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The influence of corporate brand reputation on the purchase intention of the post-postmodern consumer society

A quantitative study in the automobile industry

by

Imke Falkenrodt & Ayelén Rojas Alvarez

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Supervisor: Javier Cenamor
Examiner: Reema Singh

Abstract

Title: The influence of corporate brand reputation on the purchase intention of the post-postmodern consumer society

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Authors: Imke Falkenrodt and Ayelén Rojas Alvarez

Supervisor: Javier Cenamor

Keywords: Corporate brand reputation, reputational elements, reputation, post-postmodern consumer society, consumer purchase intention

Thesis Purpose: The present research investigates the relationship between corporate brand reputation and consumer purchase intention while regarding to the post-postmodern consumer of today. The purpose of the study is to contribute with insights on how the post-postmodern consumer evaluates corporate brand reputation and explore the effect of this evaluation on consumer purchase intention.

Methodology: A quantitative research has been designed with an online questionnaire measuring the corporate brand reputation elements with regard to purchase intention, followed by testing 6 proposed hypotheses with a multiple regression and correlation analysis.

Theoretical Perspective: The study is mainly based on six reputational elements of the corporate brand literature by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), Page and Fearn (2005), van Riel and Fombrun (2007), Roper and Fill (2012), and Urde and Greyser (2016) and its influence on the studied purchase intention by Prakash et al. (2019), Policarpo and Aguiar (2020), and Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) to latter be connected to the post-postmodern consumer by Ulver (2021), Samuels (2009), Cova (2013), Holt (2002) and Skandalis, Byrom and Banister (2016).

Empirical Data: Non-probability sampling was applied, and respondents were recruited via a self-completion web-based questionnaire (n=221).

Findings: The three reputational elements social responsibility, innovation and product and services have a significant relationship on the post-postmodern consumer purchase intent, while the reputational elements of vision and leadership, workplace environment and financial performance do not have a significant impact.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications: As a theoretical contribution the study presents and extension of the corporate brand reputation literature and its first comparison to purchase intention under the influence of post-postmodernism, thus adding the managerial contribution of providing brand managers with results on how to better target their customers, reduce the risk of reputational damage and using corporate brand reputation as a competitive advantage.

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Ayelén Rojas Alvarez

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Corporations are putting more effort into using corporate brand reputation in their benefit as the strong and potentially beneficial intangible asset corporate brand reputation is (Pollock & Barnett, 2012; Fombrun, 1996; Hall, 1993; Roberts & Dowling, 2002; Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). Among the benefits of using corporate brand reputation effectively corporations can differentiate from competitors (Lu, Ren, Zhang, Wang, Shahid & Streimikis, 2020), encounter facile entrance new markets, see their economic performance positively affected and smoothly connect with potential employees and loyal consumers (Wei, Ouyang & Chen, 2017; Homburg, Stierl, & Bornermann, 2013)

For the above-mentioned reasons corporate brand reputation has become lately of supreme importance for corporations (Ceciliano, da Silva & da Vieira, 2021; Branco & Rodrigues, 2006; Vidaver-Cohen, 2007), and several institutions, together with experienced scholars have explored corporate brand reputation in different studies and created different reputational models that attempt to measure corporations' reputations (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000). Results of several studies have then pointed out that reputational elements such as *vision and leadership, financial performance, workplace environment, product and services, innovation and social responsibility* are determining factors that influence the opinion of third-party actors over corporate reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000; Page & Fearn, 2005; van Riel & Fombrun, 2007; Roper & Fill, 2012; Urde & Greyser, 2016).

When managing corporate brand reputation, consumer perceptions of corporate brand reputation need to be taken into account Page and Fearn (2005), Ragas and Culp (2014), Urde and Greyser (2016) and Roper and Fill (2012) due the fact that reputation is dependent on individual's opinion and perception of their own evaluation of favorable reputation (Roper & Fill, 2012). Consequently, actively involving into activities that enhance corporate reputation is as important as communicating a corporate reputation and identity (Frost & Cooke, 1999; Hawabhay, Abratt & Peters, 2009) and the lack of communication of a corporation's reputation would suppose risking the benefits of reputation (Bick, Jacobson & Abratt, 2003; Eccles, Newquist & Schatz, 2007).

Conscious about the importance of corporate brand reputation and its large research, it is surprising that little attention has been given to the relationship between corporate reputation and purchase intention. While Jung and Seock (2016), proved that an overall positive corporate reputation can increase consumers' purchase intention, research linking specific corporate reputational elements with purchase intent is still in its infancy.

Not forgetting about the fact that the actors that decide about a corporation's reputation and about their own purchase intentions, additionally this study attempts to better understand the consumer behavior of today's society. Ulver (2021), Koch and Ulver (2022), and Babakaev, Vishnyakova, Patsula, Kulyamina, and Vinogradov (2019) point out that nowadays more knowledge is required regarding consumer culture by challenging previous understanding of consumer culture theory due to the constant change and transformation of the society. Further, relating back to the recently developing new society, Spangenberg and Lorek (2019), Byström, Heinström and Ruthven (2019), and Koch and Ulver (2022) recognize that the society in question is yet empirically under-discovered.

Moreover, Ulver (2021) claims that the primarily under-discovered society is having a still unexplored impact on the understanding of the market. Babakaev et al. (2019) recognize the problems arising with an under researched market and suggest more research in order to discover and determine contemporary consumer habits and characteristics that can correspond to the unfamiliar society and its market.

Findings of this study then aim to add on previous research on corporate brand reputation and consumer purchase behavior by exploring the relationship between the corporate brand reputation elements and purchase intention for the so-called undiscovered but post-postmodern consumer society.

1.2 Research Problem

As stated by Byström, Heinström and Ruthven (2019), Spangenberg and Lorek (2019), Koch and Ulver (2022) the current society is in constant change and transformation. This new society is the result of new consumer practices and values that are continuously arising in today's society (Spangenberg & Lorek, 2019; Berenguer & Cervera, 2005; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Skandalis, Byrom & Banister (2019); Allen & Anderson, 1994; Ulver, 2021). Consequently, the aforementioned new consumer practices and values suppose also new challenges in the

evolution of the market and what has been understood and treated as the market till now (Koch & Ulver, 2022; Byström, Heinströ & Ruthven, 2019; Spangenberg & Lorek, 2019)

Clearly, if a new proposed consumer society is unexplored (Koch & Ulver, 2022), the current research studies on consumer culture theory have not taken into account the new changes in consumer society in consumer practices, consumer preferences and consumer purchase intention in depth. Hence, there is a knowledge gap in consumer culture literature and further, in practice, corporations are not yet aware of the implication of a new consumer society and its preferences for themselves.

Arguably, changes in the consumer society come together with different consumer preferences and presumptions regarding corporate brand reputation. Henceforth, the research problem of this study arises that previous studies connecting corporate brand reputation to purchase intention cannot longer provide a realistic insight of the actual consumer society, its behavior and specifically its market.

Furthermore, according to Bertilsson and Tarnovskaya (2017) the reputational models have considered the brand image as the focus of their positioning approach in which the fulfillment of customers' needs and wants are superordinate, while not unilaterally leading the brand's development and shape its identity (Urde, Baumgarth & Merrilee, 2011). In addition to that, each reputational model is made from various perspectives (de Chernatony & Harris, 2000), supporting the latter argument.

1.3 Research Purpose

The research purpose of this study is to contribute to previous research in a more determinant manner with specific insights about what societal changes imply the new post-postmodern consumer society of today. Moreover, the authors want to discover what these social changes mean for the theory of corporate brand reputation as well as to explore how post-postmodern consumers evaluate the elements of reputation and how these determine their purchase intention.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the exposed background and research purpose and with the aim to respond to the research problem, the following main research question is formulated:

What is the relationship between the corporate brand reputation elements and purchase intention for the post-postmodern consumers?

1.5 Aim and Objectives

One aim is to contribute to corporate brand reputation research by studying the relationship of this area with regard to consumer purchase intent. Clearly several reputational elements have been identified as determinants of favorable corporate image and brand reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000; Page & Fearn, 2005; van Riel & Fombrun, 2007; Roper & Fill, 2012; Urde & Greysier, 2016). But surprisingly a significantly low amount of quantitative research has been found to link reputational elements with purchase intention. Only two reputational elements of the six studied in this research have been previously connected to purchase intention, more specifically *leadership* and *social responsibility* (Jung & Seock, 2016). Therefore, a novelty of this study comes from providing empirical evidence that supports that reputational elements have an impact on purchase intention.

As mentioned in the research problem, the current consumer society has changed and has created a new conflicting market (Ulver, 2021) and the actual market is evolving (Koch & Ulver, 2022). Responding to the need of research in this area in order to understand the market (Babakaev et al. 2019; Ulver, 2021; Koch & Ulver, 2022), an aim of this research is to construct more knowledge regarding consumer post-postmodern society preferences and their purchase intention.

Moreover, according to Bouchet (1994), research in marketing could be of best use and more recognized if it would analyze the influence of social movements in the development of societies. Therefore, the intent of this research is to study the post-postmodern consumer society and understand their consumer evaluations regarding corporate brand reputation elements. Arguments to conduct the following study are that to the moment of conducting this research and to the best knowledge of the authors, the new consumer society of the post-postmodern era

has been identified and regarded as relevant to understand but little research has addressed what implies living in a post-postmodern society.

Further, according to Babakaev et al. (2019), an accurate study of consumer preferences can contribute to consumer targeting research. Therefore, this study also contributes with managerial implications on (a) how to better target post-postmodern consumer groups, in order to (b) diminish the risk of exposing the whole corporate brand portfolio to reputational damage and (c) how to properly use corporate brand reputation to achieve competitive advantage by its means.

With the intent to explore consumer post-postmodern society preferences regarding corporate brand reputation, the automobile industry has been chosen by the authors to conduct this research. The reasoning behind this industry selection was that in consumer societies it is a second priority for individuals to own a car, following their first priority of owning a house (Suganya, Gurusamy & Jankai, 2021). Together with the new consumer post-postmodernism society changes, consumer behavior has become more complex. As Suganya, Gurusamy and Jankai (2021) expose, the automobile industry has also been affected by the complex society and in fact “customers have been more selective in their buying behavior of a car” (Suganya, Gurusamy & Jankai, 2021, p. 1).

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

An outline of the thesis is provided in to inform the reader about the disposition of the current research. The thesis is structured into seven sections. The first chapter includes the introduction which includes background overview, research problem, research purpose, aim and objectives, research question and the present outline. A review on the existing literature regarding corporate brand reputation, consumer purchase intentions, and the post-postmodern consumer society can be found in the second chapter. Next, in the third chapter, a theoretical framework is presented together with a theoretical background and a hypothesis formulation. The fourth section includes the methodology in which the research philosophy, research approach, research design, conceptual framework, sampling process, data collection, data analysis, research quality criteria, and research ethics and limitations of the research are introduced. In chapter number five an analysis and presentation of the found results are provided. Following the later chapter, a discussion of the results is provided to finally conclude the research in chapter seven.

2 Literature Review

Several scholars such as Ceciliano, da Silva and da Vieira (2021), Branco and Rodrigues (2006), and Vidaver-Cohen (2007) have previously studied and highlighted the importance of corporate brand reputation. Therefore, several definitions and models have been developed in this area in order to measure corporate brand reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000; Page & Fearn, 2005; van Riel & Fombrun, 2007; Roper & Fill, 2012; Urde & Greyser, 2016), and further facilitate corporations' path to a favorable corporate brand reputation, since reputation is granted by external actors (Fombrun, 1996; Roper & Fill, 2012; Dowling, 1994). Jung and Seock (2016) not long ago proved that a positive corporate reputation increases consumer purchase intention. Therefore, understanding the actual consumer society (Roach, Goodwin & Nelson, 2019) defined by Babakaev et al. (2019), Ulver (2021), and Koch and Ulver (2022) as a new consumer that is creating a new market is of supreme importance to, as stated by Babakaev et al. (2019), to complete previous marketing research.

2.1 Corporate Brand Reputation

One of the first scholars to define corporate brand reputation was Dowling (1994), who stated that corporate reputation is connected to corporate identity and corporate image. According to Dowling (1994), Fombrun (1996), van Riel and Balmer (1997) and de Chernatony and Harris (2000), when a company's corporate identity is enhanced by its corporate image, it is more likely to create a favorable corporate brand reputation. Supporting the idea of corporate images, Urde and Greyser (2016) and van Riel and Fombrun (2007) add that corporate brand reputation is built upon a series of already perceived corporate images, meaning that not only current corporate activities are evaluated but also past activities.

Internal and external stakeholders are the ones to judge, perceive and evaluate a corporation's activities and assess whether a corporation has a positive or negative corporate reputation (Fombrun, 1996). According to Roper and Fill (2012), a corporation's brand reputation is then subjected to the valuation of customers, workers, the general public, communities, suppliers, media, governments, trade unions and financial institutions. Further, to gain a favorable reputation, corporate identity and corporate image alignment have to line up with a society's values and consideration of appropriate behaviors (Dowling, 1994).

Because corporate reputation is built and earned by the opinion of third-party individuals or stakeholders (Roper & Fill, 2012), Hall (1993) adds that a favorable corporate brand reputation is an asset that any economic sum cannot acquire. This asset then becomes a competitive advantage and a means of differentiation for corporations (Fombrun, 1996; Melo & Garrido-Morgado, 2012; Roper & Fill, 2012, Urde & Greysen, 2016). Therefore, and in accordance with Ceciliano, da Silva and da Vieira (2021), Branco and Rodrigues (2006) and Vidaver-Cohen (2007), corporate reputation becomes one of the most valuable intangible assets a firm can possess.

Although corporate brand reputation is an intangible asset, researchers have agreed upon the fact that a favorable corporate brand reputation supposes several distinct, valued and relevant advantages, which are in turn connected to a number of tangible benefits (Pollock & Barnett, 2012; Fombrun, 1996; Hall, 1993; Roberts & Dowling, 2002). For example, Bick, Jacobson and Abratt (2003) emphasize that the pursuit of a good reputation helps to ensure the economic survival of the corporation and that a good reputation, once established, can easily promote the uniqueness of the corporation and sustain the growth of the corporate brand in the long term.

In addition, a positive reputation, in general, is regarded as a crucial key component of brand equity (Heinberg, Ozkaya, & Taube, 2018), essential for any brand (Baalbaki & Guzmán, 2016) and beneficial to remain competitive in today's business arena (Lu et al. 2020). Accordingly, a positive reputation firstly increases long-term shareholder value (Bonini, Court & Marchi, 2009), secondly, gives access to new markets, increases profitability, allows premium pricing, creates corporate brand trust and loyalty, confers competitive advantages, facilitates staff recruitment (Wei, Ouyang & Chen, 2017; Homburg, Stierl & Bornermann, 2013) and lastly, builds social brand equity (Naidoo & Abratt, 2018).

Nonetheless, the backside of corporate brand reputation being an earned asset by stakeholder's evaluation is that corporate reputation also has the characteristic of being a fragile asset that needs to be taken care of (Roper & Fill, 2012). Taking care of the fragile asset becomes a supreme matter because once a corporate brand's reputation is damaged, it becomes incredibly difficult to repair (Hawabhay, Abratt and Peters, 2009). Hawabhay, Abratt and Peters (2009) and repairing corporate reputation becomes extremely challenging because its pillars are based on third-party trustworthiness and loyalty. Besides, corporate brand reputation is not built within a day but over years as it is defined by the history and behavior of a company over the present and past activities (Hawabhay, Abratt & Peters, 2009). Supporting Roper and Fill

(2012), Hall (1993) and Fombrun (1996) further claim the importance of managing corporate brand reputation by stating again that this fragile asset can be easily broken and if damaged, would mean the termination of years of work and dedication.

In furtherance, regarding the management of corporate brand reputation, Cocis, Batrancea and Tulai (2021) and Lu et al. (2020) support that a majority of managers believe that corporate brand reputation belongs to one of the most sustainable factors in making companies successful. Nevertheless, Frost and Cooke (1999) add that corporate managers are still at the beginning of the learning process of adequately managing corporate reputation. According to Frost and Cooke (1999), developing corporate reputation is not only achieved by practices prone to positive reputation but also through the communication of these activities. The authors further support that communicating corporate brand reputation is the most challenging part of corporate reputation management. Hawabhay, Abratt and Peters (2009) argue that a company's reputation is influenced by how it conveys its image through the mix of behavior, communication and symbolism of its corporate identity. Supporting Frost and Cooke (1999), Eccles, Newquist, and Schatz (2007) state that one way to put corporate reputation at risk is to poorly communicate the efforts a corporation is taking in order to build a positive corporate brand reputation.

2.1.1 Reputational Models

As stated by Ragas and Culp (2014), different reputational models have been used to measure corporate reputation on an annual basis, see *Table 1*.

Table 1: Reputational Model Comparison

Reputational Models	Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000)	Effective Reputation Index (Page & Fearn, 2005)	Reputation Institute's RepTrak® System (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007)	The criteria that influence corporate reputation (Roper & Fill, 2012)	Corporate Brand Identity Reputation Matrix (Urde & Greyser, 2016)
Frequent Reputation Elements	Product & Services		Product & Services	Product & Service Quality	
	Social Responsibility	Public Responsibility	Citizenship	CSR	
	Vision & Leadership		Leadership	Vision & Leadership	
	Financial Performance	Leadership & Success	Performance	Profitability	Performance
	Workplace Environment		Workplace Innovation	Employee Satisfaction Innovation	
Infrequent Reputational Elements				Customer Satisfaction	Relevance
				Customer Service	Trustworthiness
	Emotional Appeal	Consumer Fairness	Governance	Comprehensive Reputation	Willingness-to-support
				Market Position	Reliability
					Recognizability
					Credibility
					Differentiation

The first model was published in 2000 by the Harris Interactive research agency and the scholars Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000). After studying consumers' attitudes towards corporate reputation, the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient' was created. To build the quotient, consumers were asked to rank corporations considering 20 attributes connected to reputation. The Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient concluded that reputation is built on six reputational elements: (a) *financial performance*, (b) *workplace environment*, (c) *products and services*, (d) *emotional appeal*, (e) *social responsibility* and (f) *vision and leadership* (Ragas & Culp, 2014). Furthermore, the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient' concludes that of all the reputational elements, the most relevant ones are *product and service*, *social responsibility* and *working environment*, all in order of importance (Roper & Fill, 2012)

As a second attempt to explore consumers' opinions regarding corporate reputation, Page and Fearn (2005) developed the 'Effective Reputation Index' in 2005. Different from the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient', the 'Effective Reputation Index' shows that corporate reputation is influenced by 14 attributes that lead reputation to be affected by three reputational elements: (a) *public responsibility*, (b) *consumer fairness* and (c) *leadership and success*. Additionally, according to Page and Fearn (2005), the reputational element of *consumer fairness* was concluded to be the most important to consumers. On the other hand, *consumer fairness* by Page and Fearn (2005) is a new reputational element if compared with the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient' by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000). However, two reputational elements of the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient' and the 'Effective Reputation Index' are slightly related as the previously known *leadership & success* reputational element by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) are mentioned again as *vision and leadership* by Page and Fearn (2005). Moreover, the reputational element of *public responsibility* by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) is now labeled as *social responsibility* by Page and Fearn (2005).

