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SCHOLARLY LANDSCAPES OF ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT: CLUSTERS, TRENDS AND GAPS

ONLINE İTİBAR YÖNETİMİNİN AKADEMİK MANZARASI: KÜMELER, EĞİLİMLER VE BOŞLUKLAR

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Abstract
In the digital age, online reputation has become one of the most critical factors shaping public perception of organizations. Reputation is vital for maintaining trust-based relationships with stakeholders and ensuring long-term success. While positive content builds loyalty and enhances brand value, negative content can lead to crises, especially due to the rapid spread of information on social media platforms.This study aims to systematically evaluate the academic literature on online reputation management, identify research gaps, and contribute to the field. A total of 116 publications retrieved from the Web of Science database using the keyword *online reputation management* were analyzed through bibliometric methods using VOSviewer software.The findings, assessed through author citation, collaboration, and keyword analyses, reveal the main research clusters, conceptual linkages, and gaps in the literature. The study highlights limited interdisciplinary collaboration, insufficient integration of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, and a predominant focus on large-scale enterprises, while emphasizing the need for more inclusive and diversified approaches.

Keywords: Online Reputation Management, Social Media, Reputation Management, Crisis Communication, Bibliometrics.

Öz
Dijital çağda, kurumların nasıl algılandığını belirleyen en önemli unsurlardan biri online itibardır. Örgütler açısından itibar, farklı paydaşlarla güven ilişkisi kurularak korunması ve uzun vadeli başarının sürdürülebilmesi için kritik öneme sahiptir. Bilgiye hızlı erişim, olumlu içeriklerin müşteri sadakati oluşturmasına ve marka değerini artırmasına katkı sağlarken; kısa sürede geniş kitlelere ulaşabilen olumsuz içerikler ise krizlere yol açabilmektedir. Özellikle sosyal medyanın etkisi, itibarı proaktif bir şekilde yönetmeyi zorunlu kılmaktadır. Online itibar, kamuoyu algılarını şekillendirdiği gibi kurumların yönetsel ve finansal performanslarını da doğrudan etkilemektedir. Bu çalışmada, online itibar yönetimi alanındaki akademik literatürün sistematik olarak değerlendirilmesi, önemli araştırma boşluklarının belirlenmesi ve literatüre katkı sağlanması amaçlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda, Web of Science veri tabanında *online reputation management* anahtar sözcükleriyle yapılan taramalar sonucunda elde edilen 116 yayın, VOSviewer yazılımı aracılığıyla bibliyometrik analiz yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, yazar atıf analizleri, iş birliği ağları ve anahtar kelime analizleri çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiş; böylece literatürdeki temel araştırma kümeleri, kavramsal bağlantılar ve mevcut boşluklar ortaya konmuştur. Çalışma sonucunda, disiplinler arası işbirliğinin sınırlı olduğu, yapay zekâ gibi yeni teknolojilerin literatüre yeterince entegre edilmediği ve araştırmaların ağırlıklı olarak büyük ölçekli firmalar üzerinde yoğunlaştığı tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Online İtibar Yönetimi, Sosyal Medya, İtibar Yönetimi, Kriz İletişimi, Bibliyometri.

INTRODUCTION

Developments in technology have demonstrated their innovative impact across many fields, including public relations. Organizations have increasingly felt the influence of digitalization in establishing effective communication with their stakeholders, leading to a shift from traditional media to online platforms. In line with digital public relations strategies, the communication that organizations build with their target audiences through platforms such as social media, blogs, and news sites has laid the foundation for online reputation management. The rapid production and dissemination of messages on digital platforms have created potential audiences that engage with organizations through user experiences. This dynamic has particularly driven organizations—especially those seeking to manage negative perceptions and strengthen their brand image—to adopt online reputation management processes.

The swift spread of information and the immediate accessibility of user-generated comments are critical for organizations to maintain their long-term reputation, effectively navigate crises, preserve brand credibility, and meet stakeholder expectations. In this context, integrating digital strategies into existing strategic management systems has become essential for organizations aiming to sustain their presence in the market.

The dynamic structure of the digital age and the rapidly evolving flow of information have transformed online reputation management into an interdisciplinary field of study. Online reputation management can be defined as a discipline that encompasses the processes of monitoring, influencing, and managing perceptions shaped by news sites, social media platforms, blogs, and user-generated content regarding a brand or individual (Aula, 2010, p. 45). Organizations and individuals must effectively implement online reputation management strategies to build and sustain a strong reputation. In this regard, online reputation management has increasingly attracted the attention of academic researchers while also becoming a focal point for the rapid expansion of practical applications. The growing body of literature in this field necessitates a comprehensive approach, encouraging researchers to integrate different perspectives and methodological frameworks. This study utilized bibliometric analysis to systematically examine the online reputation management literature. And this study aims to present an overview of academic research in the field of online reputation management and to systematically reveal the accumulated scientific knowledge through bibliometric analysis. Data retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database — a comprehensive and widely used resource for academic and bibliometric studies — were analyzed to monitor scientific impact and research trends.

The findings visualize the prominent authors, key concepts, and development trends within the online reputation management literature, while also identifying existing gaps and weaknesses and offering recommendations for future studies. This study makes a unique contribution to the literature by systematically mapping the network structures at the levels of authors, institutions, and countries, and by analyzing thematic clusters and author collaborations within a multi-centered framework.

