

Systematic Review of University Reputation: Recent Trend and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive review of previous research on university reputation, which currently lacks coherence. The study aims to address the gaps in the existing literature by providing a systematic discussion of the contributions made and highlighting the main issues found in previous research regarding the various aspects that influence university reputation, as well as its causes and effects. The approach used in this paper involves tracking all studies related to university reputation published between 2012 and 2021. After examining sources such as Scopus, Science Direct, and Web of Science, a total of 47 studies out of 295 were included in the analysis. The findings of this study demonstrate that university reputation is a multifaceted concept with diverse definitions and dimensions. The main purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive review of previous research on university reputation, which currently lacks coherence. The study aims to address the gaps in the existing literature by providing a systematic discussion of the contributions made and highlighting the main issues found in previous research regarding the various aspects that influence university reputation, as well as its causes and effects. The approach used in this paper involves tracking all studies related to university reputation published between 2012 and 2021. After examining sources such as Scopus, Science Direct, and Web of Science, a total of 48 studies out of 295 were included in the analysis. The findings of this study demonstrate that university reputation is a multifaceted concept with diverse definitions and dimensions. Additionally, the research confirms that several factors contribute to university reputation and that it has significant consequences. The study concludes by proposing recommendations for future research, including theories, methodologies, and potential areas of investigation. Furthermore, a comprehensive framework is presented as a result of this study

Keywords: Literature Review; University Reputation; Higher Education

Introduction

Education plays an important role in human life since it is considered as the backbone for individual and societal progress. In this globalization era, education is colored by competition, reputation and grade of higher education institutions. Nowadays, the university's grade is considered as the most significant case. Students tend to continue their study to universities or colleges which obtain good grade and reputation in the community (Bains & Rani, 2021). In the last decades, reputation has become serious concern for both organizations and academics. Several factors emphasize the importance of reputation in

developing a sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) (eg. Gardberg & Fombrun, 2002; Gotsi & Wilson, 2001; Telci & Kantur, 2014). Reputation is a notable indicator of success in the competition (Fombrun et al., 2000). There is no general definition for reputation though. According to Walsh & Beatty, (2007) reputation is commonly defined as the comprehensive assessment of customers make based on their responses to products, services, communication efforts, and interactions. Notably, the significance of reputation is not only confined to corporate research but has also been explored within the realm of universities (Alessandri et al., 2006; Kaushal et al., 2021; Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001).

A university's reputation is a reflection of its credible actions towards its target groups (Kaushal & Ali, 2020; Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001). According to Eroglu et al., (2001) university reputation was identified as a key positioning factor for higher education institutions, second only to the learning environment. The importance of reputation, image and identity in education services has received new attention, especially since the 2000 (Alessandri et al., 2006; Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001; Telci & Kantur, 2014; Yang & Grunig, 2005). Increasingly intense competition in the education sector makes universities have to actively manage their reputation status to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) (Ressler & Abratt, 2009). Positive perceptions of reputation bring significant benefits to organizations (Wepener & Boshoff, 2015). As competition between universities grows, the impact of institutional reputation becomes a measure of their success, further emphasizing the importance of reputation (Galeeva, 2016).

Enhancing reputation can be achieved through globalization and internationalization initiatives (Steiner et al., 2013). The significance of the international dimension in education is growing, leading to a focus on collaboration and accreditation. In this context, internationalization refers to the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global aspect into educational objectives, functions, or delivery (Knight, 2015). Over time, internationalization has transitioned from a reactive approach to a proactive strategic concern, its expanding focus, scope, and content (Wit, 2011). The internationalization of higher education has also played a role in the emergence of global university rankings (Stolz et al., 2010). The internationalized of universities has created significant strategy both for summoning the stakes working in the education institutions for new challenge, as well as for producing graduates who own sufficient skill to compete and work in international industries.

This ranking system is regarded to enhance the idea of the quality of world universities (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013; Marginson and Van der Wende 2007), whereby universities are measured on a global scale and introduced the notion of competition among institutions as a new concept in most countries. The ranking system also influence for all stakeholders in education industry (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013; Marginson 2007; Tofallis 2012). It seems strongly effected on decision making in university (Sauder & Espeland, 2009; Sauder and Fine 2008). This ranking has highly influenced on students' decision to proceed their education to certain universities (Hou et al., 2012). University's ranking provides an evidence of its academic quality. The degree achieved from higher ranking position of university is believed more valuable in the job market. Moreover, this rank offers assistance for the students to find jobs after graduated. (Morrish & Lee, 2011). Thus, university ranking simplifies the complexity of education by taking it into two significant characteristics: institutional performance and institutional reputation (Williams & Van Dyke, 2008). Hereby, reseacher propose several questions based on the study:

1. What are the main findings of the current University Reputation literature published in reputable international Journals?
2. How can further research develop and expand the literature?

