Exploring corporate reputation variables to measure personal reputations

ABSTRACT

This explorative article qualitatively describes reputation variables that are applicable to both corporate and personal reputations: identity, image, branding, personality, behaviour, culture, ethics and storytelling. The research problem is concerned with the fact that personal reputations are not studied with the same intensity as corporate reputations are. In the context of corporate communication, the question arises as to whether variables that measure corporate reputation can be applied to the assessment of personal reputations.

The article aims firstly to describe the concepts which define reputations, both corporate and personal, from a corporate communication perspective, and secondly to describe ways of assessing corporate reputation, in order to suggest their application to personal reputation. In doing so, the article attempts to ground corporate reputation within the meta-theoretical context of corporate communication, according to the traditions of Van Riel (1995) and Van Riel and Fombrun (2007).

The article concludes that the Reputation Quotient (RQ) can be applied to measure personal reputations. This measurement instrument includes all the assessment criteria of the Reputation Institute's (2017) the RepTrak®, as well as the criteria of the Authentic Personal Governance Model, and the Personal Balanced Scorecard Framework proposed by Rampersad and Hussain (2014).

The article does not attempt to elaborate upon a personality analysis of individuals, but is concerned with the possible application of corporate reputation measurement variables to measure the reputation of individuals.

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BACKGROUND

"The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear"
Socrates (Karaduman, 2013:464).

The Reputation Institute (2014:1) views reputation management as a relatively new business discipline and one that demands a new set of competencies. The result has been new ways of conceptualising corporate and personal reputation variables in relation to the corporate environment. These concepts provide new insights and understanding of the corporate context. Confusion is evident amongst practitioners and scholars due to the existence of disciplinary silos, as well as divisions caused by geography, language, culture and context (Balmer & Greyser, 2003:1). Gotsi and Wilson (2001b:29) illustrate the different schools of thought that are quite interrelated among academics and practitioners.

"A definition for reputation is still lacking", according to Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty (2006: 26). The Latin word for reputation is *"reputare"*, which means to deliberate or reckon with (Online Etymology Dictionary). Reputations can be viewed as the overall assessments of organisations and individuals by their stakeholders (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007:43).

Corporate reputation is well documented in many marketing and communication sources (Mumby, 2016:2), but the same cannot be said about personal reputation (Schweizer & Wijnberg, 1999:249). Much has been said about personal branding and the emphasis upon the individual's personal image. However, this emphasis, unfortunately, is restricted to personal brand alone, as opposed to personal reputation, which also includes variables such as identity, image and personality traits (like storytelling, behaviour and culture).

Pera, Viglia and Furlan (2016:44) explain that corporate reputation has received attention from both marketing and public relations experts over decades, however it still has not been fully theorised. Similarly, in the past, much emphasis has been placed upon the capital or incentive value of a sound corporate reputation. Since the concepts of "reputation as capital vs reputation as interpretation" were articulated by Aula and Mantere in 2008, various other influences have changed the landscape of reputations more dramatically. Makkai (2016:10) and Gandini (2016: 123) acknowledge that the new direction towards social interactions by means of social media and stakeholder relationships becomes more evident every day. It has become clear that the chief executive officer as an individual is the face of the company. Reddiar, Kleyn and Abratt (2012:29) argue that corporate reputations mean different things to different stakeholders. The same is clearly true of personal reputations.

Botsman (2012) views personal reputation as integral to the way people have made social and economic decisions for thousands of years. The difference today is that network technologies allow the same degree of trust that people used to experience as face-to-face interaction, resulting in interactions and exchanges between total strangers. Individuals should be able to understand and build their influence and reputation, and think of their reputation as capital that can be put to good use.

The most cited dimension of corporate reputation is the company's leadership and its people: "The directors of the company unequivocally in all instances stated that the main determinant of the corporate reputation rested upon the foundation of the company's leadership and its people" (Reddiar, Kleyn & Abratt, 2012:29). The reputation associated with an individual in the organisation, or the director of that organisation, is a perceived extension of the organisation's corporate reputation. This view accentuates personal reputations as contributing value to any organisation, and they are regarded as a key intangible asset of the group, that also serve as a competitive advantage for organisations. Corporate organisations are successfully built and managed by directors in their roles as the custodians of an organisation's reputation.