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ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

The digital world has made it mandatory for individuals and organisations to manage their reputations in online environments. Online reputation management is the process of monitoring, managing and improving the perception of a person, brand or organisation online (Aula, 2010, p. 45). Unlike traditional reputation management practices, online reputation management has to adapt to the dynamic nature of interactive platforms such as social media, search engines forums and blogs (C. J. Fombrun, 1996, p. 99; C. Fombrun & Riel, 1997, p. 234). Reputation is a concept that reflects the public's holistic assessment of the activities, achievements and expectations of organisations, which is shaped by the combination of the comments of the people who make up the public opinion and transformed into collective comments over time (C. Fombrun & Shanley, 1990, p. 234). Corporate reputation can be defined as the set of perceptions that an organisation creates on its stakeholders based on its corporate values, behaviour and performance. These perceptions are shaped within the framework of different factors such as past achievements, ethical values, social responsibility practices, leadership skills of the organization (Rindova et al., 2005, pp. 5-7). Corporate reputation is a long-term process that determines the position of an organisation among its competitors and needs to be managed well. Corporate reputation management is a process that ensures the adoption and integration of these elements at the corporate level by comprehensively analysing the structure, strategies and values of the corporation (Özgür, 2023, p. 306). Corporate reputation management has an important place within the discipline of public relations (Hutton, 1999, p. 200), which is a strategic management and communication process that aims to ensure mutual understanding and cooperation, trust and acceptance of the organisation with its stakeholders. It is of great importance not only to gain corporate reputation but also to protect and manage it effectively. Corporate reputation management has gained importance in online environments with the acceleration of digitalisation. New strategies created by taking into account the dynamics of digital platforms along with traditional methods have expanded the scope of reputation management and created the concept of online reputation management. Effective online reputation management, on the one hand, increases the credibility of organisations on digital platforms, and on the other hand, it stands out as an important tool that supports reputation.

Online reputation is shaped by factors such as comments, news, social media posts and search engine results on the internet (Chun, 2005, p. 46). While a positive online reputation increases customer trust and brand loyalty, a negative reputation can cause businesses to lose revenue and face crises (Coombs, 2015). Online reputation management can be defined as a strategic process applied by organisations or individuals to protect and improve their reputation in digital environments and manage negative content. Online reputation management is built on three basic strategies: monitoring and analysis, content and crisis management. Continuous monitoring of social networks (Becker & Lee, 2019, p. 234) gains importance in terms of consumers being able to communicate directly with each other and companies being able to maintain the control they have over the content and dissemination of information. In fact, the open and widespread nature of social networks has changed the balance of power between consumers and corporations in favour of consumers, creating a process that destroys sectors, damages the reputation of corporations, and even exposes corporations to bankruptcy (Becker & Lee, 2019, p. 231). In order to learn the opinions of consumers, rival brands or opinion leaders about an organisation or brand, it is very important to follow the discourses shared in digital environments such as application stores, review sites, e-commerce sites, social media in order to reveal the market situation and to determine the position of the organisation or brand in the market. Positive comments, business-related questions, spam statements, fake or negative comments are among the discourses that can be shared in digital environments. Negative comments and evaluations towards the brand affect the loyalty of consumers. Negative content damages the trust of customers, causing them to look for more reasons to cut their ties with the brand or organisation. On the other hand, positive comments and evaluations increase customers' trust in the brand or organisation. Ensuring that the brand or organisation stands out in a positive way can also help to provide a competitive advantage. Satisfied customers' evaluations of the brand or organisation also influence potential customers and encourage them to interact with the organisation (Hutton et al., 2001, p. 248). In this respect, the use of social media monitoring tools such as Brandwatch, Hootsuite, Google Alerts to understand brand perception in the digital environment constitutes the monitoring and analysis phase of online reputation management. By regularly

monitoring customer comments, blogs and news sites, possible reputation risks can be identified in advance (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 247). In particular, responding by the organisation in order to manage perceptions towards the organisation or brand affects the sustainability of reputation. In this context, the analysis of the data obtained is important in terms of evaluating the perceptions towards the brand and identifying the content that carries reputation risk (Alfonso & Suzanne, 2008, p. 144). The next stage of this strategy is content management. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), content management through digital platforms shapes the relationships of organisations with their target audiences in terms of establishing trust and loyalty-based relationships. Especially social media interactions strongly affect the perception of reputation based on user experiences (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 42). When users share their experiences on digital platforms, the algorithms and data analyses used by the system play an important role in shaping other users' perception of the sector, institution, product or brand; these shares enable organisations to develop reputation management strategies. For example, Xiang and Buhalis (2010), in their study on the role of social media on online travel information search, comprehensively revealed the impact of online reputation on customer decision processes (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) especially in the tourism sector. This study reveals that digital reputation changes faster than traditional reputation and is open to the direct influence of stakeholders. Generating positive content is one of the cornerstones of online reputation management. The image of brands can be enhanced through video content, social media posts, press releases and blog posts (Berthon et al., 2012, p. 263). With Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) techniques, the effect of negative content on organisations can be reduced by ensuring that positive content ranks high in search engines. In content production, responding quickly to negative content, resolving complaints and developing a positive relationship is as essential as producing positive content. In addition, within the scope of online reputation management, content strategies are also applied to rebuild reputation in the post-crisis period(Coombs, 2015, p. 146). The final stage is crisis management. Digital platforms, especially social media, are areas where crisis management processes and online reputation management are closely related. Online reputation management, which is integrated with corporate communication, strengthens the overall reputation of the organisation and serves as a protective function against potential risks. However, strategic mistakes during crisis communication can cause serious damage to the reputation of the organisation. Therefore, the correct implementation of online reputation management strategies in times of crisis is of great importance for the sustainability of reputation (Coombs, 2015, pp. 146-147; Eriksson, 2018, p. 538). In this context, online reputation management enables rapid intervention in crisis situations and building a positive brand perception in the long term (Oncioiu et al., 2020). It is even a critical tool in terms of intervening in crises and building a sustainable brand perception, as well as increasing social trust by gaining public support. Einwiller and Will (2008) draw attention to the role of social media in extraordinary situations such as crises, emphasising the impact of content disseminated in digital environments on the reputation of a brand or an organisation, and emphasised the importance of considering online reputation holistically with the strategic activities of the organisation (Einwiller & Will, 2008). Crises in digital media have a high potential to spread rapidly and cause great damage to organisations. For this reason, crisis communication strategies should be determined in advance by following the content published in digital media (Coombs, 2007, p. 164). Fast and transparent communication is important to help protect brand reputation in times of crisis. For example, an empathetic and quick response to negative comments published on social media platforms can prevent the spread of negative perception and eliminate prejudices (Palenchar & Heath, 2007, p. 125).

