

Measurement Model of Corporate Reputation at Higher Education Institutions: Customers' Perspective

This paper analyzes corporate reputation measurement of higher education institutions and proposes a conceptual measurement model of corporate reputation at higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers.

Keywords: corporate reputation, corporate reputation measurement, corporate reputation indicators, corporate reputation factors, higher education institutions, customers.

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimas ir pateikiamas aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo modelis vartotojų požiūriu.

Raktiniai žodžiai: korporatyvinė reputacija, korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimas, korporatyvinės reputacijos veiksniai, korporatyvinės reputacijos požymiai, aukštojo mokslo institucijos, vartotojai.

Introduction

Measurement of corporate reputation is becoming popular between scholars and practitioners. Despite the interest in corporate reputation measurement there is no conceptual base for the measurement of corporate reputation. The analysis of scientific literature indicates that corporate reputation is valuable intangible asset that has an important role in organization's relationships with stakeholders. Measurement of corporate reputation is closely related to

attitudes of stakeholders towards organizations. Measurement of corporate reputation is based on corporate reputation indicators that create good or bad attitude of stakeholders towards organizations. Stakeholders aren't homogeneous and they have different touch points with organizations. As a result they cannot be treated equally in the measurement of corporate reputation. Scholars indicate that corporate reputation indicators are evaluated diversely by different stakeholders; different stakeholders assign diverse weights to corporate reputation indicators and use distinct indicators

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in the measurement of corporate reputation. Corporate reputation indicators also depend on the nature of an organization. Indicators depend on the activities that organizations undertake and some of them may not be relevant or used at certain organizations. It is presumed that methods of corporate reputation measurement can't be used without consideration of organizations' specifics and stakeholders' relationships with organizations. Scholars usually analyze corporate reputation measurement of business organizations, so corporate reputation measurement of higher education institutions is undisclosed. Based on the above assumptions and the fact that customers are the most important stakeholder group of organizations, it is important to determine indicators of corporate reputation measurement at higher education institutions and their weights from the perspective of higher education institutions' customers. **The problem** of the research is how to measure corporate reputation of higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers.

The object of the research is corporate reputation measurement of higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers.

The aim of the paper is to construct a measurement model of corporate reputation at higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers.

The objectives of the paper are as follows:

- To disclose the importance of corporate reputation measurement and problems of corporate reputation measurement at higher education institutions.
- To introduce methodology of empirical research.
- To analyze data from exploratory and descriptive research.

- To substantiate the corporate reputation measurement model at higher education institutions and discuss its managerial implications.

The research methods used in the paper include logical analysis, generalization and interpretation of scientific literature, modeling method, qualitative and quantitative research and data processing methods.

The importance of corporate reputation measurement

Corporate reputation of higher education institution can be defined as subjective and collective recognition, perception, attitude and evaluation of higher education institution established between all stakeholder groups (internal and external) of higher education institution during a specific time that is based on quality indicators, past behavior, communication, symbolism, and possibility as well as potential to satisfy future expectations comparing to competitors (*see Šontaitė, 2011*).

There is no doubt among scholars about the importance of corporate reputation measurement. A. Caruana and C. Chircop (2000) believe that a possibility to periodically collect data about an organization allows to follow changes of corporate reputation and if needed to make changes. The fact that many organizations aren't doing business anymore or have small value in the market shows instability of corporate reputation and critical importance of corporate reputation measurement (Cravens, Oliver, Ramamoorti, 2003). Stakeholders that evaluate organizations spread information about success and failures of organizations to others. It means that every organization needs to identify indicators that stakeholders use

for corporate reputation measurement and the importance of each indicator. Practitioners and scholars agree that it is important to understand expectations of stakeholders towards corporate reputation (Hillenbrand, Money, 2007), because gaps between organization's activities and expectations of stakeholders create dissatisfaction (Post, Griffin, 1997).

Scholars indicate that stakeholders must be prioritized and organizations must concentrate on the limited set of stakeholders. According to this view the most important stakeholders must be identified for the success of an organization (Alsop, 2004; Aula, Mantere, 2008; MacMillan *et al.*, 2005). In the scientific literature there is an exceptional view that customers are the most important stakeholder group of organizations (e.g. Caruana, Chircop, 2000; Cravens, Oliver, Ramamoorti, 2003; Griffin, 2008). A. P. Petkova, V. P. Rindova, A. K. Gupta (2008) indicate that relationships with customers are extremely important for good corporate reputation because satisfied customers share their experience to others and determine positive perception. It means that customers have influence on corporate reputation.