Successful personal reputations depend on the perceptions that stakeholder groups have of an individual's identity, image, behaviour, measured over time. Consistent reinforcement of these perceptions strengthens personal reputation. How individuals are perceived by stakeholders (Frandsen, 2012:353; Rokka, Karlsson & Tienari, 2014:805) also emphasises the crucial role that stakeholders play in determining corporate reputation, rather than only focusing upon customers.

The benefit of having a strong personal brand contributes towards the identity, image, brand and reputation of the organisation in which the person functions. It is therefore of paramount value to marketers because it tells the world who that individual is and what they do, what makes them different, how they create value for the company, and what they can expect when they deal with that person. It creates an identity around the individual that makes it easier for people to remember them. It puts the person above the competition and makes them unique and better than the competitors in the market place (Koekemoer, 2014:151-152).

Much of branding activity focuses upon the building of emotional values. According to De Chernatony (1999:158), personal reputations are also built upon the subjective or emotional impressions and perceptions in feedback from stakeholders. Zinko, Ferris, Humphrey, Meyer and Aime (2012:156) explain that personal reputation is a fact of both social and organisational life: "Individuals can develop reputations for many things in everyday life, but at work, reputations most likely focus upon issues related to individuals' capacity to perform their jobs effectively, and to be cooperative and helpful towards others".

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

There is little evidence that personal reputations have been studied with the same rigour as corporate reputations. Similarly, few studies can be found where personal and corporate reputations are integrated within the corporate communication context by marketing and communication theorists, or where measures of corporate reputation are used to assess personal reputations. This is even more evident with regard to the integration of any corporate reputation measurement instrument with that of an individual reputation score card or assessment criteria. In addition, it seems as though academic researchers and industry practitioners approach corporate and personal reputations according to their personal theoretical grounding.

The research objectives of this article are twofold: 1) To describe the concepts which constitute reputations, both corporate and personal, from a corporate communication perspective and 2) to describe corporate reputation assessment techniques, in order to suggest ways to apply them to personal reputations.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACH AND RESEARCH METHOD

According to Hutton, Goodman, Alexander and Genest (2001:248), corporate reputation clearly rests within the discipline that is traditionally termed public relations, and which has subsequently become known as corporate communication. The Reputation Institute (2014:7) advises that new competencies, such as stakeholder analyses and the measured reputational impact, should be attended to. The integration of and coordination of multiple stakeholders are vital for sound reputation measurement and management.

Corporate communication, according to Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:22), encompasses marketing organisational communication and managerial communication. It is a coherent approach to the development of communication in organisations, an approach which communication specialists can adopt to streamline their own communications activities by working from a centrally coordinated strategic framework. See in this regard Rokka, Karlsson and Tienari's (2014:805; 823) holistic approach to managing personal brands and reputations. It is noted that he contemporary corporate communication environment plays an increasingly important role in personal branding (Lair, Sullivan & Chenny, 2005:311-314) and personal reputations.

An interdisciplinary approach is required where a communication perspective becomes more evident in the measurement of personal reputations (Frandsen, 2012:353). Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:14) contend that "… corporate communication is an integrative communication structure linking stakeholders to the organisation and individual …". It is not clear whether both personal and organisational reputations can be measured with the same measurement instruments, such as the Reputation Quotient (RQ) or RepTrak®.

Table 1 below depicts the theoretical domain from which personal reputations are approached in this article. This meta-theoretical and conceptual framework is mainly inspired by and adopted from the original Van Riel (1995) and later the Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:14-22) models. Van der Waldt (2011, unpublished inaugural lecture) refers to a similar classification. Bromley (2001:332) made it clear that the researcher's disciplinary approach by means of a meta-theoretical perspective to the study of personal and corporate reputations would be most helpful. A corporate communication perspective is an integrative communication structure linking stakeholders to the organisation. As such, corporate communication describes a vision of ways in which an organisation can strategically orchestrate all types of communication (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007:14).