In addition to all these, online reputation management supports the sustainability of organisations together with their social responsibility activities. Online reputation management provides competitive advantage to organisations by helping to effectively publicise social responsibility projects. As a matter of fact, Oncioiu et al. (2020) emphasise that correctly implemented online reputation management increases both corporate sustainability and economic success (Oncioiu et al., 2020). Online reputation management faces various challenges in a rapidly changing digital world. The spread of misleading information through fake news and disinformation poses a notable threat to online reputation (Vosoughi et al., 2018, p. 1146). Especially the management of negative content spread on social media is of great importance (Becker & Lee, 2019, p. 235; Lazer et al., 2018) By remaining anonymous, users can create

harmful or misleading content about brands and spread them in a very short time due to the speed of social media. While referrals from social media account for a small portion of traffic on mainstream news sites, they have a much larger share on fake news sites (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017, p. 212). Moreover, changes in the algorithms of social media platforms and search engines require the necessity of continuous updating of reputation management strategies. In this context, Google and Facebook increase the likelihood of individuals with similar profiles interacting with this content by providing content that is in line with users' tendencies. There is some evidence that this approach by Facebook and Google increases selective exposure to political content, and this issue is becoming part of a growing literature on the algorithmic underpinnings of the 21st century world. In addition, changes in the algorithms of social media platforms and search engines require the necessity of constantly updating reputation management strategies (Lazer et al., 2018, p. 1099).

In conclusion, online reputation management has become an indispensable element for organisations to survive in the digital world and gain competitive advantage. The multidisciplinary nature of the field indicates the potential to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to future studies. Accordingly, this study aims to present an overview of academic studies in the field of online reputation management through bibliometric analysis and to analyse the scientific accumulation in this field in depth. Since it is a comprehensive database for academic research, stands out as one of the most widely used sources in bibliometric analyses, and offers the opportunity to monitor scientific impact and research trends with citation data, the data in this study were extracted from the Web of Science (WoS) database. The research findings visualize the prominent authors, key concepts and development trends in the online reputation management literature, while identifying gaps and weaknesses in the literature and providing guiding recommendations for future researchers in this field.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a bibliometric analysis was conducted based on publications obtained from the Web of Science (WoS) database. During the analysis process, sub-approaches such as citation relationships between publications, co-authorship, and co-word (keyword co-occurrence) analyses were utilized (Arruda et al., 2022, p. 392). These analyses provide the opportunity to visualize the flow of knowledge and scientific collaboration within the literature (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010, p. 524). VOSviewer enables the visualization of trends and collaboration dynamics in a specific research field through the mapping and clustering of scientific networks.

As an analytical method, bibliometric analysis play a crucial role for identifying influential studies, key concepts, and current trends in the literature, while also uncovering prominent relationships and developments in academic and sectoral research(Dereli, 2024, p.2). This method enables researchers to track academic trends by visualizing structured numerical data through the software's visualization tools, thereby presenting the current status of a given field. Although bibliometric analysis is often confused with metric-related concepts such as webometrics, infometrics, and cybermetrics, it primarily aims to provide numerical indicators and quantitative data for evaluating research performance (Dirik vd., 2023, p.168). Moreover, bibliometric analysis is an important tool for understanding and mapping accumulated scientific and evolutionary trends in established fields by systematically analyzing large volumes of unstructured data (Donthu vd., 2021, p.285). This tool is of great importance in terms of saving time and facilitating the work of researchers by creating meaningful, easy to comprehend and summarising maps that can be obtained from large data stacks (Arruda vd., 2022, p.392).
Bibliometric methods helped identify the main research structures, collaboration patterns among authors, institutions, and countries, as well as the key conceptual clusters and most highly cited publications in the field (Başer, 2023, p.73).

Accordingly, the study addressed the following research questions:

- How are co-authorship relationships structured in the field of online reputation management?
- Who are the most highly cited authors, publications, institutions, and countries?
- How does keyword analysis reflect the thematic clusters in this field?

- How are connections established through bibliographic coupling?
- At what level do author collaborations occur?

Purpose and Significance of the Study

This study aims to examine academic publications on *online reputation management* indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database through bibliometric analysis. By mapping collaborations among authors, institutions, and countries, and analyzing citations and keywords, it provides a holistic overview of the field. The findings aim to systematically reveal current trends and collaboration structures to guide future research.

Population, Sample, and Data Collection

The population of the study consists of academic publications indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database using the keyword "online reputation management" under the "all fields" option. The dataset was limited to articles, and a total of 116 relevant publications retrieved on October 17, 2024, formed the sample. To ensure consistency, publications indexed after this date were excluded from the analysis.

A descriptive review of the dataset shows that the first study appeared in 2007 and the most recent in 2024. The highest publication counts were in 2015 (14), 2017 (11), 2019 (16), 2020 (14), and 2023 (10), while other years had fewer than 10 publications.

Of the retrieved works, 73 were articles, 34 were conference papers, 4 were reviews, 3 were early access papers, 3 were editorials, and 2 were book chapters. The leading disciplines were business (33 publications), management (22), computer science – information systems (17), hospitality and tourism (15), communication (14), artificial intelligence (12), economics (12), and computer science – theory and methods (10).

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, only publications indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database were included, excluding sources like SCOPUS, TR Dizin, and Google Scholar. Second, the dataset was limited to articles, excluding reviews, early access papers, book chapters, and editorials. Third, only the keyword *online reputation management* was used, without considering related terms, which may have restricted the dataset's scope.
Additionally, data were collected on October 17, 2024, and publications indexed after this date were not included to maintain dataset consistency. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted considering these database, publication type, keyword, and data collection limitations.

