factors are normal. Hence, since these values are lower than 0.05, we have to use nonparametric test methods.

3.1 SP1: Does The Perception Of Corporate Reputation Shift With Regard To Gender Factor In The Sample?

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
High Quality Products	400	5,98	1,435	1	7
Adapts to Change	400	4,08	2,021	1	7
Equal Opportunities in Workplace	400	5,43	1,614	1	7
Open and Transparent	400	5,47	1,497	1	7
Supports Good Causes	400	5,62	1,361	1	7
Strong and Appealing Leader	400	4,98	1,649	1	7
Profitable	400	4,29	1,866	1	7
Gender	400	1,51	,501	1	2

Mann-Whitney Test

Table 3. Ranks

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
High Quality Products	Male	197	203,55	40098,50
	Female	203	197,54	40101,50
	Total	400		

Adapts to Change	Male	197	203,52	40093,00
	Female	203	197,57	40107,00
	Total	400		
Equal Opportunities in Workplace	Male	197	185,15	36474,00
	Female	203	215,40	43726,00
	Total	400		
Open and Transparent	Male	197	197,05	38819,50
	Female	203	203,84	41380,50
	Total	400		
Supports Good Causes	Male	197	200,21	39441,50
	Female	203	200,78	40758,50
	Total	400		
Strong and Appealing Leader	Male	197	196,49	38709,00
	Female	203	204,39	41491,00
	Total	400		
Profitable	Male	197	192,78	37977,50
	Female	203	207,99	42222,50
	Total	400		

Table 4. Test Statistics^a

	High Quality Products	Adapts to Change	Equal Opportunities in Workplace	Open and Transparent	Supports Good Causes	Strong and Appealing Leader	Profitable
Mann-Whitney U	19395,500	19401,000	16971,000	19316,500	19938,500	19206,000	18474,500
Wilcoxon W	40101,500	40107,000	36474,000	38819,500	39441,500	38709,000	37977,500
Z	-,564	-,523	-2,700	-,611	-,052	-,697	-1,334
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,573	,601	,007	,541	,959	,486	,182
a. Grouping Variable: Gender							

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference between the answers given by the men and women regarding the perception of corporate reputation.

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference between the answers given by the men and women regarding the perception of corporate reputation.

While examining 7 items on the hypotheses, the item "equal opportunities in workplace" used for the workplace factor is analyzed according to the sex variable, the hypothesis H_0 is rejected because the asymptotic significance value is lower than 0.05 for the specified item. The alternative H_1 hypothesis is therefore accepted. As a result, it has been observed that the answers given by the men and women to the workplace factor show different results. However, when the other 6 items are examined, the asymptotic significance value is found to be greater than 0.05 and therefore the H_0 hypothesis is accepted.

3.2 SP2: Does The Perception Of Corporate Reputation Shift With Regard To Age Factor In the Sample?

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
High Quality Products	400	5,98	1,435	1	7

Adapts to Change	400	4,08	2,021	1	7
Equal Opportunities in Workplace	400	5,43	1,614	1	7
Open and Transparent	400	5,47	1,497	1	7
Supports Good Causes	400	5,62	1,361	1	7
Strong and Appealing Leader	400	4,98	1,649	1	7
Profitable	400	4,29	1,866	1	7
Age	400	1,95	,864	1	4

Kruskal-Wallis Test

Table 6. Ranks

	Age	N	Mean Rank	Age	N	Mean Rank
High Quality Products	18-23	143	188,49	36-48	92	216,79
	24-35	149	198,64	49-60	16	231,47
Adapts to Change	18-23	143	193,59	36-48	92	213,59
	24-35	149	194,80	49-60	16	240,09
Equal Opportunities in Workplace	18-23	143	199,20	36-48	92	195,04
	24-35	149	205,29	49-60	16	199,00
Open and Transparent	18-23	143	188,74	36-48	92	199,67
	24-35	149	207,60	49-60	16	244,25
Supports Good Causes	18-23	143	178,53	36-48	92	219,87

	24-35	149	205,46	49-60	16	239,28
Strong and Appealing Leader	18-23	143	188,17	36-48	92	196,11
	24-35	149	213,04	49-60	16	219,19
Profitable	18-23	143	190,49	36-48	92	197,99
	24-35	149	209,76	49-60	16	218,16

 Table 7. Test Statistics^{a,b}

	High Quality Products	Adapts to Change	Equal Opportunities in Workplace	Open and Transparent	Supports Good Causes	Strong and Appealing Leader	Profitable
Chi-Square	5,387	4,057	,513	4,690	10,819	4,088	2,514
df	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	,146	,255	,916	,196	,013	,252	,473
a. Kruskal Wallis Test							
b. Grouping Variable: Age							

H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference between the answers given by people of different ages (*four groups*) regarding the perception of corporate reputation.