Research Method

The research uses a systematic literature review method. Systematic literature reviews allow researchers to map existing research domains and propose directions for future research (Tranfield et al., 2003). Systematic reviews rely on reproducible methods to map and evaluate previous research in response to research (Paul & Criado, 2020). Agenda and systematic review contributions enable researchers to provide cutting-edge insights into phenomena by highlighting knowledge gaps, contradictions, and theoretical activators, as well as methodological developments for future research (Nwachukwu, 2022; Hulland & Houston, 2020; Palmatier et al., 2018). This study uses a procedure adopted from the *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA)* guidelines by (Liberati et al., 2009), the protocol consists of four stages—identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The selected procedure provides clear guidelines for reviewing processes (Lim & Rasul, 2022; ter Huurne et al., 2017)

In the first step of the method is identifying keywords and search strategies. Articles on the subject of “university reputation” are identified by looking into Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Web of Science hosted databases. The database is selected since it is largely comprehensive and its search function allows for sufficient accuracy (Supriharyanti & Sukoco, 2022). The first stage is conducting a survey using the Scopus database with the first keyword "University Reputation" and the second keyword "University Prestige". The researchers obtain 295 articles with details from the Scopus.com database of 177 articles, from the ScienceDirect database of 53 article and from the Web of Science as many as 65. The searching criteria are as follows:

- 1) The articles were published from 2012 to 2021;
- 2) Regarding the type of sources, the research is focused on published articles, excluding conference documents and books;
- 3) Only English articles are selected.

The second stage is screening of the obtained publications of three databases, clustering the same publications of the articles. The researchers gained 295 articles in total, then the same selection of articles is done, there are around 21 articles left. The rest is excluded from the literature review. The third stage is the feasibility study by looking at the relevance of the articles and research topics. There are 227 articles which are irrelevant; hence they are excluded from the literature review. The last stage is the inclusion by reviewing the 47 selected articles. Figure 1 presents details of each stage and explains more detail in the next section.