Problems of corporate reputation measurement at higher education institutions

The most popular method of corporate reputation measurement at higher education institutions is media ratings. However, media ratings are criticized for their validity. G. Bickerstaffe, B. Ridgers (2007) indicate that ratings are criticized for the selection of measurement indicators and methodology. K. Peters (2007) indicates

that ratings are criticized for their statistical validity, weights of measurement indicators and methodology. D. Vivader-Cohen (2007) indicates that media ratings can't be considered as a corporate reputation measurement method because they are third parties that influence corporate reputation measurement from the perspective of stakeholders. R. Williams and N. van Dyke (2008) indicate that ratings use methods of corporate reputation measurement, methods of performance measurement or both. Corporate reputation measurement is based on surveys of stakeholders and performance measurement is based on internal data. During the performance measurement specific weights are assigned to indicators what is most controversial aspect of ratings. In this view surveys have advantage because weights are assigned to indicators by stakeholders.

The Analysis of corporate reputation measurement methods at higher education institutions indicate that there is no method providing thorough understanding of corporate reputation indicators and factors, and their level of relevance for customers of higher education institutions. Based on the limitations it is necessary to identify corporate reputation indicators and factors that are used for the measurement of corporate reputation at higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers.

Methodology of empirical research

For empirical research the indicators and factors of corporate reputation have been selected having analysed 14 corporate reputation measurement methods from 13 sources. The indicators and factors were selected from the following sources:

RepTrak tool and Reputation Quotient (van Riel, Fombrun, 2008), prototypical instrument No. 2 of Reputation Quotient (Fombrun, Gardberg, Sever, 2000), „Fortune“ rating of American Most Admired Companies (Fryxell, Wang, 1994), „Veidas“ rating of universities (Kučinskaitė, Janužytė, Kairienė, 2009), corporate reputation measurement method of business schools (Vivader-Cohen, 2007), corporate reputation measurement method of universities (Alessandri, Yang, Kinsey, 2006) and corporate reputation measurement method of service organizations (Walsh, S. E. Beatty, 2007). The above mentioned methods were selected as they are either most commonly accepted, methodologically valid or used in practice for a long time. Only most frequently repeated and specific indicators and factors that are relevant in the context of higher education institutions were selected for empirical research. The methods of empirical research are outlined in Table 1.

Analysis of exploratory research data

A focus group discussion method was used for exploratory research. Each focus group was conducted with homogenous customers of higher education institutions: 8 school leavers, 9 students and 8 graduates. Scenario of focus groups consisted of two parts: 4 open questions and 1 closed question with a questionnaire. The aim of exploratory research was to determine how respondents understand the definition of corporate reputation at higher education institutions, relevance of corporate reputation at higher education institutions and relevance of corporate reputation indicators at higher education institutions.

The data from questionnaires determined the relevance of corporate reputation indicators at higher education institutions. Based on the evaluations of each indicator

1 Table

Methods of empirical research

Parameters of research	Research methods and their characteristics	
	First stage of research	Second stage of research
1. Nature of research	Exploratory research	Descriptive research
2. Object of research	Indicators and factors of corporate reputation at higher education institutions	
3. Order of research	Onetime (short-term)	
4. Level of research	National	
5. Period of research	February – March, 2010	April – May, 2010
6. Type of data	Primary data	
7. Method of research	Focus group discussion with elements of semi-structured interview	Survey on internet
8. Instrument of data collection	Scenario of discussion and questionnaire	Questionnaire
9. Type of questions	Open and closed (scale)	Closed (scale and optional)
10. Type of scale	Likert scale	Interval scale
11. Number of values	5	10
12. Method of measurement	Qualitative	Quantitative
13. Sample of research	Purposive nonprobability	

from the perspective of Lithuanian universities with the best and the worst corporate reputation, average means of each indicator have been calculated for the best and the worst universities separately. Relevant corporate reputation indicators of higher education institutions must be as close as possible to 5 for the best corporate reputation university, and as close as possible to 1 for worst corporate reputation university. The most relevant corporate reputation indicator must receive the average mean equal to 4. Average means less than 1 are considered too small and indicators with such means aren't relevant for customers of higher education institutions. The average mean of each indicator for university having the best and the worst corporate reputation was calculated using the following formula:

Average mean of x indicator for best/worst corporate reputation university =

$$((RSE5 \times 5) + (RSE4 \times 4) + (RSE3 \times 3) + (RSE2 \times 2) + (RSE1 \times 1)) / N$$

** where RSE5 means number of respondents that selected value of 5 for the evaluation of x indicator, RSE4 – number of respondents that selected value of 4 for the evaluation of x indicator, etc., N – size of sample.*

The method used for the identification of relevant corporate reputation indicators at higher education institutions is based on validity verification logics of Reputation Quotient (Gardberg, 2006; Groenland, 2002) and the corporate reputation measurement method proposed by S. Helm (2005). This method is considered reliable as worldwide acknowledged methods of corporate reputation measurement (RepTrak and Reputation Quotient) were constructed using this method.