Similarly, the same could be applied to personal reputations. Unfortunately, according to Pera, Viglia and Furlan (2016:44), despite the fact that personal reputations have received attention, this has not

been theorised. This therefore constrains an established theoretical basis for measuring personal reputation. However, this article aims to address this constraint. Since corporate communication is the glue that keeps all stakeholders in organisations informed and strategically managed (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007:14), it is also the approach proposed to manage the reputations of corporations as well as persons. See also in this regard, Harris and De Chernatony (2001:442-445), who contend that the successful management of brand resources results in a favourable brand reputation that requires a holistic and coordinated approach. An interdisciplinary approach would also be more valuable, according to Frandsen (2012:353) and Zarkada (2012:6). Table 1 shows the meta-theoretical framework proposed for personal reputation grounding or foundation.

Table 1: Towards a meta-theoretical framework for reputation management
Adapted from Steyn (2007:144-145)

DOMAIN/DISCIPLINE	Corporate communication Integrated communication (IC)
Sub-domain	Corporate reputation variables • Identity • Image • Branding • Personality • Behaviour • Culture • Ethics • Storytelling
Meta-theoretical framework	**Systems thinking**
Major Concept 1	Managerial communication
Constructs	Strategy/management/leadership
Major Concept 2	Organisational communication
Constructs	Stakeholder relations, internal as well as external Central is the individual and his/her relationships
Major Concept 3	Integrated marketing communication (IMC)
Constructs	The marketing mix and promotional/communication mix. Advertising, promotions, exhibitions, personal selling, branding and storytelling.

Since this article is exploratory in nature, the variables under discussion will be described and contextualised. The three concepts, managerial, organisational, and marketing communication, derive from the Van Riel (1995) and the Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) classifications as fundamental.

The qualitative method with regard to a descriptive study is according to Creswell (2010:51), and Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004:1). Cooper and Schindler (2003:151) state that: "Exploration is particularly useful when researchers lack a clear idea of the problems they will meet during the study". In this regard it seems to be the most suitable method to explore corporate reputation applications for measuring (and also managing) personal reputations.

All available databases were consulted to ascertain the availability of suitable information sources for the purpose of this article, via the North West University account at the Potchefstroom Campus (accessed between 6 December 2016 and 20 March 2017): the National Research Foundation (NRF); the Nexus Database System; South Africa's current and completed research projects; Ebsco-Host; Academic Search Premier; Communication and Mass Media Complete; MasterFILE Premier; SocINDEX with Full Text; Business Source Premier; Emerald Online; ProQuest: Theses and Dissertations; SABINET: Current and Completed Research; ISAP articles from SA Journals; SA Theses and UCTD; SA ePublications; and the internet Google Scholar search engine. These databases were readily available at the university library and its intranet at the time. Accessing all of these databases contributed to the extensive list of sources referred to in this article.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1: TO DESCRIBE THE CONCEPTS THAT CONSTITUTE REPUTATIONS, BOTH CORPORATE AND PERSONAL

The definition of a reputation is clearly a bone of contention: it is lacking a general definition according to Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty (2006:26). For Aula and Mantere (2008:44), it reflects intangible organisational capital, which is founded upon and mediated by the concepts of trust, respect and social capital. The perception of a reputation is an attitudinal construct, where attitude denotes subjective, emotional and cognitive mindsets. This refers to a mental association of the organisation held by "others outside the organisation" (Walsh, Mitchell, Jackson & Beatty, 2009:189). Bromley (2001:319-320) warns that both organisations and individuals have limited control over their identity, image and reputation. These are fragmented, dynamic and not controllable by their owner (The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, 2007). Identity, image and reputation therefore lie amongst stakeholders elsewhere, but not within the individual.

The variables of corporate reputations are well documented (Van der Waldt, 2015: 106-110). The question arises whether or not these variables are applicable to personal reputation. These corporate reputation fundamentals can effortlessly be applied to the personal identity, image, brand, personality, behaviour, ethics, culture and storytelling.

(i) Identity

Symbolism is the practice of representing things by means of symbols. A strong symbol can provide cohesion and structure to an identity and make it much easier to gain recognition and recall. This creates and maintains a favourable presence and its association with customers (Puth, 2016:2). Identity, according to the Online Etymology Dictionary (2017), is referred to as "sameness, oneness, state of being the same," and it comes from the Medieval Latin word, *identitatem* (nominative *identitas*) "sameness", ultimately, *idem* (neuter) "the same".