According to van Riel and Fombrun (2007), exploring cultural differences and not the general consumer for the first time, the Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system was developed by the authors themselves, Cees van Riel and Charles Fombrun together with the Reputation Institute. The authors stated that this system was created to focus on complementing and reassessing the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient'. Also known as the RepTrak® system, this model asked consumers to rank companies based on 23 attributes grouped into seven reputational elements: (a) *products/services*, (b) *innovation*, (c) *workplace*, (d) *governance*, (e) *citizenship*, (f) *leadership*, and (g) *performance*. In addition, implications of these reputational elements are

scored using an overall measure of effect built upon four elements that are central to the model: esteem, admiration, trust, and feeling. Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) add that since The RepTrak® system was launched, it has become the most standardized and integrated corporate reputation measure tool globally.

By paying attention to *Table 1*, it can be noticed that the majority of the reputational elements of the Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system are in accordance with the reputational elements of the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient'. In fact, five of the reputational elements are strongly related to each other. Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) recognize the reputational element of *products and services* again as Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) earlier did. On the other hand, the previously known reputational element of *social responsibility* by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) is being mentioned again by van Riel and Fombrun (2007) as *citizenship*. Moreover, *vision and leadership* by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) has evolved into *leadership* by van Riel and Fombrun (2007). Finally, the two reputational elements of *financial performance* and *workplace environment* by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) are now referred to as *performance* and *workplace* van Riel and Fombrun (2007). Having said that, van Riel and Fombrun (2007) in the Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system, have discovered two new reputational elements labeled as *governance* and *innovation*. And yet, the dimension of *emotional appeal* by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) in the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient' is no longer a reputational element in the Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007)

In an attempt to expand on current corporate reputation measuring tools, Roper and Fill (2012) developed a list of reputational elements that expose what stakeholders take into consideration when ranking corporate reputation. Labeled as the criteria that influence corporate reputation, Roper and Fill (2012) found that for stakeholders, reputation elements are: (a) *employee satisfaction*, (b) *customer satisfaction*, (c) *customer service*, (d) *innovation*, (e) *vision and leadership*, (f) *comprehensive reputation*, (g) *product and service quality*, (h) *market position*, (i) *profitability*, and (j) *corporate social responsibility*. Furthermore, the authors state that no element is more important than others. Instead, the ideal situation for corporations should be to excel in all of the reputational elements.

Four of the reputational elements are in alignment with the reputational element found in the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient'. *Product and services* by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), van Riel and Fombrun (2007) have been now referred to as *product and service quality*

(Roper & Fill, 2012). *Social responsibility* by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) is now presented as *corporate social responsibility* (Roper & Fill, 2012), and *financial performance* by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) evolved to *profitability* by Roper and Fill (2012). On the other hand, *vision and leadership* remained unchanged (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000; Roper & Fill, 2012). Furthermore, the reputational element of *innovation*, which was previously included in the Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system by van Riel and Fombrun (2007), has been considered again in the model by Roper and Fill (2012).

Building on The RepTrak® system and the criteria that influence corporate reputation, Urde and Greyser (2016) add to reputation theory by introducing the 'Corporate Brand Identity Reputation Matrix' (CBIRM). Both measuring simultaneously corporate identity and corporate reputation, the matrix introduces eight different identity and reputation elements: (a) *relevance*, (b) *trustworthiness*, (c) *differentiation*, (d) *credibility*, (e) *performance*, (f) *responsibility*, (g) *willingness-to-support*, and (h) *recognizability*. Clearly, all of the reputational elements mentioned by Urde and Greyser (2016) are different from the elements and criteria by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), van Riel and Fombrun (2007), Page and Fearn (2005), and Roper and Fill (2012). The reputational elements of *relevance*, *trustworthiness*, *willingness-to-support*, *reliability*, *recognizability*, *credibility* and *differentiation* differ notably from the several times mentioned reputational elements of *products and services*, *vision and leadership*, *leadership*, or *leadership and success*; *innovation*; *social responsibility*, *citizenship*, *public responsibility*, or *CSR*; *workplace environment*, *employee satisfaction* or *workplace*. Nonetheless, Urde and Greyser (2016) agree with Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), Fombrun and van Riel (2005) and Roper and Fill (2012) when stating that *performance*, *financial performance*, or *profitability* is a reputational element as well.

According to the five different models that over the years have been used to measure corporate reputation, scholars agree on the fact that six reputational elements are responsible for shaping corporate reputation: (1) *products and services*; (2) *social responsibility*, *citizenship*, *public responsibility*, or *CSR*; (3) *vision and leadership*, *leadership*, or *leadership and success*; (4) *financial performance*, *performance*, or *profitability*; (5) *workplace environment*, *workplace*, or *employee satisfaction*; and (6) *innovation*.

The reputational element of (1) *products and services* is supported three times by the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient', the Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system, and the criteria that influence corporate reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000; Fombrun & van Riel,

2007; Roper & Fill, 2012). (2) *social responsibility, citizenship, public responsibility, or CSR* has been found to be a reputational element four times by the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient', the Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system, the 'Effective Reputation Index', and the criteria that influence corporate reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000; Fombrun & van Riel, 2007; Page & Fearn, 2005). The third reputational element (3) *vision and leadership, leadership, or leadership and success* were supported four times by 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient', the Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system, and the criteria that influence corporate reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000; Fombrun & van Riel, 2007; Roper & Fill, 2012). Also confirmed four times, the reputational element (4) *financial performance, performance, or profitability* is backed by the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient', the Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system, the criteria that influence corporate reputation, and the 'Corporate Brand Identity Reputation Matrix' (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000; Fombrun & van Riel, 2007; Roper & Fill, 2012; Urde & Greyser, 2016). The reputational element of (5) *workplace environment, workplace, or employee satisfaction* is supported three times by the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient', the Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system, and the criteria that influence corporate reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000; Fombrun & van Riel, 2007; Roper & Fill, 2012).

2.2 Purchase Intention

Up until now, the reputational element of *products and service* has been proved to have an impact on purchase intention (Tsiotsou, 2005; Diallo & Seck, 2018), similar to *innovation* (Alpert & Kamins, 1995; Thompson, Hamilton & Rust, 2005; Mulyani, Sari, Sari, Rani & Ekajaya, 2019), *social responsibility* (Auger, Devinney & Louviere, 2010), *workplace environment*, (Evanschitzky, Groening, Mittal & Wunderlich, 2011; Rybaczewska, Sparks & Sułkowski, 2020), and *financial performance* (Posavac, Herzenstein, Kardes & Sundaram, 2010; Chang & Liu, 2009; Aaker, 1996; Tarmi & Senthilnathan, 2012). Besides, scholars, such as Jung and Seock (2016) have supported that a positive corporate reputation in one or several reputational elements can increase consumers' purchase intention.

Purchase intention has been defined as the probability that a consumer tends to purchase a product or not (Dodd & Supa, 2011) as a personal behavioral tendency in terms of purchasing products or services (Bagozzi, Tybout, Craig & Sternthal, 1979) and regarded as an exchange behavior created after consumers' general evaluation of a product (Hsu, 1987). Differently,

Howard and Sheth (1970) title purchase intention as a buyer's forecast of one's brand choice some time in the future involving "assumptions about future events including the likelihood of any perceived inhibitors creating barriers over the buyer's planning horizon" (p.148). And, Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2001) align with Howard and Sheth (1970) by arguing that purchase intention includes a subjective judgment for future behavior.

On the other hand, Oke, Kamolshotiros, Popoola, Ajagbe and Olujobi (2015) have placed purchase decision on the third step of the purchasing process of acquiring a product or service that starts with (1) consumer's recognition of a need, followed by (2) consumer's internal and external seek of information about the product or service consumers are willing to buy, next, (3) consumers evaluation of the gathered internal and external information in order to (4) finally decide whether to real purchase or not the assessed product or service.

Overall, the previously mentioned definitions have in common that 'purchase intention' or the 'intent to buy' refers to something consumers want to buy in the future. Thus, Siomkos and Kurzbard (1994) argue that in marketing research, purchase intention has been predominantly measured as an outcome variable, which is also further supported by the 'Theory of Buyer Behavior'-model by Howard and Sheth (1970).

Once a purchase intention has been completed and an external object is treated as an extension of the self, these possessions become part of one's identity (Belk, 1988). Belk's major work in the field of consumer behavior was in 1988, discussing how possession contributes to the extended self. The author further argues that possessions belong to the core of the sense of self and help tangibilizing an individual's past, present, and future. That is because purchase intention revolves around the act of future purchases, while possessions help individuals to define themselves in the future (Belk, 1988). Belk further challenges that "we are what we have" (p. 139), thus claiming that individuals identify themselves through possessions.

In conclusion, purchase intention can be, according to Shao, Baker and Wagner (2004), Hsu (1987), Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) and Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2001), measured through several essential meanings: (a) "it refers to the possibility for consumers to be "willing" to consider buying", (b) "it represents what a person "wants" to buy in the future, "and (c) "it reveals the decision of a consumer to "buy" a company's product "again" (Lin & Lu, 2010, p.21, Prakash, Choudhary, Kumar, Garza-Reyes, Khan & Panda (2019), Policarpo & Aguiar, 2020; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

2.3 Living in a consumer society

According to Roach, Goodwin, and Nelson (2019), consumer society has been the result of "a society in which a large part of people's sense of identity and meaning is achieved through the purchase and use of consumer goods and services" (p. 13). Thus, consumer society has been the term used to refer to a society that is not characterized by the poverty of its society members or by the anti-consumerism values of the same members (Roach, Goodwin & Nelson, 2019, p. 13).

As stated by Byström, Heinström and Ruthven (2019), Spangenberg and Lorek (2019), and Koch and Ulver (2022), our society is in constant change and transformation. Spangenberg and Lorek (2019) add that new consumer practices and values are still arising in today's society. According to Koch and Ulver (2022), all these changes have an impact on the understanding and evolution of the market. Thus, Babakaev et al. (2019) support that the actual social transformation leaves an unexplored research area in consumer society theory.

Recently consumer studies have used social movement research in order to better understand the changing consumer lifestyles and consumer practices. Therefore, there is "an au currant and coherent connection between social movement theories and consumer studies research and allows for creating new insights in both fields" (Wahlen & Laamanen, 2015, p. 397). Henceforth, several scholars such as Firat and Venkatesh (1995) and Cova (1997) have studied the relationship between consumer societies and social movements and have distinguished three social movements: modern society, postmodern society, and post-postmodern society.

As proposed by the different authors such as Berenguer and Cervera (2005), Firat and Venkatesh (1995), Skandalis, Byrom and Banister (2019), Allen and Anderson (1994) and Ulver (2021), consumers present different values influenced by their society. Hence, corporate management can benefit from studying different consumer preferences regarding different societal movements by addressing in a more precise manner the different consumers corporations want to target (Babakaev et al. 2019). The practice of differentiating customers is nothing different from marketing research. In fact, this practice has been known as market segmentation and makes sure to satisfy better each customer group's needs, characteristics or behavior (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong, 1996).

2.3.1 Modernism and consumer society preferences

Modern consumer society is characterized by central ideas such as continuities, progressions, stable order and harmony (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Cova, 1997). According to Mendoza de Ferrer (2008), modern individuals seek rationality constantly, and its members are individuals characterized by the use of detailed observation that allows them to gain individual reasoning and, therefore, rationality.

In times of modernity, the society was hierarchically organized in accordance with the achieved rationality of their individuals. The members with a better degree of rationality would have status and power in the society, while those with rationality in a minor degree would lack this power (Mendoza de Ferrer, 2008). Further, this society's rational or cognitive values were supported by Venkatesh (1992). According to Venkatesh (1992), it is essential to be a cognitive being that uses reasoning to find rationality in the external world of modern society.

Building upon the modern characteristics found by Firat and Venkatesh (1995) and Cova (1997), Venkatesh (1992) further adds that modern society is known for being extremely capitalist.

Regarding consumer preferences, in modern consumer societies, preferences are influenced by the manner the acquisition of a products and services would improve a consumer's material life (Berenguer & Cervera, 2005). Therefore, consumers of modern society are willing to use their purchasing behavior to gain a better social position. To possess and accumulate a large number of products and services became necessary for the consumer and less attention was given to the utility of the products (Berenguer & Cervera, 2005). In addition, the modern consumer society prefers to purchase national products and services and keep their consumption habits private (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995).

In modern society corporations needed to use their manipulative skills in order to convince the consumer society (Ulver, 2021; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Berenguer and Cervera (2005) stated that modern individuals were more appreciated for their material possessions. Thus, in accordance, Ulver (2021) and Firat and Venkatesh (1995) add that corporations had the habit of producing large amounts of unnecessary products that would later be sold to consumers as valuable products when in reality, they were not valuable products. Further, Firat and Venkatesh (1995) continued that corporations treated the modern consumer as a "king" who is never wrong to satisfy consumer society.

2.3.2 Postmodernism and consumer society preferences

According to Firat and Venkatesh (1995) and Cova (1997), the rise of a different social movement, the postmodern one, came together with different codes of social behavior. Postmodern society is characterized by being defined by culture, language, aesthetics (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995), symbolic modes, literary expressions and meanings, and freedom from social constraint (Cova, 1997).

Different from modern society, the postmodern society does not believe in hierarchical organizations, instead believes that every individual has its own power (Murray, 2020). Moreover, Venkatesh (1992) and Berenguer and Cervera (2005) concluded that the postmodern society is characterized by chaos, changing behavior, indecision, irony and ambiguity. Supporting the characteristic of modern society being extremely capitalist, Babakaev et al. (2019) state that a transition from the modern society to the postmodernist also implies a transition from the "society of mass consumption to the society of individualized consumption" (p.155). According to Venkatesh (1992), change from a modern society to a postmodernist one implies a transition from cognitive values to symbolic values.

The consumer society preferences of the postmodern social movement are characterized by a significant symbolic and iconic social value which translates into consumer willingness to stress identity and self-realization in all of their consumer habits (Babakaev et al. 2019). Skandalis, Byrom and Banister (2019) further add that the postmodern consumer society uses its consumption habits in a manner that seeks to build meaningful experiences. Thus, consumer preferences of postmodern societies are characterized by the fact of not only buying what an individual needs but what gives them a sense of belonging and presents a symbolic and representative trait. In fact, Babakaev et al. (2019) state that the postmodern consumer society seeks to acquire self-esteem and gain prestige and recognition with their purchasing decisions (Babakaev et al. 2019).

On the other hand, and for the first time, consumer preferences of the postmodern society are influenced by the removal of contradicting forces, such as the old understanding that reality can only be either beautiful versus ugly or good versus evil (Babakaev et al. 2019). Moreover, Allen and Anderson (1994) argue that consumer preferences are socially conditioned and are determined by external social factors. This means consumers are influenced by the realities they are exposed to, laying, for example, in the hands of brands.

While large corporations still relied on applying rationalizing procedures to form consumers en masse to a consumer, who was a passive, nearly inert beings and acted merely upon objects (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1997; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Holt, 2002), the postmodern consumer was emphasized as a self-determined, autonomous subject free from all market forces. Postmodern consumer society wanting to escape the new postmodern market was not necessarily a new phenomenon but has already been explored by Murray and Ozanne (1991) and Firat and Venkatesh (1995). While the latter argue that the consumer society tended to escape the market through increasingly fragmented and self-productive consumption practices, the former argues that escaping market forces could only happen through reasoned flexibility.

2.3.3 Post-postmodernism and consumer society preferences

The post-postmodern society is also known as a postcapitalist society (Gibson-Graham, 2006) or automodern society (Samuels, 2009) and portrays a society characterized by expressing its enthusiasm, engagement and sincerity through intermediately (Cova, 2013; Cantone, Cova & Testa, 2020), and serves as a social, psychological, and technological response to postmodernity (Samuels, 2009).

Engagement is, according to Cova (2013), explicitly present in the "reconstruction projects" (Cantone, Cova & Testa, 2020). Skandalis, Byrom and Banister (2016) have anticipated this before already, by identifying this change of prefix 're-', indicating a shift towards the stitching things back together, of going back to previously held positions and convictions to revive and reconfigure them (Fjellestad & Engberg, 2012). Moreover, this engagement, defined by playful and creative engagement with transitional objects in the context of everyday life, has been taken one step further by Samuels (2009). This new era of cultural history is characterized by a new sense of self-centeredness and self-disclosure practices (Samuels, 2009).

Enthusiasm is linked to the ability of these society members to reconsider past realities in order to remake them. Society is enthusiastic and actively looking to leave behind the chaos and negativity of the postmodern society to create new realities (Cova, 2013). Prus (2004) gives the example of how the post-postmodern society is reconsidering how globalization, technology and virtual realities are reshaping the past realities while implicating a reconstruction of what was believed and considered real in the postmodern society.

Further, the post-postmodern society uses sincerity to infer common values, comprehension, closeness, empathy, serviciality and seriousness between all of its members. And intermediality, the term that refers to using the post-postmodern technological environment that involves social media and networking to share and communicate this society's new identity (Cova, 2013).

Similarly, to Cova (2013), Robert Samuels (2009) has also coined a new implication of post-postmodern consumer behavior by introducing the concept of 'automodernity'. Automodernity can be described as the co-existence of the two concepts streamlining next to each other: an amplified level of automation and a likewise elevated sense of autonomy. Thus, as a reaction to postmodernism, the consumer moves away from being a vulnerable recipient controlled by external forces but moving toward being an empowered, autonomous, and liberated subject (Baya, 2013; Zwick, Bonsu & Darmody, 2008). While consumers seem to evolve in the post-postmodern era and become more autonomous than they have in the modern and postmodern eras before, the newly acquired autonomy is deceptive.

Samuels (2009) argues that this 'autonomy' is strongly dependent on the recognition of others. Baya (2013) adds to this by pointing out the fact that 'autonomy' has also brought the necessity for people to be registered for it, as these automodern processes allow externalization of interior feelings and ideas. This is supported on account of an ever-increasing time spent receiving and producing media content. Zhang, Lu, Wang and Wu (2015) further specify that brands and consumers can collaborate by using online platforms, as automodern technologies, as a space where consumers can control and retain their power, while brands can engage with consumers, which is also known as co-creation envisioned by Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody (2008). Co-creation is one of the most recent new marketing technologies in the 21st century as it is treated as an activist-style declaration leaving the customer in charge, thus retaining their power and control (Zwick, Bonsu & Darmody, 2008).

The reconstructive spirit of this post-postmodern era also translates into a new role for new media outlets (Skandalis, Byrom & Banister, 2016; Baya, 2013). While the auto modern technologies present uses with a new autonomy, they also serve a new form of individualized control and power of the input consumers consume (Samuels, 2009). This phenomenon is regarded as the 'privatization of public' as Samuels (2009) supports and gives users the control over what they want to consume and what is genuinely most important, which however, is subjective to each of them and leads to a new freedom of consumption. With this new freedom,

consumers are also in the power of avoiding "appropriate public information and space for unpredictable personal reasons" (p. 16). This illusion of automated autonomy gives consumers the opportunity to have the freedom to choose what to consume and where to "go" online (Samuels, 2009).

