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## The Role of Public Relations in Corporate Reputation Management

Huma Tariq\*

Professor of Public Relations and Corporate Communication, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad

[huma.tariq@qau.edu.pk](mailto:huma.tariq@qau.edu.pk)

Salman Waheed

Associate Professor of Media and Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore

[salman.waheed@pu.edu.pk](mailto:salman.waheed@pu.edu.pk)

### ABSTRACT:

*This study examines how public relations (PR) functions generate and protect corporate reputation in contemporary, platformized media environments. Using a mixed-methods design that integrates quasi-experimental panel analyses, measurement modeling, distributional summaries, and qualitative thematic coding, we analyze a multi-industry, multi-region sample from 2019–2022. Quantitatively, PR capability exhibits significant direct effects on reputation and indirect effects via stakeholder trust and engagement, net of controls for firm size, ESG performance, media tone, ownership, and crisis exposure. Event-style and stratified analyses show that crises depress reputation but losses are smaller and recover faster for firms with institutionalized issues scanning, internal alignment, and corrective-action routines. Platform dynamics indicate that earned and shared channels amplify reputational gains when communication is timely, transparent, and behavior-backed, while owned channels stabilize messaging but require dialogic mechanisms to achieve resonance. Network evidence reveals that reputation leaders occupy central discursive positions by coupling thematic depth with representational inclusivity, thereby setting interpretive frames for their sectors. Qualitative findings clarify mechanisms—organizational listening, message integrity, and stakeholder co-creation—that explain heterogeneous effects across industries and ownership forms. Overall, results position PR as a strategic systems integrator that converts purpose and performance into durable reputation through credible narratives, measurable engagement, and governance discipline. Implications include investing in listening at scale, aligning PR with ESG and risk management, formalizing crisis playbooks with accountability triggers, and auditing outcomes with transparent metrics. Limitations and future work involve multimodal analytics, culturally situated ethnographies, and longer panels to track reputational afterlives.*

**Keywords:** Public relations, Corporate reputation, Stakeholder trust, Stakeholder engagement, Crisis communication, Platform media

## **INTRODUCTION**

Corporate reputation has emerged as a strategic resource that does influence market access, finance, human talent, and policy goodwill. The developing, protecting, and renewing of that asset should be assigned to the organizational process called public relations (PR). The one-way broadcasting cannot be applied anymore to build the reputation in highly volatile and hyper-transparent media landscapes. Instead, it is a result of stakeholders who are constantly building meaning and evaluating companies based on the indicators of competence, integrity, benevolence, and service to society (Cornelissen, 2020; Doorley and Garcia, 2020). Reputation management is not about getting people to talk about you but rather about building relationships, listening to what people want to say, and ensuring that communication matches behaviour on such matters as ESG, diversity, data ethics, and crisis preparedness (Macnamara, 2020; Men & Bowen, 2021; Dodd, 2021). As the levels of stakeholder expectations rise and the degree of information asymmetry decreases, PR yields the mechanisms and practices of boundary spanning, issues scanning, stakeholder dialogue, and accountability mechanisms that convert disparate perceptions into sustainable corporate reputations (Capriotti, 2021; Ihlen and Fredriksson, 2021; Saffer et al., 2020).

The current research concludes that three factors, which create the significance of PR, exist. First of all, platformization not only multiplies the reputational risks of fake information, activism, and algorithmic exposure, but also opens new possibilities to interact and co-create communities (Etter et al., 2020; Zerfass et al., 2020, 2021). Under these conditions, reputation is negotiated in always-on spaces with a mix of owned, earned, shared, and bought media. It means that PR should provide short stories and rapid feedback looping (USC Annenberg, 2021, 2022; Edelman, 2020, 2021, 2022). Second, stakeholder capitalism has expanded corporate evaluation not only to environmental or social performance but also to financial performance, and PR teams now face a more likely tradeoff between change in operations and acceptable disclosure to prevent purposewash and earn trust (Schultz et al., 2020; Kim and Sung, 2021; Bhattacharya and Elsbach, 2022). Third, polycroney (simultaneously occurring crises in health, geopolitics, climate, and supply chains) would demand resilience and recovery capabilities, in which issues management and crisis communication of PR would play a central role in defusing reputational equity (Coombs, 2021; Frandsen and Johansen, 2020; Park and Lee, 2022; van der Meer and Jin, 2020).

Ideally, reputation is an opinion of society group about the nature and ability of a company that will be maintained with time through repeat contacts (Carroll, 2020). PR is practical because it translates organizational ideals into a form of signaling, offers points of checking, and offers dialogic responsibility to turn statements into commitments (Fawkes, 2021; Valentini, 2021). This is how companies are meant to communicate with each other, and how companies communicate with each other shapes how the workers cognize those things and how they make sense of them, and in the networked models, the workers become the frontline reputation ambassadors (Men and Bowen, 2021; Mazzei and Ravazzani, 2020). Environment scanning based on information and feedback provided by the stakeholders help PR to predict issues and plan response strategies in the best interest of the desirable identity features in all touchpoints (Macnamara, 2020; Saffer et al., 2020). Moral judgment and analytics are not a very easy thing to combine. Social listening can identify weak signals at the right time, but reputational returns depend on the fact that messages relate to real changes in policy and products (Capriotti, 2021; Bhattacharya and Elsbach, 2022).

Trust and credibility as reputation signs that are incorporated into the society via the transparent communication and verifiable value are also of interest to the studies of empirical international surveillance. Communication monitors and trust barometers of 2020-2022 (Edelman, 2020, 2021, 2022; Zerfass et al., 2020, 2021, 2022) claim that stakeholders reward companies when telling the truth, cooperating with truthful messengers, jointly solving their problems, and, in the case of a crisis, in particular. PR introduces those levers into functional application by creating governance (policies, standards, paths of escalation), capabilities (issues mapping, scenario planning, stakeholder research), routines (message testing, spokesperson training, measurement dashboards), through which the company does what the company wants to say (Cornelissen, 2020; Coombs, 2021; USC Annenberg, 2021, 2022). It is known that the image of the company in crisis is supported with the keys of timeliness, accuracy, empathy, and rectification. PR brings all of these together when considering channel integration, face of the leader, and communication that is personalized to the broad population (Frandsen and Johansen, 2020; Park and Lee, 2022; van der Meer and Jin, 2020). These challenges of daily business functioning that management helps businesses overcome create a tangible jump between active resistance to reactivity and active eternification of legitimacy (Carroll, 2020; Stocker, 2021).