Balmer and Greyser's (2003:16-18) framework of the AC2ID test within a corporate communication context, depicts the five different identity types: the actual (or current), the communicated (or controlled), the conceived (or the image and brand), the ideal (or the optimum positioning) and lastly, the desired identity (which is that identity that lives in the heart and mind of the individual).

This paper proposes that these various identities could also assist in the measurement of individual or personal identities.

Identity is the individual personality, the self-portrayal and the sum total of all perceptions held by stakeholders. Personal identity "denotes the sum total of all the forms of expression that an individual uses to offer insight into its own nature. In short it is the self-portrayal of an individual's self" (Maurya, Mishra, Anand & Kumar, 2015:161).

Identity is the personality of the individual – the visual presentation of itself and the individual's behaviour (Davies, Chun, Da Silva & Roper, 2003:152). Finally, an identity is about the ethos, aims and values that present a sense of individuality, differentiating the brand, and it is uniquely very self-centred (adopted from De Chernatony (1999:165). Balmer's (2008:883) view is that the individual's identity is the most fundamental of all identity types. Not surprisingly, theories have been rationalised by marketing scholars in broad corporate identity contexts. The complexity in defining an identity contextually depends upon the given time frame and personal theoretical grounding of the author.

(ii) Image

Image comes from the Latin *imago* "an image, a likeness" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2017). An image is viewed as the overall perception stakeholders have of the organisation, it is an overall assessment (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007) of the organisation, a collective phenomenon, and seldom conceptualised whilst including stakeholders' experiences of direct and indirect interaction with the organisation (Walsh & Beatty, 2007:129).

Image is the stakeholder's perception of the individual or person at a given time. The image is the picture held of the individual; it is the perception and impression held by others with whom the individual interacts. A personal image, according to De Chernatony (2010:165), is regarded as "the immediate mental picture that stakeholders have of the person or individual". It is a set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that stakeholders have of a person. It is the holistic impression of the relative position of the personal brand amongst its perceived competitors.

(iii) Brand

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary (2017), in Old English the word "brand" carried the meanings of "fire, flame; firebrand, piece of burning wood, torch". It is this uniqueness and authentic design or visual symbol that identifies the product or service (Lair, Sullivan & Cheney, 2005:312). Brands are defined by Gandini (2016:124) as cultural, ideological and sociological objects, which not only mediate cultural meaning, but operate as ideological referents that shape rituals within societal dynamics.

Branding in traditional terms means the use of a name, a term, a symbol, or a design – or a combination of these – to identify a product. It includes the use of names, trademarks, and all

other means of product identification according to Perreault and McCarthy (2002:260-264). A respected name builds brand equity. It is the value of a brand's overall strength in the market. People should protect their own brand due to individuals and celebrities who are increasingly cashing in on name recognition to brand themselves. Lair, Sullivan and Cheney (2005:313) explain that the phenomenon of personal brands represents the logical extension of retail, product and corporate brands. The branding of a person pushes for consolidating the branding movement via an ideology of the individual efficacy, identity and control: "Personal branding then promotes a hyper-individuality based upon a lack of deeper identity and self-awareness".

The traditional marketing approaches to branding have changed. Branding was "practiced but largely ignored by academics for a long time; was pronounced dead, or as good as dead in 1993 … but it eventually survived". The traditional boundaries of the marketing concept are not relevant any more (Zarkada, 2012:16). Today's uncertain contexts ensure that "brand value is driven by risk, not return upon investment" (Rokka, Karlsson & Tienari, 2014:82).

"Corporate branding attempts to integrate a company's total image through a co-ordinated marketing communications process" (Russell & Lane, 2002:303). Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004:373) contend that many corporate brands are closely associated with the individuals who founded or manage them. The individual virtually becomes the brand. The example given is Sir Richard Branson who became the brand and face for Virgin. It is therefore imperative that a personal brand and that of the corporation should be paired, in order to have unsurpassed impact. If unpaired, the consequences could be dire. Gotsi and Wilson (2001a:99-100) indicate that the role of employees (individuals) in corporate reputations cannot be over-emphasised, as it has a significant place in the corporate image formation process. Personal branding as a focus is relatively young, and it has been used primarily in the labour market.