Data Analysis

VOSviewer software was used to analyze the dataset due to its ability to handle large data and visualize scientific relationships effectively. Data were exported with citation information, and analyses focused on author, institution, and country citations, co-authorship networks, and keyword co-occurrences using the Web of Science database content.

FINDINGS

This section presents the results of the bibliometric analysis on online reputation management, focusing on publication trends, citation networks, co-authorship structures, and keyword clusters.

Disrtibution of Publications by Year

Figure 1 shows the number of studies published between 2007 and 2024 on *online reputation management.* Academic production in this field began in 2007, with a significant increase after 2015.

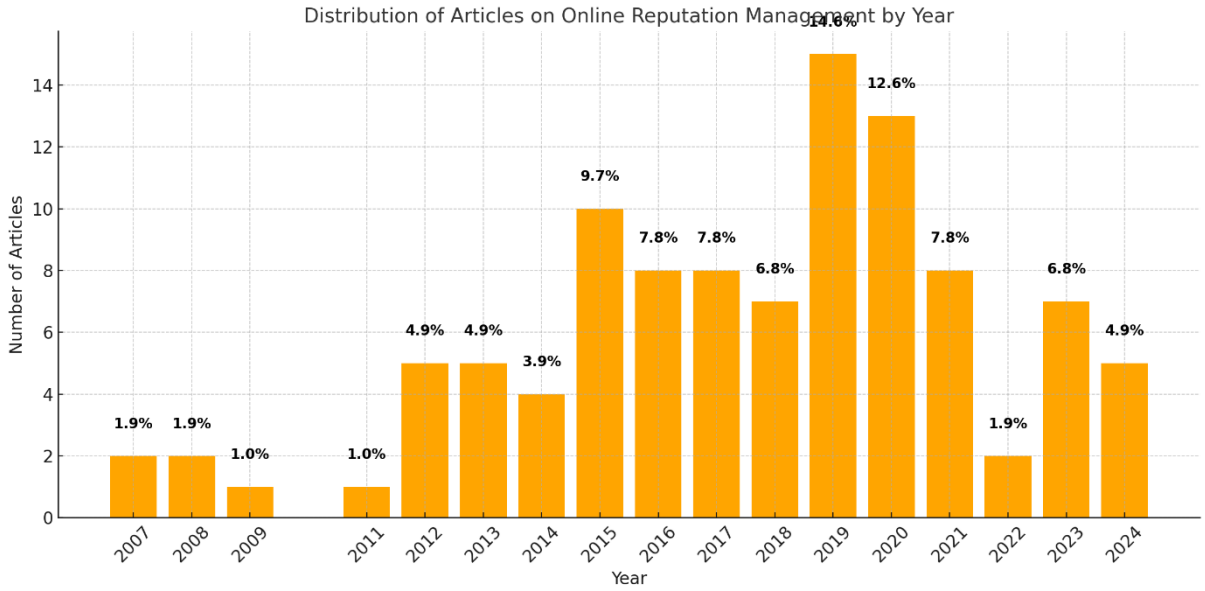

Figure 1. Distribution of publications by year

The highest publication rates were observed in 2019 (14.56%) and 2020 (12.62%), reflecting the growing influence of digital platforms on reputation management. Although annual production fluctuated after 2015, the overall trend remained upward. This evolution indicates that online reputation management has expanded beyond communication studies, drawing attention from fields such as marketing, public relations, information technology, and artificial intelligence. The limited output before 2014 highlights the field's recent but growing academic interest, closely tied to digitalization, the rise of social media, and the transformation of corporate communication strategies.

Co-authorship of authors

To analyze co-authorship relationships, a threshold of at least one publication and one citation was applied, including 188 of 266 authors in the dataset. The network map revealed 19 authors grouped into five thematic clusters, with 67 connections and a total link strength of 84, indicating active collaboration.

Figure 2 visualizes the collaboration network. Authors within the same cluster often focus on specific themes, collaborating closely. Damiano Spina, Maarten de Rijke, and Edgar Meij are notable for their central positions and high citation counts, particularly in text mining and information retrieval. Julio Gonzalo acts as a bridge across clusters, fostering an integrated approach. Authors like Enrique Amigo and Fabio Crestani contribute through interdisciplinary research, while Minh Thuong Bui and Mathias Breuss focus on more specialized, niche areas. This diversity highlights the field's development beyond core themes into emerging research areas.

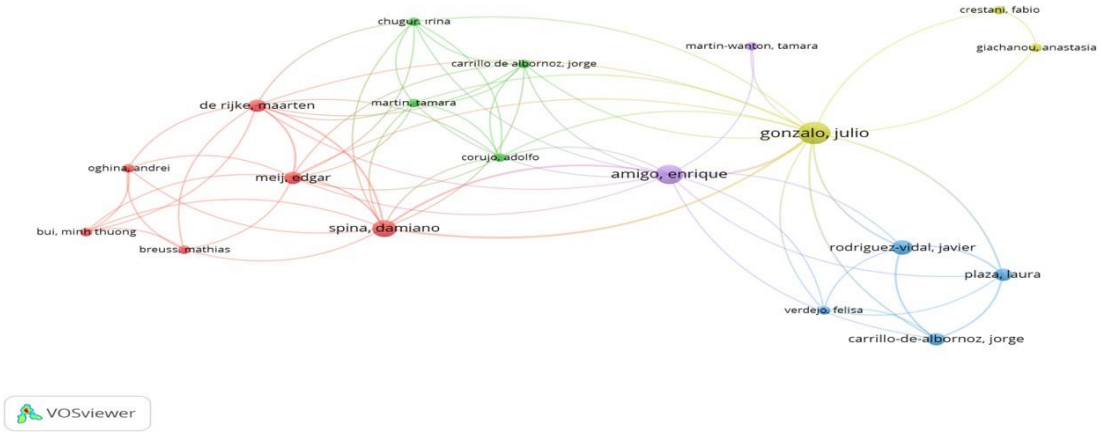

Figure 2. Collaboration map of authors working on online reputation management (VOSviewer, 2024)

Citation of Authors Analysis

Authors with at least one publication and one citation were analyzed, resulting in a dataset of 188 authors. A subnetwork of the 14 most connected authors was visualized in Figure 3.