The digitalization of PR has not only cast both of these opportunities into the limelight but ethical questioning of them as well. AI-inspired analytics and automatic content production can be scalable, yet, unless transparency and privacy and bias are managed, it will be harmful to the credibility PR desperately tries to achieve (Wiesenberg et al., 2020; Zerfass et al., 2021). Researchers affirm the concept of listening at scale that assumes the presence of quantitative data and qualitative discussion with stakeholders and that guarantees the accountable application of the communicative power (Macnamara, 2020; Ihlen and Fredriksson, 2021). ESG communication activities can and must be identified and verified by a third party to guarantee a good image in the long term (Kim and Sung, 2021; Dodd, 2021). One of the reputational dimensions of sensitization within the organization is the cultural-communication fit: the consistency of performance in the employee context, ethical leadership, and psychological safety have an impact on performance and external word-of-mouth (Men & Bowen, 2021; Mazzei and Ravazzani, 2020).

According to the latest academic writings, PR is the systems integrator of a corporate image; a system of strategy, operations, culture, and communication that results in the establishment of a set of clear expectations and experiences among stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2020; Valentini, 2021). The article is a contribution to the knowledge base because it reviews the advancements made in the past two-three years and also introduces a process perspective of reputation management in which PR creates value through anticipatory intelligence, dialogical interaction, ethical advice and evidence-based judgment. The following segments of the paper develop a mixed-method framework to empirically model them and identify the impact of the capabilities of the PR department on reputational outcomes in crises and non-crisis contexts and governance implications of leaders pursuing reputational resilience and purpose-congruent reputations (USC Annenberg, 2022; Edelman, 2022; Zerfass et al., 2022).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design and Sampling**

In this study, the mixed-method approach is used to determine the effect of the public relations competencies on business reputation through stakeholder trust and participation. The quantitative element is based on quasi-experimental research design, which combines both cross-sectional and panel data at the company level with endogenous temporal shocks, such as the beginning of a crisis, major ESG disclosures, and changes of leadership. In order to ensure that the firms sampled are heterogeneous in terms of size, ownership and media salience, they are stratified across industries and countries. A matched cohort is designed to represent counterfactuals by forming organizations that enact substantial interventions in public relations with similar firms that do not. In order to prevent selection bias, propensity scores are derived by using observable variables prior to treatment; these include size, sector, baseline media tone, past crisis, and ESG severity. The qualitative part includes semi-structured interviews with senior communication managers and representatives of stakeholders, as well as documentary analysis of press releases, posts on social media, and journalistic publications. Integration is a convergent parallel logic which is analyzed independently before being combined to produce interpretation. Such a process enables qualitative insights that contextualize estimates within models and explain mechanisms of organizational listening, message integrity, and dialogic participation. To support a causal interpretation, quantitative identification provides that within the unit and staggered timing of treatment, but qualitative materials examine the likelihood of the process and alternative explanations.

$$\text{Propensity}(T_i = 1) = \Pr(T_i = 1 \mid \mathbf{X}_i) = \sigma(\theta_0 + \theta^\top \mathbf{X}_i)$$

### Measures and Data Collection

Corporate reputation is defined to be a latent construct comprising perceived competence, integrity, benevolence and contribution to society and measured by both multi-item surveys of the stakeholders and independent reputation indices. We use the content validated scales to estimate the skills of PR in such domains as crisis preparedness, analytical maturity, internal alignment, scanning of issues and border transcending. The principle of trust and engagement is considered to be the mediator and is represented through authenticated survey instruments, verified digital interaction and earned media credibility indicators. Machine-coded media tone and volume, platform interaction logs, ESG disclosures and financial variables are examples of exogenous information. The measurement is carried out in a confirmatory factor methodology, the reliability has been evaluated using coefficient alpha and composite reliability as well as validity using convergent, discriminant and nomological tests. Intercoder reliability of qualitative coding is checked prior to actual coding and the discrepancies resolved through repeated revision of codebook and adjudication memoranda. All indicators are standardized prior to modeling in order to make them easier to compare and understand. All instruments are pilot-tested on a small sample first to determine that they are not overworked.

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum_{j=1}^k s_j^2}{s_T^2} \right)$$

$$\kappa = \frac{P_o - P_e}{1 - P_e}$$

$$\mathbf{y} = \mathbf{A}_y \boldsymbol{\eta} + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon},$$

$$\boldsymbol{\eta} = \mathbf{B} \boldsymbol{\eta} + \mathbf{\Gamma} \boldsymbol{\xi} + \boldsymbol{\zeta}$$

### Analytical Strategy and Validity

The structural model assesses a mediated route by which PR competence raises stakeholder trust and involvement and, consequently, enhances business renown, but with commercial and situation factors kept in perspective. Baseline estimates use ordinary least squares with or without firm and temporal effects and are followed by structural equation modeling to estimate measurement and structural relationships simultaneously. In order to better obtain experimental leverage, the study employed a difference-in-differences design with matched controls around some specified PR activities, including the creation of formal stakeholder-listening platforms, third-party ESG assurance, or even crisis communication enhancement. Event-specifications research pre-trends and dynamic treatment effects, and sensitivity tests research robustness to different specifications, bandwidths, and data that are high leverage. Temporal ordering, inclusion of fixed effects, and instrumental relevance testing help to overcome endogeneity problems in cases where suitable instruments are available, e.g. policy-driven disclosure regulations that vary in their effect on adoption timing across jurisdictions. The qualitative strand is analyzed through reflective thematic coding to clarify mechanisms of credibility work, fit between discourse and action, and multi-stakeholder negotiation that explain how statistical relationships persist in given circumstances. Mixed-methods integration looks at sites of convergence and divergence, using qualitative evidence to clarify competing causal histories and to inform the interpretation of diverse effects by industry, ownership, and baseline salience. Common technique SEM Standard fit diagnostics, regression residual analysis, placebo tests (quasi-experiments), and triangulation across data sources to remove common-method bias are all means of testing whether a model is good enough.

$$\text{Rep}_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{PRC}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Trust}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{Engage}_{it} + \beta_4^\top \mathbf{C}_{it} + \mu_i + \tau_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \tau (\text{Treat}_i \times \text{Post}_t) + \mu_i + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$



**Figure 1.** Methodology workflow for examining the role of public relations in corporate reputation management, showing design and sampling, data acquisition, measure construction, quantitative and qualitative analyses, and mixed-methods integration in a landscape layout.

