# Corporate Reputation in Thailand :
# An Analysis of Indicators

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## Abstract

*T* *This research, "Corporate Reputation in Thailand: An Analsis of Indicators", examines indicators to measure reputation for 16 different industries, in four major sectors: consumer goods and services, health care, tourism and manufacturing. Focusing on Thailand's private sector, the study's objectives are to determine what indicators consumers of these industries' products and services as well as the public in general use to determine their attitudes towards different businesses and companies. A quantitative method was employed in which a sample of 2500 persons completed a survey questionnaire. The sample includes respondents from Bangkok and provinces representing the country's four regions: Central – Chonburi; Northern – Chiang Mai; Northeastern – NakhornRatchasima; and Southern – Songkhla.*

*The Rep-Trak® Scorecard with 23 attributes, divided into seven factors and four characteristics was employed. The data from these standardized Rep-Trak® Scorecard developed by the Reputation Institute were analyzed using SPSS for Windows. The data included descriptive statistics, including number, percentage, mean and deviation, and inferential statistics for multiple regression.*

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*Research results showed that the businesses with a strong positive reputation displayed, or reflected, four characteristics: esteem, admiration, trust, and liking. All of the businesses had esteem as their highest characteristic indicator except fashion and clothing, which had liking ranked the first. The results also found that the most important indicators for measuring business reputation in Thailand were products and services. The other indicators were likely to have less influence on a business reputation and good governance showed no influence on a business reputation in Thailand in this study of 16 different industries. The respondents all showed different attitudes in the answers about the industries.*

## Introduction

There are a number of factors that affect the operations of an organization, particularly a corporation. A number of public relations practitioners and specialists have conducted research to determine the importance of reputation and establish indicators that can reflect the attitudes of different groups of persons and measure corporate reputation. One academic who has devoted much of his attention to the study of corporate reputation is Dr. Dennis Wilcox, who identified that three basic factors to measure how good or bad a company's reputation are: 1) economic performance, 2) social responsiveness and 3) the ability to deliver valuable outcome to stakeholders (Wilcox, Cameron, & others, 2008, pp 53-55).

A good, or positive, reputation is known by the public through the results of a company's operations and activities over a long period of time. This can be measured by satisfaction of different stakeholders who are affected directly or indirectly. This reflects the abilities or a company's efficiency. A good reputation is an outgrowth of a company's actions, or behaviors, and how it is interpreted by the public, for example, as trust.

In Thailand, however, the knowledge of reputation management plays less significant roles in PR profession. Most of the organizations, both public and private sectors, have evaluated their communication effectiveness by applying indicators for measuring organization's images instead of reputation. The bodies of literature and research about corporate reputation are very new and need to be introduced to lift up PR professional standard. Moreover, it is important to have indicators for measuring corporate or business reputation for each country since people are different all over the world. Therefore, the objective of this study is to find the answer for the differences of indicators for reputation measurement between Thailand and the United States where the corporate reputation is a subject that many corporate executives pay particular attention to and are very keen to measure.

Beginning in 1982, when Fortune magazine began publishing their "America's Most Admired Companies", academics and specialists in the field have been conducting studies to determine and refine the factors used to measure corporate reputation. Fortune has continued to publish their results for major American corporations and countries like India have also begun following this trend (Van Reil and Fombrum, 2007).

Following a similar vein, The Reputation Institute, since 1997, has been conducting research and following movement of corporate reputation through a measurement scheme they developed called the "Rep-Trak® System". In June 2006, the institute introduced its Rep-Trak® Model and "Global Pulse" research findings worldwide through forbes.com and a network of institutes in 27 countries. "Rep-Trak®" is a tool developed to

conduct studies with various affected stakeholder target groups in different industries and countries (www.reputationinstitute.com, @2009 Reputation Institute. All rights reserved).

Previously, in Thailand, research has been conducted on "Factors reflect Corporate Reputation of Telecommunication Business in Thailand" in 2009 by Rungnapar Pitpreecha. One interesting finding was that industry customers who comprise the general public already had an understanding about corporate reputation because of previous studies conducted by the Reputation Institute (RI), which found that there were three main factors that people considered in determining corporate reputation, which were products and services, governance and performance with statistical significance. Meanwhile, the remaining four factors did not show any statistical significance. This study, though, only examined the Thai consumer target group in particular industry and different companies, it did show that Thai consumers' expectations were different from foreigners' e xpectations.

The objective of this research is to expand these areas of study to determine factors that consumers and the public as a whole would use to judge a company's reputation of different industries that can be used to develop effective corporate reputation measurements for companies and industries located in Thailand.

## Research Objectives

To study measurement indicators for corporate reputation in Thailand through product and service consumers as well as the general public.