The results from exploratory research indicated 41 relevant corporate reputation indicators for higher education institutions' customers. Average means of 41 indicators were bigger than 1. Based on the results it is determined that the most relevant corporate reputation factors to customer of higher education institutions are: emotional appeal (M=2,37), performance (M=1,59), academic performance (M=1,54), leadership (M=1,52) and studies (M=1,46). Less relevant factors are: innovation (M=1,36), attitude towards customers (M=1,31), citizenship and social responsibility (M=1,17), governance (M=1,08) and workplace (M=0,92). The factor of distinction (M=0,66) was eliminated because none of its indicators accounted for the minimum mean. As exploratory research can describe only the content of a problem, generate ideas and insights, and determine variables for the descriptive research, the results of exploratory research are considered mediate and can be modified during descriptive research.

Analysis of descriptive research data

Quantitative data collected during descriptive research was processed and analyzed using SPSS 16.0 program. For the analysis of descriptive research data the following statistical methods were used: reliability analysis (Cronbach alpha), descriptive statistics (absolute and percentage frequencies, average weights (M) and standard deviation (SD)), and factor analysis.

Reliability analysis of descriptive research data. Cronbach alpha was used for the analysis of descriptive research data reliability. Cronbach alpha evaluates

internal scale compatibility of corporate reputation indicators. It was assessed that reliability of corporate reputation indicators ($N=3428$, N of indicators=41) is very high and equals to 0,979. After the assessment of separate corporate reputation indicators it was determined that Cronbach alpha values range from 0,978 to 0,980. It means that reliability of corporate reputation indicators is very high and instrument measures reliable when there is a big sample. Based on Cronbach alpha

values it is assumed that all corporate reputation indicators must be included into the research.

Characteristics of respondents. During the descriptive research 3428 questionnaires were collected (see Table 2). The total number of respondents consisted of 909 school leavers, 1341 students and 1178 graduates.

Students and graduates represented one of four target universities. The total number of respondents consisted of 14,1%

2 Table

Characteristics of descriptive research respondents

		Segment of school leavers		Segment of students		Segment of graduates		Total
		Rate	%	Rate	%	Rate	%	
Number of respondents		909	26,52	1341	39,12	1178	34,36	3428
Grade	12	909	100	-	-	-	-	909
Preference for studies	University	909	100	-	-	-	-	909
University	KTU	-	-	189	14,1	140	11,89	329
	MRU	-	-	339	25,28	395	33,53	734
	VDU	-	-	506	37,73	336	28,52	842
	VU	-	-	307	22,89	307	26,06	614
	Total:	-	-	1341	100	1178	100	2519
Level of studies	Bachelor	-	-	1341	100	255	21,65	1596
	Master	-	-	-	-	872	74,02	872
	PhD	-	-	-	-	51	4,33	51
	Total:	-	-	1341	100	1178	100	2519
Form of studies	Ordinary	-	-	1097	81,80	920	78,10	2017
	Extended	-	-	244	18,20	258	21,90	502
	Total:	-	-	1341	100	1178	100	2519
Course	First	-	-	444	33,11	-	-	444
	Second	-	-	412	30,72	-	-	412
	Third	-	-	284	21,18	-	-	284
	Fourth	-	-	201	14,99	-	-	201
	Total:	-	-	1341	100	-	-	1341
Year of graduation	2010 – 2006	-	-	-	-	594	50,43	594
	2005 – 2001	-	-	-	-	332	28,18	332
	2000 – 1996	-	-	-	-	173	14,69	173
	1995 – 1991	-	-	-	-	45	3,82	45
	1990 – 1986	-	-	-	-	11	0,93	11
	1985 – 1971	-	-	-	-	23	1,95	23
	Total:	-	-	-	-	1178	100	1178

of students and 11,89% of graduates from Kaunas University of Technology, 25,28% of students and 33,53% of graduates from Mykolas Romeris University, 37,73% of students and 28,52% of graduates from Vytautas Magnus University, 22,89% of students and 26,06% of graduates from Vilnius University. It is presumed that a sample of descriptive research is representative and balanced.

Importance of corporate reputation at higher education institutions. It was found that corporate reputation of higher education institutions is very important to its customers. It was determined that importance of corporate reputation at higher education institutions is consistently descending: 42,01% of higher education institutions' customers appointed 10 points out of 10; 23,86% of respondents appointed 9 points; 17,77% of respondents appointed 8 points. The rest of the scale values didn't assemble more than 10 percent on each value of the scale.

