

## **Research on Corporate Reputation: A Bibliometric Review of 43 Years (1977-2020)**

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### **Abstract**

Corporate reputation is vital in today's uncertain and challenging business environment. It is crucial for firms' long-term viability, prominence in a competitive market, and relationship with the stakeholders. Research on corporate reputation has been increasing tremendously. This study aimed to perform a bibliometric analysis to find the trends in corporate reputation publications, influential countries, institutions, sources, and scholars and propose a model that could impact corporate reputation. The keyword "corporate reputation" was used as it is a collective view of all stakeholders, by using the TITLE-ABS-KEY, inserted with quotation marks. 1807 publications from 1977 to 2020 were extracted from the Scopus database. Data were exported to Microsoft Excel, Publish or Perish (PoP), and VOSviewer. The trends show increased corporate reputation research, with most corporate reputation studies focusing on business, management, and accounting. The United States accounted for nearly half of the corporate reputation publications, with New York University being the most productive institution. Some of the scholars have been mentioned in this paper. A proposed model has been developed, consisting of corporate image, e-communication, stakeholder, philanthropy, and leadership as the variables that could impact corporate reputation. This model could be further explored using qualitative or case studies. Also, contingency theory could be explored in the corporate reputation area. This study's contribution provides scholars with an overview on the corporate reputation research area.

**Keywords:** Bibliometric Analysis, Corporate Reputation, Publish or Perish, VOS Viewer

### **Introduction**

Corporate reputation is the overall perception of stakeholders towards their organization, either positive or negative (Pomering & Johnson, 2009). It is a collective judgement of a company based on ongoing assessments of its financial, social, and environmental impacts (Barnett, Jermier & Lafferty, 2006). Therefore, corporate reputation is crucial for companies' long-term sustainability (Abdullah & Abdul Aziz, 2013). Managers consider the corporate

reputation the most pertinent among their intangible assets (Gómez-Mejía & Balkin, 2002). Boosting the company's reputation is essential due to the competitive markets that require companies to stand out to be recognized (Illia & Balmer, 2012). Corporate reputation is perceived to be vital as it affects customer behaviour towards the organization. For example, good products and quality services will lead to customer satisfaction.

Consequently, customers will indirectly be encouraged to become loyal to the organizations (Goldberg & Hartwig, 1990; Rao, Agarwal & Dahlhoff, 2004; Shapiro, 1983). In terms of suppliers, if an organization has a good reputation, the cost of contracting, negotiating, and monitoring may decrease (Bergh, Ketchen, Boyd & Bergh, 2010). In addition, employees of a reputable company will be motivated to be more productive and stay in the organization. New talents will also be attracted to join the organization (Roberts & Dowling, 2002). Besides, as highlighted in previous studies, investors are more likely to invest in a reputable organization, enabling the organization to set a higher issue price (Raithel & Schwaiger, 2015). These observations, which imply the importance of corporate reputation, have motivated the researchers to conduct this bibliometric analysis of corporate reputation. Furthermore, the rapid growth of corporate reputation research (see Figure 2) indicates the need to map the literature on corporate reputation using bibliometric analysis. Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey and Lim (2021) agreed that bibliometric analysis could be used when the dataset is too large to be reviewed manually.

Bibliometric analysis is valuable because it allows the researchers to understand and evaluate the status of research on corporate reputation. Bibliometric analysis is a statistical and mathematical technique for analyzing books and other communication media (Pritchard, 1969). Thus, the bibliometric analysis method can provide a visible view of publications and can be used to identify and measure collaborative relationships, citations, research areas, and research patterns (Abdullah & Abd Aziz, 2021). However, bibliometric analysis in business research is still in its infancy (Donthu et al., 2021).

Four related studies have conducted bibliometric analysis concerning corporate reputation (Leila, Camelia & Claudia 2020; Li, Spry & Woodall, 2021; Orviz & Cuervo, 2020; Veh, Goebel & Vorgel, 2019). However, their studies only focused on the relationship between media and corporates from 1992–2019 (Leila et al., 2020), the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and reputation (Li et al., 2021), and corporate reputation (Orviz & Cuervo, 2020). However, for Orviz and Cuervo (2020), the data were solely obtained from the Web of Science from 1988–2018. Meanwhile, Veh et al. (2019), using the term "reputation", obtained only the data published until 2016 from the Web of Science. The subject areas are only related to business, management, and accounting. Therefore, based on these previous studies, there is a need to conduct a study to cover the gap in the literature.

This paper's significance is that it focuses on articles using the term "corporate reputation" only. This term is used as it is a broad concept encompassing internal and external stakeholder perceptions (Chun, 2005). The articles were solely from the Scopus database due to their beneficial features. The search has retrieved the articles published between 1977–2020. The bibliometric analysis performed in this study has addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the publication trends on corporate reputation?
2. Which countries, institutions, and sources are the most influential in the corporate reputation literature?
3. Which scholars have the most influence in the corporate reputation literature?