



KEY THEMES IN BRAND REPUTATION RESEARCH: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS WITH VOSVIEWER SOFTWARE

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- This study is designed to examine the bibliometric analysis of existing studies with VOSviewer to provide a perspective to researchers who will work on "brand reputation" in the field of brand management. The aim of the study is for managers and marketers to develop strong strategies to increase brand reputation, for academics to determine what the related concepts are that affect brand reputation and to investigate the literature in this context.

Methodology- The study included 77 studies with SSCI, SCI-Expanded and ESCI indexes in the Web of Science database. The downloaded data were evaluated by author, citation, journal, country, institution, keyword and abstract analysis.

Findings- As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the first study was conducted in 1991, the number of studies increased since 2018, researchers from the USA, England, Australia, China and India conducted more studies, and there were more studies in the USA, and the authors were mostly involved in a single study. In keyword analysis, the concept of brand reputation is mostly examined together with concepts such as reputation, corporate reputation, brand image, brand trust, brand equity, social responsibility, consumer behavior, brand awareness, brand loyalty, Twitter, brand recognition, public relations, consumer engagement, In the abstract analysis, it was observed that concepts such as reputation, corporate social responsibility, identity, attitudes, brand image, and consumers were examined.

Conclusion- In the conclusion and discussion part of the study, these findings were evaluated and new study suggestions were presented to the researchers.

Keywords: Key themes, brand reputation, bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer, web of science

JEL Codes: M30, M31, M39

1. INTRODUCTION

Creating a brand and ensuring its sustainability is essential in a competitive marketing environment, and brand reputation results from investments in effective and efficient branding activities. The creation of high-reputation brands is important in developing consumers' brand perceptions correctly and strongly and in terms of industrial customers' being able to reference and trust each other in their business processes. For this reason, managers and marketers should develop strong strategies to increase brand reputation, and academics should examine the associated concepts that affect brand reputation.

For academics working in brand management, it may be difficult to determine the antecedents and consequences of brand reputation, with which conceptual variables it is associated, with which concepts less research has been done, and how studies in this field have developed. The analysis technique that emerged to answer these questions and has been used in recent years is bibliometric analysis. With bibliometric analysis, a deep literature review is done on the subject studied, the past and current situation of the subject is evaluated, and suggestions for future studies can be made. The aim of this study is to examine the current status of the studies on brand reputation in the Web of Science database and to prepare the ground for future research. In this context, answers to the following questions were sought.

Question 1: What are the publication and citation trends for brand reputation?

Question 2: Who are the authors, institutions and countries that contributed the most to the studies on brand reputation?

Question 3: What are the most cited articles and journals in brand reputation studies?

Question 4: What are the keywords used in brand reputation studies?

Question 5: What are the main themes and issues in brand reputation studies?

Question 6: What are the opportunities and suggestions for future research on brand reputation? has been determined.

The answers to these questions are important because they will help both researchers and marketing managers to identify concepts related to brand reputation and to understand the role of brand reputation in these relationships. Marketing managers will be able to develop new strategies, especially on concepts related to brand reputation, and researchers will be able to benefit significantly from the results of this study in developing new research models.

The following parts of the study continue with the examination of the concept of brand reputation, the bibliometric analysis method, data analysis, findings and the conclusion and discussions part.

2. BRAND REPUTATION

The concept of reputation is explained as the collective perception of all businesses and consumers outside the company about the characteristics of companies or brands (Fombrun and Rindova, 2000). Another definition, is expressed as the total value and character of a brand that is generally seen and judged by people (Day and Wensley, 1988). Brand reputation is the customers' perception of the total service quality associated with the brand name (Selnes, 1998). Brand reputation is the sum of all the images that develop in the customer's mind over time and are used in the evaluation of a company (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001; Foroudi et al. 2017). Brand reputation is the combination of trustworthiness, benevolence, respect, admiration and trust regarding both current and future activities of a company or an organization (Dowling, 2001).