## Research Terminology

The attributes that act as indicators for corporate reputation for the seven factors are as follows:

Factor 1: Products and Services
1. High quality
2. Value for money
3. Position behind its quality
4. Response to customers' needs

Factor 2: Innovation
1. Innovative
2. Ability to be the first to market
3. Quick adaptation to change

Factor 3: Workplace
1. Fair rewards to employees
2. Concerns with employee well-being
3. Equal opportunities offered

Factor 4: Governance
1. Openness and transparency
2. Ethical behaviors
3. Fair business practice

Factor 5: Citizenship
1. Environmental responsibility
2. Good causes supports
3. Positive influence on society

Factor 6: Leadership
1. Good organizing
2. Appealing leader
3. Excellent management
4. Clear vision for its future

Factor 6: Performance
1. Profitability
2. Better expected results
3. Strong growth prospects

## Literature Review

Through management and marketing, corporate identity, corporate image and corporate reputation are developed. Dowling (2001) explains the meaning and relationship of these terms as follows:

Corporate Identity is created through the name symbols of a company, which include logo, slogan and uniforms of employees.

Corporate image is how the pubic evaluates a company using their beliefs and feelings.

Finally, corporate reputation can be defined

as a company's attributed values: success, industry position, sincerity, responsibility and honesty. These are all values that target groups know and understand and can be communicated in a company's identity and image.

This research employs the Rep-Trak® System developed by the Reputation Institute to measure corporate reputation.

This study is also based on the development of Reputation Quotient, another measurement for corporate reputation developed by Charles Fombrun together with the marketing company Harris Interactive. Van Reil and Fombrun (2002) explained that the reputation quotient (RQ) is produced using a form that measures the responses of the stakeholder groups. Fombrun and Weidmann (2001) went on to say that each individual in each group acquires their knowledge on a company's reputation

in similar fashions and can employ the same measurements. Therefore, the same indicators can be used for each target group, while the weight of these indicators could change for the different groups, for example different viewpoint and the vision of chief executive or financial results could have greater importance for investors compared to customers (Reynolds et al., 1994; Caruana, 1997; Bromley, 2002).

Still, the Reputation Institute has studied the movements and trends affecting corporate reputation and has developed their "Rep-Trak® System" based on their findings using the Reputation Quotient (RQ) system (Van Reil and Fombrun (2007), which is a tool developed to measure stakeholder group's attitudes in different industries of different countries that measures seven factors and 23 attributes as shown in Figure 1.1.
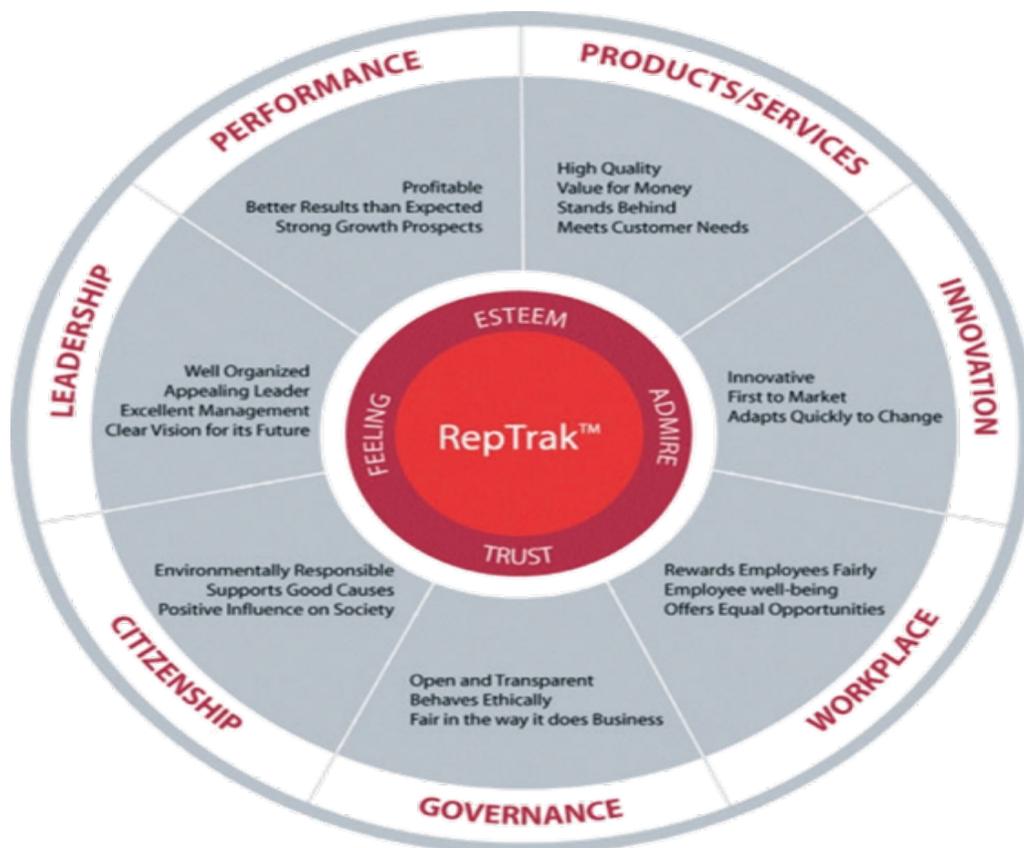