Further, Ulver (2021) has, as one of the first scholars, concluded in a recent study that consumer preferences with regard to politics of the post-postmodern society can be divided into three consumer ideoscapes: neoblue, neogreen and neobrown. While the neoblue ideoscape is defined by monetary value, economic growth, fighting for resources, newness, urban grandiosity and narcissistic conspicuity, a neogreen consumer is characterized by social values, solidarity, sharing resources, craft authenticity, sustainability ethics and participatory (Ulver, 2021). The neobrown consumer, on the other hand, can be described as an ideoscape fighting for attention, informational value, conflictual, having a deep nostalgia, escapism and survivalism (Ulver, 2021).

All of these ideoscapes mirror some of the newer consumer preferences emphasized by Holt (2002), Cova (2013) and Samuels (2009), but, however, to different degrees. Nonetheless, all the latter mentioned ideoscapes are defined by a detachment of old structures and reconfiguring of past concepts in the contemporary marketplace (Ulver, 2021). Further, Ulver (2021) also enunciates that to remain relevant in today's society, corporate brands need to stimulate a polarization, as a consequence of two distinct reasons, being: (a) if not polarizing the brand risks staying unnoticed and (b) as all ideoscapes claimed to be somewhat introverted, consumers only know what they do not want. This, in turn, means that consumers need to be directly communicated to be noticed as a brand, as alternative perspectives become irrelevant and invisible (Ulver, 2021).

In the actual post-postmodern condition, Holt (2002) argues that corporations are required to act as citizen-artists in order to stay competitive. While corporations that originated in the postmodern time will struggle to establish value in the post-postmodern consumer, corporations focusing on their contribution as a cultural resource will thrive in the current time. As stated by Holt (2002), in order to excel, corporations need to emphasize their value as an identity project for the consumer by providing original and relevant material the consumer can work with. The consumer of the post-postmodernism society moves away from the question of whether a brand is authentic but moves towards the question of whether a brand can strike consumers'

imaginations that inspire and provoke and stimulate while delivering creatively to help the consumer interpret the world that surrounds them (Holt, 2002).

In addition, according to Holt (2002), corporations need to move away from commercial and profit-oriented motivations but instead need to support the consumer as a self-determined subject in their self-construction process and move towards the proliferation of narrowly focused consumption communities. Thus, it will be crucial for corporations to build a bridge between brand and company, act as a local merchant, as in a member of the community, serve as cultural source material and how they will treat people when they are not customers (Holt, 2002). Lastly, in order to build a solid fundamental corporate reputation nowadays, Holt (2002) argues that the cultural asset of a corporate brand is becoming increasingly important

To summarize, modern society used to portray central ideas such as continuities, progressions, stable order and harmony (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Cova, 1997). Society gave relevance to being a cognitive being, being this quality the one that would establish the role and status of a person in the hierarchical, capitalist (Mendoza de Ferrer, 2008) and extremely material society identifying themselves through their materialistic possession to gain a better social status (Berenguer & Cervera, 2005). Additionally, this society is characterized by its domestic and private consumption (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995) and quantity over quality purchasing behavior.

Postmodern society, however, is characterized by culture and language, aesthetics and symbolic modes, literary expressions and meanings, and freedom from social constraint (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Cova, 1997). Their changing behavior, indecision and ambiguity (Venkatesh, 1992; Berenguer & Cervera, 2005) started to establish individual power (Murray, 2018). This society has a substantial value on symbolic and social character and continuously wants to stress their identity and self-realization in its buying behavior, meaning symbolic possession through meaningful experiences (Babakaev et al. 2019). Nonetheless, society's consumer preferences are still socially conditioned and determined by the rest of the members of the society (Allen & Anderson, 1994). This way, this society seeks prestige and recognition through its purchase decisions (Babakaev et al. 2019).

Post-postmodern society values comprehension, closeness, and serviciality between all of its members (Cova, 2013). Prus (2004) states that the post-postmodern society sees how globalization, technology and virtual realities are reshaping the reality of the society and is

characterized by enthusiasm, engagement, sincerity, intermediality and autonomy. While the postmodern consumer has already moved away from solely materialist and symbolic possessions to possession forming their identity, they still sought prestige and recognition through their buying behavior (Berenguer & Cervera, 2005; Babakaev et al. 2019; Samuels, 2009). Possessions are now defining identity and are still used to be recognized by others, even though their online presence through digital technologies has emerged. In addition, the urge to escape market forces in order to stay autonomous is still present, however, the post-postmodern consumer is willing to work with brands together to co-create furtherance of the meaningful postmodern experience through playful and creative engagement. Further, as the postmodern consumer has already initiated a movement toward being more autonomous and not letting brands control them, while the post-postmodern consumer is making it a fundamental characteristic (Samuels, 2009; Kozinets, 2002).

With regard to the chosen automobile industry to conduct this research, as it was found to be second priority for individuals to own a car after a house, it has been noted that changes in the chosen post-postmodern automobile industry infer different consumer interests and preferences. Suganya, Gurusamy and Jankai (2021) have found that “customers have been more selective in their buying behavior of a car” (Suganya, Gurusamy and Jankai, 2021, p. 1). Further, they argue consumers' preferences over car brands now need to meet consumer expectations on product qualities, specifically in need to excel engineering and product design. Further, innovative attributes have also been appreciated by the post-postmodern society as consumers are interested in well-developed technologies when selecting car brands and cars. Additionally, another determining factor on what car brand or car to select has been financial performance or warranty of low-risk investment (Suganya, Gurusamy & Jankai, 2021). As consumer preferences changes are affecting this industry but it has also been proven that factors that influence consumer post-postmodern purchase intent are aligned with some corporate reputational elements, this industry is of special interest to conduct this research.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Background and Selection of Reputational Elements

The previous presented literature review focused on different reputational elements that influence consumers' perception of a corporate brand's reputation. Several scholars have concluded that different reputational models such as the Harris-Fombrun Reputational Quotient by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), the Reputation Institute's RepTrak System by van Riel and Fombrun (2007), the Effective Reputation Index by Page and Fearn (2005), the criteria that influence corporate reputation by Roper and Fill (2012), and the corporate brand identity reputation matrix by Urde and Greyser (2016) shape corporate brand reputation and the perception consumers have about it.

Nonetheless, the reputational elements that have been found to influence consumers' perception of corporate brand reputation often differ from each other. Thus, for the purposes of this research, all of the reputational elements that have been found from the latter-mentioned reputational models have been compared. After that, it was noticed that six different reputational elements were several times found to shape consumers' perception of corporate brand reputation and henceforth were reputational elements supported by previous or posterior research.

Financial performance is a reputational element supported by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), van Riel and Fombrun (2007), Roper and Fill (2012) and Urde and Greyser (2016). *Vision and leadership* by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), Page and Fearn (2005), van Riel and Fombrun (2007) and Roper and Fill (2012). *Innovation* is supported by van Riel and Fombrun (2007) and Roper and Fill (2012). *Product and services* have been supported by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), van Ran and Fombrun (2007) and Roper and Fill (2012). *Social responsibility* is supported by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), Page and Fearn (2005), van Riel and Fombrun (2007) and Roper and Fill (2012).

Henceforth, given that this paper focuses on adding on the previous quantitative proved reputational elements, the new selection of reputational elements has been based on the previously mentioned reputational elements for purposes of this study.

Further, the study intends to connect the newly selected reputational elements with the post-postmodern consumer society and specifically explore this society's corporate brand preferences.

3.2 Hypothesis Formulation

3.2.1 Vision and Leadership

Vision and leadership were first related to market opportunities, leadership quality, and the vision for future corporations (Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000). Additionally, leadership evaluates the effectiveness of the management of a corporation (LoBue, 2018; Fombrun, Ponzi & Newbury, 2015). Also referred to as leadership and success by Page and Fearn (2005), the term is related to how successful and innovative a corporation is compared to other businesses with the same business model. Again, mentioned as vision and leadership by Roper and Fill (2012), the authors add a definition consisting of a corporation's ability to influence business actors to together with the corporation actively engage in a corporation's vision. Leadership and vision, thus, have the end goal of leading all the business actors where the corporation wants to go (Roper & Fill, 2012).

Moreover, Love, Lim and Bednar (2017) argue that the way individuals view a company's leaders, such as for example, Steve Jobs at Apple, Jeff Bezos at Amazon, or Elon Musk at Tesla, influences a corporation's perception. According to Carpenter, Geletkanycz, and Sanders (2004), Nohria and Khurana (2010) and Yukl (2013) 'corporate leaders' are not only seen as powerful actors but also as the face of the firm and everything it stands for, including its actions and outcomes, whether success or failures (Cannella, Finkelstein & Hambrick, 2008). Similarly, Gaines-Ross (2003) and Graffin, Pfarrer and Hill (2012) hold the position that "evaluations of the firm's top leaders will at times shape the reputations of the corporations they lead, and that highly regarded CEOs should confer reputational benefits on their firms" (Love, Lime & Bednar, 2017, p. 1462). Thus, several researchers, such as the latter mentioned, even go as far as linking the corporate reputation to a single corporate brand leader. Contrary, however, Collins (2001) argues that corporate leaders often seem to primarily operate in the background of the corporate brands and thus do not seem to influence perceptions of a corporation as a whole necessarily.

Differing from Collins (2001), van Quaquebeke, Becker, Goretzki and Barrot (2019) show that the person in charge of a corporation has a strong relationship with consumer's purchase intent, thus, influencing the overall perceptions of a corporation. Further, whether this leader presents qualities such as honesty, compassion, and fairness have a direct positive impact on consumer behavior and purchase intent (van Quaquebeke et al. 2019). Additionally, Dávila and Trendel (2010) argue that not only the mere existence of a leader and its personality influence consumer purchase intention but also its physical appearance.

Nonetheless, Chatterji and Toffel (2019) and Stravinskiene, Hopeniene and Levickyte (2020) hold that the use of leadership and its benefits is under discussion. When a leader takes a standpoint regarding sensitive matters such as sexuality, religion, politics or any other controversial topic, empathy or apathy arises around consumers aware of a leader's personal opinion (Chatterji & Toffel, 2019). In a similar manner, Stravinskiene, Hopeniene and Levickyte (2020) support that consumers are continuously evaluating what would, in their opinion, build a positive leader image. Moreover, only when a leadership image aligns with consumers' judgment, they tend to trust the like-minded leader. As a following step, once consumers' trust in a corporation and a corporation's leader is gained, consumers are more willing to engage in purchasing decisions.

By the same token, Sirohi, McLaughlin and Wittink (1998) associate purchase intentions with customer loyalty while stating that loyal consumers show repurchase intentions and willingness to recommend a corporate brand and its products. Based on this, Chiu and Cho (2021) found that all factors of positively perceived vision and leadership do have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction, which in turn has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase and repurchase intentions.

Given the aforementioned arguments, the first hypothesis is offered:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the *vision and leadership* reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.

3.2.2 Workplace Environment

First definitions of the workplace environment reputational element included how well the work environment would be managed in a particular company. A positive reputation in this dimension implies that a corporation provides a conducive workplace for its employees

(Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000). Further, workplace refers to employee benefits, employee rewards, work/life balance, on-boarding and training activities (LoBue, 2018; Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry, 2015). Employee satisfaction, meaning how satisfied are employees with their workplace and working environment in terms of happiness, is also a determinant of this reputational element (Roper & Fill, 2012).

Furthermore, the workplace environment is an integral part of the corporate branding process, as it plays a crucial role in mediating the brand values (de Chernatony, Harris & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2000). Lastly, employee behavior is considered to be of central importance as a cornerstone of corporate identity as it enhances the image and subsequently the reputation over time (Hawabhay, Abratt & Peters, 2009). Gray and Balmer (1998) even go as far as arguing that "corporate reputation is also a result of both the attitudes and behavior of employees and the outside perceptions of a firm's culture" (Hawabhay, Abratt & Peters, 2009, p. 7).

According to King (1991), the employees of a corporation become an asset because all workers not only represent a company but also have leverage on external stakeholders' perceptions of the corporate brand (de Chernatony & Harris, 2000). Therefore, increasing significance has been placed on this essential organization's intangible assets as a source of competitive advantage, vital resource, and contributor to actualizing a brand's identity (de Chernatony & Harris, 2000), given that the emotional values of the brand, expressed above all primarily through its employees, are the most sustainable source of competitive advantage (de Chernatony, Harris & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2000). This is further supported by the fact that staff behavior can be leveraged to establish an emotional connection with external stakeholders (Kennedy, 1977; Balmer & Wilkinson, 1991; King, 1991).

While the relationship between employer image and consumer decision-making is both intuitively credible and logically understandable, it has not been widely researched (Rybczewska, Sparks & Sułkowski, 2020). Nonetheless, a study by Evanschitzky et al. (2011) supports that employee satisfaction in the workplace environment positively affects consumers' purchase intention. Rybczewska, Sparks and Sułkowski (2020) add that although employer image is not an explicitly stated priority for consumer decision making, it still influences consumer choice and satisfaction.

Similarly, Keller's (2013) suggestion, according to the brand equity framework, is that companies should build their brand image around satisfied employees to be attractive. This is

because Anselmsson, Bondesson and Melin (2016) found that brands with a favorable workforce image, i.e., customers who are willing to buy and even pay more for products from retailers that treat their employees well, have stronger customer loyalty and thus attract customers who are more willing to pay a price premium than a brand with a less favorable workforce image. Thus, the workforce is directly related to the overall strength of the corporate brand as perceived by customers (Anselmsson, Bondesson & Melin, 2016).

Thus, the assumption that the workplace environment influences consumer choice is founded, and the second hypothesis is proposed:

H2: There is a positive relationship between the *workplace environment* reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.

3.2.3 Social Responsibility

Social responsibility was first linked to the charitable causes supported by corporations while encompassing environmental and community responsibilities (Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000). Fombrun, Ponzi, and Newburry (2015) explained that a civically engaged company is committed to changing the world for the better by being intentional about its environmental and social activities. Social responsibility, referred to as public responsibility by Page and Fearn (2005), suppose a corporation's ethical practices that define good corporate behavior, such as advocating for those in need, supporting communities, and being accountable for a corporation's environmental and social actions. In addition, socially responsible corporations should commit to providing ethical products and adapt their production to better impact the society in which it operates.

However, Page and Fearn (2005) also noted that while ethical practices are valued by consumers, they are not a determining factor in purchasing decisions. Although ethical practices are expected, social practices do not guarantee rewarding consumer behavior (Page & Fearn, 2005). Roper and Fill (2012) support Page and Fearn's attribute of ethical practices and relate the criteria that influence a company's reputation to a corporation's ethical practices that translate into ethical behavior. However, Roper and Fill (2012) add that companies should be accountable to all their business partners, not just to society and communities, as Page and Fearn (2005) assert.

How essential this reputational element is, is demonstrated given that, in recent years, corporate brands have, through corporate social responsibility (CSR) as well as sustainability, exhibited investment in their reputation through exponential means (Landrum, 2017; Torelli, Monga, & Kaikati, 2012). Further, Landrum (2017) found that almost 70% of consumers indicated an increased willingness to pay extra for corporate brands involved in CSR, meaning any voluntary activity to enhance the reputation and corporate brand image (Torelli, Monga, & Kaikati, 2012), or sustainability efforts.

The increased obligation of organizations, as a recent development, towards society (Hawabhay, Abratt & Peters, 2009) and critics demand even higher levels of corporate social responsibility (Porter & Kramer, 2002). The involvement in social welfare has become a vital element in instilling trust and a sense of admiration and building corporate reputation, which creates the credibility needed for, again, a sustainable competitive advantage and for favorable results in their business, namely, an improvement in the company's reputation (ed. Crane, Matten, McWilliams, Moon & Siegel, 2009; Quezado, Fortes & Cavalcante, 2022). This is further supported by Chomvilailuk and Butcher (2018) and Orazalin and Baydauletov (2020), who underline the importance of corporations to develop strategies based on ethical values and CSR in order to, consequently, positively influence their results and, thus, reputation. Werther and Chandler (2005) add to this by linking an increased business performance, strengthened ties with target groups and the reinforcement of an attractive image to consumers with the integration of CSR practices and a resulting better brand reputation, while at the same time communicating such adhesions to the corporate's audience.

Nonetheless, Swoboda, Puchert, and Morschett (2016) argue that no or low consumer awareness can indeed reduce the effectiveness of such reputation signals, especially in global markets (Sen, 2006; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). In addition to that, if those signals are superficial (Maxfield, 2008) or insincere (Pope & Wæraas, 2016) they will be subject to criticism, especially on social media nowadays (Iglesias, Markovic, Bagherzadeh, & Singh, 2020) and should therefore be positioned at the core of a brands strategy (Markovic, Iglesias, Singh & Sierra, 2018; Sierra, Iglesias, Markovic & Singh, 2017).

Generally, a company's CSR performance is a critical antecedent that has a profound and positive impact on the corporate image and reputation (Lu et al. 2020) that may lead to higher stock returns (Lins, Servaes & Tamayo, 2017) and is associated with better financial

performance (Javed, Rashid, Hussain & Ali, 2020) in terms of stock value (Iglesias et al. 2020), thereby positively impacting corporate reputation (Asmussen & Fosfuri, 2019; Lu et al. 2020).

Auger, Devinney and Louviere (2010) state that consumer purchase intention is being affected by consumers' rising concern about social and ethical matters when making their buying decisions. For instance, an early study by the authors in 1996 showed the favorable implication CSR has on consumer purchase intentions when it was proved that more than 60% of consumers consider ethical practices when making their buying decisions. Moreover, 55% of consumers would refuse to buy from a company that disfavors consumers' ethical values (Auger, Devinney & Louviere, 2010). Dodd and Supa (2011) have recently claimed that corporations' social responsibility practices and consumer purchase intentions are positively related, meaning that consumers' willingness to buy a product if aware of socially responsible practices increases its intention. Supporting the consumer intention and CSR practices relationship, Sharma, Poulouse, Mohanta and Antony (2018) state that corporations need to evaluate their social practices and explore the best way to communicate them in order to remain competitive and keep their consumers. Further, David, Kline and Dai (2005) showed that the communication of social responsibility practices also positively impacts consumer purchase intention.

Thus, it can be argued that social responsibility has an influence on consumer preference, and the third hypothesis is proposed:

H3: There is a positive relationship between the *social responsibility* reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.

3.2.4 Product and Services

The Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient, also called RQsm, was the first quotient to mention products and service as a reputational element. This reputational element evaluates the quality, degree of innovation and value for money for the products and services offered by a corporation. This reputational element also explores what stands behind the product and services (Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000). According to Roper and Fill (2012), products and services are shaped by the quality of the same ones and the relationship between the demanded price and perceived quality for money of the same ones. Again, strongly related to their quality, Fombrun, Ponzi and Newburry (2015) add that stakeholders have some predefined expectations

for quality in products and services. Thus, if quality expectations are not met, a corporation's reputation is negatively affected (Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry, 2015).