At the center of the network is Francisco Peco-Torres, showing strong academic ties with Antonio Usai, Riccardo Rialti, Manlio Del Giudice, and Sebastian Molinillo, forming a red cluster focused on a specific thematic area. This cluster also collaborates with internationally diverse authors like Zaid Alrawadieh, Enrico Supino, Selena Aureli, and Mithat Zeki Dinçer in the green cluster. The network highlights active interdisciplinary and cross-cultural academic exchanges, revealing a diversity based on both thematic focus and methodological approaches.

As a result of the analysis conducted among authors who met the criteria of having at least one publication and one citation, a dataset consisting of 188 authors with the highest total link strength was obtained. From this dataset, a subnetwork composed of 14 authors with the most intensive interaction was analyzed and visualized in Figure 3.

At the center of the network lies Francisco Peco-Torres, whose strong academic interactions with productive authors such as Antonio Usai, Riccardo Rialti, Manlio Del Giudice, and Sebastian Molinillo are particularly noteworthy. The red cluster, which includes these authors, has concentrated on a specific thematic area and produced influential studies that have shaped the literature. Moreover, this cluster has also established collaborations with authors from different national backgrounds, such as Zaid Alrawadieh, Enrico Supino, Selena Aureli, and Mithat Zeki Dinçer, who are positioned in the green cluster.
These connections demonstrate that interdisciplinary knowledge exchange and cross-cultural academic interaction are being actively sustained. The network structure across clusters reveals the emergence of academic richness not only around a specific research theme but also based on methodological and cultural diversity.

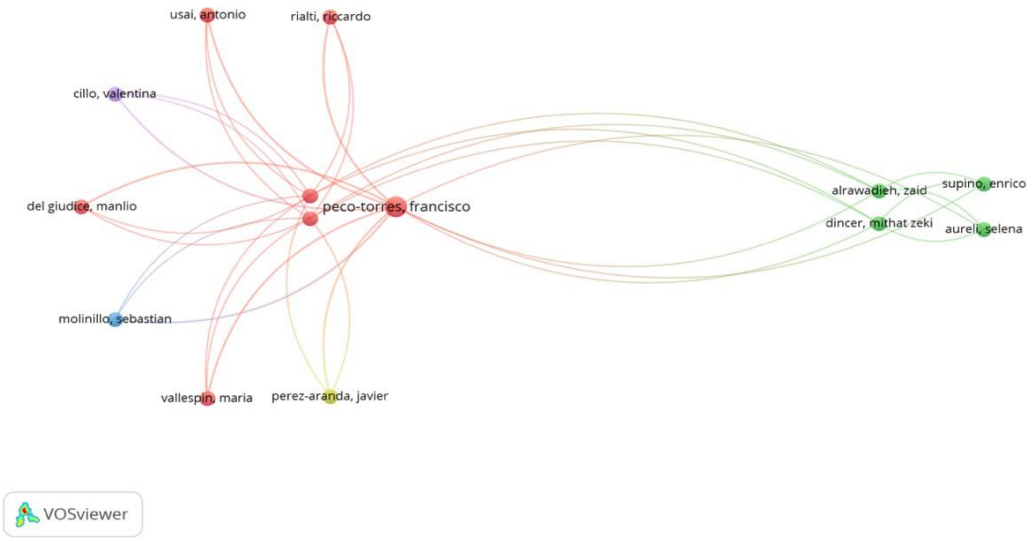

Figure 3. Co-authorship network of the most prolific authors in online reputation management (VOSviewer, 2024)

Citation Analysis of Countries

Twelve countries with strong connection networks were identified based on having at least one publication and one citation, as shown in Figure 4.

The analysis revealed 14 connections clustered into three thematic groups, indicating that online reputation management research is shaped mainly through international collaborations. The United States (23 publications, 467 citations), Spain (26 publications, 177 citations), Italy (6 publications, 60 citations), and Canada (5 publications, 33 citations) are central in terms of both productivity and citation impact, driving global academic exchange. Spain and the United States drive Europe- and America-centered scientific collaborations, while Italy and Canada play supportive roles.

These findings help identify strategic areas for future research and show that international academic partnerships are evolving not only regionally but also through shared thematic interests.

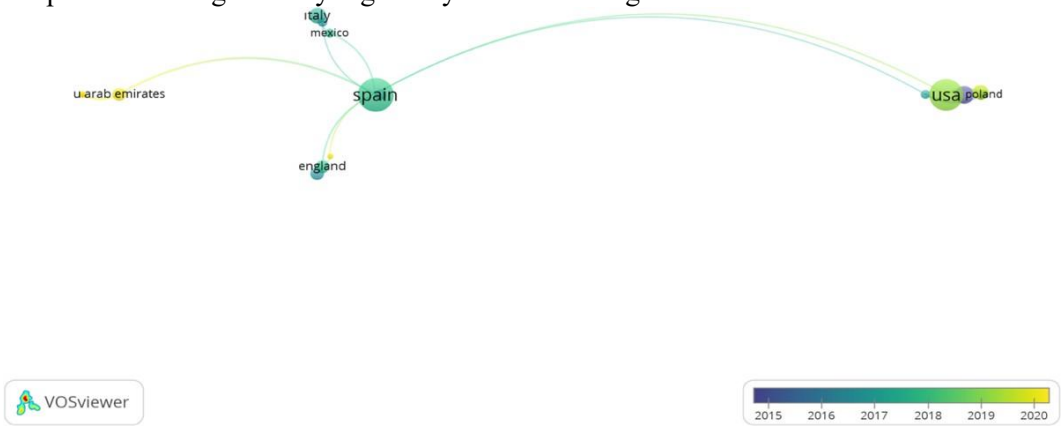

Figure 4. International co-authorship network among countries (VOSviewer, 2024)

Citation of Organisations Analysis

The analysis of institutions with at least one publication and one citation reveals that academic collaboration continues globally. The network, divided into three clusters and visualized in Figure 5,

shows that scientific knowledge exchange in online reputation management is both geographic and thematic.