**Figure 1.1** The Reputation Institute's Rep-Trak®scorecard

The Rep-Trak® Scorecard includes 23 attributes under seven factors, and this standardized scorecard has been employed in over 20 countries for benchmarking purposes of leading companies. The seven factors include:

1. Products and Services
2. Innovation
3. Workplace
4. Governance
5. Citizenship
6. Leadership
7. Performance

## Research Method

This research, "Corporate Reputation in Thailand: An Analysis of Indicators", is a quantitative study that focuses on business located in Thailand. The companies have been classified according to divisions established by the Securities Exchange of Thailand (SET) and the Department of Business Development of the Ministry of Commerce (www. set.or.th/th/company/companylist.html,www.dbd. go.th/mainsite/index.php?id=22140) together with criteria listed on the Rep-Trak® Scorecard. The industries listed on SET were then selected based on the Rep-Trak® Scorecard. These businesses had consumers as their end users and not businesses. Business types were then added based on criteria set by the Ministry of Commerce's Department of Business. With industry divisions and subdivisions, a total of 16 business types were identified. (see the note below)

### Research Tools

The research tool was the questionnaire to study the "Indicators for measuring business reputation in Thailand" that included both closed and open-ended questions divided into two parts:

1. Personal information such as age, gender, profession and salary
2. Evaluation of different corporations' reputation in various industries in Thailand.
Validity

The research tool was tested for validity and reliability

### Validity

The faculty members from PR department, faculty of communication art, Chulalongkorn University were asked to evaluate the face validity of each question of the questionnaire to determine their level of difficulty and capability to be understood as well as the clarity of the language employed to make any necessary adjustments to improve the questionnaire so that it would be most effective before presenting it to the actual group samples.

### Reliability

A prototype of the questionnaire was tested with a sample of 30 participants. Reliability was then analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha method.

Reliability for question 2 of part 2 for indicators for good corporate reputation was a = .95, while for question 3 for different business attributes was a = .99 products and services are the most important, or influential, indicator for measuring a company's corporate reputation.

All following factors: performance, citizenship, governance and innovation, show different levels of importance, or influence, for different types of industries in determining good corporate reputation as they have been proven in this research

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Note:   The 16 business types   included: food and beverages; energy and public utilities: water, electricity, oil and benzene, and natural gas; communications and information technology: terrestrial telephone systems, mobile telephone systems, and internet networks; finance, banking and securities; accident and life insurance; tourism; healthcare: hospitals, clinics, and residences for the elderly; retail outlets and shopping malls; automotive industry: automobiles and motorcycles; kitchen, home and office appliances: toilet paper, cleaning equipment and kitchen ware, and office equipment and supplies; personal care products: soap, bath foam, shampoo, cosmetics, etc.; pharmacies, medical supplies, medical equipment and health products; fashion: clothing and shoes; property and real estate; hotels; and high technology and electrical appliances.

on the indicators to measure corporate reputation in Thailand. For telecommunications, respondents scored citizenship as the third factor in level of importance (b = 0.09), which is similar to the findings in research on factors that affect corporate reputation for the telecommunications industry (Rungnapar Pitpreecha, 2009).

In this research, however, Citizenship, which is one of the seven indicators of reputation in the reputation indicator measurement standard of Rep-Trak@ (The Reputation Institute's Rep-Trak@ scorecard), is one of the top three most important factors that was ranked the highest score by the consumers for having an influence for the corporate reputation of the eleven industry groups studied except these five industries: food and beverages, healthcare, automotive industry, property and real estate, and high technology and electrical appliances, which are influenced from other factors for corporate reputation. Therefore, although the rank of citizenship factor is much farther than products and services factor (average point of citizenship: b = 0.18, products and services: b = 0.37), it can still

be explained that citizenship is relatively important for strategy planning for corporate reputation for most of the corporations and industries in Thailand, and for the attitudes of Thai consumers at present.

## Sample Group

The sample comprised a total of 2,500 individuals residing in the Bangkok metropolitan area and four selected provinces representing the four regions of Thailand.

Random Sampling Selection

A multi-step random sampling method was used with the following steps:

Step 1: Purposive sampling: provinces were selected based on the highest population density for each region (according to statistics provided by the Population Bureau for 2008) and Bangkok metropolitan area.

Step 2: Samplings were then selected by a fixed quota as presented in Table 1.1 below:

**Table 1.1** Study's provincial populations and samplings

| Region | Province | Population | Sampling |
|--------|----------|------------|----------|
| Central | Chonburi | 1,209,290 | 243 |
| North | Chiangmai | 1,658,298 | 333 |
| Northeast | Nakhon Ratchasima | 2,555,587 | 514 |
| South | Songkhla | 1,317,507 | 265 |
| | Bangkok | 5,695,956 | 1,145 |
| | Total | | 2,500 |

Step 3: Purposive sampling: The capital city's central district (Amphur Muang) was chosen for each province.