DelVecchio (2000) stated that brand reputation has two components: brand credibility and benevolence. Brand reliability has been defined as "the ability of an existing brand name to act intuitively to reduce consumers' perceptions of risk when evaluating a brand extension in a particular product category" (DelVecchio, 2000: 463). On the other hand, brand benevolence is impact-oriented and concerns "non-profit actions" that reflect a brand's interest in customers (Wang et al. 2014: 3). It is a type of cognitive reputation based on the functional capacity of the brand (Ohh, 2002).

Today, brand reputation has become more and more important for both academics and marketing managers. It has been stated that brands must have a positive and high reputation to earn more profits (Herbig and Milewicz, 1995). The high total value offered to the customer will positively affect on the market share and profitability of the brand and the company. For this reason, the importance given to brand reputation has increased today.

Besides satisfying consumers, the development of brand reputation also expresses the total perception of what the brand means to current and potential customers. Developing brand reputation is a phenomenon that the company and the brand gain over time (Milewicz and Herbig, 1994). Brand perception with a high brand reputation will lead customers to be more interested in these brands and shop. It also shapes consumer behavior positively and negatively. While the damage to the brand reputation during the crisis affects the consumer behavior negatively, increasing the reputation as a result of an activity or a campaign can have a positive effect on the consumer behavior. For this reason, the management of brand reputation is continuous and should be checked from time to time, and the studies should be audited.

Brand reputation acts as a shield during the crisis, protecting the company and the brand (Hess, 2008). Customers hold the firm less responsible for the crisis in times of crisis and focus more on the positive aspects of the firm, ignoring the negative information.

Brand reputation also has a powerful effect on shaping consumer behavior. Gounaris and Stathakopoulos (2004) stated that studies in the service literature support that brand reputation has a positive effect on behavioral intentions (Gounaris and Stathakopoulos, 2004). In some cases, it has been stated that brand reputation rather than overall satisfaction may have a more substantial effect on brand loyalty and purchase intention (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). In a study, it was determined that a brand with a better brand reputation was more preferred by consumers (Belén del Río et al., 2001).

De Chernatory (1999) also stated that brand reputation is critical for companies that want to have strong brand reputation and create a sustainable competitive advantage against rival brands. Brands with a high brand reputation have advantages such as higher awareness levels, positive brand image associations, and low-risk perception (Delgado-Ballester and Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Brand reputation positively affects brand loyalty, repurchase and recommendation and contributes positively to the brand's current and future performance of the brand (De la Sabaté and de Puente, 2003).

Walsh et al. (2009) stated that an important determinant of brand reputation for a person is that person's relationship with the brand and company, and that positive relationships and reputation will increase brand performance (Walsh et al., 2009:

191). Previous studies, have determined that a company and brand have high brand reputation when it is visible and reliable (Fombrun, 1996), and there are strong relationships between brand reputation and brand trust (Chang, 2013; Park et al., 2014).

From this point of view, it is important to reveal the concepts that will affect brand reputation and be related to this concept in an integrated way, because it is a guide to marketing managers and it is important to design research models for researchers who want to work in this field and to examine the literature to expand. In the study prepared for this purpose, the bibliometric analysis approach, which is used to help a researcher take a holistic view of the academic community in question, was used, and studies on brand reputation were examined.

3. BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Bibliometric analysis is a technique that allows researcher to obtain comprehensive information about the history and development of a particular field through bibliometric indicators (Jiménez-García, et al., 2020). It is one of the effective ways to evaluate and monitor dynamic changes in research topics in a particular field of study (Ardito et al., 2019).

This methodology is important as it provides a categorized view of the documents published in each research field based on objective criteria for analyzing and classifying publications (Cavalcante, et al., 2021).