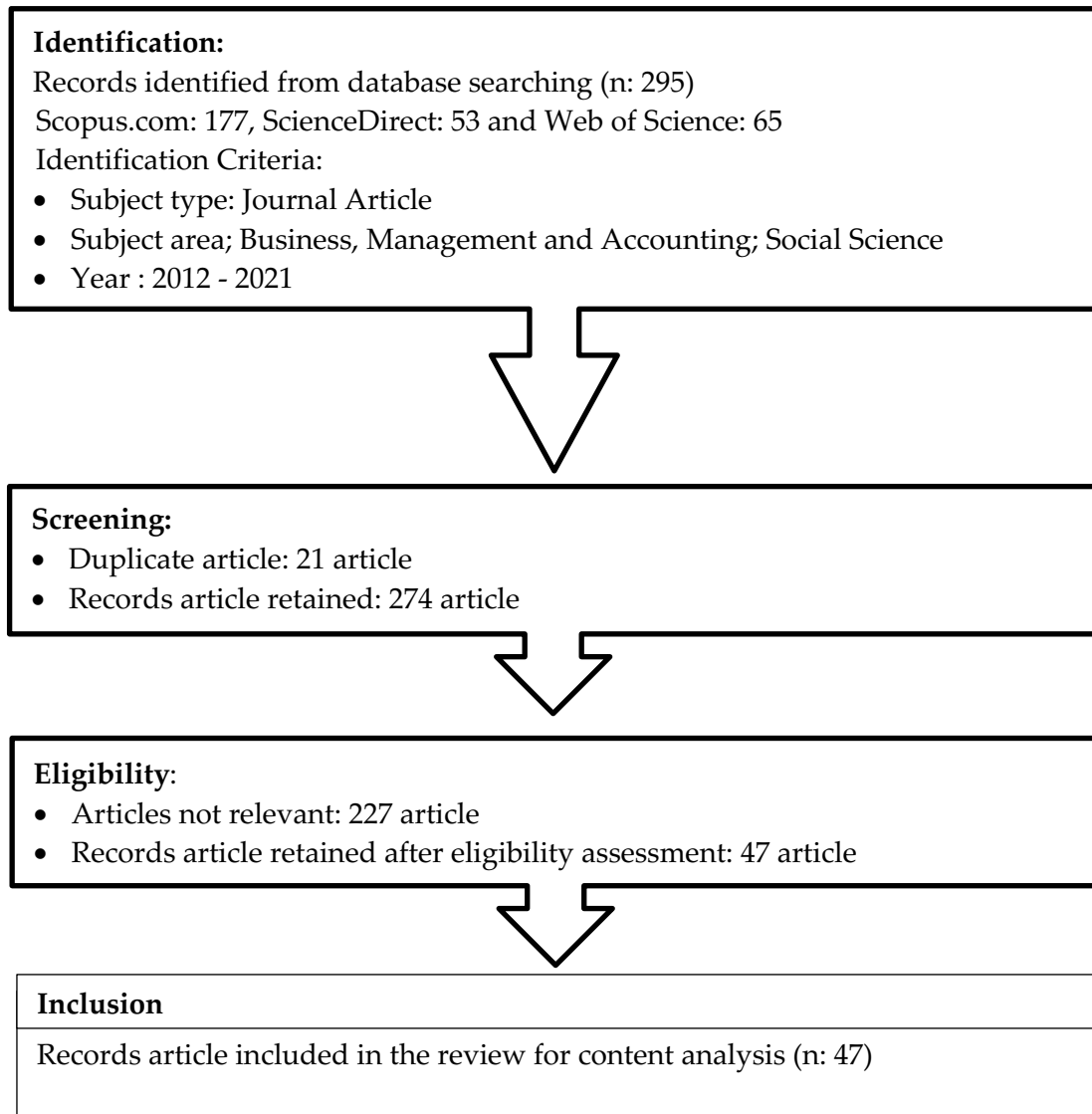


Figure1. Flowchart of the article selection process using the PRISMA protocol

Result

The researcher has analyzed and summarized the results from background, bibliographic data, frequently used theories, as well as the antecedents and consequences of the university's reputation.

The data of Bibliography

Having reviewed 46 articles published, we find that the publication mostly are higher education journals (6 articles) and achieve 13%, then studies in higher education with (4 articles) achieve 9%, journal of marketing for higher education with 3 articles achieve 7%, corporate reputation review and international journal of educational management (2 articles) with 4% and while other journals (1 article) or 2%. For more details, the data as shown in the table 1 below:

Table1. The publication outlet

Journal Name	Number of Article	%
Higher Education	6	13%
Studies in Higher Education	4	9%
Journal of Marketing for Higher Education	3	7%
Corporate Reputation Review	2	4%
International Journal of Educational Management	2	4%
Communication Today	1	2%
Downes International Journal for Educational Integrity	1	2%
Economics of Education Review	1	2%
Education and Training	1	2%
Education and Urban Society	1	2%
Education Economics	1	2%
Education Research International	1	2%
Eurasian Journal of Educational Research	1	2%
European Research on Management and Business Economics	1	2%
Higher Education Research & Development	1	2%
International Journal of Emerging Markets	1	2%
International Journal of Manpower	1	2%
International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing	1	2%
International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing	1	2%
Iranian Journal of Management Studies	1	2%
Journal of Business Research	1	2%
Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management	1	2%
Journal of Information Policy	1	2%
Journal of Public Affairs	1	2%
Management In Education	1	2%
Quality Assurance in Education	1	2%
Research Policy	1	2%
Social Indicators Research	1	2%
South African Journal of Science	1	2%
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	1	2%
The Asia Pacific Education Researcher	1	2%
The Economic and Labor Relations Review	1	2%
The Journal of Technology Transfer	1	2%
Asia Pacific Education Review	1	2%
ABAC Journal	1	2%
Total	47	100%

Source: data analyzed by the author (2022)

Research Methodology

From the 47 articles that have been analyzed, they have different way in research methodology. Methods in this study (36 articles) were dominated by quantitative approach with 76% while the qualitative method (8 articles) with 17% and the literature review method I (3 articles) or 7%. For details, it can be seen from table 2

Table2. Research method

o	Method	Number of Article	%
	Quantitative	36	76
	Qualitative	8	17
	Literaturereview	3	7
	Total	47	100

Source: data analyzed by the author (2022)

Time Publication

The data are collected from several scientific publications in the research domain, covering a time frame of 10 years. The articles in the review were published in 2012, in that year the publication was rare and it grew rapidly in 2019 – 2021. Meanwhile, it was found that, the article that was most widely cited was written by Hong &Su, (2013) with 241 citations. The research during 2012 – 2016 was focused more on establishing a university reputation model. Further research in that year also focused on graduates from reputable universities in searching jobs. Whereas in 2017-2021 university reputation research focuses on correlating reputation with university rankings, apart from that the university's collaborative efforts with other parties in improving reputation such as alumni and other educational institutions.

