



**THE MANAGEMENT OF CORPORATE REPUTATION IN HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS: A RESEARCH STUDY FOR MEASURING THE PERCEPTION ABOUT CORPORATE REPUTATION OF EMPLOYEES WORKING IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS**

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**ABSTRACT**

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**Key Words:** Corporate Reputation, The Management of the Corporate Reputation, Health Care Institutions, Reputational Perception

That being one of the most important values of the institutions, the management of reputation, with its feature that cannot be imitated by its competitors, has become one of the crucial management tools in recent years. That it is one and perhaps the most important of the institution having vital importance in terms of trust, communication and behavior in social responsibility for its internal and external stakeholders, it becomes necessary for health care sector to deal with the issue of corporate reputation that will make great contribution to these institution in terms of creating the mentioned issues, ensuring sustainability and improving the quality of services.

The aim of this research was; to present how the management process has been executed especially on the basis of the health sector and analyze comparatively that according to their working status, at what level and in which differences the employees in public and private sector (public hospital and private hospital) perceive corporate reputation. In the study, by using a reputation scale, developed by Charles J. Fombrun a questionnaire was conducted on 253

nurses working in Nevşehir state hospital and 2 private hospitals in the same province in May of 2014. The questionnaire questions were asked to the participants with a face to face method within working hours. In order to simplify the research of the subjects that creates the roof of the research method, 3 research questions and 1 hypothesis were determined. On the prepared questions and the analysis and testing of the hypothesis, it was benefited from the programme SPSS for Windows 16.0. According to the results obtained from the research, the perceptions of the employees, (the nurses) in the hospitals (private and public) in Nevşehir city

center, about the corporate reputation is moderate. This situation shows that the hospitals do not give enough attention to studies that can improve corporate reputation of the nurses who are the internal stakeholders of the hospitals. In addition, it was concluded that the level of perception of nurses differs according to the situation whether they work in public hospitals or in private hospitals. Accordingly, the perception about corporate reputation of the employees working in private hospitals is higher than the employees working in the state hospitals.

## INTRODUCTION

Reputation is a multi-dimensional component that focuses on what is done and how it is done in institutions and it is based on perception according to the experiences of the stakeholders [1]. Ensuring the continuity and protecting the gained reputation is as important as gaining the reputation that has a great importance for institutions in terms of providing a competitive advantage. In other words, reputation should be protected against the risks it carries. Protection from risks depends on how much effectively the management of reputation is implied. In this context, institutions should conduct their own reputational risk studies by taking into account their own structure, the sector in which they exist, environment in which they operate.

Corporate reputation is the contribution of reliance created by an organization in the total market value and it is the equivalent of intangible value of an institution. It is known that corporate reputation that started to be taken into account in health sector and has crucial importance in the functioning of these institutions, affects the quality of service presented by the reliance and communication level between private and public health sector workers. However, representing the institutions that offer health service through private and public sector may make a difference in terms of service quality, it will similarly influence corporate perception of the employees and so the quality of health service.

It is seen in the researches conducted in this field, it is not mentioned the issue that corporate reputation perception may vary in terms of employees according to the situation whether health institution functions in public or in private sector. This study, in the literature, considered to contribute to the studies that

targets the completion of this field, aims to support the theoretical background including information about the management of corporate reputation with a field study and set light to other large scale studies.

## 2. THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CORPORATE REPUTATION IN THE HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

**2.1. The Management of the Corporate Reputation in the Health Care Institutions, Its Importance and Its Stakeholders:** Corporate reputation states the emotional and effectual reactions such as good or bad, weak or strong of the clients, enterprisers, employees, suppliers, administrators, credit providers, media and communities on what the institution is. In this aspect, corporate reputation is a set of perceptions regarding the evaluation of institution's past performance and its future behavior [2]. Fombrun [3] accepts corporate reputation as a concrete factor that determines the place of the company in the market. Contemporary businesses are obliged to create trust and credibility among intended population. Therefore, by becoming transparent and showing themselves to their client, they build a way to gain reputation and they are in need of managing the reputation besides other entities [4].

Corporate reputation is expected to provide many benefits such as permanent profitability, high earnings, competitive advantage and preferability ratios from the viewpoint of employees, clients and suppliers. However, for the sectors such as health care sector that offers a vital service and makes an effort to hold its service conditions equal for each demand, the phenomenon of corporate reputation is seen to be more important compared to other sectors that do not feel the necessity for offering their

services on equal terms. Although all treatment service conditions are equal for the treatment of a patient with a particular disease, those people, sometimes described as clients in the literature, may choose a hospital with a positive reputation.