In bibliometric analysis, the literature is reviewed systematically and empirically using scientific mapping techniques (Andersen, 2019). VOSviewer software is a valid bibliometric method as a visual mapping tool in bibliometric analysis (Eck and Waltman, 2010). VOSviewer software provides the opportunity to present data graphically via category maps (Cavalcante, et al., 2021).

To improve the bibliometric analysis of the literature, it is necessary to select the indicators to be used in the study (Ding et al., 2014). Various text analysis indicators such as author analysis, citation analysis, journal analysis, geographical analysis, analysis of publications by the organization, keyword analysis, abstract analysis are used in the bibliometric analysis.

Paul and Rialp (2020), in their literature review using bibliometric analyses, found that there are three approaches: domain-based (the synthesis of content into themes), theory-based (generalizations about studies that apply the same theory), and method-based (generalizations about studies that share a common methodology). stated. In this study, a field-based approach was adopted, which is used to summarize the content of the literature (main themes) and explore future research gaps (Goyal and Kumar, 2021; Paul and Benito, 2018).

One of the leading indicators of scientific productivity is the studies performed in national or international journals and indexed in international databases such as Web of Science (WoS) and the number of citations to these studies. In this study, a systematic bibliometric analysis was made from the Web of Science (WoS) database for the concept of brand reputation. Choosing the Web of Science database is that the VOSviewer program provides the opportunity to analyze the files that can be downloaded from this database, and the database contains high-quality publications such as SSCI, SCI-Expanded, ESCI.

Bibliographic records for the period 1991-2021 were downloaded based on the word brand reputation in the title of each article. Data download was performed on 7 January 2022. In this way, a total of 77 articles were obtained. These were then exported as plain text and sent to a bibliometric analysis software called VOSviewer. The following categories were selected to filter the results. Document types—article, proceeding paper, early access, and review; directories—SCI-Expanded, SSCI, and ESCI. Research areas were Business (41 publications) Management (16), Computer Information Systems (7), Economics (7), Communication (5).

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The study performed the following analyzes: author analysis (based on authors' publications), citation analysis (based on citation network by authors), journal analysis (based on journal productivity and publication volume per journal), geographic analysis (based on the/a number of co-authored publications by country), by organization analysis of publications, keyword analysis, abstract analysis.

4.1. Publications by Year and Category

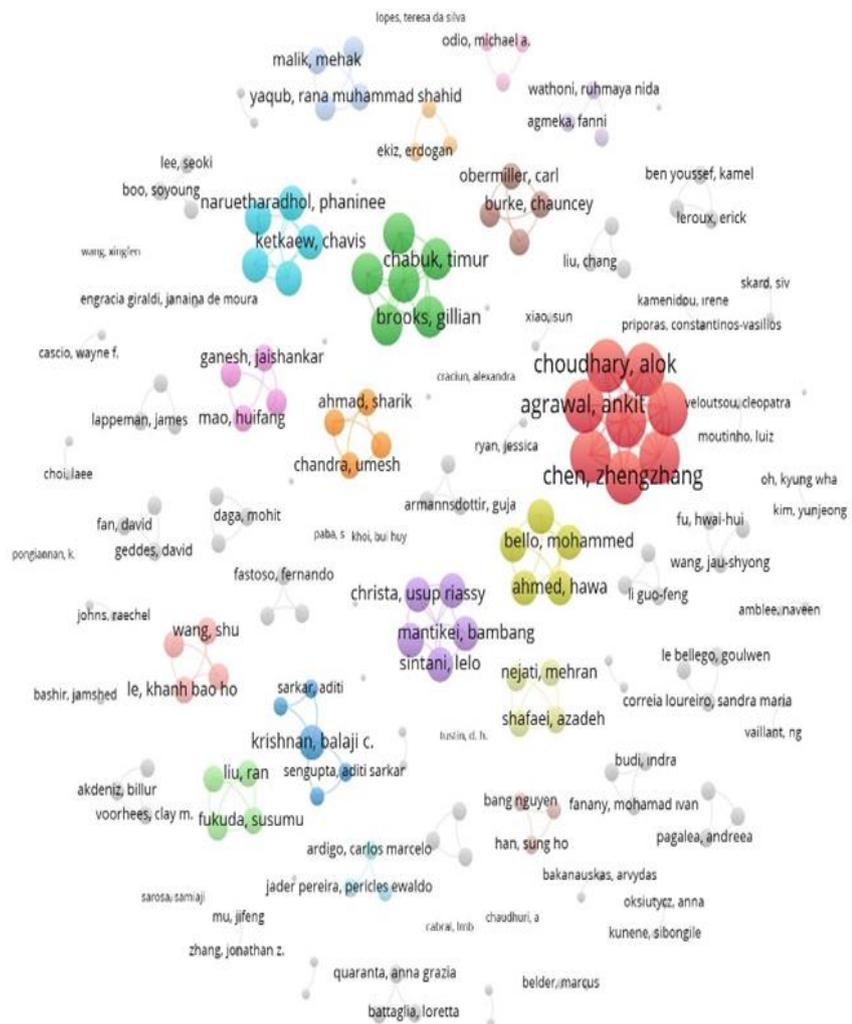
The first study dealing with the brand reputation theme was published in Paba's proceeding paper-in 1991 (Paba, 1991). The study title was "Brand Reputation, Efficiency and The Concentration Process- A Case Study". Afterwards, another study was published in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2007. 2 studies were published in 2008 and 5 studies in 2009. After 2009, the interest in the subject increased and 2014, 2018 and 2021 were the years with the most studies. After 2018, the number of studies increased.