Exploring the relationship between product and services and purchase intention, Tsiotsou (2005) states that when the perceived quality of a service or product is positive, a beneficial impact occurs on consumers' purchasing intention, leading to consumer satisfaction. Similarly, when perceiving product and services' quality, consumers see enhanced the evaluation of the quality and value of the physical place where the product or service was found and finally show a positive attitude towards the proven corporate brand of the product or service in question (Diallo & Seck, 2018).

Henceforth, product and service performance might act as an influencing factor on consumer purchase intent and the fourth hypothesis is formulated:

H4: There is a positive relationship between the *products and services'* reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.

3.2.5 Financial Performance

First described as financial performance, this reputational element was linked to a corporation's position regarding competitors, taking into consideration its profitability and prospects of economic growth. In addition, this element was an indicator of how reliable it was for stakeholders to make an investment in this corporation (Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000). Financial performance, as later referred to as performance by LoBue (2018) and van Riel and Fombrun (2007), is subjected to business activity numbers, performance, and profitability. Roper and Fill (2012) linked this reputational element to a corporation's profit once again.

Moreover, Cocis, Batrancea and Tuali (2021) expressed that financial performance is the efficient use of assets in generating as much income as possible and indicating a company's overall financial health over a period of time. Cocis, Batrancea and Tuali (2021) further found that companies with a relatively good financial performance also perform very well on their corporate reputation, at least from the investors' perspective, which also, in turn, leads to improved functions and activities for the organizations involved.

Exploring the relationship between financial performance and purchase intention, several scholars such as Chang and Liu (2009), Aaker (1996), and Tarmi and Senthilnathan (2012) have stated that there is a positive relationship between brand equity and consumer purchase intention. For consumers, a profitable corporation presents an indicator of quality products and services (Posavac et al. 2010).

Therefore, given the aforementioned above, the fifth hypothesis is:

H5: There is a positive relationship between the *financial performance* reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.

3.2.6 Innovation

Aimed at addressing customer needs more sufficiently, innovation is characterized as an "implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations" (OECD, 2009, para. 1) or seen as the way to create differentiation (Aaker, 2007) and can be divided into four distinct types: (a) product innovation, (b) process innovation, (c) marketing innovation and (d) organizational innovation (OECD, 2021) that is highly dependent on context, environment, organizations, people's know-how and networking (Aaker, 2007).

The RepTrak institute, on the other hand, adds to this by emphasizing that innovation grasps a corporation's performance across three attributes: (a) innovative, (b) generally the first to market new products and services and (c) adapt quickly to change with the goal to develop distinctive characteristics the consumer then connects to the corporation (LoBue, 2018; Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry, 2015). Thus, innovation should be placed at the heart of the strategy (Aaker, 2007) as an approach to creating a flexible business model which can deliver the interests of managers and consumers in a competitive market (Foroudi, Jin, Gupta, Melewar & Foroudi, 2016; Abernathy & Utterback, 1978; Darroch & McNaughton, 2002; Han, Kim & Srivastava, 1998).

According to RepTrak (2019), 12.8% of the corporate reputation is made up by innovation among the informed general public. Schumpeter (1954) adds to the importance of innovation by arguing that this reputational element belongs to one of the most crucial and significant elements when it comes to achieving a compactivity advantage on a long-term basis, while

Drucker (1985) emphasizes the fact that innovation can be treated as a determinant element in terms of entrepreneurial success, especially considering the fast-paced world we live in since the early 20th century. When implementing innovation constantly, Aaker (2007) even argues that this reputational element will lead to growth and profitably because "growth will come from innovation-driven new products and businesses and profit will follow from innovation-inspired margin increases and cost decrease" (p.8.).

According to Thompson, Hamilton, and Rust (2005), consumers value innovation due to the fact that they appreciate the special and complex features of products and services. Taylor and Todd (1995) and Posavac et al. (2010) add that an innovative product or service is an indicator of quality. Therefore, as stated by Alpert and Kamins (1995) and Mulyani et al. (2019), innovation in technology is a decisive factor in purchasing intention.

Similarly, and affected by purchase intention, corporations that are more attributed for being innovative are leading or pioneering companies on the market (Posavac et al. 2010). Posavac et al. (2010) add that consumers unconsciously relate leader brands with quality, technological and innovative attributes. Thus, pioneer corporations and their brands are also the ones being more noticed by consumers and the most benefited by consumers' purchase intention. Furthermore, Chiu and Cho (2019) found that its predominantly younger consumer who relate innovation to their satisfaction and repurchase intention.

Lastly, the sixth hypothesis stated that:

H6: There is a positive relationship between the *innovation* reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.

3.3 Conceptual Framework

The in *Figure 1* portrayed conceptual framework will be tested in this study to answer the study's main research questions. The figure illustrates the to-be-tested relationship between the independent variables consisting of the reputational elements on the dependent variable, the consumers purchase intention.

The reputational elements derived based on the literature review and a comparison of the Harris-Fombrun Reputational Quotient, the Reputation Institute's RepTrak System, the Effective

Reputation Index, the criteria that influence corporate reputation, and the corporate brand identity reputation matrix.

Moreover, the study specifically studies today's post-postmodernism consumer society and its preferences regarding reputational elements. Henceforth, the following *Figure 1* and *Table 2* presents a visualization and summary of the six proposed hypotheses.

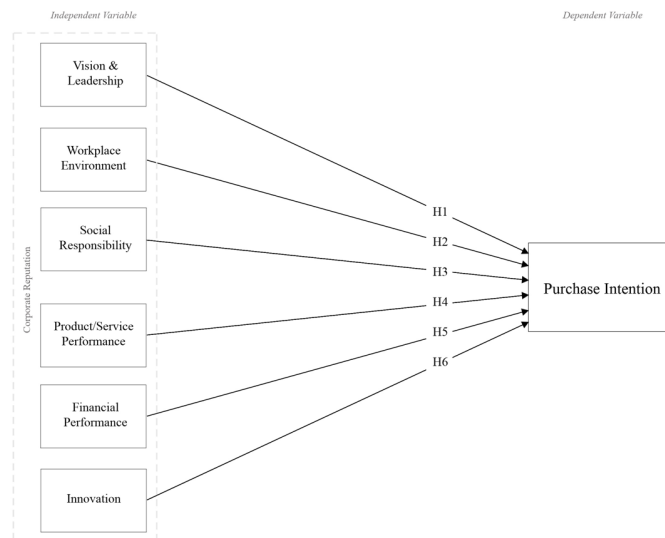


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Table 2: Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis

H1	There is a positive relationship between the <i>vision and leadership</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.
H2	There is a positive relationship between the <i>workplace environment</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.
H3	There is a positive relationship between the <i>social responsibility</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.
H4	There is a positive relationship between the <i>product and services</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.
H5	There is a positive relationship between the <i>financial performance</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.
H6	There is a positive relationship between the <i>innovation</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research Philosophy

"All research projects have philosophical foundations" (Hunt and Hansen, 2008, p.2)

According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015), appropriately adapting a research philosophy can positively affect the quality of management and business research. Additionally, researchers that are acknowledged in research philosophy can easily detect what research designs are needed in order to conduct the study. A well-chosen research design helps researchers determine the type of evidence that needs to be collected and interpreted and to what degree that evidence would contribute to answers to the study's research question (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015). Thus, familiarity with research philosophy has the potential to improve the quality and creativity of research.

4.1.1 Ontology

Ontology is one of the topics generally elaborated upon regarding philosophical perceptions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jaspersen & Valizade, 2021). Ontology concerns questions regarding the nature of reality and existence (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The authors do acknowledge that there are several ontological perspectives such as realism, internal realism, relativism and nominalism. Since the present research is of quantitative character, the internal realism ontology is more suitable for collecting numerical data and testing the previously mentioned hypothesis and, hence, confirming or disconfirming them. Internal realism is characterized by one single true reality independent of the human's subjective mind (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The contributions of a realism ontology further support this since this approach establishes that there is a single reality and truth that exists and can be proved and revealed (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

At the same time, the authors recognize that having one truth in the world means that the relationships between the different elements influencing corporate brand reputation and consumer purchase intention are a reality for the post-postmodern consumer society.

4.1.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with a general set of assumptions about different manners of inquiring into the nature of the world. The authors are aware that positivism and social constructionism are two different approaches in epistemology. Nonetheless, a positivist epistemology will be chosen to conduct the current research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), meaning reality is constructed by people, leading to the fact that the way people make sense of their world and experiences is most crucial. The reasoning behind the selected approach has been that a realism ontology together with a positivist epistemology is in alignment with the research intentions of developing hypotheses with the aim to discover numerical facts and whether there is a confirmation or falsification of the proposed hypothesis. The outcome of the chosen epistemology would then be a confirmation of theories (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

In order to conduct a correct positivism epistemology, the authors are aware that it is needed to remain independent of what is observed. Additionally, the intended research concepts need to be measured to adapt a research process conducted by establishing hypotheses and deductions that will be tested in a large number of randomly selected samples to finally reach a statistical conclusion (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

4.2 Research Approach

4.2.1 Deductive Approach

As the prime form of reasoning in quantitative research, a deductive method of analysis which deduces from general principles to specific instances, will be applied for the purpose of this research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Deduction can be defined as a theory-testing (Verhoeven, 2016) or top-down strategy (Burns & Burns, 2008), which examines whether a particular model or theory is valid and true for the information the researchers have collected (Verhoeven, 2016). Through formulation expectations based on empirically tested theories and models, implications will be made based on the obtained findings, and the original theory or hypothesis can be confirmed or rejected (Burns & Burns, 2008).

The current study will use the theories of corporate brand reputation, consumer purchase intentions, and post-postmodern consumer society.

4.2.2 Survey Research

Survey research refers to a "structured questionnaire given to a sample of a population and designed to elicit specific information from respondents." (Malhotra, 2010, p. 179) and is predominantly used in explanatory or analytical research. Employing a survey method design enables a researcher to examine and further explain the relationships between variables. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) have identified three distinct types of survey design being of (a) factual, (b) inferential and (c) exploratory essence.

In consideration of the research philosophy, the survey can be treated as an inferential survey, following the internal realism ontological philosophy. Further, according to the nature of an inferential survey, the authors have identified the main dependent variables 'purchase intention' and predictor variables, being the six reputational dimensions. This will be done to confirm or disconfirm prior assumptions and hypotheses regarding the nature of these relationships (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015).

For the purpose of this structured data collection, respondents were asked questions regarding the behavior, attitudes, awareness and demographic characteristics. Based on respondents' questioning, the survey research design can be either direct or indirect. The method of choice for this study will be a direct approach, as the purpose of the study will be disclosed in the beginning and will be evident based on the questions asked. This type of design can be defined as a structured-direct survey, one of the most popular data collection methods. Further, questions will be arranged in a fixed-alternative way which instructed the participants to select from the predetermined set of responses (strongly disagree – disagree – somewhat disagree – neither agree nor disagree – somewhat agree – agree – strongly agree). Using this type of design also has, according to Malhotra (2010), several advantages: (a) it is simple to administer, (b) increases reliability through a fixed-alternative design, (c) increases validity due to absent differences in interviewers, (d) coding, analysis and interpretation is simple and lastly (e) the perceived anonymity of the respondents. However, Malhotra (2010) also mentions disadvantages such as (a) wording questions properly is not easy, (b) unwillingness or inability to provide the desired information and (c) reaching a sufficient response rate.

To overcome those challenges, the authors will adopt the questionnaire wording items from well-established and well-researched proven models, excluded all incomplete survey responses, and provided alternative responses for the demographic questions to reduce the effort to provide information as much as possible.

4.3 Research Design

4.3.1 Web-based Survey

A web-based survey is a type of survey in which a website link is sent to potential participants and respondents to complete the survey by recording their answers online (Malhotra, 2010; Burns & Burns, 2008). As mentioned before already, the link for this study will be published on the author's personal social media accounts in addition to various Facebook groups and survey-swap websites. When pulling out the data, it is necessary to check answers for consistency, exclude possible automated answers, and upload them to SPSS for further analysis (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Using this kind of approach has the benefit of respondents being able to remain anonymous, hence observing netiquette and reducing any possible bias, in addition to their inability to modify the questionnaire (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015).

4.3.2 Cross-sectional study

A cross-sectional study design was chosen for several reasons, being (a) the positivist nature of this research, (b) being timely constrained and eventually (c) because the authors decided to employ a survey strategy (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Further, this approach will support the descriptive and explanatory character of this study. In addition to that, a cross-sectional study will reduce the risk of having a response bias and an insufficient representative sampling (Malhotra, 2010).

This type of research design is described as "involving the collection of information from any given sample of population elements only once" (Malhotra, 2010, p. 76) and is one of the most frequently used descriptive designs in marketing research. More specifically, this study will follow a single cross-sectional design, meaning that only one sample of respondents is drawn from the beforehand defined target population and subsequent information is obtained from the sample once only (Malhotra, 2010). In the case of this study, this method will enable the comparison of a set of independent variables and a dependent variable (DV) facilitating possibilities for investigating underlying relationships (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

4.4 Conceptual Framework

4.4.1 Research Variables

A classification of the to-be-researched variables has been summarized *below*.

Table 3: Summary of Research Variables

Variable Category	Variable
Independent Variables (IV's)	Vision and Leadership
	Workplace Environment
	Social Responsibility
	Product and Services
	Financial Performance
	Innovation
Dependent Variables (DV)	Purchase Intention

4.4.2 Operationalization of Variables

To translate the established concept into tangible and measurable indicators, an operationalization of the identified variables will be presented, including the overall factor, the respective item wording as well as the sources they have been adopted from and can be found in *Appendix A*.

To ensure an appropriate research setting, the authors decided to examine five different markets where they expected to find the most participants in their personal networks. Seeing that the markets of Sweden, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands had in common that they position the BMW brand among the top 10 best-known brands in each country, this brand was finally chosen.

4.5 Sampling Process

4.5.1 Target Population

In order to receive the data that is needed to elaborate on and make assumptions on the research question, a target group needs to be established. As the research goal is looking to identify which corporate brand reputation elements are influencing a post-postmodern consumer's purchase intention, this society will make up the core of our target audience. Furthermore, in

order to gather reliable results, the researchers will limit the respondent group to targets above the age of 18 due to the fact that it needs to be made sure that the respondents are aware of the concept of corporate brand reputation by, for example, having purchased something themselves already.

Henceforth, non-probability sampling will be applied and was chosen for the benefit of being able to make assumption about generalizations about the target population. Additionally, it was found that convenience sampling, defining a sampling method that selects sample units based on how easily accessible they are, is deemed the most suitable (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). A 5% margin of error will be accepted for the quantitative analysis to be respective, thus a 95% confidence level. As it will not be possible to collect data from the entire population to make statistical inferences, a sample size needs to be chosen and will be elaborated on in the following sub-chapter. For the quantitative research part of the project the principle of data saturation will be applied, meaning that on the basis of the data that have been collected or analyzed hitherto, further data collection and/or analysis are unnecessary. (Saunders, Lewis, & Tornhill, 2015).

4.5.2 Sample Size

As the population for the survey is unknown, a sampling size needs to be chosen. The total sample size can differ among others on the importance, nature of the research or number of variables. Due to an unknown population size, establishing a sample frame is not possible (Burns & Burns, 2008). Thus, it is needed to estimate a good sample size that can be used for which the following table can help choose an appropriate sample size, as seen in *Figure 2*.

Margin of error	Size of population					
	>5000	5000	2500	1000	500	200
±10%	96	94	93	88	81	65
±7.5%	171	165	160	146	127	92
±5%	384	357	333	278	217	132
±3%	1067	880	748	516	341	169

Figure 2: Sample Size Selection (Bisits Bullen, 2013)

Considering the mentioned table and knowing the population to be above 10,000, a sample size of at least $n = 384$ is needed to meet the 5% margin of error. This is further supported when considering making use of the z score, the difference between a raw score in a population and

the mean of that population measured in standard deviations of that population and can be used to determine the sample size at the 95% confidence interval while using a 50% chance of picking or choice of response, as seen *below*.

$$n = \frac{z^2(pq)}{d^2} = \frac{1.96^2(0.5(1 - 0.5))}{0.05^2} = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384.16 \approx 384 \text{ respondents}$$

Due to time constraints, the survey data, which has been published online for seven working days, needed to be extracted with a sample size of $n = 221$. The goal of 384 respondents was not achieved. Nonetheless, as the population size is unknown and the number of respondents of 384 also would not necessarily allow a generalization of the total unknown population, the actual sample size can be treated as sufficient for the purpose of this research.

4.5.3 Sampling Design

A sample, a subgroup or part of a larger population (Malhotra, 2010) was chosen over a census, the collection and analysis of data from every possible case or group member in a population (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015) or complete enumeration of the entire defined population (Burns & Burns, 2008), due to the time and budget constraint that this study is subject to. Moreover, as the target population is substantial, it would have been impossible to collect responses from the entire population.

As convenience sampling belongs to the group of non-probability sampling, several disadvantages are attached. One of the major drawbacks is that some segments of the population do not have a chance to be included, which defeats efforts to generalize to the population as a whole, from which the authors intend to draw their conclusions. In addition to that, a certain potential researcher bias resonates with this sampling method, as this method is prone to bias and influences that are beyond the authors' control (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015). However, if being aware of these limitations and the fact that the sample is not representative of any definable population, the sample can still have a value (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015) and can be used for exploratory research of generating ideas, insights, or hypotheses (Malhotra, 2010). Furthermore, due to the mentioned time and cost restraints, the authors decided that convenience sampling was discarded as the most feasible option for the purpose of this study.

4.6 Data Collection

Data collection methods are defined as individual techniques for data collection (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). As the authors are taking on a realism ontologism and a positivism epistemologist point of view, research techniques will be quantitative to test the previously mentioned hypothesis and confirm or disconfirm them.

As far as the authors were aware, there was no previously collected readily available data for the specific purpose of this research design. Hence, primary data needs to be collected, i.e., data collected by the researchers themselves (Burns & Burns, 2008). Considering primary data is, in this case, more beneficial than secondary data because it allows the authors to obtain the specific data needed and allows the authors to control how it was collected (Easterby-Smith, et al. 2021). However, secondary data as a basis for gathering theories, paraphrasing the research topic, and confirming established factors will be taken into account as well. The survey method has been chosen as it can be treated as the better data collection when understanding underlying attitudes and beliefs (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). Further, it is the most appropriate measure to gauge opinion and understand behaviors, such as understanding which corporate brand reputation elements have a significant influence on purchase intention.

Nonetheless, several problems can arise, such as the bias of how questions are understood, what kind of participant answers, low response rate, non- or unequal coverage of segments and possible non-generalizable convenience samples (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). To solve these possible restrictions, detailed pop-up instructions will be provided to guarantee a proper understanding of the questions. Additionally, the authors aim to send out the questionnaire early enough to ensure a long enough time frame to collect the answers. Further, internet surveys have been found to be valuable because they enable a broad range of questions and collect large amounts of data under time and cost constraints (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021) while also valuing social distance. Yet, internet surveys can potentially increase data leakage because researchers are not physically present to answer questions or motivate respondents (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). For this reason, including extensive contact information to allow respondents to ask questions about the survey has been found appropriate.