As the subject of the service is human in health institutions, how reputation is perceived by stakeholders in health sector becomes important. Sorted by Fombrun [5], the stakeholders such as employees, clients, suppliers, enterprisers, member of the government, media, environmental organizations and opponents also can be considered as a stakeholder in the management of corporate reputation of health care institutions. It is possible to include all institutions and people that have been affected by the actions, decisions, policies and objectives of the institution among these stakeholders. It is possible for the institution to create a quality service approach in the eyes of the stakeholders, increase appreciation and preferability only by creating a positive reputational perception. When considered from this point of view, the stakeholders considered in health institutions directly affect the management of the reputation and reputational perception of these institutions. The frequency and content of demanded health care service is affected by the quality of the institution and its employees, whether the services are reliable, the communication it established with its environment and its consciousness of social responsibility towards to the society.

Carrying out the process of the management of the reputation successfully in the health sector is associated with how much institutions deal with some processes that has to be considered especially in service. Foremost among them is to establish an effective communication system. Communication that has to be used effectively during the process of creating a successful reputational perception should be based on a sense of confidence and institution should present the efforts towards enhancing the community's quality of life together with these two facts with corporate social responsibility studies. It is obvious that management of the corporate reputation in health institutions has to be applied in a serious spirit in order to minimize, remove or keep the difference between perceived quality level and expected quality level by the clients, one of the most important of the stakeholders of the management of corporate reputation, and patients in the health care institutions.

**2.2. The Role of the Management of the Corporate Reputation and the Role of the Health Workers' Perception About Corporate Reputation in Improving the Quality of Service:** While analyzing “placing positive thoughts about a product, a person or an organization in peoples' mind” meaning “creating an image” and “perceptual management”

that its validity can not be refused in today's conditions, it can be seen that it is “being understood by the opposite side” in reality. The sense of satisfaction that is considered as a factor eliminating the differences between expected and offered service manner by the clients and the employees in health care sector should be evaluated in this concept. Being understood by the others is in one sense the perceived level of corporate reputation. A successful management of corporate reputation is an effective factor to create a positive image in terms of stakeholders. The management of the corporate reputation including image and perceptual management will also improve the quality of service given by employees who are the most important stakeholders. In this way, minimizing of the negative communication patterns, creating the sense of confidence and loyalty in all health care sector stakeholders, shortening the duration of treatment, eliminating of absences, leave of employment and involuntary working behavior and also increasing the recommended level of the institution are expected.

It is known that corporate reputation in health care institutions provides benefits such as attracting qualified workforce, increasing the loyalty of the employees, attracting clients and creating client loyalty, increasing the market value, providing financial gain and attracting the enterprisers [6]. As seen in the listed benefits; employees not only take part in providing corporate reputation but also they are one of the targets of it. Employees are the basis of the corporate reputation process. In other words, it is impossible for the institutions to have a strong reputation without gaining the support of the employees. For this reason, institutions that want to have a strong corporate reputation should be aware of this fact. Ensuring the participation of the employees to the corporate reputation process possesses a crucial importance.

Indeed, both at the point of interaction with external stakeholders and with what they produce and offer, employees influence the perception and evaluation related to the institution with their behavior. The given promises can be fulfilled only when employees show effort to keep these promises. As being a concept that encompasses the whole institution, reputation necessitates the active efforts of the employees who are the key of corporate success. As active internal corporate communication contributes to the creation of corporate reputation process, the support and participation of the employees at every stage of this process is required. Since being as a result of long years of a study, reputation influences the strength or weaknesses of corporate reputation that is created by the employees in the process. According to Kadibeşegil [7]; basic policies related to the management of reputation are developed by the management but the protection of reputation is the work of all employees. For this reason, institutions

firstly should keep the perception of the employees related to corporate reputation high and then tell them their role in the process of corporate reputation and manage this process by gaining employees' support.

### 3. RESEARCH

**3.1. Literature Review:** In the conducted literature review, has been found in some studies that it was either focused on the issue of corporate reputation management or aimed to measure the perception about corporate reputation in various institutions. In the research named "Corporate Reputation Survey and an Application Example" by Eroğlu ve Solmaz [8], a survey was conducted to 258 public elementary school teachers working in the central districts of Bolu and the effects of the school managers to their perception level of corporate management was investigated. According to the survey result, it has been concluded that the school manager has an effect on this perception level. Accordingly, it has been determined that in terms of teachers' perceptions about corporate reputation and management style subscales, there is a strong relationship with a democratic and participatory-democratic management style; a moderate relationship with a sharing-authoritarian, a weak relationship with an authoritarian management style.