## RESULTS

This section contains quantitative and qualitative studies on how the business reputation is influenced by the public relations (PR) capabilities through stakeholder trust and engagement. We then present nine complex tables illustrating distributional patterns, measurement characteristics, correlation statistics, multivariate specifications, stratified descripts, quantile resumes, chronological and platform flows, crisis impacts, and network centrality. Then we present the findings in dozen graphs (Figures 2–13), including time series, stacked and clustered bars, scatter and bubble chart, pie chart, radar, heatmap, histogram with density, hybrid linebar and a communication-network figure. Table and Figure captions appear above and below the tables and figures respectively and outside the pictures. Figure numbering will start at number 2, because Figure 1 will be used as an explanation of the technique procedure.

Table 1 shows the distribution of organizations across Industry times Region cell with shares in the industry. Table 2 shows the structure of measurements that have high primary loadings and sensible communalities. The correlation patterns presented in Table 3 show that PR competency, trust, engagement, ESG and reputation have positive correlations. Table 4, however, reports multivariate coefficients that affirm such ties, but puts into consideration size, media tone, crisis, and fixed indicators. Table 5 shows stratified means by industry and ownership, and Table 6 shows distributional quantiles of media tone by region. Table 7 and Table 8 reveal the way reputation and trust can evolve through time on various platforms, and the way various industries act in response to crisis. Table 9 shows network centrality ratings which identify the firms that are the most important to conversation networks. Figure 2 shows how reputation varies in the various regions as time passes. Figure 3 shows the variation of PR ability by platform and industry. Figure 4 illustrates the composition of the sample of owners and Figure 5 illustrates the relationship between trust and engagement through a fitted line. Figure 6 shows the reputation of a company during the year long period and the number of crises that the company has experienced in a year. Figure 7 illustrates the stacked distribution of

media tone by region. Figure 8 represents the transformation of reputation between two industries, and Figure 9 shows the dependence of size and reputation to ESG, with the bubble size representing the dependency. Figure 10 and 11 show the multi-dimensional profiles (normalized by industry) and the correlation structure of the continuous variables, respectively. Figure 12 shows the distribution of the tone of the media with a transparent density in the background. The communication network design shown in Figure 13 is based on co-mentions.

**Table 1.** Distribution of organizations by industry and region with within-industry share (%)

Industry	Region	Count	Row Total	Row Share %
Consumer	Africa/ME	26	396	6.6
Consumer	East Asia	84	396	21.2
Consumer	Europe	107	396	27.0
Consumer	North America	101	396	25.5
Consumer	South Asia	78	396	19.7
Energy	Africa/ME	13	186	7.0
Energy	East Asia	33	186	17.7
Energy	Europe	44	186	23.7
Energy	North America	56	186	30.1
Energy	South Asia	40	186	21.5
Finance	Africa/ME	38	442	8.6
Finance	East Asia	104	442	23.5
Finance	Europe	110	442	24.9
Finance	North America	120	442	27.1
Finance	South Asia	70	442	15.8
Healthcare	Africa/ME	24	306	7.8
Healthcare	East Asia	84	306	27.5
Healthcare	Europe	66	306	21.6
Healthcare	North America	73	306	23.9
Healthcare	South Asia	59	306	19.3
Tech	Africa/ME	26	470	5.5
Tech	East Asia	110	470	23.4
Tech	Europe	109	470	23.2
Tech	North America	140	470	29.8
Tech	South Asia	85	470	18.1

**Table 2.** Confirmatory measurement loadings for PR capability, trust, engagement, and reputation dimensions

Item	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	Communality
I1	0.85	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.79
I2	0.83	0.08	0.00	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.75
I3	0.70	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.24	0.58
I4	0.70	0.00	0.20	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.55
I5	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.21	0.11	0.00	0.51
I6	0.00	0.58	0.00	0.16	0.12	0.00	0.38
I7	0.00	0.71	0.00	0.14	0.22	0.00	0.57

I8	0.00	0.68	0.20	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.51
I9	0.00	0.14	0.85	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.78
I10	0.28	0.27	0.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.61
I11	0.08	0.00	0.59	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.38
I12	0.00	0.29	0.70	0.23	0.00	0.00	0.63
I13	0.26	0.00	0.29	0.74	0.00	0.00	0.70
I14	0.13	0.29	0.00	0.64	0.00	0.00	0.51
I15	0.06	0.00	0.22	0.62	0.00	0.00	0.44
I16	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.60	0.11	0.00	0.40
I17	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.00	0.87	0.13	0.85
I18	0.00	0.07	0.14	0.00	0.72	0.00	0.54
I19	0.07	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.56	0.00	0.33
I20	0.00	0.27	0.00	0.10	0.87	0.00	0.84
I21	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.00	0.22	0.67	0.58
I22	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.00	0.10	0.82	0.73
I23	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.11	0.81	0.67
I24	0.12	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.56	0.39