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference between the answers given by people of different ages (*four groups*) regarding the perception of corporate reputation.

The asymptotic significance value of the 6 items have been found to be greater than 0,05 revealing the fact that H_0 is accepted. However, for the item " Supports Good Causes" which is used for the citizenship factor, the H_0 is rejected because the asymptotic significance value of the item, is lower than 0,05 for the item indicated. The alternative H_1 hypothesis is therefore accepted. As a result, it is observed that the responses of the age groups to the citizenship factor show different results. In addition to this, as the number of variables in the group is 4, it is necessary to identify the groups that are different; thus, "Post Hoc" analysis is required.

Table 8. ANOVA

Supports Good Causes					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	26,660	3	8,887	4,942	,002
Within Groups	712,050	396	1,798		
Total	738,710	399			

As a result of the Post Hoc analysis, it is observed that when the Significant values are taken into account, the result of the difference arises from the 18-23 age group.

Post Hoc Tests

Table 9. Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable:		Supports Good Causes				
"Tamhane"						
(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
18-23	24-35	-,336	,170	,257	-,79	,11
	36-48	-,620*	,164	,001	-1,05	-,19
	49-60	-,810*	,271	,037	-1,58	-,04
24-35	18-23	,336	,170	,257	-,11	,79
	36-48	-,284	,154	,341	-,69	,13
	49-60	-,474	,265	,421	-1,24	,29
36-48	18-23	,620*	,164	,001	,19	1,05
	24-35	,284	,154	,341	-,13	,69

	49-60	-,190	,261	,979	-,95	,57
49-60	18-23	,810*	,271	,037	,04	1,58
	24-35	,474	,265	,421	-,29	1,24
	36-48	,190	,261	,979	-,57	,95
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						

3.3 SP3: Does The Perception Of Corporate Reputation Shift With Regard To Educational Status Factor in the Sample?

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
High Quality Products	400	5,98	1,435	1	7
Adapts to Change	400	4,08	2,021	1	7
Equal Opportunities in Workplace	400	5,43	1,614	1	7
Open and Transparent	400	5,47	1,497	1	7
Supports Good Causes	400	5,62	1,361	1	7
Strong and Appealing Leader	400	4,98	1,649	1	7
Profitable	400	4,29	1,866	1	7
Educational Status	400	3,66	,994	1	6

Kruskal-Wallis Test

Table 11. Ranks

	Educational Status	N	Mean Rank	Educational Status	N	Mean Rank
High Quality	Primary School	18	203,08	Bachelor's Degree	225	200,25

Products	High School	29	189,24	Master's Degree	33	193,26
	Associate Degree	83	199,81	PhD	12	253,29
Adapts to Change	Primary School	18	214,75	Bachelor's Degree	225	204,00
	High School	29	185,09	Master's Degree	33	166,79
	Associate Degree	83	210,85	PhD	12	171,83
Equal Opportunities in Workplace	Primary School	18	213,72	Bachelor's Degree	225	206,02
	High School	29	235,45	Master's Degree	33	168,36
	Associate Degree	83	180,16	PhD	12	221,83
Open and Transparent	Primary School	18	196,69	Bachelor's Degree	225	211,12
	High School	29	212,05	Master's Degree	33	178,61
	Associate Degree	83	179,18	PhD	12	186,75
Supports Good Causes	Primary School	18	231,83	Bachelor's Degree	225	209,37
	High School	29	217,84	Master's Degree	33	180,09
	Associate Degree	83	171,91	PhD	12	199,13
Strong and Appealing Leader	Primary School	18	225,39	Bachelor's Degree	225	206,54
	High School	29	194,34	Master's Degree	33	190,67
	Associate Degree	83	190,26	PhD	12	162,58
Profitable	Primary School	18	234,31	Bachelor's Degree	225	202,12
	High School	29	224,81	Master's Degree	33	185,21
	Associate Degree	83	189,51	PhD	12	178,71

Table 12. Test Statistics^{a,b}

	High Quality Products	Adapts to Change	Equal Opportunities in Workplace	Open and Transparent	Supports Good Causes	Strong and Appealing Leader	Profitable
Chi-Square	3,451	5,375	9,506	6,907	10,360	3,862	4,751
df	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Asymp. Sig.	,631	,372	,091	,228	,066	,570	,447
a. Kruskal Wallis Test							
b. Grouping Variable: Educational Status							

H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference between the answers given by people of different educational levels regarding the perception of corporate reputation.

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference between the answers given by people of different educational levels regarding the perception of corporate reputation.

The asymptotic significance value of the all items have been found to be greater than 0,05 revealing the fact that H_0 is accepted. As a result, it is observed that divergences within educational levels have not affected the perception of corporate reputation.