4.6.1 Data Source and Empirical Data Collection

With regard to the nature of the research approach, primary data needed to be collected in addition to the established literature review based on secondary data only. That is because primary data originated by the researcher is explicitly used to address the research problem and the subsequent research problem (Malhotra, 2010). Further, primary data is collected due to the reason of increased relevance and accuracy in addition to the alignment of objectives, nature, and methods for the present study and research goal (Malhotra, 2010). While this type of data is not only leading to possible new insights, it can also increase the confidence in the outcomes of this specific research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

4.6.2 Data Collection Instrument

A survey was chosen as the instrument for data collection, given the fact that the "greatest use of questionnaires is made within the survey strategy" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill., 2015, p.354). Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2015) also add to this by saying that surveys enable researchers to collect a large amount of data, especially important for large population sizes, in an incredibly efficient way (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015) while simultaneously allowing easy comparison of variables and responded and is, hence, ideally used for relationships between those and to produce models of these relationships.

The survey method of choice is called 'Online self-completion', 'Self-administered' or 'Internet-mediated' questionnaire and has been chosen for the reasons that firstly, it is completed online, and responses are stored directly in an online database for statistical processing later and secondly, carrying out web-based surveys (Gunn, 2002) is increasingly becoming more common (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), and thus, reducing possible difficulties on the part of the respondents.

The final survey will be created and then published with 'Crowdsignal', as it enables the researchers to apply as many matrices as required. However, due to the unknown population sample size and an ideal respondent rate of $n = 384$, private monetary sources were invested to ensure an unlimited number of responses and the export of responses as XML.dataset, which translates more easily into SPSS, reducing the error likelihood. Furthermore, this platform has been chosen as it offers several additional functions, such as form fields for contact information, page elements for explaining parts of the web survey that are more difficult to understand and

dynamic error-checking of answers to ensure that people respond consistently throughout (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

4.6.3 Questionnaire Design

As established before already, the survey type of choice is an inferential study, as it is deemed the most appropriate. Malhotra (2010) proposed a 10-step process to follow when designing the actual questionnaire. Firstly, the information needed, needs to be specified for the purpose of asking precise questions giving the data that is needed to answer the main research questions. This step is then followed by specifying the type of interviewing method (self-administered, web-based survey). The step of determining the content of individual questions will be skipped due to the nature of this research. Instead, an extensive literature review will be conducted prior to the development of the questionnaire design in order to overcome one of the most significant weaknesses of the questionnaire design process, more specifically the lack of theory attached to the questions (Malhotra, 2010).

However, in order to overcome the respondent's inability and unwillingness to answer, the authors decided to reduce the items for each variable to six and provide a comprehensive explanation of corporate brand reputation in addition to avoiding any kind of double-barreled, ambiguous questions, sensitive and/or offensive questions. Further, the set of response alternatives and the response format will be specified to reduce vague and random responses. More specifically, the questionnaire consists of 35 questions (3 demographic questions, 29 questions for measuring the independent variables and 3 questions for measuring the dependent variable) and can be found in *Appendix B*. Except for the demographic questions, all questions will be structured and based on a 7-point-Likert scale. According to Malhotra (2010), this step is then followed by "deciding on the question structure, determining the question wording and arranging the questions in proper order" (p. 304). Again, as the questions were translated from the literature, they solely need to be adapted slightly by adding the company name BMW and sorting them according to the dimensions they belong to.

All questions will be chosen to be mandatory and presented in a logical and transparent order, meaning questions related to a corporate brand reputation dimensions were grouped together, and to enhance respondents' ability to understand, and brief transitional sentences were incorporated at the outset of a novice section. Further, the chosen platform enables the authors to choose a user-friendly design, as it can impact the response rate (Burns & Burns, 2008). To

make the survey visually appealing a plain black and white design was chosen, matching the black and white Lund University's School of Economics and Management logo.

To ensure a proper understanding of the questionnaire, the researchers reproduced the questionnaire by pretesting it with six individuals to prevent bugs, from which the feedback will be incorporated immediately. Finally, the last section of the questionnaire will thank the participants and includes codes for the two websites 'surveycircle.com' and 'surveyswap.com'.

4.6.4 Measurement and Scaling Procedures

In order to measure and scale the collected data, a regression analysis will be the measurement of choice. Regression analysis gives researchers the possibility to make predictions of the likely values of a dependent variable from known values of one or a set of independent variables (Burns & Burns, 2008). Burns and Burns (2008) established three significant regression types: (a) simple linear regression, (b) multiple regression and (c) hierarchical/stepwise regression. While the simple linear regression focuses on estimating a value in one variable based on a value of only one other variable, multiple regression analysis is concerned with how the value of the dependent variable changes based on the value of a set of independent variables (Malhotra, 2010; Burns & Burns, 2008).

On the other hand, the stepwise regression is an extension of the latter analysis, as it measures the effect of two or more independent variables but is based on a predetermined order of entry based on theoretical knowledge (Burns & Burns, 2008). The measure applied for this thesis will be the multiple regression analysis, which will give room for establishing which reputational elements are influential to the purchase intention of the post-postmodern society. Thus, the respondents will be asked to assess each of the six dimensions with its attributes on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'.

A Likert scale measurement can be defined as the "measurement scale with seven response categories ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," which requires the respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with each of a series of statements related to the stimulus objects" (Malhotra, 2010, p. 276) with each statement being assigned a numerical score, ranging either from -3 to +3 or 1 to 7. However, in the case of this study, all item wordings and statements are positively worded, meaning the agreement will present a favorable response towards the linked dimension. Using a Likert scale has several practical reasons. Firstly, it is

widely used, proving its efficiency, easy to construct, administer, and understand (Malhotra, 2010) and proving that it is best for evaluating attitudes towards certain variables. Secondly, a Likert scale offers the possibility to calculate overall scores for each dimension, giving the authors of this study insight into which dimension is considered most significant in the post-postmodern society's purchase intention.

4.6.5 Pre-testing of Questionnaire

Pretesting a questionnaire involves a small sample of respondents answering the questionnaire for the purpose of improving the questionnaire by identifying and eliminating potential problems (Malhotra, 2010). Further, a pretest is crucial to identify confusing, poorly written and other problematic questions (Burns & Burns, 2008). The respondents will be chosen based on the author's target population since the sample is as similar as possible to the target group survey in terms of background characteristics, familiarity with the topic, and attitudes and behaviors of interest (Burns & Burns, 2008). This will be done by personal observations, as the authors are hence able to detect any reactions and attitudes.

Moreover, the researchers of this study decided to apply the principle of pretesting, meaning that test respondents will be asked to explain the meaning of each question in addition to any issues which may have occurred during the answering process to the authors (Burns & Burns, 2008). Based on the feedback, the questionnaire will then be corrected, and feedback will be implemented. As for example, while the authors initially wanted to go with Volvo as the corporate brand of choice, the feedback mentioned that these chosen individuals were too inexperienced with the brand to be able to answer the questions properly and their feedback was then incorporated into a new selection of brand. Due to the previously mentioned time constraint, only one round of debriefing will be conducted. However, in addition to that, the questionnaire was also reviewed by this thesis supervisor as a professional.

4.6.6 Questionnaire Distribution

The researchers of this study decided to use their personal networks to distribute the questionnaire to as many possible respondents as possible. Thus, the questionnaire will be published on the authors' personal WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts. However, one should note that some followers, connections or members coincide. Thus, one cannot calculate a single number of respondents that could answer the survey. Furthermore, the

authors' social network will be asked to share the survey on their private social media accounts. In addition, after completing the survey, survey participants were invited to share the survey with others via their private accounts, which can be treated as a form of snowball sampling.

In furtherance of the described questionnaire distribution possibilities, the authors decided to publish the survey in fourteen Facebook groups. Moreover, the survey will be posted on SurveyCircle, a research platform that helps researchers find participants for online surveys and online experiments outside of their network and SurveySwap, a platform that connects students with other students and researchers that also need respondents, where one helps the other by answering each other's surveys through earning credits. That is why two survey codes need to be added to the last page of the survey.

4.7 Data Analysis

4.7.1 Data Preparation

To facilitate the analysis of survey data, the results will be first exported as a CSV-file and then employed into SPSS. The first step includes editing and recoding the data. Due to the nature of the 'Crowdsignal' platform, values such as respondent ID, start date and end date, IP address, automated country code and country name, type of browser used, platform agent and source of referrer were included in the data set as well and will be deleted for the purpose of better intelligibility. Moreover, this step includes recoding all written text data into numerical coding to enable the analysis of several relationships and correlations. Gender data will be recoded into 0 for male and 1 for female and the 7-point Likert scale will be recoded accordingly into the following numerical coding: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree and 7 = strongly agree. Further, new variables will be added by grouping the wording items into the reputational element's dimensions to calculate a mean for each reputational element and a Cronbach alpha, confirming the reliability of the chosen model.

4.7.2 Descriptive Statistics

For the aim of understanding the collected data, descriptive statistics offer a first overview and understanding of the sample. The most commonly used tools to understand the sample are measures of location and variability. Measures of location are concerned with the location of

different values within the data set (Burns & Burns, 2008). A vital addition is a measure of central tendency establishing the center of the distribution such as the mean, the average, the mode, the value most often occurring in the sample or the median, the "value above which half of the values fall and below which half of the values fall" (Malhotra, 2010, p. 454). A measure of variability, indicating a distribution's dispersion, on the other hand, includes range as in the spread of the data, variance, the mean squared deviation from the mean, or standard deviation, the square root of the variance measuring the spread of the data (Malhotra, 2010).

4.7.3 Analysis 1 – Multiple Regression Analysis

The primary analytical method of choice will be a multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis is a widely used tool in explaining variation in, for example, brand preference and a powerful and flexible procedure for analyzing associative relationships (Malhotra, 2010). Malhotra (2010) defines this analysis as a "statistical procedure for analyzing associative relationships between a metric dependent variable and one or more independent variables and an interval-scaled dependent variable" (p.545). Further, this tool is not concerned with the nature and degree of association between variables and does not imply or assume any causality, but rather the power of the connection.

By identifying independent variables and a corresponding dependent variable, the strength of association between these variables can be determined and answer the question of whether variation in purchase intention can be explained in terms of variation in corporate brand reputation. To identify whether a relationship exists between the set of independent variables, the corporate brand reputation elements and the subsequent dependent variable, purchase intention, and further to circle out the variable with the strongest predictor character, the standardized beta coefficients (beta) will be taken into consideration as it can be used to compare the relative contributions of each predictor, hence, helping to answer the main research question.

Common problems with this analysis are high multicollinearity values, meaning a state of very high intercorrelations between independent variables (Burns & Burns, 2008). As established before, the authors of this study adopt a model of well-known scholars. Thus, no high multicollinearity values are expected but will be tested for reliability purposes. Multicollinearity can be detected through several measures: (a) variance inflation factors (VIF) greater than ten as well as (b) tolerance values lower than 0.10 (Burns & Burns, 2008).

4.7.4 Analysis 2 – Correlation Analysis

To support the preceding multiple regression analysis, a correlation analysis will be conducted. With the help of the Pearson correlation coefficient, also known as the product-moment correlation coefficient, r , the linear association between two metrics (interval or ratio scaled) variables will be measured (Malhotra, 2010). Its square, r^2 , measures the proportion of variation in one variable explained by the other, also known as the coefficient of multiple determination.

In concrete terms, this translates into looking at the correlation orders, consisting of the zero-order, partial and part values. While the zero-order correlation value describes the correlation between two variables without controlling for the influence of any other variables, partial correlation values establish the relationship between the two types of variables after controlling for the influence of other variables on both (Malhotra, 2010). Part correlation values, which are most interesting for the purpose of this study, however, give an insight into the magnitude of the unique contributions of the independent variable on the dependent variable with the effect of the remaining independent variables removed (Malhotra, 2010; Burns & Burns, 2008).

4.8 Research Quality Criteria

4.8.1 Reliability

Reliability is defined as the incidence of random errors or the "consistency of measurement in a composite variable formed by combining scores on a set of items" (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021, p.120), meaning whether an instrument will produce the same score on each occasion that it is used (Verhoeven, 2016) and can, according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002), be challenged with three questions: (a) Will the measures yield the same results on other occasions?, (b) Will similar observations be reached by other observers? and (c) Is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data?.

In order to ensure reliability throughout the whole research and data collection process, several control instruments will be applied. The authors will examine the reliability of the six reputational elements of the hypothesized model using Cronbach's α . Hence, Cronbach α coefficients must be calculated for each study unit. α coefficients can range from zero to one (Burns & Burns, 2008), while an alpha coefficient above 0.7 is favorable, considered significant, and will be accepted. These analyses will provide support for the internal consistency of the dimensional structure of the used model. Further, a pilot testing of the

questionnaire will take place as mentioned above. In addition to that, the Likert scale wording items have been adopted from several well-established corporate brand reputation models and thus already served as a reliable instrument.

4.8.2 Validity

Similar to the concept of reliability, validity is a concept used for ensuring the quality of the research and is concerned with the actual magnitude to which measures, and research results accurately reflect the measures they are intended to represent (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015). As the authors are taking on an internal realist ontology, significant validity concerns are existent, according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015), and address the degree to which the instruments and questionnaire items used to assess the variables are reasonably accurate and stable. The soundness and accuracy of the research are characterized by firstly the internal validity and secondly, the external validity, which in turn defines the generalizability of the research results.

4.8.2.1. Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to the degree to which conditions are controlled for the reason that one can ensure that any observed differences or relationships are attributable to the independent variable and not to other factors (Malhotra, 2010; Burns & Burns, 2008)

To ensure a sufficient level of internal validity, the authors adopt the style of a question in which only the relationship between the set of independent variables and the dependent variables was measured with regard to existing research. Further, according to Burns and Burns (2008), the use of the Likert scale "produces more homogeneous scales and increases the probability that a unitary attitude is being measured, increasing validity (construct and concurrent) and reliability" (p. 473).

4.8.2.2. External Validity and Generalizability

External validity is a concept that challenges whether the results from the data analysis can be transferred to an entire population (Burns & Burns, 2008). As the study is based on a non-probability sample, sampling bias and error can influence the results (Malhotra, 2010). Further, based on the study's design, cross-sectional, difficulties when it comes to processes over time and explaining these observed patterns exist (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Due

to the relatively low response rate, the authors will not be able to make generalizations from the drawn sample. However, it is indeed possible to draw assumptions, which will be further elaborated on in the discussion chapter. Moreover, based on the adopted model, a high reliability of the survey scale and internal validity, the results can be treated as reliable and possessing pertinence for future research.

4.9 Research Ethics

Research in the field of management and business is not exempt from ethical issues and principles. In fact, it has been found that ten different principles can prevent research from harming participants and the research community. The authors were conscious of the protection of the participants, meaning that no harm, respect for the dignity of the subjects, confidentiality, anonymity, and respect for privacy have always been provided. Additionally, full participant consent has been required throughout the data collection process (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015) and needs to be agreed upon before answering the actual survey questions, as can be seen in *Appendix B*.

The authors have made sure that no harm has been done not physically or psychologically to the research respondents. Respect for their dignity has been shown throughout the research process by informing the participants in every manner possible about who the authors were and what and where they were studying. Furthermore, respondents were given a choice to participate or stop their participation freely whenever necessary. Special remarks have been made about the results' privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. Lastly, only legally adult respondents were allowed to participate in preventing additional ethical risks, thus respondents need to consent they are 18 or above.

Protecting the research participants has been a priority for the authors of this thesis but protecting the integrity of the research community has also been of supreme importance. Thus, it is intended not to deceive the research aim of the study and not use false information or intent to mislead the readers. Moreover, the authors are committed to being as transparent and honest as possible and declaring any funding sources (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

To not mislead the reader or deceive the research community, plagiarism has been taken into account by the authors. All intellectual property used and collected in the form of presented

work or ideas from other researchers has been referenced according to the LUSEM Harvard standards and is further presented in the section References.

4.10 Research Limitations

The major limitation to the results is that the time used to collect data has been of short character and a more significant amount of time could have improved the quality of our data by allowing the researchers to gather more data. The intended number of participants was initially 384 respondents in order to work with a 5% margin of error. Nonetheless, only an amount of 221 responses could have been collected and analyzed. This limited number of respondents has also resulted from the researchers' decision not to put extra economic resources into the data collection process of the research itself. A larger sample size could have improved the quality of the analyzed data.

In addition to the previous limitations, the researchers and the participants of this study are not native English speakers. Thus, several misinterpretations from the researcher's side could have misinterpreted the data from previous studies. And the questionnaire of this study could have also been misunderstood, and participants of the present research could also have misinterpreted the questions coming from the questionnaire.

Lastly, the authors of this thesis have self-reported the data independently. No additional help came from the studied corporation or any other corporation or institution.

5 Analysis

5.1 Preparation of Data

The automatically collected responses were firstly exported as a CSV file, which was then uploaded to IBM SPSS Statistics 27. Eventually, the variables were recoded in accordance with the requirements of the research prior to data analysis, meaning wording items such as 'BMW has a strong and appealing leader' were renamed to VL1. Further, for each reputational element, a mean of all wording items was computed to ensure a better comparison of reputational elements. Because the authors decided not to penalize any respondents for ending the questionnaire due to its voluntary nature, incomplete responses needed to be deleted from the dataset. However, the authors decided to use the platform of 'Crowdsignal', which already gave the opportunity for the explicit exclusion of incomplete questionnaires.

Nonetheless, prior to analyzing the collected data, the data set needed to be cleaned in order to detect any possible mistakes, outliers, input errors, missing values, or possible falsified responses. In conclusion, from the initial $n = 391$ respondents, $n = 221$ were valid and could be used for the subsequent analyses.

5.2 Validity and Reliability of the Constructs

5.2.1 Cronbach Alpha

Due to the fact that the authors adopted the wording items from the RepTrak company and the 'Corporate Reputation Quotient', it was not expected that the reliability of the analysis would be violated. However, to further ensure it, since two models were combined, the authors decided to compute a Cronbach alpha for each reputational element, which ranged from $\alpha = 0.791$, being the lowest value to $\alpha = 0.930$ to being the highest value. The individual values for each reputational element can be found in *Appendix C1*. Hence, as an alpha coefficient above 0.7 is favorable and considered significant, all coefficients were accepted, meaning reliability can be ensured.

5.2.2 Multicollinearity

Another further significant consideration when using multiple regression analysis, which will be further elaborated on later in this chapter, is multicollinearity. In fact, especially in regression analyses, a high correlation between the independent variables should be avoided for reliability reasons as they would over-inflate R. There are two primary indicators of multicollinearity: (a) a tolerance value smaller than 0.10 and (b) a variance inflation factor (VIF) value, measuring the degree to which collinearity throughout the predictors degrades the precision of an estimate, greater than 10.0 (Burns & Burns, 2008). As to be seen in *Appendix C2*, for all reputational elements, the tolerance values are all way above 0,10 – indicating that no variable is highly correlated with any other predictor and variance inflation VIF values are greater than 10 – hence, no strong multicollinearity. Based on the collinearity statistics and diagnostics, the results support the absence of a multicollinearity problem.