For Bangkok metropolitan area, a simple random sampling was selected from 8 districts, choosing no less than 143 persons from each. They included people of working age and a wide range of ages for business owners. The eight districts selected included: Khlong Toey, Khannayao, Bang Khen, Bang Sue, Bang Rak, Laksi, Khlong Sun

and Central District, Nonthaburi province.

Step 4: People at random, or a convenience sampling, were asked to complete the questionnaire. The interviewers were in the area selecting and asking the respondents to complete the questionnaire. They also helped explain in case the respondents didn't understand some questions. The data collectors were hired to be the interviewers and they were the university students and freelancers.

## Data Analysis

SPSS for Windows was employed to record and analyze research data using descriptive statistics for total numbers, percentages, means and standard deviations; and inferential statistics to determine a multiple regression.

## Data Presentation

Data is presented in charts for total numbers, percentages, means, and standard deviations as well as a chart for T-test and multiple regression comparisons.

## Results Summary

Of the 2,500 participants who completed the questionnaire, 45.70 percent came from Bangkok metropolitan area, 20.50 percent from the northeast, 13.30 percent from the north, 10.60 percent from the south, and 9.80 percent from the central region. The majority of the respondents was female (54.10 percent), and 31.60 percent of the entire sampling was between 26 to 35 years of age, followed by 27.60 percent between 16 and 25 years of age, and 21.60 percent between 36 to 45 years of age. Of the total number of respondents, 34.20% was company employees, 19.90 percent was high school and university students, and 19.20 percent was sales outlet owners.

For the factors that achieved a good corporate reputation, the majority of the respondents answered in descending order:
1. products and services
2. innovation
3. leadership

Factors and Attributes that achieved a good corporate reputation

The research showed that there were four attributes that were important in achieving a good corporate reputation. These included: esteem, admire, trust and liking. When examining all the attributes, esteem came first with an average value of 4.10, followed by liking, admiration and trust, each with an average value of 3.95, 3.94 and 3.94 respectively.

When the attributes are considered by industry types, it was found that nearly all the industries had esteem as the most important attribute, except for fashion, clothing and shoes, which had liking as their first attribute.

The seven factors that determined a good corporate reputation according to the RepTrak® Scorecard were:
1. Products / Services
2. Innovation
3. Workplace
4. Governance
5. Citizenship
6. Leadership
7. Performance

When classified by industry, the most important factor for almost all industries is performance with an average value of 4.12, followed by products and services with an average value of 4.03. This was true for all industries except for communications and information technology, automotives, fashion, and high technology and electrical appliances, which had as their second most important factor i nnovation with an average value 4.08. The third most important factor for most of the other industries was innovation as well with an average value of 3.91.Finance, banking and securities, insurance, property and real estate and hotels had as their third most important factor leadership with an average value of 3.84. Energy and public utilities had leadership as their third most important factor citizenship with an average value of 3.80.

Based on these findings, the factors and attributes that achieve a good corporate reputationcan be classified according to industry as follows:

**Table 1.2** Factors in achieving a good corporate reputation

| Industry | Factors | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| | Products/ Services | Innovation | Workplace | Governance | Citizenship | Leadership | Performance |
| 1. Food and beverages | 2 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| 2. Energy and public utilities: water, electricity, oil and benzene, and natural gas | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| 3. Communications and information technology: terrestrial telephone systems, mobile telephone systems, and internet networks | 3 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 4. Finance, banking and securities | 2 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| 5. Accident and life insurance | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| 6. Tourism | 2 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| 7. Healthcare: hospitals, clinics, and residences for the elderly | 2 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 8. Retail outlets and shopping malls | 2 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 9. Automotive industry: automobiles and motorcycles | 3 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 10. Kitchen, home and office appliances: toilet paper, cleaning equipment and kitchen ware, and office equipment and supplies | 2 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 11. Personal care products: soap, bath foam, shampoo, cosmetics, etc. | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 12. Pharmacies, medical supplies, medical equipment and health products | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 1 |
| 13. Fashion: clothing and shoes | 3 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 14. Property and real estate | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 15. Hotels | 2 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| 16. High technology and electrical appliances | 3 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 |

Note: There are a number of industry types that respondents saw certain factors as equally important, while the seventh factor for many, workplace were placed as the fifth or sixth most important factor for other industries. It should also be noted that some industries did not have the seventh factor, for example: food and beverages; energy and public utilities; accident and life insurance; personal care products; pharmacies, medical supplies and equipment and health products; fashion; and property and real estate.

When considering the important attributes under the different factors that determine a good corporate reputation, the average value of each of the top three attribute classified by industry types shows consumers value factors and attributes at different levels for each industry. For example, under food and beverages, the top factor is performance with its top attribute of profitability, followed by products and services factor and the attribute of quality products or services, and the third most important factor innovation with the attribute of a company that continues to introduce new products and services. In other words, food and beverages industry companies that will have a good reputation need to perform well and show a good profit because of products and services quality that is consistently being improved.