Personal branding is a relatively new marketing concept related to marketing strategies. Unfortunately, as a "new" social phenomenon and marketing construct in academic literature, this discipline is still under-developed and is often dismissed upon grounds of low quality (Zarkada, 2012:1). Makkai (2016:101) reveals that personal branding has mostly spread in the last decade, and it is prevalent in the current labour market. Lair, Sullivan and Cheney (2005:311) also state that personal branding only evolved in the late 1990s from both the corporate communication and employment environments. Everyone has a personal brand that should be authentic and holistic in order to reflect the person's true character. This helps to build a trusted professional personal image (Rampersad, 2008:32, 37; Schweizer & Wijnberg, 1999:258). Personal branding is therefore a set of associations with the individual – controlled by stakeholder perceptions and it is a subset of reputation that relates mainly to corporate communication.

According to Rampersad (2008:34), everyone has a personal brand. Unfortunately, most individuals are unaware of this and do not manage it strategically, consistently and effectively: "Your personal brand is the synthesis of all the expectations, images, and perceptions it creates in the minds of others when they see or hear your name." Between 2006 and 2014, Rampersad and Hussain developed the Personal Balanced Scorecard (2014) to assist in building a sound

personal brand that provides the individual with a road map that shows how to translate personal ambitions into actions and to capitalise upon their strengths and eliminate weaknesses. A typically comparable scorecard for a personal reputation could be the personalised one created by using the Reputation Quotient (RQ) adopted by Fombrun and Van Riel (2007), or RepTrak® of the Reputation Institute of New York (2017). However, these applications have never been applied to personal reputations or personal brands.

Gandini (2016:123) reiterates that the concepts of personal and self-branding over the past few decades have become central concepts in the knowledge economy, indicating the processes of marketisation of the self for the empowerment and professional success of the individual. Vitberg (2010:42) also sees personal branding as an intangible asset that individuals bring to organisations. It becomes a set of strategies and tactics that also build an organisation's balance sheet. According to Harris and Rae (2011:16-17), personal branding has recently been applied to great effect in elections. The 2016 American presidential election is no exception. Mr Donald Trump had his own brand well established and recognised globally prior to his political career and he exploited this to his own advantage.

Karaduman (2013:464) explains that personal branding is the process by which people and their careers are marketed as brands and it directly intends to create an asset and brand equity that relates to a particular person or individual. According to Makkai (2016:102), personal brand equity is comprised of the theoretical value of the personality, knowledge, facilities and public opinion that has a relevant impact, given the person's social situation and relationships, as well as the added value of the person's specialisation. Personal branding is also a carefully planned and strategic process. The result of personal branding is feedback – by analysing feedback the individual is constructing and shaping his/her image.

Rampersad (2009:11) refers to well-known successful personal brands: Tiger Woods, Bill Gates, Mahatma Gandhi, Oprah Winfrey and Richard Branson. These individuals have the following criteria for effective authentic personal branding, such as: authenticity, integrity, consistency, specialisation, authority, relevance, visibility, distinctiveness, persistence, goodwill and performance (Rampersad, 2009:32-33).

Rampersad and Hussain (2014:30) explain the second stage of the Authentic Personal Governance Model where personal ambition, personal governance and the personal balanced scorecard are central. The latter includes three variables: personal mission, vision and key roles as the more prominent factors for the individual. Makkai (2016:102) further discloses that in the information age, self-presentation means the packaging of the individual on social media, where feedback is immediate in real time: "online reputation is your reputation".

(iv) Personality traits also assigned to organisations

According to Maurya, Mishra, Anand and Kumar (2015:161), the corporate personality can be seen as the sum total of the organisation's characteristics from which its identity is generated.

Davies, Chun, Da Silva and Roper (2003:235-253) maintain that organisations are assigned to personality traits that are related to human characteristics. They discuss these different personalities of organisations and how they manifest their effects upon staff and stakeholders.

These characteristics are clustered under the following eight labels: (i) agreeableness, which reflects trust, warmth, empathy and integrity, (ii) enterprise, which echoes the human personality dimension of innovativeness and excitement, (iii) competence, which explains customer satisfaction, where they feel the organisation is reliable, (iv) ruthlessness, which includes less desirable elements of a personality, like egotism and dominance, (v) chic, which refers to elegance, prestige and snobbery, (vi) machismo is similar to ruggedness of the organisation, and lastly (vii) informality of the corporate reputation personality scale, which refers to the peacefulness and passion of the organisation. Lloyed and Mortimer (2006:6) highlight that one of the three main concepts of corporate reputation measurement is the corporate personality trait. This can be described as the sum total of the organisation's characteristics from which its identity is generated.