Theoretical Framework

To evaluate the development of university reputation research, it is necessary to pay attention to the main theoretical framework developed by researchers. However, only 4 articles among the 46 available papers explicitly mention the theoretical framework. In contrast, most research uses descriptive methods, describing only what was done to gain reputation. The following is the theoretical framework that commonly used:

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory embraces a developing concept of interactive agency, as proposed by Bandura, (1997). Thoughts, although intangible and non-material, exist independently from neural events. Cognitive processes represent emerging brain activities that hold significant influence. The properties that arise from these processes exhibit qualitative distinctions from their individual components and cannot be reduced solely to them. Within the causal structure of social cognitive theory, the perceived Self assumes a crucial role due to its efficacy beliefs, which not only impact personal adaptation and change but also influence other determinants, as stated by Bandura, (1997). These beliefs shape individuals' tendencies towards pessimism or optimism and influence their self-enhancing or self-defeating behaviors accordingly, as emphasized by Bandura, Albert, (1999).

Dynamic Capability

The initial development of the dynamic capabilities theory can be attributed to Teece & Pisano, (1994), and further contributions were made by David J. Teece; Gary Pisano; Amy Shuen et al., (1997). Subsequently, the strategic management theory, as recognized by Stefano et al., (2010). and David J. Teece, (2007), acknowledged the theory as a valuable framework. According to this theory, the first step in constructing a conceptual framework for dynamic capabilities is to identify the sources of competitive advantage, which are scarce and challenging to replicate. Within the university context, numerous studies suggest that adopting a market orientation facilitates the potential expression of dynamic capabilities. By cultivating a business culture and climate that aligns with the required behaviors and actions, an organization can attain sustainable competitive advantage (Alarcón-del-Amo et al., 2016; Lynch & Baines, 2004; Ma & Todorovic, 2011).

Institutional Theory

The Institutional Theory examines the role of social pressure and influence on organizational actions. It suggests that the social context within which organizations operate both constrains and guides their behavior (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). DiMaggio & Powell, (1983) identified three mechanisms through which pressures against isomorphism are exerted: coercive pressures, which result from formal and informal influences; mimetic pressures, whereby organizations consciously model themselves after others perceived as more successful in the public eye; and normative pressures, which arise from the professionalization process and involve the enforcement of values, codes, and standards by the organization (Alarcón-del-Amo et al., 2016). However, Institutional Theory also argues that newly established organizations tend to possess lower levels of reputation and legitimacy (Kuo et al., 2019).

Resources Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) proves highly valuable in the development of strategies, clearly illustrating how successful organizations utilize their strengths in their strategic approaches. According to Barney, (1991) resources are defined as the internal capabilities of an organization, which empower them to effectively respond to environmental opportunities and achieve success. Sirmon et al., (2007)) emphasize the significance of resources in corporate achievements, providing evidence of a direct correlation between resources, strategy, and firm performance. Researchers, building upon the notion that resources exhibit heterogeneity and idiosyncrasy, have identified key characteristics such as value, scarcity, uniqueness, and non-substitutability. After reviewing various studies conducted by numerous researchers, Barney (1991) proposed a practical classification for resources, grouping them into three types: physical capital resources encompassing tangible assets and technological infrastructure within an enterprise; human capital resources encompassing the capabilities and expertise of organizational members, including training and experience; and organizational capital resources comprising the capabilities related to organizational processes, such as formal reporting structures

Discussion

Antecedent and Consequences for Developing University Reputation

After exploring the theoretical research framework and research methodology, this paper proceeds to integrate the empirical evidence gathered regarding the factors that impact university reputation. The findings presented are the result of a systematic

literature review that encompasses 46 empirical studies. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the antecedent findings and outcomes associated with university reputation, Figure 2 outlines the main points before delving into the discussion.