Boston University (4 publications, 221 citations), Southern California University (1 publication, 196 citations), Harbin Institute of Technology (2 publications, 144 citations), and California State University Fresno (2 publications, 48 citations) are central, leading the global flow of knowledge. Universities in the United States and China hold strategic positions in maintaining the network's structure. In the red cluster, the University of Economics Bratislava connects most collaborations, while Feng Chia University enhances interdisciplinary research. In the green cluster, Hwa Shia Institute of Technology and National Taipei University of Education focus on education and technology. The orange cluster includes National Chiao Tung University and Kainan University, strengthening regional ties in Taiwan. The University of Presov, in the blue cluster, is active in Slovakian research networks.

This structure highlights existing citation relationships and also reveals potential areas for future strategic partnerships. The citation-based analysis provides valuable insights for enhancing institutional synergy in the field.

Figure 5. Inter-institutional citation network

Keyword Analysis (Co-occurance of All Keywords)

In studies on online reputation management, the most frequent keywords were *online reputation management* (28 occurrences), *social media* (17), *reputation* (14), *reputation management* (13), and *online reputation* (10). Based on 419 keywords, an analysis of terms appearing at least three times revealed four clusters with 52 links and a total link strength of 84, as visualized in Figure 6.

The map illustrates the interdisciplinary nature of the field, highlighting central themes such as social media, online reviews, sentiment analysis, and user-generated content. The clusters show that online reputation management intersects with communication, marketing, data analytics, and public relations. The red cluster emphasizes the strategic role of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter in brand reputation. The blue cluster focuses on corporate reputation, online reviews, and user-generated content, showing the impact of user feedback on digital reputation. The green cluster highlights social media marketing and sentiment analysis, underlining the decisive role of user-generated content.

These concepts show that user-generated content plays a decisive role in reputation management. The relational structure among keywords highlights the multidisciplinary nature of online reputation management and its strong interaction with communication technologies, emphasizing that user engagement and digital reviews have become critical determinants of corporate reputation.

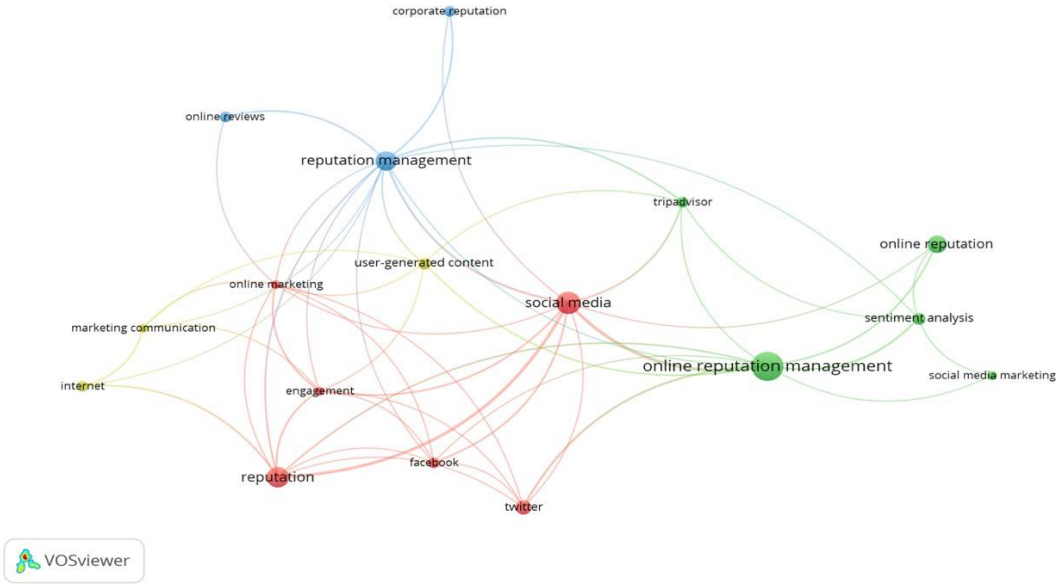

Figure 6. Keyword co-occurrence network in online reputation management

Bibliographic Coupling of Documents

Publications with at least one citation were analyzed using bibliographic coupling to understand relationships within the online reputation management literature. This method helped visualize thematic clusters and the flow of knowledge, as shown in Figure 7.

A total of 65 publications directly contribute to the field, divided into nine thematic clusters. The total link strength among the sources is 454, indicating a high level of conceptual similarity. The green cluster represents recent studies, the blue cluster includes classic works on corporate reputation management, and the red and purple clusters focus on specific sub-themes.

At the center of the network is Proserpio (Proserpio & Zervas, n.d.), with 196 citations and 65 bibliographic connections, playing a pivotal role. Researchers in the red and purple clusters show strong internal connections but limited interaction with the broader network. For example, Amigo (2013) significantly contributes to its cluster with 55 citations but remains relatively independent. In contrast, recent studies like Marland (2019) and Kotras (2020) in the green cluster are integrated with broader trends, indicating the emergence of new directions in the field.

This analysis reveals how the online reputation management literature has been structured historically as well as conceptually and thematically, providing valuable insights for identifying literature gaps and future research opportunities.