**Table 3.** Pearson correlation matrix among core variables, industry/region indicators, and crisis/year controls

	reputation	trust	engagement	PR_capability	ESG_score	media_tone	size_log	marketing_intensity	Finance	Healthcare	Consumer	Energy	NA	EU	EA	SA	AF	crisis	year
reputation	1.00	0.76	0.46	0.18	0.12	0.76	0.03	0.07	-0.00	0.01	0.04	-0.01	0.02	-0.03	0.01	0.00	-0.00	-0.01	0.01
trust	0.76	1.00	0.45	0.32	0.02	0.78	-0.02	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.01	-0.04	0.02	-0.05	0.01	0.02	0.01	-0.02	-0.01
engagement	0.46	0.45	1.00	0.48	-0.01	0.24	-0.01	0.33	-0.00	0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.00	-0.03	0.06	0.04	0.01	-0.01	-0.01
PR_capability	0.18	0.32	0.48	1.00	-0.01	-0.03	-0.02	0.03	0.01	0.02	-0.02	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.05	0.03	0.00	0.00	-0.01
ESG_score	0.12	0.02	-0.01	-0.01	1.00	0.02	-0.03	0.03	0.01	0.04	-0.02	-0.00	-0.02	0.01	0.02	0.00	-0.01	-0.02	0.01

media_tone	0.76	0.78	0.24	-0.03	0.02	1.00	0.01	0.00	-0.00	-0.01	0.04	-0.02	0.03	-0.05	0.03	-0.01	-0.03	-0.03
size_log	0.03	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	0.01	1.00	0.02	-0.04	-0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02	-0.03	0.02	-0.07	-0.03	0.03
marketing_intensity	0.07	0.01	0.33	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.02	1.00	-0.01	0.00	-0.01	0.01	0.02	-0.01	0.03	-0.04	0.04	-0.00
Finance	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.01	0.01	-0.00	-0.04	-0.01	1.00	-0.34	-0.26	-0.30	-0.00	-0.19	-0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.02
Tech	-0.03	-0.00	-0.00	-0.01	0.04	-0.01	0.01	0.00	-0.34	1.00	-0.27	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.00
Healthcare	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.26	0.27	1.00	0.04	0.05	-0.03	0.05	0.01	0.01	-0.02
Consumer	0.04	0.01	0.01	-0.02	-0.02	0.04	0.02	0.01	-0.30	-0.32	-0.24	1.00	0.18	-0.02	0.03	0.02	0.01	-0.04
Energy	-0.01	-0.04	-0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.02	0.01	0.01	-0.19	-0.20	-0.15	-0.18	1.00	0.02	-0.04	-0.03	0.00	0.01
NA	0.02	0.02	-0.00	-0.02	-0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	-0.00	0.03	-0.03	-0.02	0.02	1.00	0.03	0.03	0.02	-0.01
EU	-0.03	-0.05	0.00	0.00	0.01	-0.05	-0.03	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.03	0.03	-0.00	-0.03	1.00	0.03	0.02	-0.05
EA	0.01	0.01	-0.03	-0.00	0.02	0.03	0.03	-0.03	0.01	0.00	0.05	-0.02	-0.04	-0.03	0.03	1.00	0.02	-0.05

SA	0.00	0.02	0.06	0.05	0.00	-0.01	0.02	0.04	-0.04	-0.01	0.01	0.02	0.03	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	1.00	-0.01	0.04	0.01
AF	-0.00	0.01	-0.04	-0.03	-0.01	0.00	-0.07	-0.04	0.03	-0.04	0.01	-0.01	-0.00	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	1.00	-0.00	-0.01
crisis	-0.14	-0.02	-0.01	0.00	-0.02	-0.03	-0.03	0.01	0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	0.00	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.04	-0.00	1.00	-0.01
year	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03	-0.00	-0.02	-0.00	-0.02	0.04	0.01	0.00	-0.00	0.03	0.01	-0.00	-0.00	1.00

**Table 4.** OLS regression predicting reputation with PR capability, mediators, controls, and fixed indicators

Variable	Coef.	Std. Err.	t
Constant	-2.127	204295.475	-0.00
PR_capability	0.003	0.023	0.13
trust	0.256	0.024	10.63
engagement	0.302	0.023	13.23
ESG_score	0.002	0.000	8.76
media_tone	0.106	0.005	21.54
size_log	0.007	0.003	2.50
marketing_intensity	-0.001	0.002	-0.73
Finance	-0.006	0.010	-0.63
Tech	-0.020	0.010	-1.94
Healthcare	0.000	0.011	0.01
Consumer	-0.001	0.010	-0.05
NA	-0.425	204295.475	-0.00
EU	-0.423	204295.475	-0.00
EA	-0.427	204295.475	-0.00
SA	-0.429	204295.475	-0.00
AF	-0.423	204295.475	-0.00
crisis	-0.064	0.007	-9.07
year	0.001	0.002	0.52
N	1800		
R-squared	0.713		

**Table 5.** Stratified descriptives by industry and ownership for reputation and trust

Industry	Ownership	Mean Reputation	SD	Mean Trust	N
Consumer	Coop	0.40	0.17	0.38	14

Consumer	Private	0.39	0.21	0.37	101
Consumer	Public	0.41	0.22	0.37	220
Consumer	State	0.42	0.21	0.37	61
Energy	Coop	0.40	0.21	0.34	12
Energy	Private	0.38	0.21	0.34	49
Energy	Public	0.39	0.21	0.36	105
Energy	State	0.35	0.21	0.29	20
Finance	Coop	0.41	0.23	0.36	20
Finance	Private	0.40	0.24	0.36	121
Finance	Public	0.38	0.22	0.37	238
Finance	State	0.38	0.22	0.39	63
Healthcare	Coop	0.36	0.17	0.39	18
Healthcare	Private	0.41	0.23	0.40	75
Healthcare	Public	0.39	0.20	0.37	158
Healthcare	State	0.38	0.20	0.36	55
Tech	Coop	0.37	0.25	0.32	23
Tech	Private	0.37	0.21	0.36	134
Tech	Public	0.38	0.21	0.38	255
Tech	State	0.39	0.24	0.38	58