5.3 Analysis of the Results

5.3.1 Demographics

Demographics is a necessary tool for providing insights regarding the research participants and gives the researcher the possibility to determine whether the data set can be treated as a representative sample for generalization purposes (Salkind, 2010). Therefore, SPSS was used to compute frequency tables of the independent categorical variables gender, age groups and country of current residence.

The gender distribution revealed that 58,8% (n = 130) of our respondents identified as female, while in comparison 41,2% (n = 91) identified themselves as male. For gender equality concerns, the options 'Non-binary', 'Prefer not to say' and 'Other' were included but did not receive any responses. This distribution of gender can be treated as favorable for the purpose of this research as the focus did not revolve around gender-based analysis, see *Appendix D1*.

With regard to the age distribution, the authors decided to restrict the target group to participants above 18. Approximately half of the research participants, 48.4% (n = 107), belonged to the youngest, 18 to 25, age group, followed by 33.9% (n = 75) of the second-youngest age group, from 26 to 35. The remaining 17,4% were distributed with n = 29 in the age group from 45 and above and with n = 10 in the age group 35 to 45, see *Appendix D1*.

To obtain an overview of which country the research participants are currently living in, the authors included this question in the survey as well. Results showed that almost 90% (n = 181) of the respondents are currently living in a European country. The remaining 10% are located in North America with 6.42%, South America with 2.96% and Africa and Oceania with representatively 0.5%. To attain a more understandable and reasonable classification, continents were further categorized into countries. Within Europe, the majority of the respondents are currently living in firstly, Sweden (37,1%, n = 82), Germany (22,2%, n = 49), Spain (12,7%, n = 28) and the Netherlands (9%, n = 20), which also aligns with the expectation of the authors due to their origin.

Eventually, this sample will provide the authors with a holistic understanding with regard to the research topic.

5.3.2 Descriptive Statistics

To provide basic information about the tested reputational elements and highlight potential relationships between those, descriptive statistics were analyzed. As already mentioned earlier, the six reputational elements each had between four and six corresponding items which described each dimension and were measured on a 7-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree). In order to be able to make a comparison of the dimensions as a whole, a total mean score index of the multiple wording items had to be computed. A mean score index is defined as an average score for all items that measure a particular reputational element (Burns & Burns, 2008). These were then used to give insights into the descriptive statistics and make correlations.

Generally speaking, one can note that the means of all reputational elements are slightly skewed to the positive side of the 7-point Likert scale, meaning they somewhat agree with wording items describing each dimension. Also, research participants scored higher on the reputational elements *vision and leadership*, *product and services*, *workplace environment* and *financial performance*, meaning that respondents agreed with the statements that reflected these elements, while the reputational elements' social responsibility and 'innovation' portrayed relatively neutral opinions, see *Appendix D2 – D7*.

Standard deviation, a measure of dispersion or variability, helps determine how the responses vary from the total mean index score of the entire population (Burns & Burns, 2008; Malhotra, 2010) and acts as an indicator of precision. While a high standard deviation indicates a wide spread of data, a low standard deviation is an indicator of data clustering around the total mean index score. Hence, the aim is to achieve a low standard deviation as it can be treated as a reliability indicator. As seen in *Appendix D2 – D7*, the standard deviation ranges from 0.77 for the dimension *workplace environment* to 1.06 for *social responsibility*. However, all reputational elements' standard deviation circles around 1, which seems reasonable considering the mean responses. That, in turn, means for *product and services*, for example, that the responses range roughly from '5 = somewhat agree' to '6 = agree', supporting the latent argument of the respondent answers being slightly skewed to the positive side of the scale. This can be similarly applied to the remaining reputational elements as well, meaning that values can be treated as consistent and are, thus, supporting the scales' reliability.

5.3.2.1 Correlation

A correlation follows the purpose of examining the strength of a relationship between two variables belonging to the same observation units, indicating the strength of the linear relationship of those. Concurrently, this measure deems to give evidence of the degree of correspondence between the measured variables. Correlations are either negative or positive, indicating the direction of the relationships, ranging from -1.00 (perfect inverse or negative) to +1.00 (perfect positive), with a midpoint 0.00 indicating randomness or lack of linearity. Further, correlation values should only be accepted below 0.90 not to violate multicollinearity and prevent overflowing R, see *Appendix C3*.

A set of Pearson correlations was computed, to be seen in *Appendix C3* to determine if there were any significant relationships between the six different reputational elements and the overall purchase intention and to support the multiple regression analysis. All relationships are significant at the 0.01 level, ranging from 0.679, the strongest value, to 0.448, the lowest value. Further, all probabilities (Sig, (2-tailed)) of less than the significance level of 0,05 are considered to be statistically significant (different from zero). The correlation between *vision and leadership* and *workplace environment* is strongest with +0.679, followed by *vision and leadership* and *product and services* with a correlation of +0.653, *social responsibility* and *workplace environment* with +0.653 and lastly, *innovation* and *financial performance*, with a

respective value of +0.624. The "weakest" correlations were found between *product and services* and *social responsibility* with +0.448 and *social responsibility* and *financial performance* with +0.497. All positive values indicate that those variables are positively correlated, meaning an increase in one variable coincides with an increase in the other variable.

While *product and services* appear to predict around 21,7% of purchase intention, *innovation* predicts 21%, *financial performance* predicts 18.4%, followed by *social responsibility* with 15.3%, *vision and leadership* with 14.4% and lastly, *workplace environment* with 10.8%. One can argue that all reputational elements provide a weak to moderate guide to purchase intention, which seems reasonable as all reputational elements are well-established factors relating to corporate brand reputation. Moreover, as already discussed earlier, a positive corporate brand reputation, hence, has a positive influence on purchase intention.

5.4 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple regression allows the researchers of this study to deem predictions of the likely values of the dependent variable Y, in this case, purchase intention from values on two or more predictor variables X, which are all considered at once, in this case, the corporate brand reputation elements, see *Appendix C2*.

In the ANOVA sub table, the F statistic (15,146) has an associated probability close to zero, which falls below the significance level of 0,05. Therefore, one can reject the null hypothesis of a random error model and accept the alternative hypothesis of a multiple linear regression model. Much of the variation in the ANOVA structure comes from the regression source, more than the residual or error component. Further, the six independent variables taken together as a whole are significantly related to the dependent variable of purchase intention. The mean squares give support to the significance of the multiple linear regression model and support the assumption that there is a significant multiple linear regression equation, see *Appendix C2*.

The coefficient of determination, R^2 , is based on the multiple Correlation (R), a measure of the correlation of one dependent variable with a combination of two or more predictor variables. R^2 , on the other hand, represents the proportion of variation in one variable, which is explained by the other and is always positive and usually reported as a percentage. However, as R^2 is often "too optimistic" (Burns & Burns, 2008, p. 389), the adjusted, more conservative R^2 is used for interpretation to give a more realistic estimate for generalization purposes. For the collected

data set, R^2 and adjusted R^2 are 0,298 and 0,278, respectively. Using the R^2 , one can argue that 27,8% of the variation of the purchase intention is explained by the variation in the six independent reputational elements altogether. The strength of the relationship is relatively weak to moderate. Further, this implies that 72.2% of the variation in purchase intention cannot be explained by the corporate brand reputation elements. However, this was expected by the authors, as there are many more determinants of purchase intention and the purpose of this research was solely to find the reputational elements most influential to purchase intention, see *Appendix C2*.

The absolute magnitude of the standardized beta weights can be used to compare each predictor's relative contributions and indicate how strong the predictor is in contributing to the prediction of the dependent variable purchase intention.

In *Appendix C2*, one can see that the strongest predictor is product and services since the corresponding standardized beta (0,263) is the largest among the independent variables. The variables *workplace environment* and *vision and leadership* register the lowest, even negative, absolute values for standardized beta coefficient, at -0.085 and -0.012, respectively, making them the weakest independent variables compared to the remaining predictors.

Additionally, the *vision and leadership*, *workplace environment*, and *financial performance* variables show insignificant regression coefficients at $p_{VL} = 0.898$, $p_{WE} = 0.345$ and $p_{FP} = 0.093$, exceeding the accepted significance level of 0.05, hence, indicating no significant contribution to the prediction. The three remaining independent variables, however, all reveal a significant regression coefficient at $p_{PS} = 0.048$, $p_{SR} = 0.001$, and $p_{IV} = 0.028$. Furthermore, the unstandardized coefficient B indicates that for one unit increase in one of the independent variables, the purchase intention will increase by that same amount. Meaning for a one unit increase in the *social responsibility* reputational element, purchase intention will subsequently increase by 0.247 units.

With respect to the correlation analysis, the regressions analysis showed more sophisticated results with a significant difference. While both analyses indicate that the reputational elements *product and services*, *innovation* and *social responsibility* are significant for the purchase intention, the regression analysis positions *financial performance*, *workplace environment* and *vision and leadership* as not having a significant impact on a post-postmodern consumer's purchase intent.

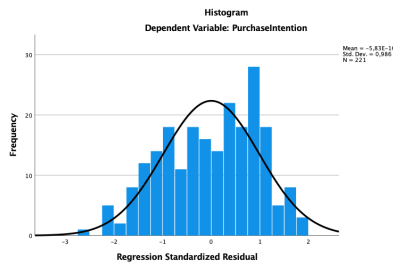


Figure 3: Histogram

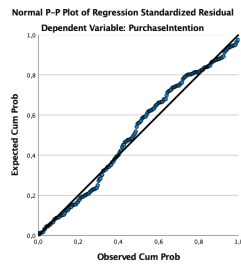


Figure 4: P-Plot

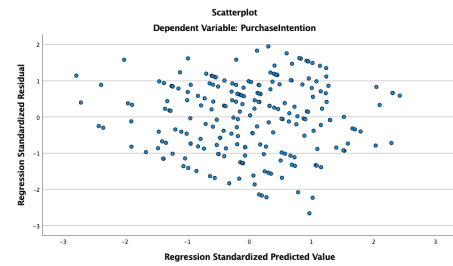


Figure 5: Scatterplot

Further, the graphic visualizations in *Figure 3*, *4* and *5* satisfied the normality of residuals and homoscedasticity while no outliers were identified. Normality of residuals can be assumed as the histogram shows a slight form of positive skewness. Additionally, on the ocular inspection of the normal probability plot, the cumulative probability points follow a straight normal line, accepting that the normal assumption can be acceptable. In Homoscedasticity, the differences between obtained and predicted dependent variable values should be normally distributed (Burns & Burns, 2008). The same variance of residuals for predicted scores can be challenged through a scatterplot for standardized residuals and standardized predicted values (Burns & Burns, 2008). No increasing nor decreasing pattern can be observed, which in turn, means that the variance remains constant across the observed range of values, showing homoscedastic behavior, due to an even spread of the points for standardized residuals and predicted values.

5.5 Hypothesis Testing

Based on the antecedent analysis, the authors can conclude that H3, H4 and H6 can be accepted, providing support for the relationship between the respective reputational elements and purchase intention, while their null hypotheses will be rejected. At the same time, H1, H2 and H5 will be rejected, meaning the null hypothesis will be retained, see *Table 4*.

Table 4: Summary of Hypotheses Results

	Hypothesis	Results	β	p-value
H1	There is a positive relationship between the <i>vision and leadership</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.	Not accepted	-0.012	0.898
H2	There is a positive relationship between the <i>workplace environment</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.	Not accepted	-0.085	0.345
H3	There is a positive relationship between the <i>social responsibility</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.	Accepted	0.162	0.048
H4	There is a positive relationship between the <i>product and services</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.	Accepted	0.263	0.001
H5	There is a positive relationship between the <i>financial performance</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.	Not accepted	0.140	0.093
H6	There is a positive relationship between the <i>innovation</i> reputational element and a consumer's purchase intention.	Accepted	0.184	0.028

6 Discussion

The purpose of this research is to add on previous research on consumer culture by exploring the relationship between the corporate brand reputation elements and purchase intention for the post-postmodern consumer society.

Moreover, the attempt of the study is to examine if the selected reputational elements in this study are valuable for the post-postmodern actual consumer and how the assessment given to those reputational elements also affect this society's consumer purchase intent. Therefore, this research highlights the importance of understanding what reputational elements are valuable for the post-postmodern consumer in order to influence its consumption behavior. With the aim, to finally convince the society to translate its purchase intent into real purchasing behavior (Oke et al. 2015).

As for the results of this study, three of the research hypotheses have been confirmed. The reputational elements of *product and services*, *innovation*, and *social responsibility* have been empirically proved to have a significantly positive relationship on the consumers purchase intent. Yet, the three remaining research hypotheses have not been retained and it has been proved that the reputational elements of *vision and leadership*, *financial performance* and the *workplace environment* do not have a significant influence on the consumers' purchase intent.

Prior literature has already established *product and services* as a reputational element of corporate brand reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000; Page & Fearn, 2005; Roper & Fill, 2012). In the reputational model of the 'Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient' it has been proved that this reputational element is the most important one when it comes to building a positive corporate brand reputation (Fombrun, Gardberg & Server, 2000).

The results of this study then corroborate Page and Fearn, (2005); Roper and Fill (2012); Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) by showing that *product and services* is one reputational element. Nonetheless, this study only establishes that for the post-postmodern consumer society this reputational element continues to be a determining factor when consumers evaluate corporate brand reputation with regard to purchase intention, without explicitly proving to what degree this reputational element is important for the post-postmodern consumer society.

Additionally, Tsiotsou (2005) and Diallo and Seck (2018) found that when consumers have a positive perception and rate the probable quality of the product and service highly, consumers tend to positively see their purchasing intention influenced towards buying a product or services. This study on the other hand, has not constrained the consumers to relate their perception of the *product and services* reputational element to the attribute of its quality itself as Tsiotsou (2005) and Diallo and Seck (2018) previously did. Thus, these results can go as far as to claim that in general *product and services* do positively influence consumer purchase intent, no matter what previous knowledge or presumption the consumer has about the product or service itself.

Samuels (2009) also supports the importance of the reputational element *product and services*. That is because the post-postmodern consumer society goal is to be read and seen by an audience, which in turn can lead to the assumption that the post-postmodern consumer eventually identifies themselves via these automodern technologies as well as brands in the remotest sense (Samuels, 2009). With regard to Belk (1988) and its theory about possessions, the author argues that especially luxury goods, are objects a consumer identifies oneself with, meaning one can assume that these two concepts are interrelated. Applying Belk's theory of identifying oneself with external objects, Suganya, Gurusamy and Jankai (2021) add that consumers have become increasingly particular regarding their buying decision when purchasing cars. Hence it can be argued that the post-postmodern consumer spends more time conducting this purchase, which in turn can lead to the assumption that this purchase is important to the post-postmodern consumers and its identity, as this object represents the consumer toward the society.

Barkin already proposed in 1978 that consumption experiences emerge through a consideration of consumers' playful and creative engagement with transitional objects in the context of everyday life. Skandalis, Byrom and Banister's (2016) build on that by arguing that this is still valid as their study showed that marketers need to seek the role of creating "propositions of extraordinary, escapist and/or imaginary consumption experiences within ordinary, everyday and realistic frames" (p.1322). Moreover, Cova (1997) suggested in an earlier study that consumers are increasingly seeking *product and services* less for their use value than for their linking value; meanings of objects are no longer fixed but have varying meanings that depend on the individual. Further, consumers are increasingly challenging brands that strike their imaginations, that inspire and provoke and stimulate while delivering creatively in order to

assist the consumer when trying to interpret the world that surrounds them (Holt, 2002). Assumably, stimulating a positive connection towards the *product and services* in the post-postmodern consumer's mind can, thus, be connected to their purchase intention.

Secondly, this study established a positive connection between the reputational element *innovation* and the post-postmodern consumer societies purchase intention. The reputational element of *innovation* found by Roper and Fill (2012); and Fombrun, Ponzi and Newburry (2015); LoBue (2018) and Reprtrak (2019) can be argued to be up until now a crucial reputational element in order to attain competitive advantage and increase purchase intention, similar to what Schumpeter (1954) suggested.

Alpert and Kamins (1995); Thompson, Hamilton and Rust (2005); and Mulyani et al. (2019) have previously similarly claimed that consumers look for *innovation* in their products and services and treat the quality of *innovation* as a decisive factor when making their purchases decisions. Thus, the result from this study is consistent with the earlier studies mentioned above and supports that for the post-postmodern consumer society *innovation* is a determining factor that leads to purchase intent.

Prior research has established *innovation* as an instrument of success or quality that can translate into an increased consumer and managers interest (Foroudi et al. 2016; Abernathy & Utterback, 1978; Darroch & McNaughton, 2002; Han, Kim & Srivastava, 1998). From this study, it can be concluded that for the post-postmodern consumer *innovation* as stated by Drucker (1985), Tayler and Todd (1995) and Posavac et al. (2010) acts as acts as a benchmark of success and quality, hence, advocating the corporate brand and its products' level of involvement. Considering that the post-postmodern consumer purchase intention is influenced by *innovation*, it can be assumed that if a product is innovative or a corporate brand is quick-to-market and able to change (Posavac et al. 2010), this society might infer adaptation with what the brand stands for in the greatest sense. Furthermore, innovativeness has been shown to have a stronger influence on the post-postmodern consumers (Chiu & Cho, 2019), which aligns with this study, being that the majority of the respondents were in the age group 18-25.

Upon further analysis of the collected data, the study indicated *social responsibility* to be of significant importance for the post-postmodern consumer society and their purchase intentions. Several previous studies regarding *social responsibility* have linked this reputational element to a positive influence on corporate brand reputation, and elaborated further that the benefits of

having a solid reputation in *social responsibility* translate into benefits for a company (Auger et al. 2007; Dodd & Supa, 2011; Sharma et al. 2018; David et al. 2005; Landrum, 2017; Torelli et al. 2012; Quezado et al. 2022; Chomvilailuk & Butcher, 2018; Orazalin & Baydauletov, 2020; Lu et al. 2020; Lins et al. 2017; Reputation Institute 2016; Iglesias et al. 2020; Asmussen & Fosfuri, 2019). However, Page and Fearn (2005) and Roper and Fill (2012) contradicted those studies by arguing that while *social responsibility* is a valued reputational element for consumers, it is not a determining factor that leads to favorable corporate brand reputation. This study, on the other hand, does not solve the question of how determining *social responsibility* is when evaluating corporate brand reputation, but supports previous studies by asserting that to the post-postmodern consumer society this reputational element is of importance with regard to consumer's purchase intention.

Henceforth, this study reinforces that there is a positive relationship between a corporation's *social responsibility* and post-postmodern consumer society purchase intent. It can be argued that Auger, Devinney and Louviere (2010) have anticipated post-postmodern consumer behavior in their study when stating that purchase intention was being affected by consumer's social and ethical concerns, without specifying any kind of consumer society.

