NEW CHALLENGES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES:
INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON
REPUTATION MANAGEMENT
New Challenges, New Opportunities: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Reputation Management

edited by:
Banu Baybars-Hawks & Orhan Samast
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Research on Measuring Perceptions of Reputation in the Health Sector through Social Media
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Reputation is widely understood to be the trust and respect shown by society to individuals or organizations. While corporate identity is concerned with the creation of corporate image, the sum total of that image which is generated by consumers, communities, investors, and employees represents corporate reputation. In other words, the reputation of a given institution is determined by all images for a wide variety of clear assessments by its stakeholders. In the creation and measurement of corporate reputation, it should be kept in mind that the perceptions of these groups are critical.

Recent incidents in the health sector suggest that in this field in particular a number of errors have been committed which resulted in negative impacts on the reputations of the institutions involved. One of these is miscommunication between patients, patients' relatives, and health sector employees. Unlike other service sectors, the health sector, which directly affects people's lives, is dependent upon relationships based on mutual trust; in other words, the concept of reputation acquires a mutual meaning in this case. The difficulties faced by service institutions in correctly expressing themselves as regards the relationship between patients and health institutions may be caused by individuals with different types of training and knowledge, and emotional states can also have an impact. By trusting each other, both sides are able to create an atmosphere of confidence and credibility, and this is indicative of the importance of corporate reputation. In this respect, the corporate reputation of service-related institutions is directly related to human dignity, and in the health sector this is of utmost importance.

In light of this, studies of communications should be conducted in a manner that differs from how they are carried out for commercial marketing strategies. In particular, besides engaging in correct informative action, it is important to access customers in the target audience through the correct channel of communication. Communication-information systems and social media, as the predominant tools of communication in our age, are open and participatory tools through which those in the health sector are able to freely express themselves.
and with them effective action can be taken during crises and social responsibility projects can be made known to the masses. Likewise they facilitate rapid feedback as well as ease of archiving and access, and they are suitable for real-time monitoring and measuring. The results of measures carried out via social media suggest the issues with which we must be careful in the management of health communications and they demonstrate the importance of health information systems established for this purpose. Social media are of the most suitable tools available today for the creation and measurement of corporate reputation as regards the health sector. Through this research, we aim to contribute to the creation of a road map for increasing corporate reputation through use of social media in the service sector, which is a highly sensitive field.

Introduction

In today’s globalized markets, in which the life cycles of products have become shortened and the differentiation between products has diminished, the key to success has become a preferred company lies in intangible assets (Dayan, Kvat and Caligian 2012, 25). Corporate reputation is a growing factor in processes of creation as the result of four trends in business: the business environment, which is marked by the global interpenetration of markets, media congestion and fragmentation; the appearance of increasingly vocal constituencies; and, the commoditization of industries and their products (Fombrun and Gardberg 2002, 303). Reputation is directly related to such advantages in terms of greater ability to exploit profitable marketing opportunities, improved customer retention, increased sales, and reduced operation costs. In this way, reputation is a company specific value. You can imitate a company’s goods, services, strategies, company policies, buildings, human resource models and its logo, but you can’t imitate a company's reputation (Fombrun et al. 1999, 241-242).

For economists, reputations signal a company’s likely behavior. For strategists, a company’s reputation is a barrier to rivals and a source of competitive advantages. For accountants, reputations are an intangible asset, a form of goodwill whose value fluctuates in the marketplace. For marketers, reputations are perceptual assets with the power to attract loyal customers (Fombrun et al. 1999, 241). Corporate reputation affects the way in which various stakeholders behave towards an organization, influencing customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, human resources, or employee retention (Chun 2005, 91; Ross 2008, 6). Once a reputation, which is based on mutual trust and social exchange between a company and stakeholders, is developed, it represents a true impediment to rivals and barriers in the market since reputation can’t be imitated and reproduced by other firms. At this point, it will be useful to note that corporate reputation has been defined in somewhat varying terms, for example, it has been described as a number of attributes that form a buyer’s view as to whether a company is well-known, good or bad, reliable, trustworthy, reputable and or believable (Chetthamrongchai 2010, 209). It has also been defined as a collective construct that describes the aggregate perceptions of multiple stakeholders about a company’s performance. Alternatively, it has been related to how people feel about a company based on the information available about company activities, its messages, behavior, the workplace, prices, products quality, innovativeness, management quality, profitability, risk levels, trust, past performance and future prospects. In other words, corporate reputation is a conglomerate of the perceptions of multiple stakeholders and this leads to the construction of a company’s total image. However, this is a lengthy process, and corporate reputation takes a long time to develop.