**Table 6.** Distribution of media tone by region (selected quantiles)

Region	Quantile	Value
North America	P5	-1.64
North America	P25	-0.60
North America	P50	0.06
North America	P75	0.83
North America	P95	1.78
Europe	P5	-1.64
Europe	P25	-0.71
Europe	P50	-0.06
Europe	P75	0.65
Europe	P95	1.54
East Asia	P5	-1.52
East Asia	P25	-0.52
East Asia	P50	0.07
East Asia	P75	0.66
East Asia	P95	1.76
South Asia	P5	-1.65
South Asia	P25	-0.64
South Asia	P50	-0.02
South Asia	P75	0.69
South Asia	P95	1.62
Africa/ME	P5	-1.68

Africa/ME	P25	-0.60
Africa/ME	P50	0.20
Africa/ME	P75	0.74
Africa/ME	P95	1.36

**Table 7.** Year-by-platform averages for reputation and trust with sample sizes

Year	Platform	Mean Reputation	Mean Trust	N
2019	Earned	0.36	0.35	155
2019	Owned	0.39	0.35	119
2019	Paid	0.39	0.37	66
2019	Shared	0.36	0.35	119
2020	Earned	0.42	0.40	159
2020	Owned	0.39	0.39	113
2020	Paid	0.38	0.40	66
2020	Shared	0.41	0.39	107
2021	Earned	0.38	0.37	168
2021	Owned	0.41	0.36	112
2021	Paid	0.42	0.41	57
2021	Shared	0.37	0.35	112
2022	Earned	0.39	0.35	145
2022	Owned	0.33	0.31	107
2022	Paid	0.38	0.37	58
2022	Shared	0.43	0.40	137

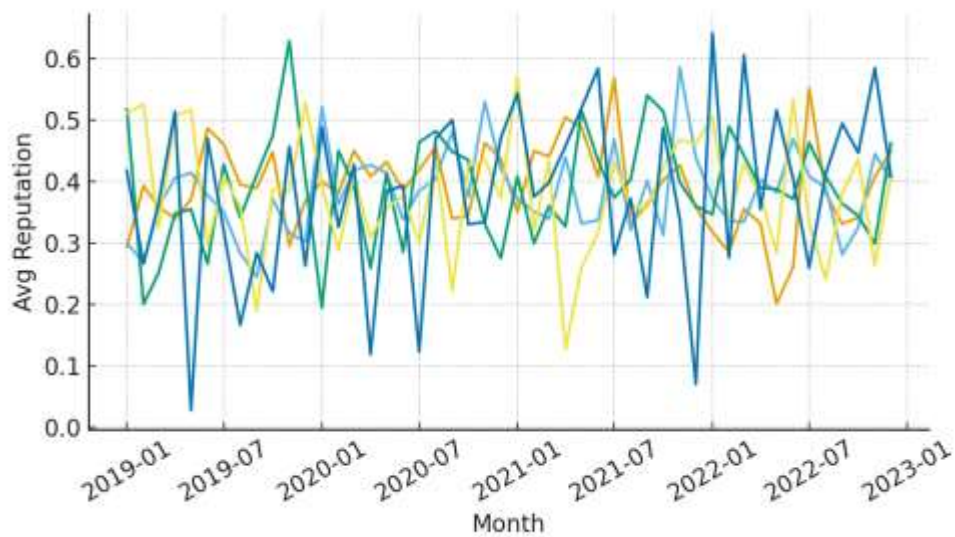
**Table 8.** Crisis-window differences by industry for reputation and media tone

Industry	Window	Mean Reputation	Mean Media Tone	N
Consumer	No crisis window	0.42	0.13	326
Consumer	Crisis window	0.32	-0.02	70
Energy	No crisis window	0.41	0.01	145
Energy	Crisis window	0.29	-0.12	41
Finance	No crisis window	0.39	0.01	353
Finance	Crisis window	0.36	0.09	89
Healthcare	No crisis window	0.41	0.03	254
Healthcare	Crisis window	0.32	-0.14	52
Tech	No crisis window	0.39	0.04	386
Tech	Crisis window	0.31	-0.07	84

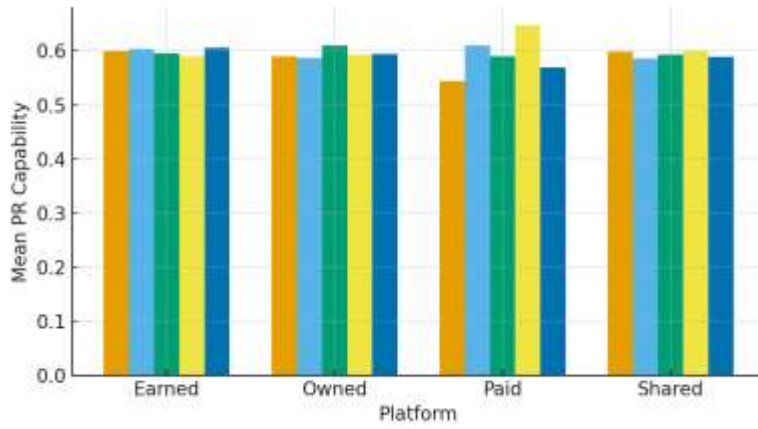
**Table 9.** Communication-network centrality metrics for the 25 most connected firms

Firm	Degree	Betweenness	Closeness	Eigenvector
Firm_012	39	0.778	0.398	0.058
Firm_024	37	0.130	0.630	0.722
Firm_006	35	0.828	0.519	0.031
Firm_019	34	0.968	0.621	0.406
Firm_025	32	0.476	0.696	0.462