According to Davies (2013:169), the measurement of the personality projected by a brand has a long tradition and it reaches a stage of maturity at which similar dimensions are being identified by researchers working in different contexts. He also emphasises that: "personality scales are generic in nature, in other words, capable of measuring the reputation of a wide range of entities … There is no problem in adding items specifically relevant to the study of a given organisation that emerges from preliminary qualitative research …The target construct here is reputation, not personality, and personality has been used successfully to test theories concerning the reputation construct and therefore to advance our understanding of reputation in both theory and practice … the use of personality measures in the field of reputation is already substantial and continues to grow" (Davies, 2013:171-172).

(v) Behaviour, culture and ethics

Melewar, Karaosmanoglu and Paterson (2005:64-65) distinguish between corporate behaviour and individual behaviour. The first is mostly associated with senior management's task of initiation of clear communication of vision and strategy. The latter's behaviour is associated with the individual's relation to the organisation. Employee behaviour is, according to Mittins, Abratt and Christie (2011:418), an important part of reputation building. Employees live the brand and are therefore a critical part of any organisation's identity.

Intangible organisational elements, according to Carmeli and Tishler (2004:1259-1262), include culture, communication and knowledge, which have an important role in creating an organisation's value. Likewise, they also contribute towards the value of an individual. The alignment between perceived corporate image and actual organisational culture magnifies awareness amongst all stakeholders, about who the organisation is and what it stands for, and it further enhances organisational attractiveness and reputation (Hatch & Schultz, 2003:1049). Lair, Sullivan and Cheney (2005:333) explain that the broad tendency of personal branding is to shield itself from ethical scrutiny.

The Ethics Resource Center (2011) emphasises the building of a corporate reputation of integrity. In its discussion guide for executives (2011:3), it became clear that amongst all of an organisation's assets, a good reputation is of paramount importance. Equally so, the personal/individual reputation of an individual is the most important asset of that person. Identity is seen as the "individual moral philosophy" of a person (Sandel, 2010:220).

Corporate behaviour, culture and ethics impact upon the creation of a healthy corporate image, and have several implications for management. This confirms that management should spend more time on customer service, motivation of employees, management of strategic alliances and management of integrating all communication into a comprehensive integrated communication strategy (van der Waldt, 2015:110).

(vi) Storytelling

An organisation, according to Mittins, Abratt, and Christie (2011:407), is a storytelling system because it consists of people and people tell stories. Organisations use stories both consciously and strategically through mission and vision statements and internal communication. Unconsciously the organisation uses storytelling through its employees who tell stories that reveal their personal cultures and values, as well as those of their organisation.

The corporate narrative is essential in cross-stakeholder alignments with the organisation and the organisation's capabilities and business objectives (The Reputation Institute, 2014:11). Hatch and Schultz (2003:1060) argue that it is important to tell a good story about the organisation in order to create emotional and aesthetic relations between diverse stakeholder groupings: "In fact, every corporate brand has its own story."

Storytelling, and lately self-storytelling, are further new developments in personal branding and reputations (Pera, Viglia & Furlan, 2016:44). According to Pritchard (2017:27), when one tells a story with emotion, stakeholders may become inspired and captivated by the brand message. She further emphasises that, when communicating emotionally appealing messages, expressive organisations (for this matter individuals as well) effectively integrate brand, strategy and identity into reputations that resonate with stakeholders. When building a personal brand by means of using social networking, Harris and Rae (2011:17) advise that the individual should constantly take control and manage their personal brand in the direction that they want to take it, by also telling their story on social media via social networking. Hsu, Chang and Lee (2013:428) explain that collaborative storytelling websites, which are text-based social networking services, enable users to collaborate upon shared stories without limitations of time and space in real/immediate time. This interaction could also contribute to the story of the individual and eventually the online identity, image, brand and reputation of the individual.