When evaluated in terms of the/a research area, it was determined that the majority of 77 studies, the majority of which were distributed as Business 41, Management 16, Economics 7, Computer Science Information Systems 7, Communication 5, consisted of studies from these fields.

4.2. Author Analysis

The authors' analysis relates to the author's number of publications and involvement in the collaboration. The authors with the most (2) studies in brand reputation are Balaji and Krishnan. This result shows that all authors except Balaji and Krishnan were authors in only 1 study. It was determined that each of the other authors had 1 study in the field of brand reputation. Considering the clustering of the studies according to the number of authors, it is shown in red that the study with the most authors consisted of 8 authors.

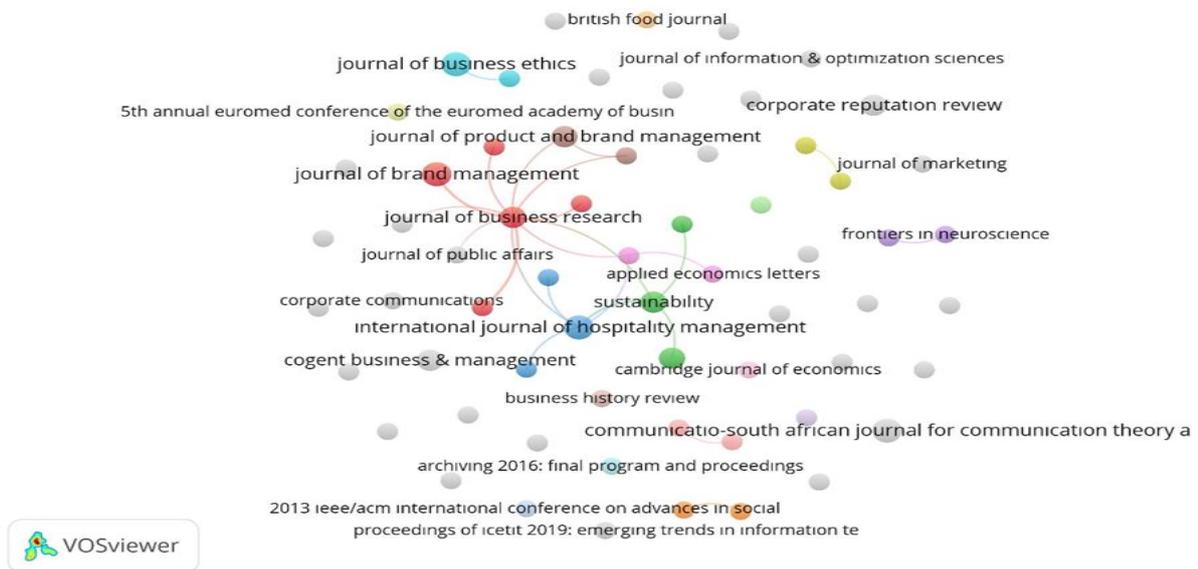
Figure 1: Co-Authorships of Brand Reputation Research in WoS (Web of Sciences)