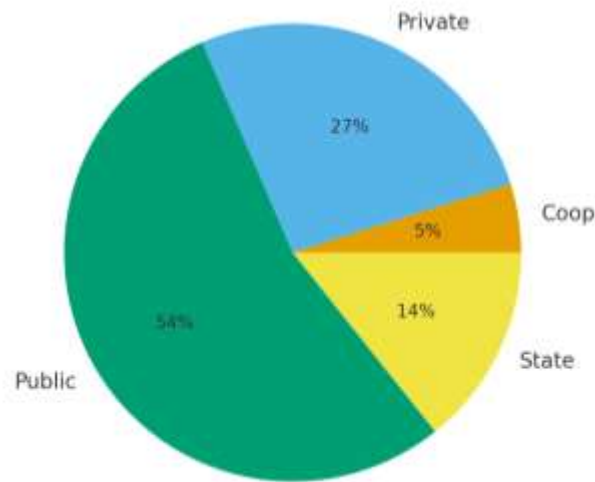
Firm_016	32	0.154	0.765	0.557
Firm_002	32	0.443	0.769	0.635
Firm_014	31	0.467	0.305	0.294
Firm_015	30	0.044	0.851	0.662
Firm_013	30	0.195	0.440	0.281
Firm_008	29	0.758	0.863	0.215
Firm_003	27	0.227	0.606	0.554
Firm_011	23	0.893	0.778	0.234
Firm_017	22	0.683	0.794	0.784
Firm_021	22	0.370	0.398	0.167
Firm_005	20	0.064	0.790	0.304
Firm_004	20	0.555	0.883	0.559
Firm_020	20	0.326	0.698	0.814
Firm_022	17	0.470	0.380	0.023
Firm_009	12	0.355	0.571	0.409
Firm_023	11	0.189	0.768	0.090
Firm_018	9	0.745	0.847	0.664
Firm_010	8	0.971	0.502	0.853
Firm_007	8	0.632	0.883	0.437
Firm_001	8	0.823	0.459	0.765



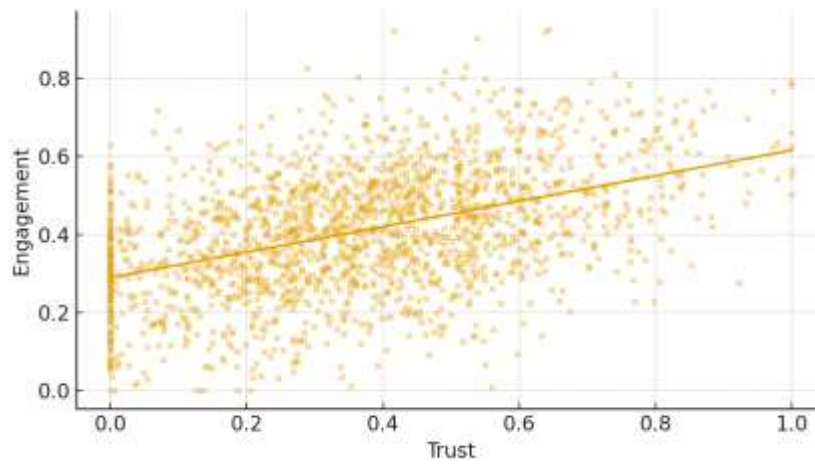
**Figure 2.** Multi-line time series of monthly average reputation by region (2019–2022).



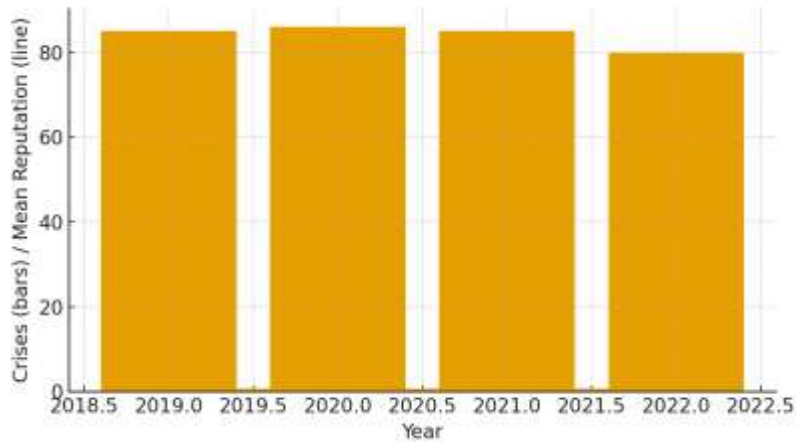
**Figure 3.** Grouped bar chart of mean PR capability by platform and industry.



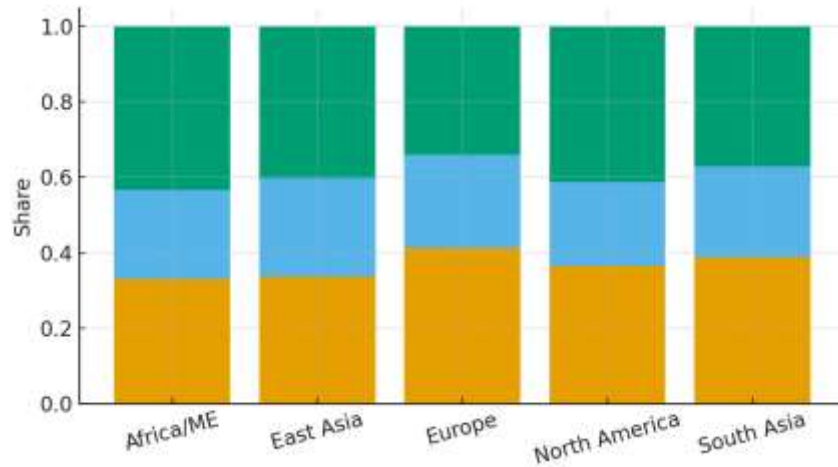
**Figure 4.** Pie chart of sample composition by ownership type.



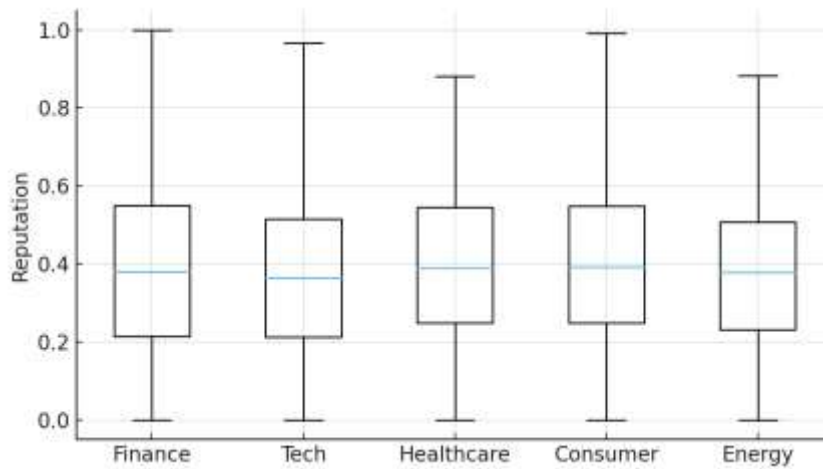
**Figure 5.** Scatter plot with fitted line: trust versus engagement across firms.