Changes in post-postmodern consumer behavior were predicted by Holt (2002) when stating that corporate brands need to emphasize their contemporary value to the society, such as for example human rights, animal welfare, and the environmental good, while Ulver (2021) further argued that contemporary brands must be "ethical" in order to satisfy consumers and Timmer (2010) argues the post-postmodern societies "structural need for a 'we'". As a contribution to their findings, this study acknowledges that these changes in the post-postmodern society have an impact on consumers' purchase intention, meaning a socially responsible corporate brand can enhance purchase intention, as their impact on society is a determining factor for post-postmodern consumers.

It can be concluded that for the reputational elements that have shown a positive relationship towards purchase intention, brands need to create an experience and linking value around the *product and services* (Barkin, 1978 & Cova, 1997) use *innovation* as a benchmark of success and quality (Drucker, 1985; Tayler and Todd, 1995 & Posavac et al. 2010) and contribute to the society in an ethical and responsible manner in order to attract post-postmodern consumer's (Holt, 2002 & Ulver, 2021).

While the previous three reputational elements have shown a positive relationship with consumer purchase intention, the following three reputational elements have shown to not have a significant influence on consumer's purchase intention: (a) *vision and leadership*, (b) *workplace environment* and (c) *financial performance*.

Scholars as Fombrun, (1996), Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000), LoBue (2019), Fombrun, Ponzi and Newburry (2015), Page and Fearn (2005) and Roper and Fill (2012) are in agreement about *vision and leadership* influencing a corporate brand reputation but missed to make a connection to its influence on purchase intention. The results of the present study are adding to previous literature as it supports the reputational element of leadership not having a significant influence on the post-postmodern consumers' purchase intention.

Although previous practices have been divided into either clearly showing who the leader for a brand is as in the case of some companies like Apple, Amazon or Tesla (Love, Lim & Bednar, 2017), some other companies are taking the opposite approach and hold back its leader (Collins, 2001). It can be argued then that organizations are dubious about the impact of brand leadership in their corporate strategy. While Love, Lim and Bednar (2017) are certain that the use of leadership supposes positive reputation for a corporation if well managed, Chatterji and Toffel (2019) discuss that using the reputational element of *vision and leadership* could cause more damages than benefits into the overall corporate brand reputation. For Chatterji and Toffel (2019) it would be very hard to manage or positively position a leader that as every human has a sexual, religious and politic opinion that might not be supported by all members or a society or could be subjected to changes.

It can be said that the results from this study solve previous hesitations regarding using *vision and leadership* as a reputational element to enhance purchase intention. The evidence of these results suppose that *vision and leadership* does not influence the post-postmodern consumer into buying from a corporation. Henceforth, it can be argued that putting extra effort into establishing corporate brand reputation through leadership would be ineffective since at the end, the post-postmodern consumer does not value who the person is in charge of a company as a determining factor to perform a purchase action.

A second reputational element that has not shown a positive relationship with consumer purchase intention has been the *workplace environment*. Since de Chernatony and Harris (2000) stated that a corporation's values are transmitted through a company's employees, greater

efforts have been made to enhance a workplace environment in order to make this reputational element a source of competitive advantage. Later on, Evanschitzky et al. (2011) proved that employee satisfaction in the workplace positively affects consumers' purchase intention, and Rybaczewska, Sparks and Sułkowski (2020) supported the previous mentioned authors by recently concluding that acknowledging a good corporate work environment influences consumer choice in a positive manner.

Nonetheless, results from this study suggest that the *workplace environment* does not have any influence on the post-postmodern consumer society purchase intention. The novelty of this study comes from being one of the first studies to contradict Evanschitzky et al. (2011) and Rybaczewska, Sparks and Sułkowski (2020). However, the authors of this study can only make assumptions about why the influence of the *workplace environment* does not longer influence the post-postmodern consumer behavior. One possible explanation however could be that the post-postmodern consumer society is increasingly confronted with new technologies which might move consumption behaviors increasingly online. Samuels (2009) even argues that the post-postmodern consumer is not able to differentiate between online and offline anymore, which can lead to the assumption that these consumers forget about the corporate brand behind the online experience, while making the *workplace environment* less visible to them.

Moving on, another influential reputational element that does not influence purchase decisions is the *financial performance*. Earlier studies regarding *financial performance* and purchase intent have shown that consumers relate profitable corporations with an indicator of quality (Posavac et al. 2010), thus consumers intended to purchase more products and services from profitable corporations (Chang & Liu, 2009; Aaker, 1996; Tarmi & Senthilnathan, 2012).

While no previous studies refusing the positive relationship between *financial performance* and purchase intent have been found, findings from this research reject a significant relationship between *financial performance* and purchase intention and contradict the work of previous studies by Posavac et al. (2010), Chang and Liu (2009), Aaker (1996) and Tarmi and Senthilnathan (2012).

While Gursoy and Schwager (2007) argue that *financial performance* is treated as a “given” factor by consumers, the results of this research can further elaborate on Gursoy and Schwager (2007) and conclude that for the same reason *financial performance* does not influence the post-postmodern consumer society to purchase goods or not. In addition, consumers of this society

are more autonomous and thus in control of what they want to consume, so one can assume that the financial performance does not influence their decision-making for purchase intentions.

In summary, two hypothetical scenarios could explain this not-significant influence on a consumer's purchase intention: (1) consumers are aware of the reputational elements of a corporation's (a) *vision and leadership*, (b) *workplace environment* and (c) *financial performance*. (2) consumers are not aware of these three reputational elements of a corporation.

In the first hypothetical situation, consumers are aware of the reputational elements of (a) *vision and leadership*, (b) *workplace environment* and (c) *financial performance* but do not put special interest into them. What the authors have noticed is that the aforementioned three reputation elements not having a significant impact on the post-postmodern consumers' purchase intent all revolve around processes happening inside the company. While the aforementioned reputational elements of *social responsibility*, *product and services* and *innovation* can be accessed or perceived directly through the products or services a corporation is offering, *vision and leadership*, *workplace environment* and *financial performance* need more background information in order for consumers to be able to evaluate these reputational elements.

Another reason to explain this non-significant relationship is the increasing consumer autonomy and its movement “away” from the market (Kozinets, 2002). Even though, consumers are more connected than ever through their intermediality of several platforms and have access to more information than ever, due to the newly arised technologies, consumers have simultaneously become more involved into self-centered and self-disclosure practices, for the only goal of being recognized by others (Samuels, 2009). This makes it incredibly difficult for corporate brands to access these consumer groups. Ulver (2021) has argued that brands need to polarize in order to be noticed at all, as consumers continuously try to escape the market (Kozinets, 2002) owing to the fact that the post-postmodern consumer has become more autonomous and wishes to stay in control of their newly acquired power (Samuels, 2009). Zhang et al. (2015) have elaborated on a possibility to overcome this resistance by consumers through a collaboration of consumers and brands, termed co-creation, an activist-style concept leaving the consumer in charge.

On the other hand, in the second hypothetical situation, consumers are not aware of the reputational elements of (a) *vision and leadership*, (b) *workplace environment* and (c) *financial performance* and thus are not able to put special interest into them. Scholars such as Blackwell,

Miniard and Engel (2001) claim that in order to purchase intention being influenced, purchase intention is dependent on consumer's judgment regarding a product or service. Moreover, Dowling (1994), Fombrun (1996), and Roper and Fill (2012) support that a large number of actors such as consumers, employees, suppliers, financial institutions, among others, are the ones to perceive, assess and evaluate whether they build a positive or negative opinion regarding a corporation's reputation elements such as (a) *vision and leadership*, (b) *workplace environment* and (c) *financial performance*. The previously mentioned authors are then putting emphasis on the need for third parties to first create an opinion regarding any reputational element to later assess it.

It can be then concluded that the problem arising with consumers not knowing about a corporation's reputation activities involving reputational elements has been already pointed out by Frost and Cooke (1999) in its work 'Brand v reputation: Managing an intangible asset'. Frost and Cooke (1999) together with Eccles, Newquist, and Schatz (2007) support that a common issue regarding effective corporate brand reputation management is communication. The authors suppose that commonly corporations show inability to transmit their reputational activities. And it can be argued that if corporations are not using corporate brand reputation in their favor, these corporations are not taking advantage of the intangible but beneficial corporate brand asset by missing an opportunity to build competitive advantage (Fombrun, 1996; Melo & Garrido-Morgado, 2012; Roper & Fill, 2012, Urde & Greyser, 2016).

7 Conclusion

This research's overall aim was to answer the main research questions investigating the influence of corporate brand reputation on purchase intention while studying the implications of post-postmodernism on consumer behavior, hence consisting of two objectives. The first objective seeks to primarily contribute to consumer research by investigating the impact of reputational elements on the consumers' purchase intention. And the second objective revolves around understanding how the changes in the post-postmodern society influence corporate brand reputation by investigating which reputational elements influence their consumer purchase intent. Likewise, the authors' goals with the conducted study were to contribute to the corporate brand reputation literature while also adding to the relatively under-researched post-postmodern consumer society literature.

Post-postmodern consumer society is characterized by being extraordinarily autonomous and escaping from market forces; this society does not want corporations to control them. Further, this society sees how globalization and technological advances shape their behavior. For example, by being autonomous and willing to escape market power (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1997; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Holt, 2002), consumers of this society use their buying habits to express their unique identity (Holt, 2002), only influenced by themselves. Too used to the use of the internet and the impact of social media, consumers of the post-postmodern society are continuously expressing their identity openly to the whole world through its offline and mostly online networks (Cova, 2013). For this consumer, the brand choices and purchases they make reflect how or to what extent they escape market forces and are uncontrolled by the same (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1997; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Holt, 2002). Therefore, expressing their buying behavior gives them prestige and recognition (Babakaev et al. 2019).

Still, the findings of this research establish that the post-postmodern consumer society does not escape from corporate brand reputation, this society puts value into the reputational elements and activities corporations get involved with. Evidence from this study results has concluded that the post-postmodern consumer represents a positive relationship between the *social responsibility*, *product and services*, and *innovation* reputational elements and its purchase intention. Nonetheless, no positive relationship has been found between the reputational elements of *vision and leadership*, *workplace environment* and *financial performance*.

7.1 Theoretical Contributions

The findings of this study contribute to the existing research on the connection between corporate brand reputation and purchase intention. Distinguishing this research by concentrating on the influencing role of the social post-postmodern movement in this connection, the present study adds to the understanding of a crucial, present and relevant topic.

Although the authors acknowledge that there is previous research on how corporate brand reputation and its reputational elements influence consumer behaviors, this study contributes to the field by looking at its influence on purchase intention in particular. Therefore, with the results of this study, the authors believe in contributing to major corporate brand reputation research from Fombrun, Ponzi and Newburry (2015) and Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000) in addition to Ulver's (2021), Samuels (2009) and Holt's (2002) take on post-postmodernism.

As post-postmodern consumers tend to identify themselves with external objects as part of their extended self, known as possessions, these possessions become a crucial part of their identity (Belk, 1988). With regard to *products and services*, *social responsibility* and *innovation* as tangible benefits, these elements can be seen as beneficial features of an acquisition that people want to identify with. On the other hand, the elements of *vision and leadership*, *workplace environment* and *financial performance* have not shown an impact on purchase intention. The authors contribute to existing research by making the assumption that post-postmodern consumers are predominantly concerned about themselves and their own, resulting benefits, while these three elements portray characteristics that have less to do with the product or service itself. While one assumption could be that these elements have nothing to do with contributing to their identity, it could also be possible due to the fact that a lot more knowledge is needed to evaluate these elements, thus not contributing to their purchase intention.

By concluding that three elements have a significant impact and three do not portray an impact on a consumer purchase intent, the theoretical contribution of this study advances previous studies as one of the first to relate a corporate brand reputation to purchase intention and discover that not all brand reputation elements supported by Fombrun, Gardberg and Server, (2000), Fombrun and van Riel (2007), Roper and Fill (2012), Urde and Greyser (2016) influence a purchase intention.

In addition to that, by comparing the three social movements, the authors wish to contribute to a better understanding of the consumer society for managers of corporate brands. Furthermore,

the authors would like to stress the importance of the changes in the post-postmodern consumer (Holt, 2002; Ulver, 2021; Koch & Ulver, 2022, Samuels, 2009; Skandalis, Byrom & Banister, 2019) and them being more liberated than ever (Baya, 2013; Zwick, Bonsu & Darmody, 2008). In concrete terms, this translates to the consumer wanting to stay in control of their decisions. This means brands need to provide a platform where consumers reserve their control while co-creating the consumption experience with a brand together.

7.2 Managerial Implications

Understanding the nature of the reputational elements can enable marketers to deliver effective and creative strategies toward purchase intention. Therefore, this study also contributes with managerial implications with regard to (a) better targeting post-postmodern consumer groups; there are three major contributions for corporate brand managers.

Firstly, with the research undertaken in the area of post-postmodernism, it became absolutely evident that consumption experiences are more important than ever, as the post-postmodern consumer is progressively looking for brands that strike their imagination and create an experience about the consumption, leading to the following contribution, the linking value.

Secondly, the linking value of the acquisition has also been confirmed to be of a greater value than the purchase intent itself already before post-postmodernism but is still applicable today and should be taken into account by brand managers by, as latterly mentioned creating an experience around the consumption.

Thirdly, to keep consumers in the market, brands need to work together with the post-postmodern consumer. Since they are, above all, focused on keeping their decision power, the marketing strategy of choice should revolve around any kind of co-creation, as established by Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody (2008).

Furthermore, to (b) diminish the risk of exposing the whole corporate brand portfolio to reputational damage, corporations should foresee that regarding corporate brand reputation, it is almost as essential to build a reputation as to communicate that one. In this matter, reaching the consumer society should be treated as an objective when managing corporate reputation. Lack of ability to communicate one or more reputational elements of a corporate brand

reputation leaves a corporation with a reduced chance to benefit from the most probable practices and resources put into building a favorable corporate brand reputation.

Moreover, to (c) use corporate brand reputation to achieve a competitive advantage, corporate brands should encourage the use of the reputational elements of *product and services*, *social responsibility*, and *innovation* in order to further strengthen the post-postmodern consumer society's purchase intention. Meaning, that if a corporate brand has identified its consumers as designated towards the characteristics of post-postmodernism and wishes to stimulate an increased purchase intent, the three above-mentioned elements should be their focus. Therefore, corporations should engage themselves in putting more effort into activities that show that a corporation is involved with reputational elements of *product and services*, *social responsibility*, and *innovation*. Clearly, activities prone to reputational elements increase a corporation's chances of experiencing more sales and seeing its revenue positively affected.

Lastly, with the help of this quantitative web-based survey study of the automobile industry, concretely of the brand BMW, it was possible to provide a deeper understanding of corporate brand reputation and its influence on purchasing behavior in this practical context. Thus, the findings of this research could become of particular interest to BMW itself or corporations that are doing business activities in the same industry.

7.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study is one of the first to understand the influence of corporate brand reputation on the purchase intention of the post-postmodern consumer society. Therefore, further research on these three different areas can still refine the understanding of post-postmodern society, consumer purchase intent and corporate brand reputation and should be considered by future researchers.

Additionally, one major limitation of this work is the relatively small sample size; thus, no generalizability can be guaranteed. Therefore, similar research with a larger sample size involving the post-postmodern society, consumer purchase intent and corporate brand reputation could develop further in the future. Another suggestion for future research would be to apply this study's methodology to several other brands to get a more detailed overview of the role of branding in corporate brand reputation and its influence on purchasing intent, thus validating or rejecting the present study results.

A third limitation is that this study only investigated a significant or non-significant relationship between reputational elements and purchase intention. Similar research could revolve around ordering the reputational elements depending on the post-postmodern consumer's importance in order to add to or reevaluate previous research regarding the importance of corporate brand elements.

While the relationship between corporate brand reputation and purchase intention can be explained through the changes in post-postmodern society to a certain extent, it is not entirely evident whether these results are due to the novelty of testing the influence of the corporate brand reputation elements on purchase intention or due to the social changes themselves, as they have not been quantified yet; thus, only assumptions could be drawn.

Another drawback of this work is the limited application for other sectors and brands other than the automobile industry and BMW, but it could present another future area of research. The authors believe that different results could be possibly expected for other industries, such as, for example, the fashion industry, considering the continuous 'fast-fashion debate' and its rat tail of cheap labor in "Third-World countries", or the automotive energy generation and storage industry, considering how Tesla, a pioneer brand in this industry, builds its reputation predominantly around its CEO. This means that in the latter industries, the reputation elements of workplace environment and leadership could possibly have a statistically different relationship with the purchase intention of post-postmodern consumers.

Finally, future researchers would find it interesting to investigate the impact of communicating the corporate brand reputation on purchase intent. While the assumptions of consumers being aware of reputational elements were only hypothetical scenarios, research in this area would support or disregard the assumption that communicating corporate brand reputation is almost as important as building a positive reputation. Further, the results of a study on this matter would prevent corporations from using resources in an inefficient way.

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Appendix A – Operationalization of Variables

Factor	Item Wording		Source
Vision & Leadership	VL1	Has a strong and appealing leader	Fombrun, Ponzi and Newburry (2015)
	VL2	Has excellent managers	Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000)
	VL3	Has a clear vision for its future	
	VL4	Is a well-organized company	
	VL5	Recognizes/takes advantage of market opportunities	
Workplace Environment	WE1	Rewards its employees fairly	Fombrun, Ponzi and Newburry (2015)
	WE2	Demonstrates concern for the health and well-being of its employees	Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000)
	WE3	Offers equal opportunities in the workplace	
	WE4	Is well managed	
	WE5	Looks like a good company to work for	
	WE6	Looks like it has good employees	
Social Responsibility	SR1	Is an environmentally responsible company	Fombrun, Ponzi and Newburry (2015)
	SR2	Supports good causes	Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000)
	SR3	Has a positive influence on society	
	SR4	Is responsible towards the community	

	SR5	Maintains high standards in the way it treats people.	
Product & Services	PS1	Offers high quality products and services	Fombrun, Ponzi and Newburry (2015)
	PS2	Offers products and services that are a good value for the money	Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000)
	PS3	Stands behind its products and services	
	PS4	Meets customer needs	
Financial Performance	FP1	Is a profitable company	Fombrun, Ponzi and Newburry (2015)
	FP2	Delivers financial results that are better than expected	Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000)
	FP3	Shows strong prospects for future growth	
	FP4	Looks like a low-risk investment	
	FP5	Tends to outperform its competitors	
Innovation	IV1	Is innovative	RepTrak (2019)
	IV2	Is generally the first to market new products and services	Fombrun, Ponzi and Newburry (2015)
	IV3	Adapts quickly to change	Fombrun, Gardberg and Server (2000)
	IV4	Develops innovative products/services	
Purchase Intention	PI1	I plan to buy in the future.	Prakash et al. (2019)
	PI2	I will buy in the future.	Policarpo & Aguiar (2020)
	PI3	I am willing to buy.	Fishbein and Ajzen (2010)

Appendix B – Questionnaire Design

- Part 1 –



SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

Master Thesis Questionnaire

Hello!