4.3. Citation Analysis

Citation analysis is important as it determines the research area's main studies. Figure 2 shows the most cited studies in the field of brand reputation. It is seen that the work of Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) has the highest number of citations (210 citations). The density of the citation numbers of other authors according to the circle size and colour is also seen.

Figure 3: Leading Journals for Brand Reputation Research

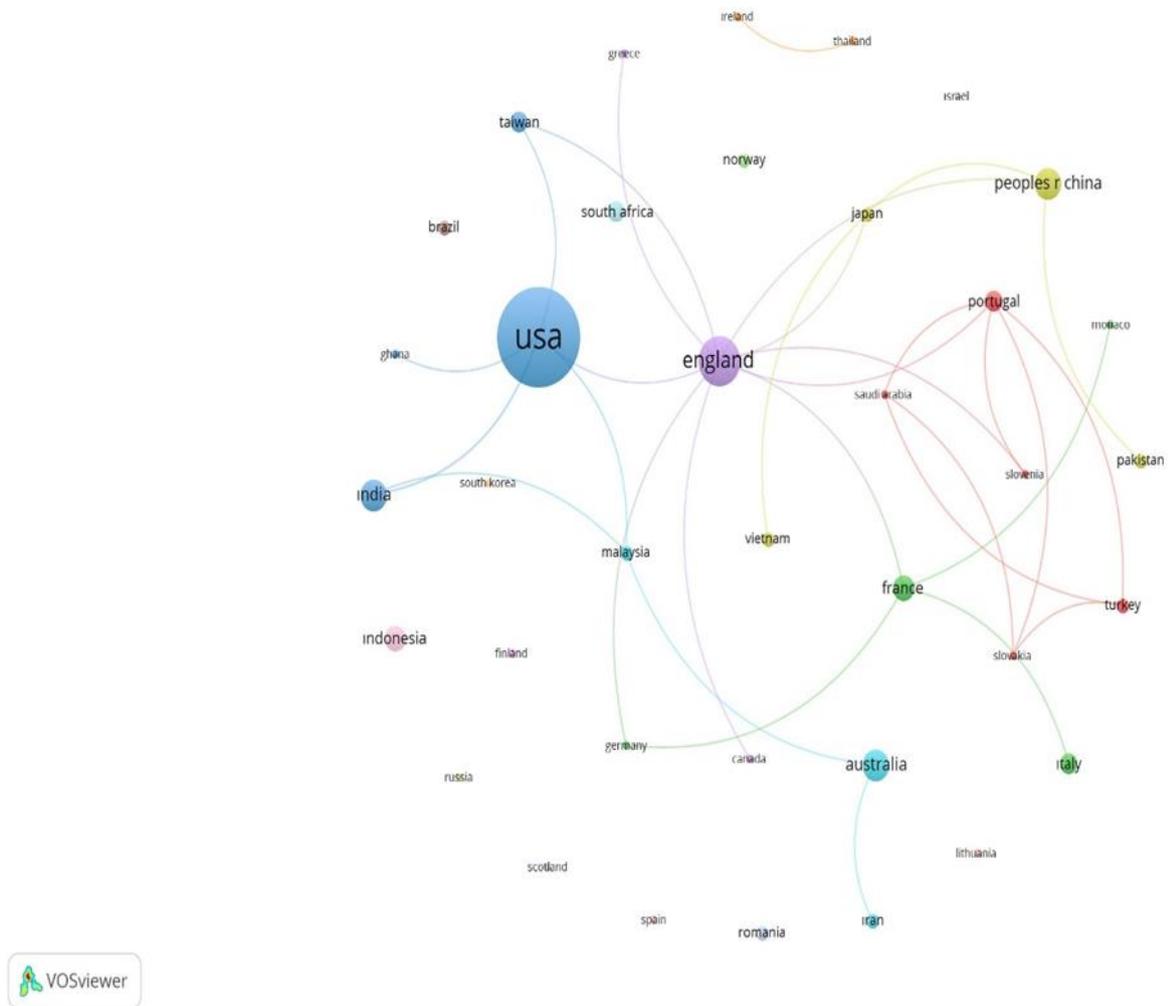


4.5. Country Analysis

Based on published articles, the country of origin of the authors indicates that this research