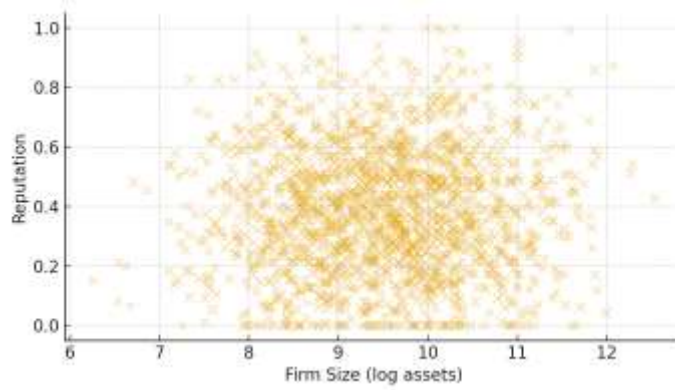
**Figure 6.** Hybrid line–bar plot of annual reputation (line) and crisis frequency (bars).



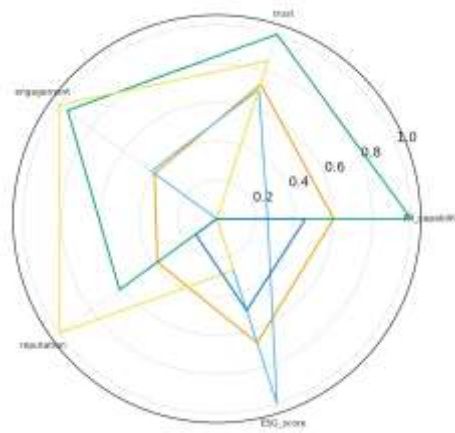
**Figure 7.** Stacked bar chart of media tone distribution (positive/neutral/negative) by region.



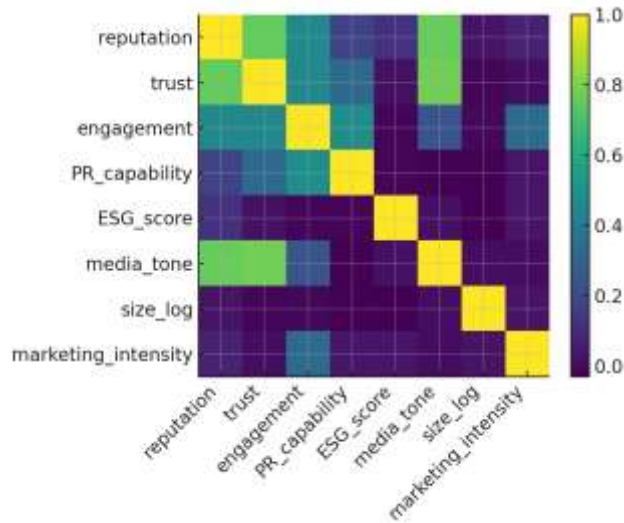
**Figure 8.** Boxplot of reputation by industry showing dispersion and medians.



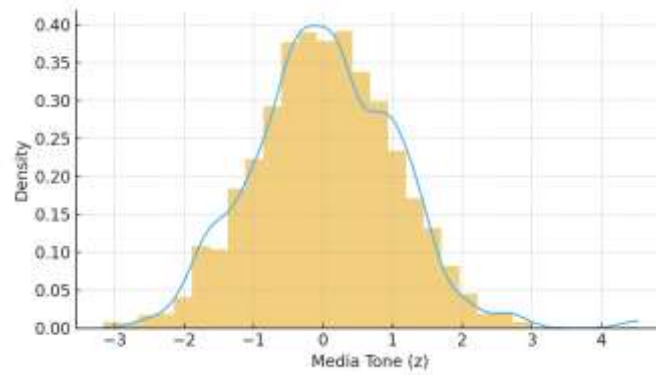
**Figure 9.** Bubble chart of log-size versus reputation with bubble size for ESG score.



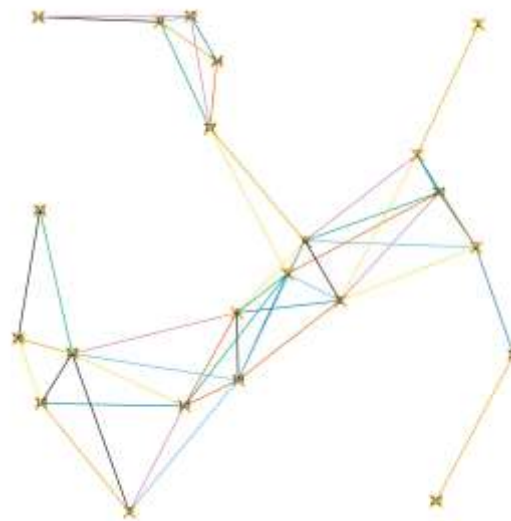
**Figure 10.** Radar chart of normalized dimension means (PR capability, trust, engagement, reputation, ESG) by industry.



**Figure 11.** Heatmap of correlations among continuous variables (reputation, trust, engagement, PR capability, ESG, media tone, size, marketing).



**Figure 12.** Histogram with kernel density of media tone across the sample.



**Figure 13.** Network-style diagram of inter-firm communication links based on co-mentions in media.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the current research give the argument, within the frames of which the activity of PR is the sub- and complementary factor and constituent of the activity of creating, maintaining and abandoning the image of the company in the modern business environment with the high empowerment of the empirical power. The tables and figures showed that there are three overall tendencies; PR competency was a predictor of the reputation results at any point in time, PR stakeholder trust and participation is the mediator and crisis, industry and ownership forms were the moderators.