Meanwhile, the energy and public utilities sector, including water, electricity, gasoline and oil, and natural gas, has as its top three factors and attributes for a positive corporate reputation: first, performance with the ability to earn profits; second, products and services with value for money; and third, good citizenship with responsibility for the environment.

**Table 1.3** The sample dhowing that Consumers value factors and attributes at different level for each industry

|  | Food and Beverages | The energy and public utilities sector |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Products and Services | 4.03 * (2) | 3.89 * (2) |
| 1.1 Quality products or services | 4.11 |  |
| 1.2 Value for money |  | 3.94 |
| 2. Innovation | 3.91 (3) |  |
| 2.1 Innovation | 4.03 |  |
| 3. Workplace |  |  |
| 4. Governance |  |  |
| 5. Citizenship |  | 3.8 (3) |
| 5.1 Environmentally responsible |  | 3.85 |
| 6. Leadership |  |  |
| 7. Performance | * 4.11 * (1) | * 3.98 * |
| 7.1 Profitable | 4.26 | 4.06 |

This mean in the certain industry, the factor of good citizenship with responsibility for the environment is significantly important that management should be aware of and has to add the factor of communication strategic plan for their companies.

When considering the results for 16 types of industries, the most important factors determining corporate reputation with an average value as high as 5 are as follows:

1. Performance (3.96)
   Important attributes in descending order are:
   - Profitability (4.05)
   - Continuous growth (3.94)
   - Results surpass targets (3.88)
2. Products and Services (3.88)
   Important attributes in descending order are:
   - Quality of products or services (3.91)
   - Products or services with value for money (3.87)
   - Responsibility for product quality or attentive service (3.85)
3. Innovation (3.83)
   Important attributes in descending order are:
   - Introduction for improved or new products or services (3.89)
   - Quick adaptation and adoption of changes (3.82)
   - Leading in innovation (3.78)
4. Leadership (3.72)
   Important attributes in descending order are:
   - Availability of a code of ethics and trustworthiness (3.72)
   - Operation with fairness (3.71)
   - Operation with transparency and auditability (3.62)
5. Citizenship (3.70)
   Important attributes in descending order are:
   - Demonstration of environment concern such as implementing environmental protection activities (3.75)
   - Having positive influence on society such as helping develop public consciousness (3.71)
   - Supporting social welfare activities such as providing scholarships (3.64)

When comparing two major industry groups, industries that sell products and those that sell services, it was found that the two have a different order for the factors that will determine a good corporate reputation with statistical significance as follows:

The industries that sell products have higher values for products and services, and innovation factors than those for industries that sell services. (t = 2.19 df = 2499 p < .05 and t = 4.24 df = 2499 p < .01 respectively).
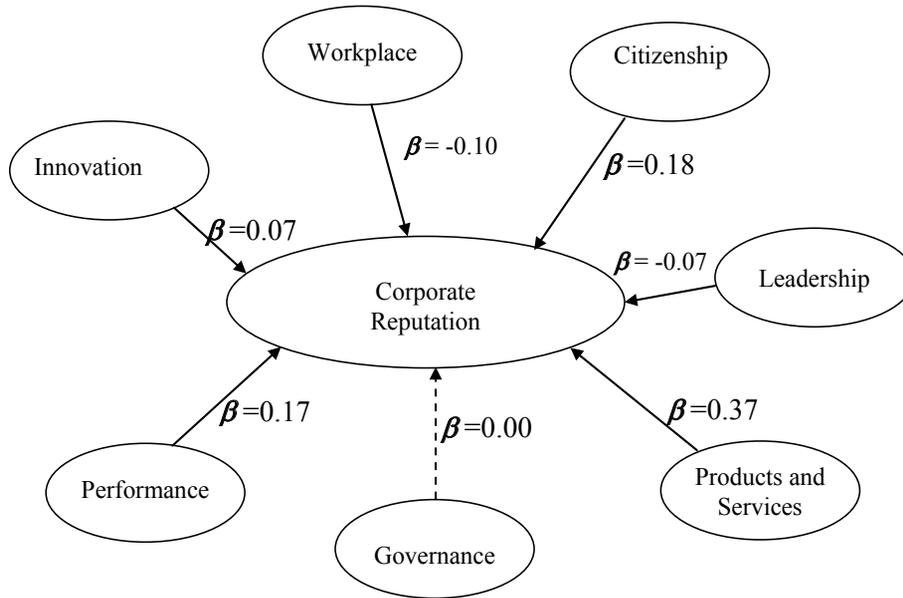
**Diagram 1.1** Factors that affect Corporate Reputation

The industries that sell services have higher values for workplace, governance, citizenship, and leadership factors than those for industries that sell products. (t = 2.60 df = 2499 p < .01, t = 4.36 df = 2499 p < .01, t = 6.68 df = 2499 p < .01 and t = 8.45 df = 2499 p < .01 respectively).

As far as the performance factor is concerned, both industry groups' average values showed no statistically significant difference.