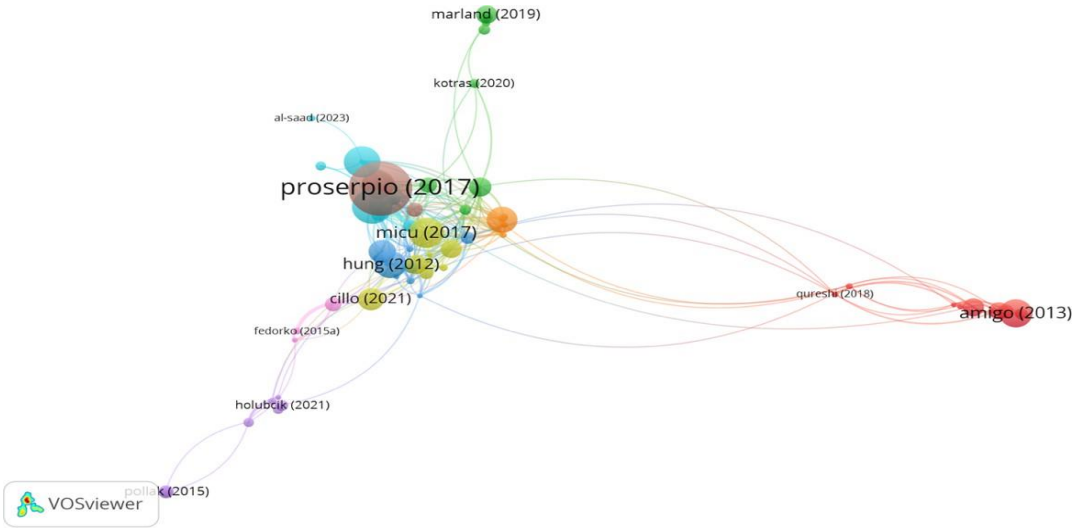

Figure 7. Bibliographic coupling network in online reputation management

Bibliographic Coupling of Authors

An author network was constructed based on those with at least one publication and one citation, visualizing bibliographic coupling in the online reputation management literature (Figure 8). The network includes 65 authors based on 170 publications.

Julio Gonzalo, with 7 publications and 95 citations, has the highest total link strength (1327), primarily due to his collaboration with Niyati Chhaya. However, this collaboration forms a relatively isolated cluster, indicating thematic depth but structural fragmentation.

Frantisek Pollak, at the center of the network, has the largest node, connecting authors across different clusters. His collaborations with Anna Lennox Esselment and Gironda Jian-Wu reflect the interdisciplinary expansion of the field into areas such as public administration, political science, and information technologies.

This analysis reveals not only the volume of academic production but also the pathways of interaction and knowledge sharing, offering insights into the structure of researcher collaboration networks.

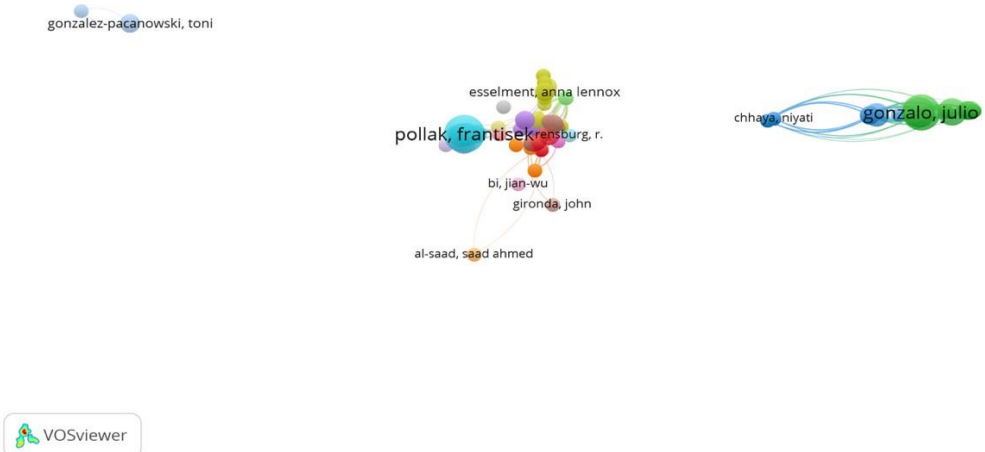

Figure 8. Bibliographic coupling network of authors

Analysis of Co-citation of Cited Authors

To identify key studies in online reputation management, authors with at least five citations were selected. A total of 66 authors out of 3,657 formed four clusters with 783 links and a total link strength of 2,322 (Figure 9).

The red cluster focuses on corporate reputation management and crisis communication, with C.J. Fombrun and W.T. Coombs leading. The blue cluster highlights customer relationship management and applied reputation studies, with B.A. Sparks, W.G. Kim, and J.F. Hair as key contributors. The green cluster centers on digital platforms and online reputation in tourism, featuring Z. Xiang and D. Buhalis. The yellow cluster includes niche studies on digital platforms and reputation impacts, with E. Amigo and C. Dellarocas standing out.

Overall, the literature displays a multi-centered and dynamic network, demonstrating that online reputation management is addressed from diverse perspectives.
This analysis is valuable because it highlights the foundational studies and thematic directions in the field, offering researchers a clear map of major contributions and emerging research areas.