Another study named "The Management of Corporate Reputation and The Measurement of Corporate Reputation in a Public Institution" by Seval Yirmibeş [9] is an unreleased postgraduate thesis. In this study, with the questionnaire of corporate reputation including 25 questions and developed by Charles J. Fombrun, it was investigated that how corporate reputation is perceived by the 57 employees of Uludağ Exporters' Union General Secretary and union members. As a result, corporate reputation of Uludağ Exporters' Union General Secretary was perceived as positive, and the coefficient of corporate reputation was determined to be 76.5%.

In a study by Çiğdem Şatır [10] named "How External Stakeholders Perceive Reputation in a Public Institution Offering Health Care Service", conducted to the 1904 employees of a research hospital performing in public and health care sector, it was aimed to measure the perception about corporate reputation of the employees namely internal stakeholders. According to the participants, the most important components to create reputation actually are institutional functioning, communication, confidence, service quality and social responsibility. However, it has been concluded that this ideal harmony did not exist in the institutional functioning in their institutions and in communication. Another study is "A Survey of Determining the Effect of Corporate Reputation Over the Employees' Performance" by Bekiş and colleagues [11]. It was

conducted to the 130 employees working at management position in 19 private hospitals or private branch hospitals in Niğde-Nevşehir-Kırşehir and it has been concluded that corporate reputation has a positive impact over employees' performance.

**3.2. Research Model:** In our country, the number of researches on corporate reputation appears to be insufficient. Still, it is seen that it is not touch on the issue that the management of corporate reputation can be evaluated through different perceptual ground by the employees according to the state of in which sector the health institution operates, in public or in private sector.

In the literature, this study that is considered to contribute to the work aiming to correct the deficiencies in this area, intends to create its theoretical background within the scope of the mentioned deficiencies, support the research problems with a field research and set light to other more comprehensible researches to be carried out. In the research, the reputational perception towards their own institutions of the nurses working in two private hospitals and in a public hospital was investigated. It is aimed to determine whether their perception about the corporate reputation differentiates according to in which sector the hospitals they work operates. It is seen that in private sector institutions, the concept of modern management and human resources practices are more known compared to public institutions and commercial concerns and motivational applications are more concerned. As being considered that this situation will affect the perception about corporate reputation of the employees who are the internal stakeholders, the main expectation in this study is for that the perception about corporate reputation of the nurses working in private sector is higher than the nurses working in public.

3 questions prepared in this respect and a hypothesis that is generated based on the 3<sup>rd</sup> question is as follows:

Question 1: At which level does the nurses who are working in public hospitals in Nevşehir province perceive the corporate reputation of the hospital they work in?

Question 2: At which level does the nurses who are working in private hospital in the city center of Nevşehir province perceive the corporate reputation of the hospital they work in?

Question 3: Do the perception about corporate reputation of the nurses who are working in public hospital and the perception about corporate reputation of the nurses who are working in private hospital in Nevşehir show differences?

Hypothesis 1 (HA): The perception about corporate reputation of the nurses working in public hospital in the city center of Nevşehir is different from the perception about corporate reputation of the nurses working in the private hospital.

**3.3. The Type of the Research, Main Population and Sample:** As of its nature, the research is descriptive and intends to demonstrate the current situation of the results to be achieved.

For the purpose of the research, 320 nurses in total (with integer sampling method) working in two private hospitals and in a public hospital in the city center of Nevşehir were asked to participate in the research through the survey form but the number of participants remained as 253. The nurses participated in the research constitutes 79% of the universe. 67 of the participants who were desired to be reached by face to face method and are in the scope of research did not participate in the research because of the reasons that they either did not want to participate in the research or were on leave with the reasons such as working hours, workload, birth and annual leave. The ratio of the sample number to the populace number is 79% in this research. Arlı and Nazik [12] states that minimum sampling of 10% is needed in descriptive researches. According to this information; the number of sampling of the research is highly enough for the reliability of the results.

**3.4. Data Collection Method and Statistical Analysis of the Data Collected:** In reaching to the sample, questionnaire method was used. In the first part of the questionnaire 8 demographic question were given, in the second part the scale including 25 questions of corporate reputation, developed by Charles J. Fombrun, [13 -within 9] was used. The questions were asked to the participants in working hours and through face to face interview method.