Analysis of corporate reputation indicators' weights. During the analysis of corporate reputation indicators it is possible to assess the importance of each indicator to higher education institutions' customers.

Indicators of emotional appeal factor. The factor of emotional appeal consists of 4 indicators: feeling, admiration, trust and esteem. Scientific literature suggests that emotional indicators are essential in the measurement of corporate reputation. However, the results of descriptive research indicate that emotional indicators aren't the most important to customers of higher education institutions. The indicator of feeling is the most important emotional indicator with average mean $M=7,94$. The indicator of admiration is the least important emotional indicator

with $M=7,27$. The indicators of trust and esteem are of average importance to customers of higher education institutions with average means of 7,70 and 7,76.

Indicators of studies factor. The factor of studies consists of 7 rational indicators: quality, value for money, stands behind, meets the needs, contemporary, employability, achievements of graduates. Scientific literature suggests that indicators of the studies factor are essential rational indicators in the measurement of corporate reputation. However, the results of descriptive research indicate that they aren't the most important ones. Comparing to all indicators of the studies factor, the indicator of quality has the biggest weight with $M=8,17$. The indicator of value for money has one of the smallest weights between all indicators of corporate reputation and is the least important indicator of this factor with $M=7,17$. The indicators of 'stands behind', 'meets the needs' and 'contemporary' respectively have average means of 7,67, 7,60 and 8,03. The indicator of employability has $M=8,07$. The indicator of achievements of graduates is the second least important indicator of the studies factor with $M=7,46$.

Indicators of innovation factor. The factor of innovation consists of 2 indicators: innovativeness and adaptability of change. The indicator of innovativeness has bigger weight with $M=8,08$. The indicator of adaptability of change has $M=7,80$.

Indicators of workplace factor. The factor of workplace consists of 2 indicators: good place to work and talented employees. Scientific literature suggests that the indicator of talented employees is the advantage of higher education institutions that makes big influence on corporate reputation. However, the results of descriptive research partly validate this

presumption. The indicator of talented employees has $M=7,93$. The indicator of good place to work has one of smallest weights with $M=7,33$.

Indicators of governance factor. The factor of governance consists of 2 indicators: open and transparent, and ethical behavior. The average means of these indicators are respectively 7,62 and 7,95.

Indicators of citizenship and social responsibility factor. The factor of citizenship and social responsibility consists of 3 indicators: good causes, environmental responsibility and influence on society. The indicator of good causes has $M=7,59$. The indicator of environmental responsibility is the second least important indicator of corporate reputation with $M=7,06$. The indicator of influence on society has the biggest weight comparing to other indicators of this factor with $M=7,75$.

Indicators of leadership factor. The factor of leadership consists of 5 indicators: appealing leader, vision for the future, well organized, market opportunities, and values' communication. The indicator of an appealing leader is the least important indicator of corporate reputation with $M=6,92$. The indicator of vision for the future is the most important indicator of this factor with $M=7,63$. The indicator of well organized has $M=7,36$. Indicators of market opportunities and values' communication have average means 7,48 and 7,50.

Indicators of performance factor. The factor of performance consists of 5 indicators: high performance, growth prospects, competitive advantage, financial results and visibility in media. Indicators of high performance and growth prospects respectively have average means 7,76 and 7,73. The indicator of competitive advantage is the most important indicator of this factor with $M=7,90$. The indicator of finan-

cial results is the least important indicator of this factor with $M=7,46$. The indicator of visibility in media has $M=7,51$.

Indicators of academic performance factor. The factor of academic performance consists of 7 indicators: research, partnership, achievements, intelligent students, terms of studies, internationality and academic fairness. Indicators of research, achievements, intelligent students and academic fairness respectively have average means 7,76, 7,79, 7,83, 7,82. The indicator of partnership has the smallest weight comparing to all indicators of this factor with $M=7,64$. The indicator of terms of studies is the most important indicator of corporate reputation with $M=8,30$. The indicator of internationality is the third most important indicator of corporate reputation with $M=8,21$.

Indicators of attitude towards customers factor. The factor of attitude towards customers consists of 4 indicators: courteous behavior, concern about students, fair treatment and relationship with students. The indicator of courteous behavior is second most important indicator of corporate reputation with $M=8,24$. Indicators of concern about students and fair treatment both have average means of 8,03. Indicator of relationship with students has $M=7,86$.