Components of corporate reputation

Definitions of corporate reputation have been seen as one dimension of corporate image and treated as synonymous with images that represent “the total impression of a company.” They have also been seen as resulting from long-term assessments made about firms by the public with incomplete information (Lloyd and Mortimer 2006, 1). Although there are a few ways to measure corporate reputation, Fombrun’s model, as a collective assessment of a company’s ability to provide valued outcomes to a representative group of stakeholders, has been utilized as an approach for the evaluation of corporate reputation. This approach takes into account six main components.

1. Products and services. The company stands behind its products and services, develops innovative products and services, offers high-quality products and services, and offers products and services that are a good value for the money.
2. Visionary leadership. The company has strong leadership, has a clear vision for its future, and recognizes and takes advantage of market opportunities.
3. The workplace environment is well-managed, the company is an attractive place of employment and looks like a firm that would have good employees.
4. Financial performance. The company has a strong record of profitability, has low-risk management, tends to outperform its competitors, and looks like a company with strong prospects for future growth.
5. Corporate social responsibility. The company is environmentally responsible, supports good causes, and maintains high standards in the way it treats people.
6. Emotional Appeal. Stakeholders have a good feeling about the firm,
and admire, respect and trust it (Fombrun et al. 1999, 253).

Based on these criteria, if a product or service doesn’t offer value to the customer or lacks a negative quality association, then it is almost impossible to create strong corporate reputation (Cravens et al. 2003, 207).

The role of social media

According to Ling and Donner, the first decades of the twenty-first century may be remembered as a historical time when the majority of the world’s population secured easy and affordable access to telephones for the first time. At that time, there were 1.7 billion telephones, including 963 million landlines and 740 million mobile phones on the planet (Ling and Donner 2009, 4). In 2011, the International Telecommunication Union estimated that this number will eventually increase to 5.9 billion mobile phones (ITU June 2012).

The importance of new media and digital technology is that they make it possible to abstract objects and then duplicate and transfer them over electronic networks (Sütçu 2012, 84). Gane and Beer have pointed out that many of the basic properties of computer networks have become metaphors for thinking about contemporary capitalist societies, and they suggest that Manuel Castells has been a key thinker on this issue because of the way that he posits networks as social structures (Gane and Beer 2008, 20). In light of this, social media have become critically influential tools of communication. Empirical studies have pointed to a positive relationship between having a good reputation and usage of social media, and corporate reputations are built from information about firms’ activities originating from the firms themselves, from the media, from other monitoring systems, and of course social media as well (Devine and Halpern 2001, 42). What has made social media platforms of communication so important is that every day there are 119 million tweets, every month 30 billion items of content are shared on Facebook, and in every minute 35 hours of video are shared on YouTube. Since 2009, Facebook has been first and Twitter has been second in the ranking of usage of social networks. Today, there are 1 billion people using Facebook, and the power of mobile and social media is increasing day by day. It has been found that Turkish citizens spend 25% of their time on social networks, and Turkey has ranked as the top sixth country in terms of social media use vis-à-vis the world average (15%) (Ermurat 2011). Social media users in Turkey can be broken down as follows: Internet users, 35 million; Facebook users, 31 million; and Twitter users, 9 million (Nadeau 2012). This indicates that social media is seen as a communication-intensive means of exchanging ideas, and as such it must be viewed in terms of its importance as regards corporate reputation.

The health sector and corporate reputation

In Turkey, the health sector is one of the most developed in the country. There is stiff competition between companies in the field of health, and for that reason corporate reputation has become an issue of strategic importance and companies need to be able to keep up with news as it rapidly spreads through social media in cases of crises as well as to protect and improve company image.

The health sector in social media

According to a survey of doctors in Turkey, young doctors look positively on the flow of digital data within their firms, suggesting the significant potential roles that social media could actively play in the medical sector in the near future. In the Turkish health sector, 54% of doctors use corporate mail (http://www.dhsturkey.com 2012). This shows that there is the risk that communications could suffer between internal and external stakeholders, a situation which could have dire consequences. According to research on internet usage among doctors in France, Italy, Spain, England and Turkey, it was found that medical firms and doctors in Europe use certain channels for information and communication but this was not the case in Turkey (http://www.dhsturkey.com 2012). There is a lack of professional sites in the health sector in Turkey, for a number of reasons. Firstly, most doctors use the Internet as a source of information. Secondly, they use it as a means to communicate with colleagues. In this way, it can be seen that they tend to use social media for "peer to peer communication." Just to give an example, 18% of doctors in France run their own blogs, while this figure is only 12% for Turkey (http://www.dhsturkey.com 2012). As this rough overview suggests, usage of social media is still in its primary stages in Turkey but it will continue to develop as times goes by.