Thus, while companies that belong to the sales industry focus on products and innovation, service industry companies focus on human resources, operations, internal management and social welfare.

In summary, when the average values for all industries are compared, it is found that the highest valued factor is performance (3.96), followed by products and services (3.88) and innovation (3.83) respectively.

When all the industry types are compared through multiple regression analysis for the seven factors, it is found that the factors that affect corporate reputation are in descending order: products and services (β = 0.37), followed by

citizenship (β = 0.18), performance (β = 0.17), workplace (β = - 0.10), innovation (β = 0.7), leadership (β = - 0.7), and governance (β = 0.00) respective, as presented in Diagram 1.1

The diagram signifies that the factor has no statistical significance for affecting corporate reputation.

The results of this research for indicators for corporate reputation can be summarized in descending order of importance as follows:

1. Products and Services (β = 0.37)
2. Good Citizenship (β = 0.18)
3. Performance (β = 0.17)
4. Workplace (β = - 0.10)
5. Innovation and Leadership (β = - 0.07)

[Note: The governance factor shows no influence on corporate reputation for Thai companies (β = 0.00).]

When examining these indicators using multiple regression analysis for the 16 industry classifications, it is found that the importance, or influence, of these factors differs for the different types of industry as follows:

1. Food and Beverages had as its most

important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.17), followed by performance (β = 0.12) and governance (β = 0.08) respectively.

2. Energy and utilities had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.22), followed by performance (β= 0.14), innovation (β = 0.06), citizenship (β= 0.06) and in sixth position, leadership (β = -0.06).

3. Communications and information technology had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.21), followed by performance (β = 0.15) and citizenship (β = 0.09).

4. Finance, banking and securities had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.28), followed by performance (β = 0.10) and citizenship (β= 0.08).

5. Accident and life insurance had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.28), followed by citizenship (β = 0.11) and performance (β = 0.09).

6. Tourism had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.29), followed by citizenship (β = 0.11), performance (β = 0.09), and governance (β= 0.5).

7. Medical industry had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.21), followed by innovation (β = 0.11) and governance (β = 0.10).

8. Retails outlets and shopping malls had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.22), followed by performance (β = 0.08), innovation

(β = 0.06) and citizenship (β = 0.06).

9. Automotive industry had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation performance (β = 0.21), followed by products and services (β = 0.13) and innovation (β = 0.11).

10. Kitchenware, and home and office equipment had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.16), followed by performance (β = 0.13), innovation (β= 0.09) and citizenship (β = 0.09).

11. Personal care products had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.21), followed by performance (β = 0.12) and citizenship (β = 0.09).
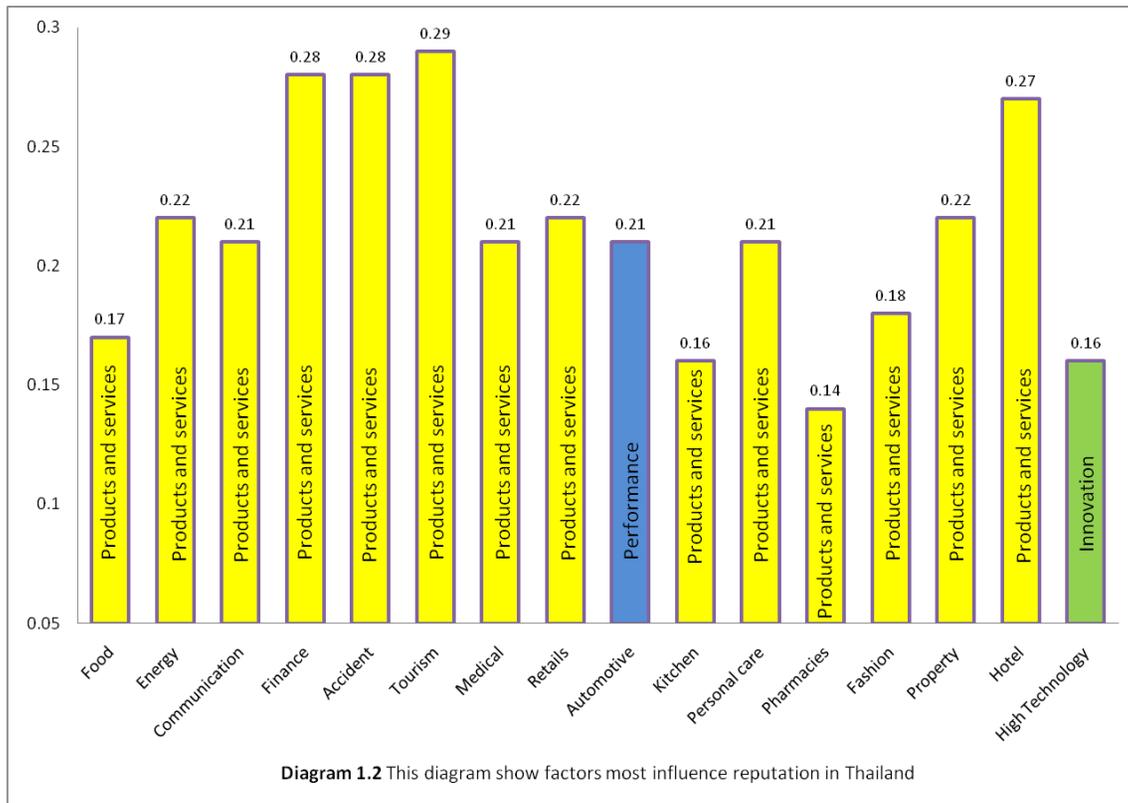
12. Pharmacies, medical equipment and health care products had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.14), followed by performance (β = 0.13) and citizenship (β = 0.10).