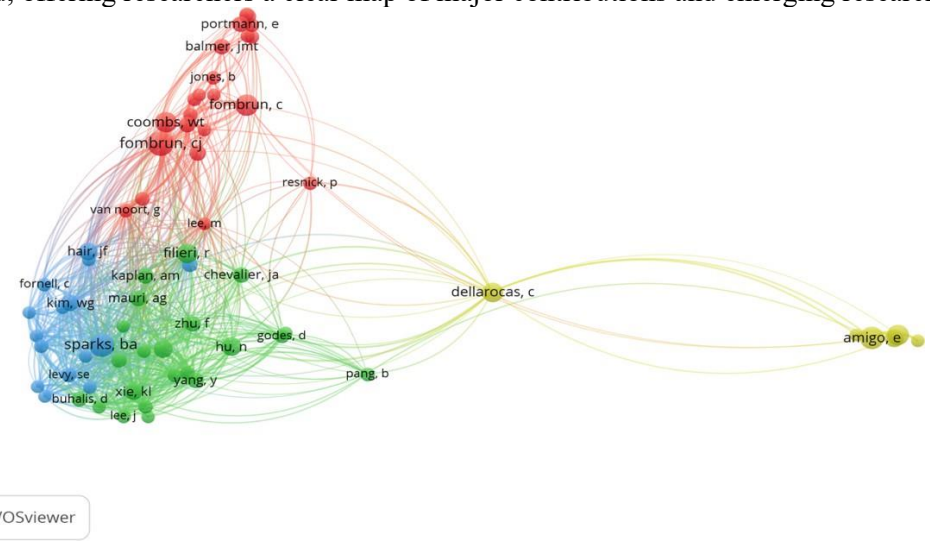

Figure 9. Co-citation Network of Cited Authors

CONCLUSION

The process of digitalization has fundamentally transformed how organizations communicate with stakeholders, making online reputation management a strategic component of corporate communication. With the widespread use of social media, positive or negative content about organizations can rapidly reach large audiences, directly influencing their reputation. In this context, online reputation management has evolved from a theoretical discussion into an integral part of strategic, practice-oriented planning.

Today, online reputation management plays a decisive role in key strategies such as crisis management, sustainability, trust-building, and organizational growth. Data-driven approaches not only guide operational processes but also shape online reputation practices. The increasing interactivity of users, the transformative role of social media, and the continuous reproduction of reputation in digital environments have made the field more complex and interdisciplinary. These developments have steadily increased academic interest in online reputation management.

This study aimed to map the academic development of the field and provide new perspectives for future research. A total of 116 academic publications retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database using the keyword *online reputation management* were analyzed using bibliometric methods with the help of VOSviewer software. The analysis examined author collaborations, country- and institution-based partnerships, citation networks, and keyword co-occurrences, thereby identifying trends, collaboration structures, conceptual focuses, and existing gaps in the literature.

The findings reveal that Spain is the country with the highest number of publications, while Univ Presov and Boston University are the most active institutions. Spain's strong collaboration with the United States forms the core of the international network, with countries like Poland and the United Arab Emirates positioned around it. In the author collaboration network, scholars such as Francisco Peco-Torres and Julio Gonzalo have made significant contributions to the literature.

Among the pioneering studies on the subject, Fombrun (1990, 1996) and Ajzen (1991) with their theoretical studies; Hair (2014) and Zhu (2010) with their applied studies; (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) with digitalisation and social media research on online reputation management. The most cited study in the field is the work conducted by Proserpio et al. (2017), which examines the impact of managerial responses on consumer reviews. The most frequently used keywords in the studies on this field are *online reputation management*, *social media, reputation, reputation management, online reputation*. Among the authors cited together on online reputation management, C.J. Fombrun and W.T. Coombs focused on reputation management and corporate crisis communication; B.A. Sparks, W.G. Kim and J.F. Hair focused on reputation and customer relationship management; Z. Xiang and D. Buhalis focused on digital platforms and online reputation management especially in the tourism sector.

According to the results of the bibliometric analysis, there has been a significant increase in academic publications on online reputation management since 2016, driven by the widespread use of social media, the growing visibility of consumer experiences, and the acceleration of digital data production. However, some structural deficiencies in the literature are also evident. In particular, the limited scope of interdisciplinary collaborations, the scarcity of studies conducted in the fields of marketing and communication, the low contribution of developing countries to the literature, the dominance of theoretical frameworks, the insufficient integration of contemporary technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analytics, and the limited number of studies focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) emerge as major gaps. This situation highlights the need for a broader perspective in addressing online reputation management and for the development of more inclusive and applicable models in the field.

Based on the analysis, the following directions are recommended to advance the development of the online reputation management literature:

- Conducting more cross-cultural research to understand how ORM strategies differ across regional contexts. As shown in the citation and co-authorship analysis, most publications originate from developed economies such as the United States and Spain, reflecting a geographically limited research scope and highlighting the need for broader representation in future studies.
- Introducing real-time, AI-supported, data-driven strategic models tailored to fast-paced digital environments such as social media. Although artificial intelligence technologies play an increasingly vital role in areas like content moderation and sentiment analysis, they remain underrepresented in the bibliometric clusters (Becker & Lee, 2019; Dirik vd., 2023), indicating a critical gap in current research.
- Developing specialized online reputation management frameworks for emerging digital crisis types such as data breaches, fake news, and social media lynching. While these issues are

becoming increasingly prevalent in digital environments, the literature still lacks models specifically designed to address their unique Dynamics (Coombs, 2015; Vosoughi vd., 2018)

- Designing simplified and accessible reputation management models for SMEs**.** While the existing literature predominantly focuses on large corporations, small and medium-sized enterprises often lack the financial and technical resources to implement complex digital reputation tools (Oncioiu vd., 2020)
- Supporting normative and critical research on ethical communication, digital media literacy, and corporate transparency. This is especially crucial given the growing risks posed by algorithmic bias and disinformation in digital communication environments (Dereli, 2024; Lazer vd., 2018)

The implementation of these recommendations is expected to make the academic literature on online reputation management more inclusive, up-to-date, and practice-oriented. Furthermore, due to the nature of new media environments, fake news and manipulation campaigns spread rapidly, leading to the emergence of new types of crises in digital spaces. In this context, theoretical models developed for online reputation management need to be reconsidered to address these new forms of crises.

In conclusion, this study systematically evaluated the scientific body of knowledge in the field of online reputation management, identified the main trends and gaps in the literature, and aimed to offer a structured, multidimensional, and interdisciplinary roadmap for researchers working in this area.

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