Relevance of data for factor analysis. Applicability of a correlation matrix for the factor analysis is assessed by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett sphericity ratio. The calculated KMO mean of the sample adequacy measure is high and significant with $KMO=0,983$. It means that variables and data are relevant for the factor analysis. Bartlett sphericity ratio determines if the observed variables are statistically correlated. The analysis of the descriptive research data indicates that

p value of Bartlett sphericity ratio equals to 0,0001 and is less than selected significance level of 0,05 (95% guarantee). Based on Bartlett sphericity ratio it is presumed that indicators of corporate reputation correlate statistically significantly. Average chi-square of Bartlett sphericity test is high and equals to 134322,542. Based on KMO measure and Bartlett sphericity ratio it is presumed that the data of descriptive research is relevant for the factor analysis: correlation of variables is explained by other variables and there are statistically significant relationships between them. Based on results no indicators are excluded from factor analysis. Communalities between variables show the strength of relationship between variables and factors. The results of the principal component analysis indicate that indicators of corporate reputation are multi-collinear because correlation quotients of each indicator equals to 1. Communalities after extraction equals to 0,697. It means that there are no indicators with weak relationships to factors. Reliability of the factor analysis also depends on the size of a sample. Scientific literature suggests that the size of a sample should be at least 5 times bigger than the number of variables. The sample size of descriptive research equals to 3428 and is relevant for the factor analysis.

Distinguishment of factors. The principal component method was used for the distinguishment of corporate reputation factors. After the assessment of factors' correlations with the indicators there were extracted 10 factors consisting of 41 variables. It is complicated to distinguish variables distribution to the factors based on an initial factor matrix, so a rotated component matrix was used for the indicators attribution to the factors. The factor analysis can be used and

factors remain in research when dispersion equals 60-70%. Data from the principal component method indicates that cumulative percentage equals to 79,043%. It means that all corporate reputation factors explain 79,043% of variance so no factors are excluded from the research.

Rotation and interpretation of factors. During the analysis of correlations between corporate reputation factors and indicators in a rotated factor matrix, an indicator was attributed to a factor when the calculated mean was closest to 1. The rotated component matrix distinguished 10 corporate reputation factors consisting of 41 indicators. Based on the results of the rotated component matrix and common logic the following corporate reputation factors were distinguished: behavior, studies, emotional appeal, citizenship and social responsibility, leadership, performance, workplace, competition, career and innovation. Three factors were renamed because of changed indicators: the factor of attitude to customers was renamed to behavior, the factor of performance was renamed to competition and the factor of academic performance was renamed to performance. One new factor of career consisting of 2 indicators was distinguished. The factor of governance was excluded from the research as its indicators strongly correlated with the renamed factor of behavior. During the analysis of the rotated component matrix it was determined that the biggest correlation between factors and indicators (factor weight, λ_{ij}) equals to 0,844. Smallest correlation equals to 0,239. Indicators with correlations to factors smaller than 0,4 should be excluded, however no indicators were excluded. The decision is based on results of factor analysis that indicate correlations bigger than 0,414. After the indicators

were redistributed based on common logic, some correlations became smaller.

Matrix of factor weights. Based on the means of standard deviation that are distributed in interval between 1,65869 and 2,12532 it is proposed that the means of corporate reputation factors are distributed closely to medium and there is no big difference in the opinion between customers of higher education institutions. The matrix of factor weights indicated corporate reputation factors with the biggest weights: innovation ($M=7,9383$), behavior ($M=7,9354$) and performance ($M=7,8462$). Factors with the smallest weights are leadership ($M=7,4434$), citizenship and social responsibility ($M=7,4679$), workplace ($M=7,6269$).

Substantiation of corporate reputation measurement model at higher education institutions

During the empirical research 6 hypotheses were formulated: 1 main hypothesis (H) and 5 supporting hypotheses (H1 – H5)

that concretize the main hypothesis. Having evaluated the data of the empirical research 1 hypothesis (H) was accepted. The rest of the hypotheses (H1-H5) were rejected (*see* Table 3). It is presumed that hypotheses were rejected because of the novelty of the empirical research meaning that corporate reputation measurement is unclosed in the context of higher education institutions. The supporting hypotheses were formulated based on the results of the exploratory research that consisted of a small sample. After the evaluation of a representative sample of higher education institutions customers, different the most and least important corporate reputation indicators and factors were identified.