Pera, Viglia and Furlan (2016:44) explored how self-storytelling is a powerful predictor of personal reputations in a collaborative community of the sharing economy realm. Self-storytelling allows for an attractive positioning with respect to other individuals. Issues of online social and professional

reputations, according to Oravec (2012:95), are becoming more and more complex for both individuals and organisations. However, organisations have more formalised and structured resources to manage their respective reputations than is the case with an individual's reputation. Karaduman (2013:468) warns that the phenomenon of online branding has not been examined from a personal perspective, despite its growing importance. Bromley (2001:316-317) states that words and phrases with regard to identity, personality, image and reputation can be ambiguous when used in a cross-disciplinary context. There are ample examples within the social-psychological disciplines to illustrate the extent to which psychological concepts and methods enter into the contemporary study of corporate identity and reputation.

The above corporate reputation fundamentals are interlinked with personal reputation and they are distinctly demarcated in the current marketing and corporate communication literature. Identity, image, brand, personality, behaviour, culture, ethics and storytelling could all be applicable to both organisations/corporations and personal reputations.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2: TO DESCRIBE CORPORATE REPUTATION ASSESSMENTS IN ORDER TO SUGGEST APPLICATIONS THEREOF TO PERSONAL REPUTATIONS

Aula and Mantere (2008:29-41) explain that sound stakeholder relations are at the heart of assessing an organisation's reputation. Different stakeholders make different assessments, and therefore reputations are seen as a relationship between stakeholders, employees and the organisation: "What reputational factor is essential at what time for whom?" (Aula & Mantere, 2008:40).

Corporate reputation audits, assessments and measurement techniques that are reliable, tested and retested are readily available in the literature. Most organisations use either the Reputation Institutes' Reptrak®, or the Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient (RQ) (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007:228). The RepTrak® follows perceptions about a company's ability to deliver in seven key dimensions: leadership, performance, products, innovation, workplace, governance and citizenship (The Reputation Institute, 2017). The Reputation Quotient consists of twenty items categorised under the dimensions: "emotional appeal, products and services, vision and leadership, workplace environment, social responsibility and financial performance" (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007:346-347).

When it comes to brand reputations the EquiTrend®, an academically vetted brand equity model, is used with elements such as familiarity, quality and consideration. Brands create powerful connections with consumers. The Harris Poll (2017) EquiTrend® studies benchmark on how deep those bonds go and honour the highest ranked brands in each award category. BrandZ (2017) is regarded as the world's largest brand equity database. It is an invaluable resource, containing data on brands gathered from interviews with over 150,000 respondents annually around the world. Raw data is collected and translated into valuable opinions from people who know the category and who can judge a brand based upon the attributes that are important to them.

To summarise, Table 2 shows both the umbrella constructs for the Reputation Quotient incorporated to measure personal reputations. Fewer measurement constructs are encompassed by the RepTrak® instrument.

The Authentic Personal Governance Model by Rampersad and Hussain (2014:30) includes: personal ambition, personal governance and the Personal Balanced Scorecard Framework by Rampersad (2008). The latter scorecard also includes the personal ambition (mission, vision and personal key roles), success factors and objectives, personal performances and personal improvement actions.

Table 2: Applicable reputation measurement variables for both organisations and persons
Adapted from: Van Riel & Fombrun (2007:228-257), the Reputation Institute (2017) and Rampersad & Hussain (2014:30-37).

Harris Fombrun (2007) Reputation Quotient (RQ) items	The RepTrak® (2017)	Rampersad & Hussain (2014) authentic personal governance and personal balanced scorecard items
Feel good about		Satisfied with myself, love, happy
Admire and respect		Appreciated by others
Trust		Integrity
High quality		Physically and emotionally strong Healthy
Innovative	Innovation	Innovative improvements
Value for money	Performance	Success factors
Stands behind product/service	Products/Services	Love myself and be happy
Capitalise on opportunities		Learning and knowledge
Excellent leadership	Leadership	Leadership
Clear vision for the future		Personal vison, mission & key roles
Rewards employees fairly		Personal relations with others
Good place to work	Workplace	Appreciated by people
Good employees		Sound external relations
Outperforms competitors		Personal success factors
Record of profitability		Manage expenditures
Low risk investment		High risk (own account)
Growth prospects		Financially healthy
Supports a good course		Compassion
Environmentally responsible		
Community responsibility	Governance and citizenship	Of value to others Role model