13. Fashion had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.18), followed by performance (β = 0.16), and citizenship (β = 0.08).

14. Property and real estate Personal had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.22), followed by performance (β = 0.16) and innovation (β = 0.07).

15. Hotel industry had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation products and services (β = 0.27), followed by governance (β= 0.11) and citizenship (β = 0.08).

16. High technology and electrical appliances had as its most important factor influencing corporate reputation innovation (β = 0.16), followed by products and services (β = 0.13) and leadership (β = 0.11).

**Diagram 1.2** This diagram show factors most influence reputation in Thailand

## Discussion

In summary, the different types of industry with good corporate reputation can be judged for esteem, admiration, trust and liking in the companies with the best corporate reputation holding the highest esteem. All of these characteristics, or judgments, will be determined by the companies' products and services firstly, followed by good citizenship, performance and innovation in descending order of importance respectively.

### Products and Services

The most important attribute for this factor is the quality of the products and services, followed by value for money, response to customer needs and position behind its quality respectively.

### Citizenship

The most important attribute for citizenship is environmental responsibility, by supporting such activities as environmental protection, making a positive influence on society and having good causes such as providing scholarships.

Other attributes under citizenship show similar results as The Edelman good purpose study of 2010 that was a CSR global consumer survey that examined the corporate reputation indicators for 13 countries worldwide with high purchasing power and found that the consumers gave the highest importance to product purchase and business support that demonstrated a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), and for these same consumers, a lack of corporate social responsibility would lower their estimate of the corporations reputation.

These results are very similar to the results of Thai consumers in this survey who feel that CSR is very influential in determining a company's corporate reputation for the majority of industry types.

### Performance

The most important attribute for this factor is profitability, followed by strong growth prospects and better expected results respectively.

### Innovation

The most important, or influential, attribute for this factor is an ability to be the first in the market to introduce new or improved products and services, followed by quick adaptation to market change and leadership in innovation respectively.

In summary, the indicators for corporate reputation for businesses in Thailand are products and services firstly, followed by citizenship, performance and innovation respectively.

It can be said that, in Thailand, as a whole, the consumers consider products and services as the most important, or influential, factor for corporate reputation of almost all industries studied in this research with the highest rank above all factors ($\beta = 0.37$), and it is ranked far higher than the second most influential factor (citizenship $\beta = 0.18$). Considering by types of industry, it is found that consumers see products and services as the most important, or influential, factor for corporate reputation in 14 types of industry except automotive industry (profitability and performance considered the most: $\beta = 0.21$), and high technology and electrical appliances (innovation considered the most: $\beta = 0.16$).

It is clearly seen that, from Thai consumers' attitudes, the expectation is on the quality and value for money of the products that the producers can provide to meet the consumers' satisfaction and the responsibility to the quality of their products and services firstly. Therefore, it is not necessary to do more business activities than producing good quality products in the marketing and communication strategy. For automotive industry, that Thai consumers focus more on its performance as the most important, or influential, factor for corporate reputation than products and services, it is possible that it is not only the corporate reputation that help sell the product, but also good aftersale service. Moreover, it is obvious that, in Thailand, the companies that have negative corporate reputation with no responsibility to their products and services including aftersale one will consequently have their profitability decreased or disappear from the market; as seen from automobile companies with formerly good profits but lost consumers until shutting down themselves while many others are still in business until these days.

High technology and electrical appliances is one of the two industries that Thai consumers do not consider products and services as the most important, or influential, factor for corporate reputation. It is rational enough for the consumers to see the innovation as the most important factor since they definitely expect the producers to produce or distribute products with new technology to support change; and Thai consumers are absolutely ready to adapt prompt development of the present high technology.

In summary, Thai consumers consider products and services as the most important, or influential, factor for corporate reputation in almost every types of industry.