Thank you so much for taking the time and effort to complete this questionnaire for our Master's Thesis!

We are Imke and Ayelen, Master's students studying 'International Marketing and Brand Management' at the Lund University School of Economics and Management.

For our Master Thesis, we examine the brand reputation and purchase intention within the car industry and highly appreciate your response to the following questions. The questionnaire takes approximately only 5 minutes to complete.

Please read through the following information before continuing:

- The data collection will follow GDPR guidelines, and all the information gathered remains confidential.
- You need to be 18 or older to participate in the study.
- Your response is anonymous; however, the thesis findings will be published together with the thesis.
- You may withdraw from the survey without giving reasons and will not be penalized for doing so.

If you have any questions about the survey or the data, don't hesitate to contact us! (im6187fa-s@student.lu.se & ay6504ro-s@student.lu.se)

Q1: I am 18 or older, I agree to participate in this study and I understand what the study is about and how the data will be managed.

- Yes
- No

Q2: Please specify your gender:

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Other: _____

Q3: Please select your age group:

- 18 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 45
- 45 or above

Q4: Which country are you currently living in?

Q5: What is 1+1?

- Part 2 -

“A good reputation is more valuable than money.” – Publilius Syrus

Reputation as such is used to assess a corporate brand’s identity and simultaneously represents an evaluation of corporate brand identity. It refers to the attitudes or responses a third party has toward a corporation. Meaning, it mirrors the consumers opinion of a brand.

In the following section of the survey, statements about BMW, a German car manufacturer, and brand reputation will be presented. Please answer the statements based on your own opinion and possible previous experiences with the brand.

Q6: Based on previous experiences and your personal opinion, please rate the following statements about BMW's vision and leadership.

BMW has a strong and appealing leader.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW has excellent managers.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW has a clear vision for its future.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW is a well-organized company.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW recognizes/ takes advantage of market opportunities.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

Q7: Based on previous experiences and your personal opinion, please rate the following statements about BMW's workplace.

BMW rewards its employees fairly.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW demonstrates concern for the health and well-being of its employees.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW offers equal opportunities in the workplace.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW is well managed.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

BMW looks like a good company to work for.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW looks like it has good employees.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

Q8: Based on previous experiences and your personal opinion, please rate the following statements about BMW's social responsibility.

BMW is an environmentally responsible company.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW supports good causes.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW has a positive influence on society.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW is responsible towards the community.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW maintains high standards in the way it treats people.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

Q9: Based on previous experiences and your personal opinion, please rate the following statements about BMW's product and service performance.

BMW offers high quality products and services.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

BMW offers products and services that are a good value for the money.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW stands behind its products and services.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW meets customer needs.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

Q10: Based on previous experiences and your personal opinion, please rate the following statements about BMW's financial performance

BMW is a profitable company.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW delivers financial results that are better than expected.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW shows strong prospects for future growth.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW looks like a low-risk investment.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW tends to outperform its competitors.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

Q11: Based on previous experiences and your personal opinion, please rate the following statements about BMW's innovations.

BMW is innovative.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW is generally the first to market new products and services.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW adapts quickly to change.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
BMW develops innovative products/ services.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

Q12: Based on previous experiences and your personal opinion, please rate the following statements about your purchase intention.

I plan to buy a car from BMW in the future.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
I will buy a car from BMW in the future.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
I am willing to buy a car from BMW.								
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

- Part 3 -

Thank you for participating!

Für Nutzer von SurveyCircle: Der Survey Code lautet: 1YFL-HNT7-22WN-148Q

For SurveySwap.io. users: The Survey Code is B1FS-Z5OW-CIJP or can be accessed through <https://surveyswap.io/sr/B1FS-Z5OW-CIJP>

Appendix C – SPSS Analysis Results

C1: Cronbach Alpha

Vision & Leadership

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,839	5

Workplace Environment

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,852	6

Social Responsibility

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,899	5

Product & Services

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,842	4

Financial Performance

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,791	5

Innovation

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,854	4

Purchase Intention

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,930	3

C2: Multiple Regression

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,546 ^a	,298	,278	1,43219

a. Predictors: (Constant), Innovation, WorkplaceEnvironment, ProductServicePerformance, SocialResponsibility, FinancialPerformance, VisionLeadership

b. Dependent Variable: PurchaseIntention

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	186,401	6	31,067	15,146	<,001 ^b
	Residual	438,947	214	2,051		
	Total	625,348	220			

a. Dependent Variable: PurchaseIntention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Innovation, WorkplaceEnvironment, ProductServicePerformance, SocialResponsibility, FinancialPerformance, VisionLeadership

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	-1,562	,702		-2,226	,027						
	VisionLeadership	-,022	,167	-,012	-,129	,898	,380	-,009	-,007	,401	2,496	
	WorkplaceEnvironment	-,184	,194	-,085	-,947	,345	,329	-,065	-,054	,410	2,438	
	SocialResponsibility	,257	,129	,162	1,986	,048	,392	,135	,114	,493	2,026	
	ProductServicePerformance	,463	,139	,263	3,336	,001	,466	,222	,191	,529	1,889	
	FinancialPerformance	,272	,161	,140	1,690	,093	,429	,115	,097	,478	2,092	
	Innovation	,301	,137	,184	2,207	,028	,459	,149	,126	,474	2,112	

a. Dependent Variable: PurchaseIntention

C3: Correlations

Correlations

		VisionLeadership	WorkplaceEnvironment	SocialResponsibility	ProductServicePerformance	FinancialPerformance	Innovation	PurchaseIntention
VisionLeadership	Pearson Correlation	1	,679**	,576**	,618**	,599**	,597**	,380**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221	221
WorkplaceEnvironment	Pearson Correlation	,679**	1	,653**	,526**	,584**	,522**	,329**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221	221
SocialResponsibility	Pearson Correlation	,576**	,653**	1	,448**	,497**	,572**	,392**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221	221
ProductServicePerformance	Pearson Correlation	,618**	,526**	,448**	1	,574**	,558**	,466**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221	221
FinancialPerformance	Pearson Correlation	,599**	,584**	,497**	,574**	1	,624**	,429**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221	221
Innovation	Pearson Correlation	,597**	,522**	,572**	,558**	,624**	1	,459**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221	221
PurchaseIntention	Pearson Correlation	,380**	,329**	,392**	,466**	,429**	,459**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	
	N	221	221	221	221	221	221	221

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix D – Descriptive Statistics

D1: Demographics

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	130	58,8	58,8	58,8
	Male	91	41,2	41,2	100,0
Total		221	100,0	100,0	

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 25	107	48,4	48,4	48,4
	26 - 35	75	33,9	33,9	82,4
	36 - 45	10	4,5	4,5	86,9
	45 or above	29	13,1	13,1	100,0
Total		221	100,0	100,0	

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
VisionLeadership	221	1,00	7,00	5,1158	,91173
WorkplaceEnvironment	221	2,50	7,00	4,9472	,77670
SocialResponsibility	221	1,00	7,00	4,4552	1,06397
ProductServicePerformance	221	2,25	7,00	5,5509	,95582
FinancialPerformance	221	2,80	7,00	5,0054	,86884
Innovation	221	1,75	7,00	4,7590	1,02798
Valid N (listwise)	221				

D2: Vision & Leadership

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
VL1 BMW has a strong and appealing leader.	221	1	7	4,87	1,220
VL2 BMW has excellent managers.	221	1	7	4,73	1,077
VL3 BMW has a clear vision for its future.	221	1	7	5,20	1,198
VL4 BMW is a well-organized company.	221	1	7	5,41	1,111
VL5 BMW recognizes/ takes advantage of market opportunities.	221	1	7	5,36	1,234
Valid N (listwise)	221				

VL1 BMW has a strong and appealing leader.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	3	1,4%
2 Disagree	4	1,8%
3 Somewhat Disagree	9	4,1%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	81	36,7%
5 Somewhat Agree	48	21,7%
6 Agree	58	26,2%
7 Strongly Agree	18	8,1%

VL2 BMW has excellent managers.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	2	0,9%
2 Disagree	2	0,9%
3 Somewhat Disagree	9	4,1%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	93	42,1%
5 Somewhat Agree	62	28,1%
6 Agree	40	18,1%
7 Strongly Agree	13	5,9%

VL3 BMW has a clear vision for its future.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	3	1,4%
2 Disagree	1	0,5%
3 Somewhat Disagree	10	4,5%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	50	22,6%
5 Somewhat Agree	51	23,1%
6 Agree	82	37,1%
7 Strongly Agree	24	10,9%

VL4 BMW is a well-organized company.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	1	0,5%
2 Disagree	1	0,5%
3 Somewhat Disagree	4	1,8%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	47	21,3%
5 Somewhat Agree	49	22,2%
6 Agree	85	38,5%
7 Strongly Agree	34	15,4%

VL5 BMW recognizes/ takes advantage of market opportunities.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	3	1,4%
2 Disagree	4	1,8%
3 Somewhat Disagree	8	3,6%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	31	14,0%
5 Somewhat Agree	57	25,8%
6 Agree	85	38,5%
7 Strongly Agree	33	14,9%

D3: Workplace Environment

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
WE1 BMW rewards its employees fairly.	221	2	7	4,64	,955
WE2 BMW demonstrates concern for the health and well-being of its employees.	221	2	7	4,55	,911
WE3 BMW offers equal opportunities in the workplace.	221	1	7	4,58	1,053
WE4 BMW is well managed.	221	2	7	5,07	1,059
WE5 BMW looks like a good company to work for.	221	1	7	5,53	1,114
WE6 BMW looks like it has good employees.	221	2	7	5,31	1,043
Valid N (listwise)	221				

WE1 BMW rewards its employees fairly.

	N	%
2 Disagree	1	0,5%
3 Somewhat Disagree	8	3,6%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	118	53,4%
5 Somewhat Agree	42	19,0%
6 Agree	46	20,8%
7 Strongly Agree	6	2,7%

WE2 BMW demonstrates concern for the health and well-being of its employees.

	N	%
2 Disagree	2	0,9%
3 Somewhat Disagree	8	3,6%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	123	55,7%
5 Somewhat Agree	48	21,7%
6 Agree	35	15,8%
7 Strongly Agree	5	2,3%

WE3 BMW offers equal opportunities in the workplace.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	1	0,5%
2 Disagree	3	1,4%
3 Somewhat Disagree	12	5,4%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	114	51,6%
5 Somewhat Agree	43	19,5%
6 Agree	38	17,2%
7 Strongly Agree	10	4,5%

WE4 BMW is well managed.

	N	%
2 Disagree	2	0,9%
3 Somewhat Disagree	7	3,2%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	68	30,8%
5 Somewhat Agree	55	24,9%
6 Agree	74	33,5%
7 Strongly Agree	15	6,8%

WE5 BMW looks like a good company to work for.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	1	0,5%
2 Disagree	2	0,9%
3 Somewhat Disagree	7	3,2%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	28	12,7%
5 Somewhat Agree	52	23,5%
6 Agree	93	42,1%
7 Strongly Agree	38	17,2%

WE6 BMW looks like it has good employees.

	N	%
2 Disagree	2	0,9%
3 Somewhat Disagree	4	1,8%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	50	22,6%
5 Somewhat Agree	54	24,4%
6 Agree	89	40,3%
7 Strongly Agree	22	10,0%

D4: Social Responsibility

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SR1 BMW is an environmentally responsible company.	221	1	7	4,22	1,434
SR2 BMW supports good causes.	221	1	7	4,40	1,134
SR3 BMW has a positive influence on society	221	1	7	4,45	1,425
SR4 BMW is responsible towards the community.	221	1	7	4,50	1,189
SR5 BMW maintains high standards in the way it treats people.	221	1	7	4,71	1,082
Valid N (listwise)	221				

SR1 BMW is an environmentally responsible company.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	8	3,6%
2 Disagree	22	10,0%
3 Somewhat Disagree	32	14,5%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	63	28,5%
5 Somewhat Agree	51	23,1%
6 Agree	37	16,7%
7 Strongly Agree	8	3,6%

SR2 BMW supports good causes.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	2	0,9%
2 Disagree	10	4,5%
3 Somewhat Disagree	22	10,0%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	95	43,0%
5 Somewhat Agree	55	24,9%
6 Agree	30	13,6%
7 Strongly Agree	7	3,2%

SR3 BMW has a positive influence on society

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	7	3,2%
2 Disagree	12	5,4%
3 Somewhat Disagree	33	14,9%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	61	27,6%
5 Somewhat Agree	55	24,9%
6 Agree	37	16,7%
7 Strongly Agree	16	7,2%

SR4 BMW is responsible towards the community.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	2	0,9%
2 Disagree	11	5,0%
3 Somewhat Disagree	20	9,0%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	87	39,4%
5 Somewhat Agree	50	22,6%
6 Agree	45	20,4%
7 Strongly Agree	6	2,7%

SR5 BMW maintains high standards in the way it treats people.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	2	0,9%
2 Disagree	3	1,4%
3 Somewhat Disagree	6	2,7%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	103	46,6%
5 Somewhat Agree	50	22,6%
6 Agree	46	20,8%
7 Strongly Agree	11	5,0%

D5: Product & Services

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PS1 BMW offers high quality products and services.	221	2	7	5,86	1,069
PS2 BMW offers products and services that are a good value for the money.	221	1	7	5,24	1,324
PS3 BMW stands behind its products and services.	221	2	7	5,60	1,122
PS4 BMW meets customer needs.	221	1	7	5,51	1,110
Valid N (listwise)	221				

PS1 BMW offers high quality products and services.

	N	%
2 Disagree	1	0,5%
3 Somewhat Disagree	7	3,2%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	20	9,0%
5 Somewhat Agree	32	14,5%
6 Agree	96	43,4%
7 Strongly Agree	65	29,4%

PS2 BMW offers products and services that are a good value for the money.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	1	0,5%
2 Disagree	6	2,7%
3 Somewhat Disagree	21	9,5%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	28	12,7%
5 Somewhat Agree	57	25,8%
6 Agree	72	32,6%
7 Strongly Agree	36	16,3%

PS3 BMW stands behind its products and services.

	N	%
2 Disagree	3	1,4%
3 Somewhat Disagree	7	3,2%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	30	13,6%
5 Somewhat Agree	38	17,2%
6 Agree	100	45,2%
7 Strongly Agree	43	19,5%

PS4 BMW meets customer needs.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	1	0,5%
2 Disagree	2	0,9%
3 Somewhat Disagree	4	1,8%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	35	15,8%
5 Somewhat Agree	52	23,5%
6 Agree	88	39,8%
7 Strongly Agree	39	17,6%

D6: Financial Performance

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
FP1 BMW is a profitable company.	221	2	7	5,77	1,081
FP2 BMW delivers financial results that are better than expected.	221	2	7	4,76	1,074
FP3 BMW shows strong prospects for future growth.	221	2	7	5,12	1,134
FP4 BMW looks like a low-risk investment.	221	1	7	4,83	1,270
FP5 BMW tends to outperform its competitors.	221	1	7	4,54	1,309
Valid N (listwise)	221				

FP1 BMW is a profitable company.

	N	%
2 Disagree	3	1,4%
3 Somewhat Disagree	3	1,4%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	25	11,3%
5 Somewhat Agree	37	16,7%
6 Agree	96	43,4%
7 Strongly Agree	57	25,8%

FP2 BMW delivers financial results that are better than expected.

	N	%
2 Disagree	1	0,5%
3 Somewhat Disagree	10	4,5%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	108	48,9%
5 Somewhat Agree	38	17,2%
6 Agree	49	22,2%
7 Strongly Agree	15	6,8%

FP3 BMW shows strong prospects for future growth.

	N	%
2 Disagree	3	1,4%
3 Somewhat Disagree	11	5,0%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	58	26,2%
5 Somewhat Agree	55	24,9%
6 Agree	73	33,0%
7 Strongly Agree	21	9,5%

FP4 BMW looks like a low-risk investment.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	1	0,5%
2 Disagree	5	2,3%
3 Somewhat Disagree	23	10,4%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	67	30,3%
5 Somewhat Agree	53	24,0%
6 Agree	49	22,2%
7 Strongly Agree	23	10,4%

FP5 BMW tends to outperform its competitors.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	4	1,8%
2 Disagree	14	6,3%
3 Somewhat Disagree	19	8,6%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	69	31,2%
5 Somewhat Agree	63	28,5%
6 Agree	40	18,1%
7 Strongly Agree	12	5,4%

D7: Innovation

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
IV1 BMW is innovative.	221	1	7	5,10	1,323
IV2 BMW is generally the first to market new products and services.	221	1	7	4,24	1,258
IV3 BMW adapts quickly to change.	221	2	7	4,73	1,162
IV4 BMW develops innovative products/ services.	221	2	7	4,97	1,181
Valid N (listwise)	221				

IV1 BMW is innovative.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	2	0,9%
2 Disagree	5	2,3%
3 Somewhat Disagree	20	9,0%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	40	18,1%
5 Somewhat Agree	63	28,5%
6 Agree	58	26,2%
7 Strongly Agree	33	14,9%

IV2 BMW is generally the first to market new products and services.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	2	0,9%
2 Disagree	17	7,7%
3 Somewhat Disagree	39	17,6%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	74	33,5%
5 Somewhat Agree	55	24,9%
6 Agree	25	11,3%
7 Strongly Agree	9	4,1%

IV3 BMW adapts quickly to change.

	N	%
2 Disagree	5	2,3%
3 Somewhat Disagree	25	11,3%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	66	29,9%
5 Somewhat Agree	68	30,8%
6 Agree	42	19,0%
7 Strongly Agree	15	6,8%

IV4 BMW develops innovative products/ services.

	N	%
2 Disagree	7	3,2%
3 Somewhat Disagree	15	6,8%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	50	22,6%
5 Somewhat Agree	75	33,9%
6 Agree	54	24,4%
7 Strongly Agree	20	9,0%

D8: Purchase Intention

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PI1 I plan to buy a car from BMW in the future.	221	1	7	3,76	1,797
PI2 I will buy a car from BMW in the future.	221	1	7	3,66	1,729
PI3 I am willing to buy a car from BMW.	221	1	7	4,36	1,872
Valid N (listwise)	221				

PI1 I plan to buy a car from BMW in the future.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	25	11,3%
2 Disagree	45	20,4%
3 Somewhat Disagree	24	10,9%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	50	22,6%
5 Somewhat Agree	38	17,2%
6 Agree	19	8,6%
7 Strongly Agree	20	9,0%

PI2 I will buy a car from BMW in the future.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	25	11,3%
2 Disagree	49	22,2%
3 Somewhat Disagree	20	9,0%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	56	25,3%
5 Somewhat Agree	39	17,6%
6 Agree	17	7,7%
7 Strongly Agree	15	6,8%

PI3 I am willing to buy a car from BMW.

	N	%
1 Strongly Disagree	20	9,0%
2 Disagree	29	13,1%
3 Somewhat Disagree	20	9,0%
4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	36	16,3%
5 Somewhat Agree	47	21,3%
6 Agree	37	16,7%
7 Strongly Agree	32	14,5%