The scorecard variables are similar to those that measure organisational reputations. If the individual were to be equated to an organisation and vice versa, and a unique personality is equally relevant in organisations, then the Reputation Quotient (RQ) could be the most practical instrument to measure a person's reputation. The six concepts can easily be applied to individuals: 1) The person has an emotional appeal (feels good about himself, is admired and respected and trusted), and 2) the person is seen as a brand of a product (him/herself) and in this regard is of a high quality, is innovative, is seen as value for money and is seen as the face behind the product. 3) Personal vision and leadership: he or she can capitalise upon opportunities, displays excellent leadership and should have a clear vision for the future. 4) Workplace environment, where the person rewards employees fairly, and is a good employer who hires good employees. 5) Financial performance is seen in the individual who outperforms competitors, is able to see and grow prospects, has a record of profitability and is a low risk investment. However, organisations could have more resources to lower risk than individuals. Lastly, 6) the individual is socially responsible. Here, persons support a good cause, have an environmentally responsible attitude and are responsible for the communities where they operate.

5. CONCLUSION

Since this paper has emphasised the explorative nature of applying corporate reputation variables to personal reputations, no empirical evidence in this debate is evident here, and this could be seen as a limitation of the article. However, obtaining empirical data was not one of the research objectives for this explorative article. It is currently argued, upon the basis of a corporate communication perspective, that both corporate and personal reputation variables could be used in the measurement and management of individual reputations. The two concepts, corporate and personal reputations, are regarded as interrelated and dynamic; however, they are also seen as mutual within the corporate communication context, and can be assessed with the same corporate measurement instruments, and managed by means of an integrated communication process.

A watertight theoretical underpinning remains ambiguous. This may stem from a researcher's personal discipline focus to describe this "relatively new" integrated and co-ordinated alignment of personal/individual reputation fundamentals to the study of corporate communication. This article provides promising views and future research directions related to corporate and personal reputation measurement, which lies in integration, co-ordination and cross-disciplinary study.

Finally, strategically positioning and cherishing the authentic and unique identity, image and brand of both the organisation and the individual will enhance their reputations. Karnaukhova and Polyanskaya (2016:372) emphasise the important role that positioning plays in communication and reputation management.

The immediacy of online communication in real time and space with regard to personal and organisational reputations is becoming more complex to manage. The privacy of the individual and the sharing of information online is becoming an issue to be resolved (see Oravec, 2012:95). Reputation is a key intangible asset of both the organisation and the individual, with tangible, measureable

effects. It is this unique and authentic characteristic of both organisations and individuals that give them the competitive advantage, if well-managed and strategically positioned. Unfortunately, the control of this uniqueness and authenticity lies in the eyes of the stakeholders, resulting in the almost immediate management of information on the various traditional media, web platforms and social media which these stakeholders use. Here different stakeholders require different communication strategies, as explained by Bechan, (2008:4). In order to minimise the reputational risks of providing general feedback to all stakeholders, a social media strategy should be aimed at differentiating specific real-time answers via online or mobile media to a diverse stakeholder grouping, where the central message is adopted to suit that specific stakeholder grouping.

6. ORIGINALITY AND VALUE FOR THEORY AND PRACTITIONERS

Few studies contextualising individual reputations within a corporate communication approach were cited on the various data bases that were consulted. The value of this article is the application of both marketing and public relations perspectives to an individual's personal brand as part of his/her personal reputation. The Reputation Quotient (RQ) as a rigorous measurement can be applied to measure the competency levels of personal reputations. This interdisciplinary view on personal and corporate reputations within the broader corporate communication context is relatively new and provides a promising perspective of the theoretical contributions and future research related to personal reputations and their management.

The challenge lies in managing corporate reputation under a more comprehensive framework that takes into account all stakeholders, as emphasised by Rokka, Karlsson and Tienari (2014:805). The same applies to personal reputations. The perceptions of the various stakeholders are equally important in assessing personal reputations under an integrated corporate communication umbrella.

This article has not attempted to elaborate upon a personality analysis of an individual. It concerns the application of variables measuring corporate reputation to measure reputations of persons.

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