The results of this study are very similar to those found in research companies in the United States (Cees, Riel & Charles, 2007) that when questioning consumers, employees and persons of influence found that the most important indicator for corporate responsibility was product awareness (Figure 1.2).
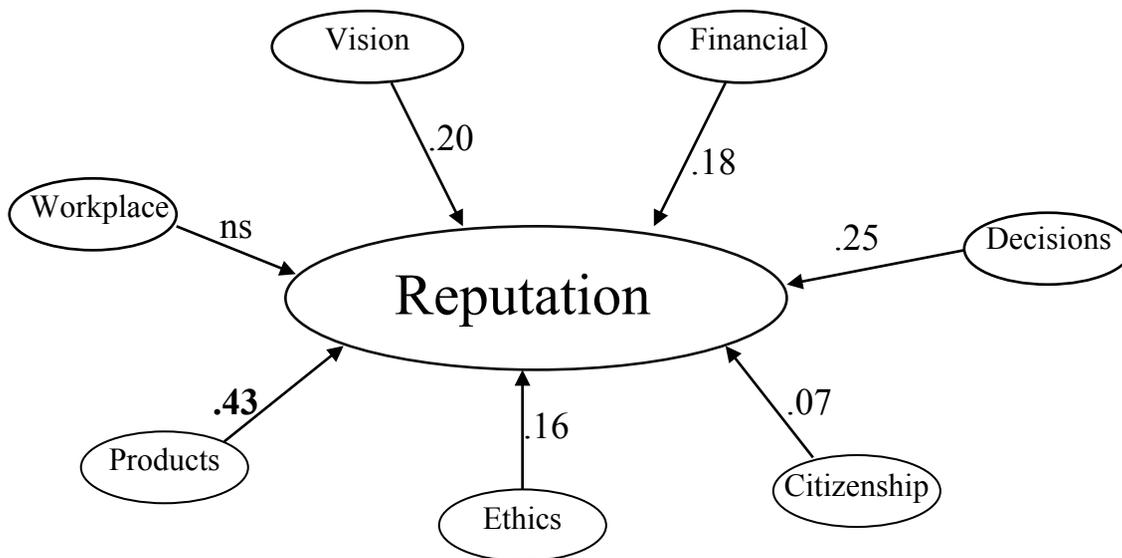
Source: Cees B. M. van Riel and Charles J. Fombrun (2007). Essentials of corporate communication: Implementing practices for effective reputation management. NY: Routledge, 258.

**Figure 1.2** Assessment of the indicators for consumers', employees' and influential persons' corporate knowledge

The results of this study show the same trends for indicators to measure business reputation in Thailand for the life insurance industry (Nophawan Khlaiophas, 2009) as well as for the telecommunications industry in Thailand (Rungnapar Pitpreecha, 2010), that products and services are the most important, or influential, indicator for measuring a company's corporate reputation.

All following factors: performance, citizenship, governance and innovation, show different levels of importance, or influence, for different types of industries in determining good corporate reputation as they have been proven in this research on the indicators to measure corporate reputation in Thailand. For telecommunications, respondents scored citizenship as the third factor in level of importance ($\beta = 0.09$), which is similar to the findings in research on factors that affect corporate reputation for the telecommunications industry (Rungnapar Pitpreecha, 2009).

In this research, however, Citizenship, is one of the top three most important factors that was ranked the highest score by the consumers for having an influence for the corporate reputation of the eleven industry groups studied except these five industries: food and beverages, healthcare, automotive industry, property and real estate, and high technology and electrical appliances, which are influenced from other factors for corporate reputation. Therefore, although the rank of citizenship factor is much farther than products and services factor (average point of citizenship: $\beta = 0.18$, products and services: $\beta = 0.37$), it can still be explained that citizenship is relatively important for strategy planning for corporate reputation for most of the corporations and industries in Thailand, and for the attitudes of Thai consumers at present.

## Recommendations

1. As demonstrated in the results of this research, companies should give importance to the measurement indicators for corporate reputation when developing strategies to build corporate reputation.

2. After analyzing the different business types, the results show the most influential factors and attributes for developing corporate reputation. This information can be used to assist companies in setting a direction for their development based on their industry sector. These can then be incorporated into a company's business, marketing and communications – public relations strategies. For example, respondents scored citizenship as the third most important factor, or indicator, of corporate reputation for the energy and public utilities industry sector followed by innovation in the fourth position, while for communications and information technology, respondents ranked citizenship as the fifth most important factor with innovation ranked the second (Chart 1.2). Therefore, when developing business and communications strategies, companies in the energy and public utilities industry should emphasize on good citizenship, while those in communications and information technology should focus on innovation to build their corporate reputations. The value of this study is that it has examined a variety of industry types using a wide sample of respondents. If additional research is conducted with specific target groups and company stakeholders, even more exact data can be obtained to assist in strategy development.

3. When comparing the results for industries involved in product sales with industries involved in selling sales of a service, future directions must be established firstly if multiple regression analysis is to be employed to determine which factors are important in determining corporate reputation.

## Recommendations for Future Research

1. Conducting studies on the indicators for the 16 industry types using different stakeholders as sample respondents.

2. Conducting studies on indicators for corporate reputation for the companies involved in product sales and those involved in sales of a service.

3. Comparing the indicators to measure corporate reputation for companies in Thailand using other measurement or analysis forms.

4. Comparing the indicators to measure corporate reputation for companies in Thailand to those of other countries in other regions.

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