The main hypothesis (H) was accepted having identified that corporate reputation of higher education institutions is evaluated by customers based on specific indicators that aren't used at different types of organizations, for example: employability, achievements of graduates, research, intelligent students, terms of studies, academic fairness, etc. The first supporting hypothesis (H1) was rejected based on the results of

Table 3

Results of hypotheses acceptance and rejection

Hypotheses	Acceptance/ rejection of hypotheses
H: Measurement of corporate reputation at higher education institutions is defined by specific corporate reputation indicators.	Accepted
H1: During the measurement of corporate reputation at higher education institutions customers assign bigger weight to emotional factor than rational factors.	Rejected
H2: During the measurement of corporate reputation at higher education institutions customers assign biggest weight to indicators that constitute factor of performance.	Rejected
H3: During the measurement of corporate reputation at higher education institutions customers assign smallest weight to indicators that constitute factor of workplace.	Rejected
H4: During the measurement of corporate reputation at higher education institutions customers assign biggest weight to indicator of competitive advantage.	Rejected
H5: During the measurement of corporate reputation at higher education institutions customers assign smallest weight to indicator of environmental responsibility.	Rejected

the factor analysis. It was found that the factor of emotional appeal has average weight $M=7,6665$. However, all rational factors have $M=7,7215$. The second supporting hypothesis (H2) was also rejected based on the results of the factor analysis. It was found that the factor of competition has $M=7,6514$. Other 5 rational factors have bigger average weights (innovation $M=7,9383$; behavior $M=7,9354$; performance $M=7,8462$; studies $M=7,8217$ and career $M=7,7621$). The third supporting hypothesis (H3) was rejected having identified that the factor of workplace has $M=7,6269$. Other 2 rational factors have smaller average weights (leadership $M=7,4434$; citizenship and social responsibility $M=7,4679$). The fourth supporting hypothesis (H4) was rejected having identified that the indicator of competitive advantage has $M=7,90$. However, 11 rational indicators have bigger weights and the indicator of terms of studies is the most important. The fifth supporting hypothesis (H5) was rejected having identified that the indicator of environmental responsibility has $M=7,06$. However, the indicator of an appealing leader has smaller $M=6,92$. Having identified and evaluated the corporate reputation indicators and factors at higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers it is possible to construct a measurement model of corporate reputation at higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers (see Figure 1).

The measurement model of corporate reputation at higher education institutions indicates how corporate reputation indicators constitute corporate reputation factors, and weights of indicators and factors in the measurement of corporate reputation at higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers: school leavers, students and graduates.

Managerial implications

The measurement model of corporate reputation at higher education institutions can be useful to rectors, heads of marketing or public relations at higher education institutions for decision making about corporate reputation building, management and measurement from the perspective of its most important stakeholder group. Higher education institutions that measure their corporate reputation can determine their possibilities and potential for better corporate reputation and competitive advantage against competitors. Based on the results higher education institutions can determine their strengths and weaknesses against competitors. Managers of higher education institutions must consider necessary investments for the improvement of each indicator when building and managing corporate reputation. It is possible that big investments are needed for the improvement of a specific indicator that has small influence on better corporate reputation. For this reason it is recommended to consider costs and benefits of each indicator.

Based on the model it is possible to distinguish the indicators and factors of corporate reputation measurement at higher education institutions that require greater or smaller attention. During the research it was identified that indicators of corporate reputation measurement at higher education institutions constitute 10 factors: emotional appeal, behavior, studies, citizenship and social responsibility, leadership, performance, workplace, competition, career, innovation. Each factor has big weight on corporate reputation of higher education institutions and there are small differences between weights. The most important factors for customers of