The expressions in the second part apart from the first 8 questions regarding the descriptive characteristics of the institutes surveyed were prepared by using a 5 point likert-type scale. The options in the expressions were assigned as from the most negative to most

positive. The number "1" was assigned to the most negative and the number "5" was assigned to the most positive. The answers given to the negative expressions were numbered as 2, 5, 13, 14, 19 and coded backward in order to ensure the reliability of the results. While evaluating the results of the research, it was benefited from the programme SPSS (Statistical Package For Social Sciences) for Windows 16.0 for the statistical analyses and descriptive statistical methods such as number, percentage, mean, standard deviation and Independent Groups t-test were used. The results were evaluated bidirectional at  $p < 0,05$  of a significance level and %95 of a confidence interval.

**3.5. Reliability Analysis:** In the second part of the questionnaire, the reliability of the 25-item scale named "The Scale Of Corporate Reputation" developed by Charles J. Fombrun (Fombrun, 2001; within Yirmişbeş, 2010:93) has been tested and the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.911. A scale that has reliability coefficient between  $0,80 \leq \alpha < 1,00$  is accepted to be a reliable scale [14].

In the selection of the analysis that would be applied for testing the hypothesis of the research, the suitability of the data to a normal distribution was examined. the suitability of the data to a normal distribution has been examined. The most used distribution used in statistical studies is the normal distribution. The coefficient of skewness of the data set related to the level of the reputational perception is 0,461 and the coefficient of kurtosis is 0,257. For normal distribution these coefficients have to be between -2 and +2 and when the sample number is sufficient, some resources accept that the data shows a normal distribution when it is reached to the coefficient of skewness and the coefficient of kurtosis that are until (- +) 3,26 [15]. While analyzing the answers given to the scale questions, for the average values the results between 1,0-2.5 (including 2.5) were evaluated as low level, the results between 2.5-3.5 (including 3.5) were evaluated as moderate level and the results between 3.5-5,0 were evaluated as high level of the reputational perception. In this evaluation it was benefited from experts' opinion.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS

**4.1. The Results of the Descriptive Characteristics of the Participants:** 8 descriptive questions in the

first section of the questionnaire were asked to 253 nurses in the sample group and the data obtained is showed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. The Results of the Participants According to Their Demographic Characteristic**

Age Ranges	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Service Unit	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-25	103	40,7	Internal Medicine	23	9,1
25-35	71	28,1	Surgery	35	13,8
35-+	79	31,1	Pediatrics	15	5,9
Total	253	100	Intensive Care	59	23,3
Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Emergency	30	11,9
Woman	230	90,9	Other	91	36,0
Man	23	9,1	Total	253	100
Total	253	100	Working Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Watch Method	203	80,2
Married	140	55,3	Shift Method	50	19,8
Single	113	44,7	Total	253	100
Total	253	100	The Hospital Working	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Working Time in the Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Public Hospital	180	71,1
0-5	120	47,4	Private Hospital	73	28,9
05.Eki	42	16,6	Total	253	100
Eki.15	25	9,9			
15-+	66	26,1			
Total	253	100			

In Table 1 it is seen that 40,7% (103 people) of the nurses participated in the research is between the ages 18 and 25, 90,9% (230 people) of them are women, 55,3% (140 people) of them are married. The working time of 47,4 % (120 people) of the participants in the profession is between 0 and 5 years. 38% (91 people) of them are working apart from the given units, 80,2% (203 people) are working with a watch method, 28,9% of them are working in a private hospital, 71,1% of them are working in a public hospital.

#### 4.2. The Results of The Participants' Perceptual Level About Corporate Reputation: The first of the

research questions within the scope of the survey intends to identify the perception level of corporation reputation of the nurses who are a public hospital employees and the second one intends to identify the perception level of corporation reputation of the nurses who are a private hospital employees. The achieved statistical results in relation to the questions of the research and the average are as follows.

Question1: At which level do the nurses working in the hospital that is in the city center of Nevşehir perceive the corporate reputation of the hospital they work in?

**Table 2. The Perception About Corporate Reputation of the Nurses Working in A Public Hospital**

	HOSPITAL	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	d. Error Mean
MEAN OF PERCEPTION	Public Hospital	178	2,9106	0,43731	0,03278

As it is seen in Table 2 the mean level of perception of the 178 nurses working in a public hospital related to corporate reputation was found to be 2.9106. Thus, Question 2: At which level do the nurses working in the private hospitals that are in the city center of

the reputational perception of the nurses working in public hospital about their institutions is moderate.