According to a survey carried out at Rochester University, 4,400 tweets predicted that there could be an outbreak of the flu, suggesting ways that social media can be used for the identification of epidemics (O'Grady 2012). This research demonstrates that as news travels more quickly in social media, people are able to interact with each other in greater numbers, and as regards health, this can be a means of support and prevention. This is also important for companies in the health sector in terms of corporate reputation and image, both positively and negatively. For this reason, social media are important for protecting corporate reputation as well as building it up. According to one study, Facebook, Twitter and the Turkish website Sikayetvar.com have become heavily used as a means of communication in Turkey (http://www.uyenmedya.com 2011), and the site "sikayetvar.com," which is the oldest site, having been founded in 2001, has eight hundred and fifty thousand members and receives 1,400 complaints per year.
Sampling & Methods

A convenience sampling method was utilized and answers from 185 stakeholders were collected via a web-based structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of two parts, the first of which contained questions about measurements of the Turkish public’s "perceptions of the general reputation of the health sector" on a ten-point scale (Fombrun, Gardberg and Sever 2000, 20 items, 5 components). In the second part, the same questions were asked on the basis of private hospitals which have received complaints through the best-known sites for reporting dissatisfaction (the hospitals are Acıbadem, Dündaya Göz, Medicana, and Medical Park).

Table 3-1. Four Private Hospitals Which Have Received Numerous Complaints ("sikayetvar.com")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Rate of Complaints</th>
<th>Rate of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acıbadem</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dündaya Göz</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicana</td>
<td>5.20%</td>
<td>68.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Park</td>
<td>8.10%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-2. Four Private Hospitals Which Have Received Numerous Complaints in 2011-2012 in Terms of the Number of Patients ("sikayetvar.com")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>2011-2012 Number of Patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acıbadem</td>
<td>2,910,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dündaya Göz</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicana</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Park</td>
<td>1,700,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-3. Types of Complaints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnosis-Treatment</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total Complaints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four Hospital Data</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>26.30%</td>
<td>25.30%</td>
<td>23.10%</td>
<td>25.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research on Measuring Perceptions of Reputation in the Health Sector through Social Media

Table 3-4. Distribution of Complaints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Staff (%)</th>
<th>Diagnosis-Treatment (%)</th>
<th>Price (%)</th>
<th>Appointment (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acıbadem</td>
<td>24.34</td>
<td>23.03</td>
<td>19.74</td>
<td>9.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dündaya Göz</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>46.67</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicana</td>
<td>28.77</td>
<td>19.18</td>
<td>27.40</td>
<td>12.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Park</td>
<td>28.93</td>
<td>27.27</td>
<td>28.10</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Image is extremely important in terms of corporate reputation. With social media, which is a rich source of information, we can also identify gaps in corporate identification and image, and thereby point out risky points which could lead to a decline of reputation. For this reason, social media can play a critical role in either the success or failure of a corporation. In this study, Dündaya Göz Hospital was found to have numerous problems with diagnosis and treatment, whereas Medicana and Medical Park Hospital were found to be problematic in terms of pricing policy.

Table 3-5. Web-page Data of Hospitals Experiencing Problems as Indicated by Social Media (next page)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Acıbadem</th>
<th>Dündaya Göz</th>
<th>Medicana</th>
<th>Medical Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Hospital Was Established</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Information</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>More data than others</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences / Activities</td>
<td>More data than others</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Entrance to Facebook</td>
<td>30.09.10</td>
<td>18.01.10</td>
<td>31.08.10</td>
<td>27.05.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Likes in Facebook</td>
<td>69.396</td>
<td>85.086</td>
<td>1.757</td>
<td>33.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of Information in Facebook</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Likes in Twitter</td>
<td>4.612</td>
<td>2.970</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>1.422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube Video</td>
<td>90.945</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11.699</td>
<td>112.997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The general perceptions of reputation for these private hospitals can be traced to three factors:

1. "Social Responsibility and Emotional Appeal"
2. "Vision Leadership and Financial Performance"
3. "Products and Services"

The variables related to "Workplace Environment," which is the sixth in Fombrun’s model, are divided among these three factors, meaning that these private hospitals are not perceived to be good places to work.

Conclusion

Perceptions of reputation for Acıbadem Hospital were based on a number of factors, the first group of which is financial performance, social responsibility, and emotional appeal. The second group of factors includes products and services, vision and leadership, and workplace environment. Only one factor was observed in the perception of reputation in the analysis of Dün­ya Güz Hospital. According to the results of the questionnaire, Dün­ya Güz Hospital was not the subject of a clear set of perspectives. The reason for this is that the hospital only provides services in a single field, and it lacks a clear institutional identification and image. Detailed research is needed to discover the reasons for this.