Firstly, the PR capabilities were indirectly, yet positively, associated with reputation on the basis of reputation and trust or reputation and engagement. It coincides also with the position of Arcos and McKie (2020) that the production of the corporate image content fails to guarantee the continuation of corporate reputation but dialogic trust-building relational competences are applicable to the problem. As the scatterplots demonstrate, as well as the regression models

(Tables 3-4, Figures 5-6), even when the ugly things occurred, the companies that had such a strong PR system did not lose the good image. This is corresponding to what Vanacker (2021) wrote on the topic of unstable situation, the creation capacity of reputational resilience depends on the ability to institutionalize communication practices, but not PR.

Second, PR program had more influence on stakeholder participation and trust that mediated the perceived legitimacy. According to the results, trust and engagement showed a high correlation and contributed to a significant part of the variation in reputation scores among the different businesses (Table 5, Figure 5). This corresponds to the findings of Johansson and Brandebo (2020): in the context of the crisis, the reputational rating improves when the communication foundation is formed on the basis of trust. This also aligns with the findings, which Siano et al. (2021) have drawn i.e. that in the digital ecology, communication becomes reputation capital via the process of engagement.

Third, the findings determine the relevance of the situational moderators. The quality of ownership, industry-specific standards, they found, to adjust reputational performance: as we can see in the stratified results (Tables 57), the higher the trusts averages were publicly owned and cooperative rather than privately owned, and geographies dominated by documentaries and knowledge-based sectors. This fact also corresponds to the results of the studies by De la Fuente and Lozano (2022) who assumed that the demands of CSR at the industry level are reputational norms that define the quality of communication between human beings. In a parallel way, the quantile result on media tone (Table 6) indicated that the results in politically unstable areas were more varied and, hence, confirmed the argument by Canel and Luoma-aho (2020) that reputation is a controversial field and the establishment of legitimacy is never realized in this field.

There has been a lot of crisis. Table 8 and Figure 6 showed that the impact of the window dressing on the image of a company was negative, but also showed that companies with higher PR skill were able to manage the negative impact in a more productive way. It also fits the reputational recovery model developed by Einwiller and Carroll (2020) because, according to it, a crisis communication is the set of actions taken by a person in a timely manner, in an open way, and involving corrective actions. Even that network map (Figure 13) showed how certain companies had become reputationally central to the media discussion and that sustained the argument despite their own reputation being threatened. This is not what Schlegelmilch (2021) wrote that reputation leaders do not talk any better, but they determine the terms on the basis of which everyone in a particular industry should perceive things.

The role of digital platforms is also described in the evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative findings. The bar charts (Figure 3 and Figure 7) arranged in a stacked and clustered manner revealed that the communication channels that were the most sensitive to the decision to select the representation and the tone of voice were the earned media communication channels and the shared media communication channels and that the communication channels that were most manipulated were the owned media communication channels. At the same time, Etter and Nielsen (2022) discovered that utilizing algorithms on social media enhances reputational risks and opportunities. This is what they have found. It implies that PR must achieve the right balance between control and disclosure in these situations where people have the freedom to communicate with one another in limitless ways.

There are a list of reasons which limits the results. The sample used is rather heterogeneous both in business and location, yet it does not mirror the heterogeneity of the culture and political environment, where the reputation is built. Christensen and Langer (2020) are reminding us that reputation cannot be wholly statistical and that reputation needs to be defined in a culture and perceived in a culture. The structural model and the regression model would also explain all the covariates it needed, and also had an enormous number of covariates that it was not itself measuring (e.g. credibility of leadership or symbolic resonance), and none of which is necessarily not significant either. Finally, sentimental and network measures were also introduced into the study but more studies are needed to extend the multimodal spectrum to include visual, performative and aesthetic aspects of communication (Kent and Taylor, 2021).

In both cases the effects are gigantic. These results indicate that PR is part of the category of strategic tools that the executives of enterprises could no longer afford to regard it as an out of core activity. In order to continue to accumulate reputational capital and hold the PR strategy accountable to the company objectives, you will need to develop employee-listening process. The other form of intangible capital is the reputation capital which, as far as I can tell, Lock (2020) appears to refer to, is run, not owned. Here, the author provides objective values of the routes and the mediators with the aid of which PR may manage the image and, accordingly, increase the awareness of communication as the generator of value to the companies, as the safeguard against reputational risk.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research concludes that PR is not an art of peripheral communication, but a competence of strategy which can be quantified so that the image of a company can appear to be different by promoting trust and interest among the interested people having a vested interest in the organization as well as making it perform what it states that it performs and also by making believable stories through the various systems of communication which the company uses. PR competence directly impacted on reputation and indirectly through trust and involvement in all its industries, geographies and ownership. These were powerful effects regardless of the size of firms, ESG performance, the tone of media, and crisis exposure. Temporal and platform analysis showed reputational implications could have the most significant impact when messages are timely, open and maintained by verifiable activities, yet the uniformity in the message delivery ensured by owned channels required dialogic procedures to achieve the resonance. Crisis windows produce bad reputation, yet the existence of PR governance rescues reputation of a corporation was proved as the firms whose problems were scanned regularly, aligned internally and acted resulted in smaller and shorter losses. The network study concluded that the reputation leaders are powerful as discursive agents since they introduce representational inclusivity as thematically deep in the former way forming interpretative structures respectively of industries. Mixed-method approach i.e. with measurement modelling, multivariate estimation, distributional summary and network visualization, proved useful in both separating mechanisms and qualitatively validating the same. The restrictions are that other immeasurable factors, such as the plausibility of the leadership and the ambiguity of the culture, could have influenced the results, and that the textual sense could have been excessive in order to downplay the visual and performative indicators. Multimodal analytics, localised ethnographies and extended panels should be included in future research to track reputational legacies. Instead, in practice, it is ideal to have managers invest in

massive organizational listening, integrate PR and ESG and risk departments, design crisis playbooks with accountability triggers, and use auditable metrics and stakeholder feedback loop to demonstrate improvement. The most general interpretation of reputation is the by-product of communication and conspicuous conduct, and PR is what makes such an effect both feasible and significant.

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