topic is widespread worldwide as 37 different countries are represented. When examining the form created to determine the countries in which the authors are included, it is seen that the prominent countries are USA (21), England (9), Australia (5), India (5), China (5).

Looking at the lines expressing cooperation and partnership between countries, it is possible to realize that the United States of America and England are located in the centre of the map because they are three poles with many connections with other countries.

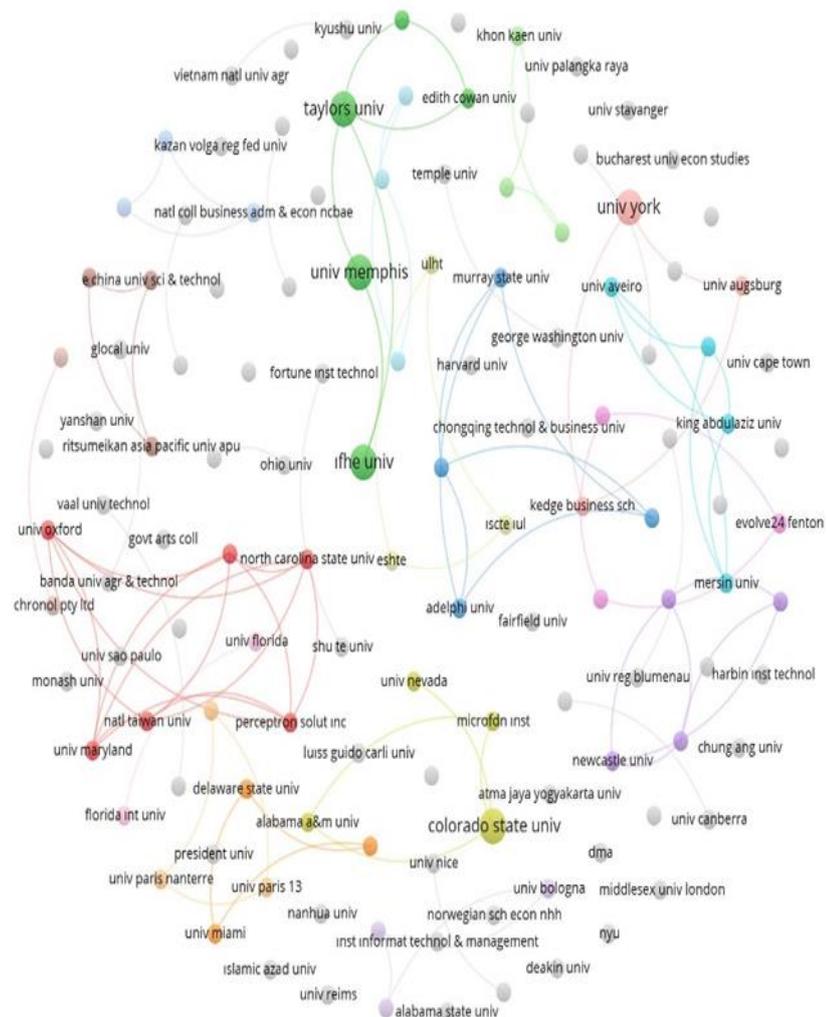
Figure 4: Top Contributing Countries in Brand Reputation Research