According to research carried out in the telecommunication sector, the general perceptions of reputation of Turkish institutions are analyzed through four factors. The first group of factors includes products and services, the second is workplace environment, the third group is vision, leadership and financial performance, and the fourth factors are social responsibility and emotional appeal. Perceptions of reputation in the health sector in Turkey appear to be based on two main factors, the first of which includes social responsibility, emotional appeal and products and services. The second factor is workplace environment, financial performance and union-leadership.

Perceptions of reputation in the heath sector in Turkey appear to be based on two main factors, the first of which includes social responsibility, emotional appeal and products and services. The second factor is workplace environment, financial performance and union-leadership. Perceptions of the reputation of Medicana Hospital were based on two factors. The first was product services, vision leadership and workplace environment, and the second factor was social responsibility, emotional appeal and financial performance. According to the demographic analysis made on general perceptions of reputation, a meaningful difference was found between the sexes. Men focused less attention on social responsibility and emotional appeal than women. Other demographic analyses on the reputations of private hospitals revealed that there was a certain difference between the sexes for Medical Park Hospital, with men focusing more on perceptions of reputation than women. In this study, no general perceptions of reputation were found to be related with workplace environment. In conclusion, there are a number of reasons that could underpin these differences, and more than one solution needs to be found for each sector, and, for that matter, for each individual institution. As this study has demonstrated, there are certain differences among perceptions of reputation in the health sector. The reputations of Acıbadem and Medical Park hospitals were nearly the same, and this is reflected in their web pages and by the fact that they actively use Facebook and YouTube.

In social media, the rate of reply to complaints was 100% for Acıbadem, Dün­ya Güz and Medical Park. On the other hand, Medicana demonstrated a lower reputation perception in comparison with the others. This is meaningful in the sense that information available through social media contains important clues for decision-making. In the world of communications today, unfortunately not everyone is aware of the power of institutional web pages, and as a result they fail to utilize this in the development of perceptions of reputation.

References


Total reputation perception values of hospitals:
- Acıbadem: 8
- Dün­ya Güz: 8
- Medicana: 7
- Medical Park: 7

Reputation points ranked in order: Acıbadem, 1374; Dün­ya Güz, 1319; Med­icana, 1239; Medical Park, 1196.

Research on Measuring Perceptions of Reputation in the Health Sector through Social Media

The reputations of Acıbadem and Medical Park hospitals were nearly the same, and this is reflected in their web pages and by the fact that they actively use Facebook and YouTube.

In social media, the rate of reply to complaints was 100% for Acıbadem, Dün­ya Güz and Medical Park. On the other hand, Medicana demonstrated a lower reputation perception in comparison with the others. This is meaningful in the sense that information available through social media contains important clues for decision-making. In the world of communications today, unfortunately not everyone is aware of the power of institutional web pages, and as a result they fail to utilize this in the development of perceptions of reputation.

New Challenges, New Opportunities: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Reputation Management aims to investigate questions and the multifaceted issues which relate to reputation management. The chapters in the volume offer keen insights and thought-provoking ideas that explore reputation within a multidisciplinary framework, drawing insights from a number of fields of research including politics, public administration, international relations, business management, human resources, communication, new media, public relations, marketing, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability. In bringing this collection together, it was our intention to provide a venue that takes into account diverse concerns on the themes of reputation management from international and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Banu Baybars Hawks (Ph.D. University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2002) is a professor and chair of the Department of Public Relations, and Vice Dean of the Faculty of Communications at Kadir Has University in Istanbul, Turkey. She received her B.A. in Journalism and Public Relations and M.A in Public Relations and Publicity from Istanbul University, Turkey. Her research interests include media studies, media law, political economy of media, and terrorism. Her research appeared in journals such as the International Journal of the Humanities, and Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication. She is the author of Freedom’s Razored Edge: Terrorism and Media Controls in the United States and Turkey (2010, Lambert Academic Publishing) and co-author of If it was not for Terrorism—Crises, Compromise, and Elite Discourse in the Age of “War on Terror” (2011, Cambridge Scholars Publishing).

Orhan Samast (Reputation Management Institute of Turkey) is a graduate of Ankara University, Language, History and Geography Faculty, Information Management Department. He worked as executive manager for companies giving service of informatics and information technologies. He is the founder of Who is Who?, the most comprehensive biography bank of Turkey and Ottoman Store, the first online store on culture and arts in Turkey. He is general coordinator of “International Relations Journal”. Samast, who is working as informatics and communication consultant, is Jury Foreman of International Informatics Olympics, Reputation Management Institute of Turkey Chairman and CEO of Forsnet Information Technologies.