We classify the antecedents of university reputation efforts into two categories, namely organizational and individual factors. For organizational factors there is organizational identity, which is a modernization demand for universities that needs to be fulfilled in the construction of buildings and places with user functions and aesthetic artifacts. Apart from creating an impressive external image, the symbols and representations of an organization often play a crucial role in shaping its internal identity, fostering identification, motivation, and organizational culture. The concept of identity, which encompasses the understanding of reality and the construction of meaning among employees, students, and external stakeholders, is influenced by the communicated physical and virtual culture. This culture, in turn, is influenced by elements such as university buildings, locations, and the aesthetic and functional aspects of these architectural components. Architecture and artifacts constitute integral parts of university culture, contributing to the perception of identity among lecturers, staff, students, and society as a whole (Becker, F. D., & Steele, 1995). Due to the significant emphasis on destination image in various studies within the field of international higher education, its influence on the international aspirations of students is widely recognized. In the context of this study, the term goal image specifically refers to the knowledge and perceptions students hold about the host country (Ma, 2022; Lee, 2014; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

While the antecedent for organization is Institutional Network. It works as a collaboration of one university to others as well as the industrial sector. Furthermore, organizational resource is the utilization of university resources to improve the reputation of the university. Meanwhile, individual factors are the value of the university, student satisfaction when studying at the university, the role of alumni and academic quality. Besides, the antecedents, this study also classified the consequences of university reputation. These consequences also have two factors, namely organizational factors and individual factors. Organizational factors are institutional performance, and organizational attractiveness. In fact, individual factors are word of mouth, commitment, loyalty, experimental learning, intention to pay premium and intention to recommend. For details, it can be seen on Figure 2.

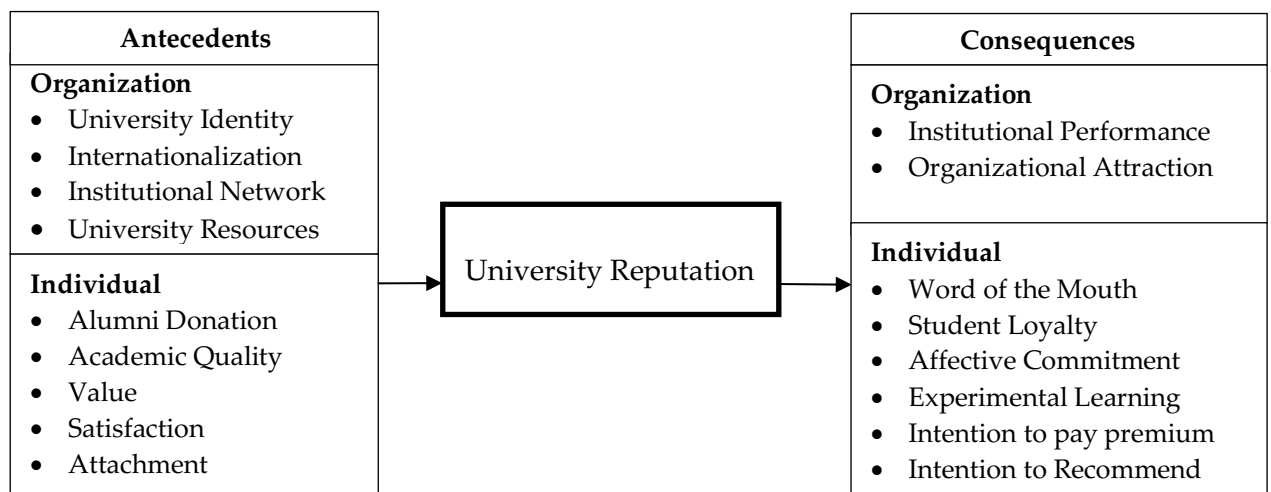


Figure 2. Antecedents and Consequences University Reputation

Conclusion

This article, in many ways, contributes benefit both to the researchers and practitioners. A review of the academic literature on university reputation allows identification of major themes explored and key findings in this area as well as knowledge gaps that may be addressed by further research. A large number of previous studies have made important contributions related to the dimensions consisting of university reputation, antecedents and consequences. Accordingly, by understanding the antecedents and consequences of a university's reputation, one is capable of achieving good image among stakeholders and improving other variables affected by it such as students' satisfaction and loyalty, the labor market, alumni and further prospect. In addition, the researchers also point out that university reputation is perceived more from other information sources beyond the organization. In Asian context, universities have been relatively slow in building profiles and networks of international students and alumni. International students and alumni can obviously serve as university ambassadors and a link between the university and the international market for higher education since the framework for future university reputation research trends is focused on international collaboration and it can be traced from the students' role as ambassadors for universities in worldwide community.

Limitation

Limitation of this study is that the findings are influenced by the decisions taken during the different searching strategies process can lead to different results. On the other hand, the way of the researchers gain data and summarize it affects the conclusion of the study.

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