4.6. Analysis of Publications by Affiliations

Figure 5 presents the universities with the most publications in brand reputation. Universities, where two studies were conducted with the same number, are Colorado State, Taylors, Memphis, Ifhe and York universities. It is noteworthy that 4 of these top 5 universities are in the United States and 1 in India. When the cooperation between universities is examined, these Taylor, Memphis and Ifhe universities, which have large knots in shape, stand out, and other similarly coloured knots, show that studies were conducted with authors from those universities.

Figure 5: Publication Volume and Relevance of Affiliations



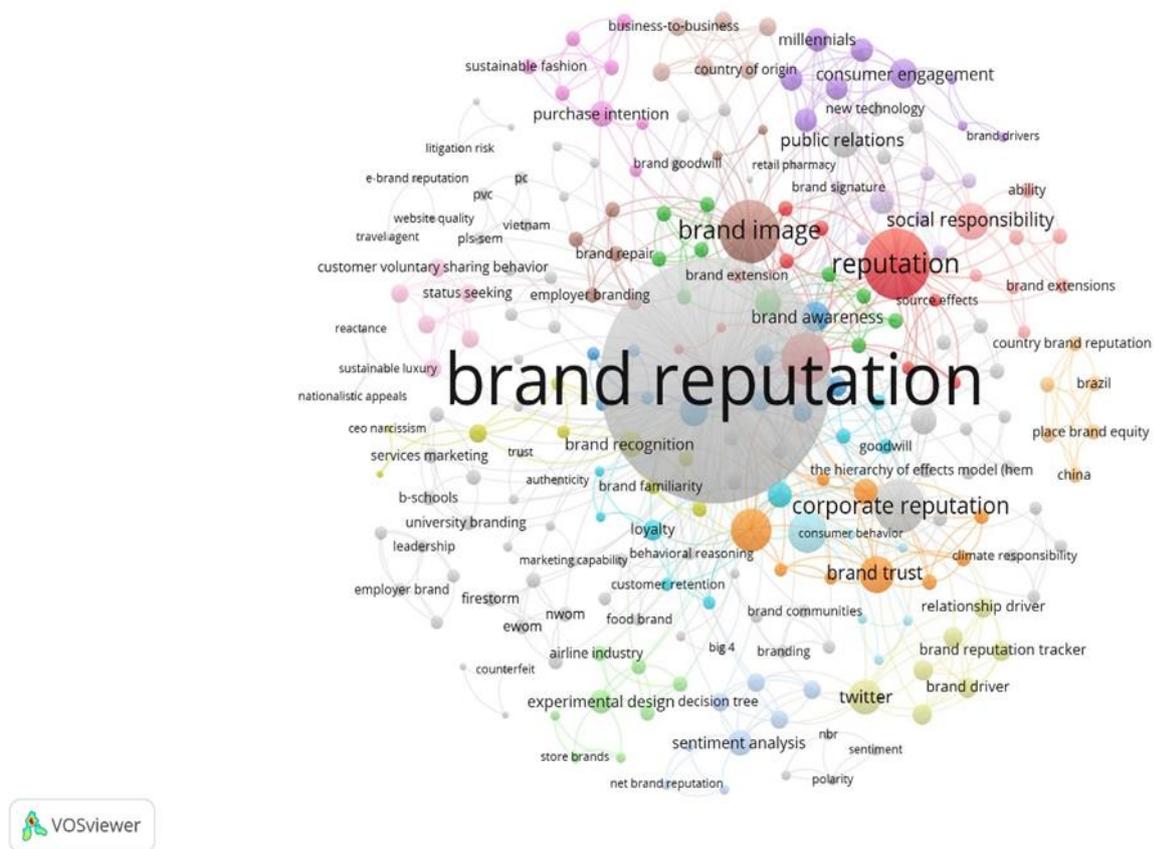
4.7.