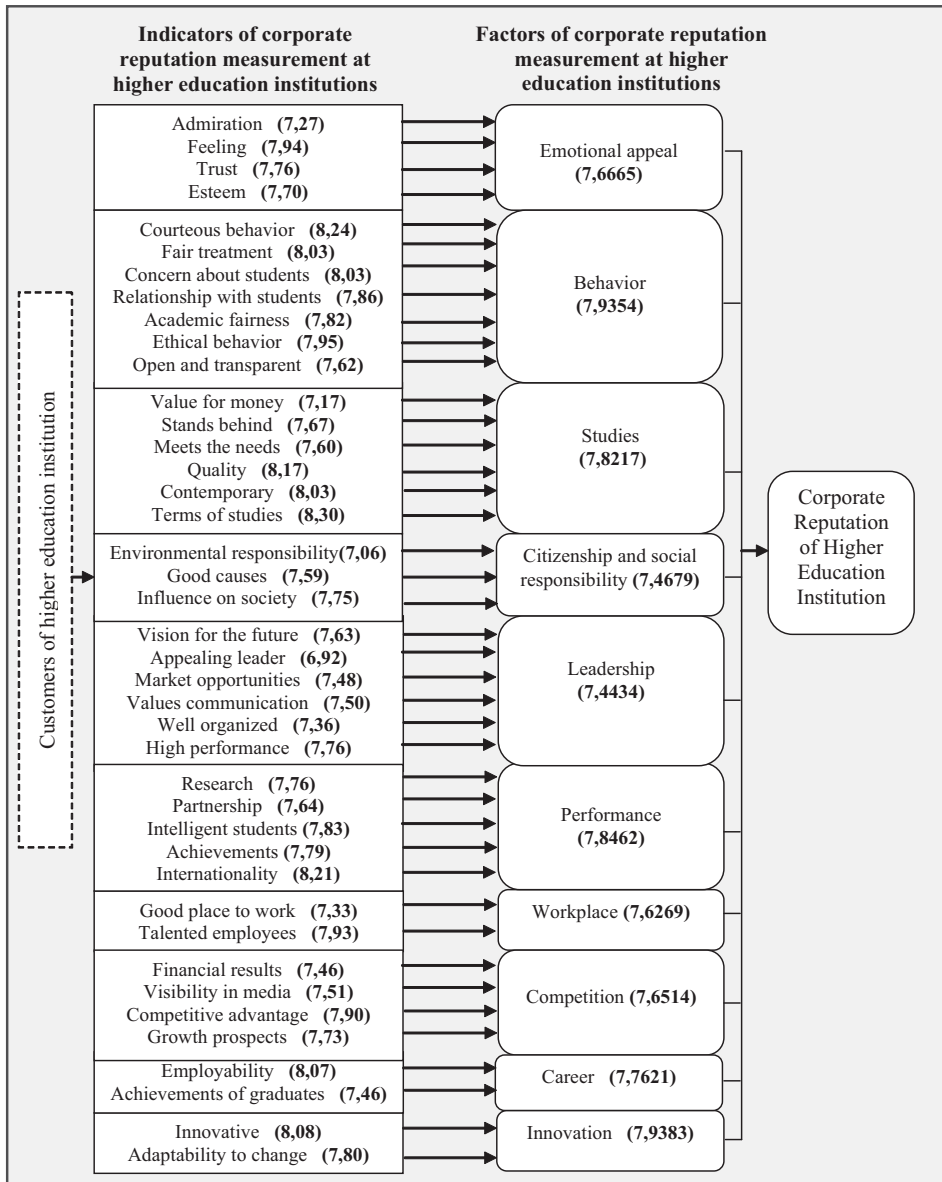


Fig. 1. Measurement model of corporate reputation at higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers

higher education institutions are: innovation, behavior, performance and studies. Managers of higher education institutions must give biggest attention to these factors. The least important factors for customers of higher education institutions are: leadership, citizenship and social responsibility, workplace, competition. Managers of higher education institutions can give less attention to these factors. However, each factor of corporate reputation measurement at higher education institutions has big influence on corporate reputation of higher education institutions, so even factors with the smallest weight cannot be devalued.

It was identified that corporate reputation of higher education institutions is evaluated based on 41 indicators. Managers of higher education institutions must consider great importance of 4 indicators with the biggest weights: terms of studies, courteous behavior with students, internationality and quality of studies. The least important indicators of corporate reputation measurement for customers of higher education institutions are: appealing leader, environmental responsibility, value for money and admiration. It is recommended for managers of higher education institutions to invest less into these indicators of corporate reputation measurement because their influence to good corporate reputation is the least one. However, they should get some attention because weights of each indicator are quite big.

Based on the corporate reputation measurement factors and indicators with the biggest and smallest weights, higher education institutions can construct a matrix of corporate reputation measurement at higher education institutions that can be used for building good corporate

reputation. In summary, a measurement model of corporate reputation at higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers can be used practically: as a tool that helps to evaluate corporate reputation of higher education institutions, potential of higher education institutions and main areas that need improvement; as an instrument for self-examination and deeper evaluation; as a guide for creation of programs for corporate reputation building and management at higher education institutions; as practical means that helps to build and manage corporate reputation of higher education institutions; as a topic of scientific discussions and the object of further research.

Conclusions and future research

It was identified that corporate reputation measurement is important to organizations and requires variety of indicators that include different aspects of organizations and satisfy expectations of stakeholders. It is important to identify indicators and factors of corporate reputation measurement and their weights from the perspective of the main stakeholder group because each stakeholder group uses a distinct set of corporate reputation indicators and factors, and each of them receive different weights. It was identified that customers are the most important stakeholder group especially at higher education institutions. There is no valid method of corporate reputation measurement at higher education institutions so it is necessary to identify indicators and factors of corporate reputation measurement at higher education institutions and their weights from the perspective of its customers.

The empirical research included exploratory and descriptive research. During the exploratory research 41 indicators of corporate reputation have been identified. During the descriptive research the importance of corporate reputation of higher education institutions and weights of corporate reputation indicators and factors has been identified. It was identified that corporate reputation of higher education institutions is very important to its customers. The factor analysis indicated correlations between indicators and factors of corporate reputation. Based on correlations 10 factors consisting of 41 indicators were extracted. The following factors of corporate reputation at higher education institutions have been extracted: behavior, studies, emotional appeal, citizenship and social responsibility, leadership, performance, workplace, competition, career, innovation. Based on results of indicators attribution to factors, weights of factors have been determined.