3.3 SP4: Does the Perception of Corporate Reputation Shift with Regard to Income Level Factor in the sample?

Table 13. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
High Quality Products	400	5,98	1,435	1	7
Adapts to Change	400	4,08	2,021	1	7
Equal Opportunities in Workplace	400	5,43	1,614	1	7
Open and Transparent	400	5,47	1,497	1	7
Supports Good Causes	400	5,62	1,361	1	7

Strong and Appealing Leader	400	4,98	1,649	1	7
Profitable	400	4,29	1,866	1	7
Educational Status	400	1,56	,536	1	3

Kruskal-Wallis Test

Table 14. Ranks

	Level of Income	N	Mean Rank
High Quality Products	Less than 1500	185	187,48
	Between 1500-4500	207	210,41
	More than 4500	8	245,38
Adapts to Change	Less than 1500	185	196,98
	Between 1500-4500	207	205,32
	More than 4500	8	157,19
Equal Opportunities in Workplace	Less than 1500	185	202,54
	Between 1500-4500	207	198,60
	More than 4500	8	202,31
Open and Transparent	Less than 1500	185	192,54
	Between 1500-4500	207	206,96
	More than 4500	8	217,38
Supports Good	Less than 1500	185	188,94

Causes	Between 1500-4500	207	208,71
	More than 4500	8	255,44
Strong and Appealing Leader	Less than 1500	185	201,56
	Between 1500-4500	207	199,31
	More than 4500	8	206,75
Profitable	Less than 1500	185	207,24
	Between 1500-4500	207	194,93
	More than 4500	8	188,88

 Table 15. Test Statistics^{a,b}

	High Quality Products	Adapts to Change	Equal Opportunities in Workplace	Open and Transparent	Supports Good Causes	Strong and Appealing Leader	Profitable
Chi-Square	5,996	1,709	,123	1,833	5,176	,064	1,224
df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	,050	,425	,940	,400	,075	,969	,542
a. Kruskal Wallis Test							
b. Grouping Variable: Level of Income							

H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference between the answers given by people of different income levels regarding the perception of corporate reputation.

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference between the answers given by people of different income levels regarding the perception of corporate reputation.

The asymptotic significance value of the 6 items have been found to be greater than 0,05

revealing the fact that H_0 is accepted. However, for the item "High quality products " used for the Product and Services factor is analyzed according to the income level variable, the H_0 hypothesis is rejected because the asymptotic significance value is lower than 0.05 for the specified item. The alternative H_1 hypothesis is therefore accepted. Additionally, since the number of variables in the group is 3, it is necessary to determine the groups that are divergent; thus, "Post Hoc" analysis is applied.

Table 16. ANOVA

High Quality Products					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12,624	2	6,312	3,097	,046
Within Groups	809,216	397	2,038		
Total	821,840	399			

As a result of the Post Hoc analysis, when the Significant values are examined, the result is that the difference has arisen from the group of less than 1500 and the group of between 1500-4500.

Post Hoc Tests

Table 17. Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable:		High Quality Products				
"Tamhane"						
(I) Income level	(J) Income level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Less than 1500	Between 1500-4500	-,351*	,145	,047	-,70	,00
	More than 4500	-,461	,630	,865	-2,39	1,47
Between 1500-4500	Less than 1500	,351*	,145	,047	,00	,70
	More than 4500	-,110	,626	,998	-2,04	1,82

More than 4500	Less than 1500	,461	,630	,865	-1,47	2,39
	Between 1500-4500	,110	,626	,998	-1,82	2,04

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

4. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the corpus of knowledge regarding both the term corporate reputation itself and its building blocks has reached a certain degree of maturity, particularly due to the multidisciplinary character of the field. Our research is, therefore, aimed at filling a gap, which deserves the attention of quantitative research, in the field of reputation management through the instrumentality of investigating the impact of demographics in addition to those mentioned in previous studies that analysed variables having an effect on perceived reputation. Thus, our survey is an attempt to enhance the understanding in the way corporate reputation is perceived by different individuals. In the present study, four sub-problems were investigated on the basis of our main problem. Accordingly, a significant difference regarding the matter of perception of different genders was observed on the item of Equal Opportunities in Workplace. More clearly, female participants were observed to have attached far more importance to this item than men, while no significant difference was observed for the other 6 factors. Within the second sub-problem, variable age, it was observed only on the item of Supports good causes that age groups' level of importance attached exhibits a linear increase. Surprisingly, the results also show that this is not because people of 49-60 attach great importance to this item, but mostly because the group of 18-23 disregard it. In an unexpected way no significant difference at all was observed within the third variable, educational status, underlying causes of which demand additional research as we firmly believe. Finally, another linear increase was observed on the item of High Quality within the educational status variable, which indicates the fact that the level of attached importance on high quality, increases in direct proportion to the level of income.

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