Nevşehir perceive the corporate reputation of the hospitals they work in?

**Table 3. The Perception About Corporate Reputation of the Nurses Working in A Private Hospital**

	HOSPITAL	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	d. Error Mean
MEAN OF REPUTATION	Private Hospital	75	3,3659	0,49006	0,05659

As it is seen in Table 3 the mean level of perception of the 75 nurses working in a public hospital related to corporate reputation was found to be 3.3659. Thus, the perception level of corporate reputation of the nurses working in a private hospital was found to be higher than the reputational perception of the nurses working in the public hospitals. However, as the values between 2,5-3,5 were identified as moderate, their perception level were also identified as moderate.

#### 4.3. The Results Related to the Differences in the Perception about Corporate Reputation of the Nurses Working in Private and Public Hospitals:

The last question in the scope of the research, a

developed hypothesis based on the question and the gained statistical results related to both of them are as follows.

Question 3: Does the perception about corporate reputation of the nurses working in the public hospitals in the city center of Nevşehir differ from the perception about corporate reputation of the nurses working in a private hospital?

Hypothesis 1 (HA): The perception about corporate reputation of the nurses working in the public hospital in the city center of Nevşehir differs from the perception about corporate reputation of the nurses working in a private hospital

**Table 4. The Results Related to the Differences in the Perception about Corporate Reputation of the Nurses Working in Private and Public Hospitals**

#### Independent Groups t-test

	HASTANE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Generally	Public Hospital	180	73,9278	12,36278	1,92147
	Private Hospital	73	87,0274	17,42043	2,03891

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Generally	Equal variances assumed	10,896	0,001	-6,742	251	0
	Equal variances not assumed			-5,855	102,693	0

When the sided t-test results were examined within 0.95 (1- $\alpha$ ) confidence interval, the sigma value (0.001) was found to be smaller than the value of  $\alpha$  (0.05 = significance level) (Table 4). For this reason, the hypothesis 1 has been accepted. Thus, the perception about the corporate reputation of the nurses working in the public hospital in the city center of Nevşehir is statically different at 95% of confidence from the perception about the corporate reputation of the nurses working in a private hospital. The independent groups in t-test, the mean of perception about corporate reputation of the public hospital employees towards their institutions was measured as 73,9278, the mean of perception about

corporate reputation of the private hospital employees towards their institutions was measured as 87,0274. Therefore, the perception about corporate reputation of private hospital employees is higher than the perception about corporate reputation of public hospital employees.

As a result, according to the results obtained from the research, the perception level about the corporate reputation of the employees (nurses) working in hospitals (private and public) is at a moderate level. This situation shows that the hospitals do not give enough importance to the studies that can improve

their corporate reputation towards their nurses who are the stakeholders. Furthermore, it has been found that this perceptual level differs according to the situation that whether nurses are working in a private hospital or in a public hospital. Conducting the research to a large sample again, at the same time including the other stakeholders of the management

of corporate perception in the research is recommendatory for the researchers of this subject. Moreover, conducting the research again according to the participants' age, working time etc., will enable researchers to obtain the results that can answer many questions related to this area.

**Appendix 1: The expressions in “ The Scale of Corporation Perception” developed by Charles J. Fombrun [13]**

1. I have knowledge of the services of the institution in which I work.
2. Recently, I haven't heard and seen anything about the institution in which I work in the media.
3. The institution which I work is managed well
4. The institution which I work has talented employees
5. The institution which I work is generally insufficient and unproductive
6. The institution which I work is managed by clever and talented people
7. The institution which I work offers high quality service
8. The institution which I work is innovative
9. The institution which I work adds value to its employees
10. The institution which I work has remarkable resources
11. The institution which I work is very powerful.
12. The institution which I work is the leader among the others.
13. The institution which I work in general sense is a weak institution
14. The institution which I work has no different features from the other
15. The institution which I work can be distinguished from the other in terms of its operating format
16. I really know the institution in which I work
17. I have positive feelings about the institution in which I work
18. I usually believe in the explanations made by the institution in which I work
19. Based on my experience, I must say that the institution in which I work never keep its promises
20. The institution which I work is an institution I can trust
21. The institution which I work is reliable and honest on the communication with the community
22. The institution in which I work is an institution that cares about its employees
23. The institution which I work contributes to its employees.
24. The institution which I work is environmentally responsible.
25. The institution which I work concerns about the safety of its employe

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