Based on the empirical research results a measurement model of corporate reputation at higher education institutions from the perspective of its customers has been constructed and managerial implications of the model have been determined. One hypothesis was accepted indicating that measurement of corporate reputation at higher education institutions is defined by specific corporate reputation indicators that are not used at other kinds of organizations such as: employability, achievements of graduates, research, intelligent students, terms of studies, academic fair-

ness, etc. The other hypotheses have been rejected as different corporate reputation factors and indicators are the most and least important to customers of higher education institutions.

In future research it would be useful to check if there are any differences in corporate reputation measurement at colleges from the perspective of its customers. The empirical research was undertaken at 4 Lithuanian universities that have best positions in media ratings. It would be advisable to include all Lithuanian universities for future research. The respondents of this research were customers, so the corporate reputation measurement model could be verified from the perspective of other stakeholders. Research has been undertaken at national level so international research could be considered for future research. In the future based on constructed corporate reputation measurement model, corporate reputation of higher education institutions could be evaluated. For future research relationship between corporate reputation of higher education institutions and their performance results could be explored. Some indicators of corporate reputation measurement can be easily interpreted and managed, while interpretation and management of other indicators is complicated for their conceptual origin. From this point of view it would be important to explore indicators of corporate reputation measurement: their perception and characteristics from the perspective of higher education institutions' customers.

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KORPORATYVINĖS REPUTACIJOS VERTINIMAS AUKŠTOJO MOKSLO INSTITUCIJOSE VARTOTOJŲ POŽIŪRIU

S a n t r a u k a

Mokslinėje literatūroje nėra abejojama korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo svarba. Nepaisant didelio susidomėjimo, nėra conceptualaus pagrindo, kaip vertinti korporatyvinę reputaciją. Korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimas yra glaudžiai susijęs su suinteresuotų grupių požiūriu ir organizacija. Korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimas yra paremtas korporatyvinės reputacijos veiksniais, kurie kuria palankų arba nepalankų suinteresuotų grupių požiūrį į organizaciją. Organizacijų suinteresuotos grupės nepasizymi homogeninėmis savybėmis. Jos turi skirtingus sąlyčio taškus su organizacijomis, todėl negali būti vienodai traktuojamos vertinant korporatyvinę reputaciją. Korporatyvinės reputacijos veiksniai skirtingų suinteresuotų grupių yra vertinami nevienodai, skirtingos suinteresuotos grupės skirtingai vertina veiksnų svarbą ir netgi naudoja skirtingus korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo veiksnius. Korporatyvinės reputacijos veiksniai taip pat priklauso nuo organizacijos pobūdžio.

Korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimas dažniausiai analizuojamas verslo organizacijų kontekste, todėl aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimas nėra atskleistas mokslinėje literatūroje. Turėtų būti keliamas klausimas, kaip vertinti aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinę reputaciją, kadangi aukštojo mokslo institucijų kontekstas skiriasi nuo verslo organizacijų. Dėl išskirtų priežasčių ir fakto, kad vartotojai yra svarbiausia suinteresuota grupė, svarbu nustatyti aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo veiksnius ir požymius bei jų svarbą (svorį) svar-

biausios aukštojo mokslo institucijų suinteresuotos grupės požiūriu.

Šiame straipsnyje koncentruojamasi į aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimą vartotojų požiūriu. Detalizuojant galima teigti, kad autoriai analizuoja aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo veiksnius ir požymius. Šiuo straipsniu siekiama atsakyti į klausimą, kaip vertinti aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinę reputaciją vartotojų požiūriu.

Autoriai straipsnį dalina į tris dalis. Pirmoje dalyje, autoriai atskleidžia korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo svarbą bei aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo problematiką. Antroje dalyje, autoriai pristato empirinio tyrimo metodologiją bei analizuoja žvalgomojo ir aprašomojo tyrimo duomenis. Trečioje dalyje, autoriai sudaro aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo modelį ir pateikia jo vadybinį pritaikymą.

Šio straipsnio objektas yra aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimas vartotojų požiūriu. Tyrimo tikslas – sudaryti aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo modelį vartotojų požiūriu. Straipsnio uždaviniai yra tokie: (1) atskleisti korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo svarbą ir aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo problematiką; (2) pristatyti empirinio tyrimo metodologiją; (3) išanalizuoti žvalgomojo ir aprašomojo tyrimo duomenis; (4) sudaryti aukštojo mokslo institucijų korporatyvinės reputacijos vertinimo modelį ir pateikti jo pritaikymą organizacijų vadyboje.