4.8. Keywords Analysis

Analysis of keywords helps us know the research area and the most repeated topics. It indicates which concepts are associated with the subject in the research area, which are the most and which are the least, and it guides future research.

Figure 6 shows the keyword analysis results. When the size of the nodes is examined, it is seen that the concept of brand reputation is studied more with concepts such as reputation, corporate reputation, brand image, brand trust, brand equity, social responsibility, consumer behavior, brand awareness, brand loyalty, Twitter, brand recognition, public relations, consumer engagement. In terms of statistical techniques, it is seen that analyzes such as experimental design and sentiment analysis are mostly used among medium-sized nodes. Suppose we pay attention to the connections with smaller nodes and similar colors. In that case we can see that brand reputation with the concepts of place brand equity, country brand reputation, reputation, social responsibility and brand extensions, brand image, country of origin and B2B concepts, public relations, consumer engagement. It is seen that it is considered together with concepts such as new technology and millennials. Apart from these connections, it is seen that it is tried to be associated with different concepts with much less node size and connection number.

Figure 6: Keywords Associated with Brand Reputation in WoS



4.9. Abstract Analysis

The last analysis that the study deals with is the abstract analysis. The/An Abstract analysis is similar to keyword analysis, but it provides the opportunity to analyze more words in scope and examine the study content. Depending on the concepts in the abstract, it gives information such as the direction of the current studies, which concepts are examined much more, which concepts are used very little, as in keyword analysis. Figure 7 contains the abstract analysis.

When the nodes in the figure are examined according to their size, it is seen that concepts such as brand reputation, reputation, corporate social responsibility, identity, attitudes, brand image, consumers come to the fore. This result shows that these concepts are more associated with brand reputation as expressed in keyword analysis. Apart from this, similarly colored clusters show the working clusters related to brand reputation by which concepts are considered together for each studied study.

keywords and abstract analysis regarding brand reputation are examined, in the keyword analysis reputation, corporate reputation, brand image, brand trust, brand equity, social responsibility, consumer behavior, brand awareness, brand loyalty, Twitter, brand recognition, public relations, Concepts such as consumer engagement and reputation, corporate social responsibility, identity, attitudes, brand image, and consumers stand out in the abstract analysis. It can be said that brands with high brand trust, equivalence, loyalty, awareness and social responsibility perception can create more brand reputation. In addition, it can be stated that attitudes will be formed depending on the perception of brand reputation, and these will affect behavioral intentions. Apart from these concepts, it can be said that the concepts that occur less in nodes and form clusters in similar color groups can be variables that can be considered for future research. In addition to the more frequently associated variables, new studies can be conducted that deal with these less often discussed concepts together. In terms of application, it has been seen that brand reputation is examined in universities and cities. Similarly, it has been determined that it has emerged recently in studies on social media and that brand reputation studies are mostly examined on Twitter. Since it is a new research area, studies in these areas can be increased. Although the number of studies examining the relationship of corporate social responsibility projects with brand reputation is high in the current situation, it can be recommended to examine again and by adding different variables during the Covid 19 pandemic period, with its increasing importance in terms of today. In terms of statistical techniques, the concept of the model comes to the fore as determined in the abstract analysis of the studies to examine research models. It shows that different techniques such as experimental design and sentiment analysis can be evaluated.

In the study, it was determined that in terms of consumer behavior, variables such as purchasing and word of mouth communication on the Internet were handled less frequently. It is thought that with the transformation of communication over social media into dialogue and word of mouth communication gaining importance, the studies that can be done in this field will contribute significantly to the reputation management process through social media and will guide in times of crisis.

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