

Does a good corporate reputation heal all wounds?

Corporate reputation and its effects on communication climate in conflict situations

22th of July 2021

Moritz Press

S2121557

Communication Science
Univeristy of Twente

Supervisor drs. M.H. Tempelman

Abstract

Objective: In this study, the effect of a projected corporate reputation and internal (conflict) communication on the evaluation of the communication climate was investigated. More specifically, it was investigated whether a positive projected reputation provides an organization with buffering capabilities when organizational outsiders witness interpersonal conflict. Thus, the study aimed at answering the following research question: *What is the effect of a projected corporate reputation and internal (conflict) communication on the evaluation of the communication climate?* **Method:** In order to derive an answer for the research question, a 2 x 2 (projected reputation: *positive projected reputation & negative projected reputation* x internal (conflict) communication: *conflict scenario & no-conflict scenario*) experimental design was used. Thereby, it was researched how a projected reputation and internal (conflict) communication affect the perception of the organizational communication climate. Data of 119 respondents was included in the analysis. It was tested whether a positive projected reputation more positively influenced the evaluation of the communication climate as opposed to a negative projected reputation. Further, it was tested whether an interpersonal conflict situation in a workplace environment negatively influenced the evaluation of the communication climate as opposed to a non-conflict situation. Lastly, it was tested whether an interaction effect exists between a projected reputation and internal (conflict) communication. **Results:** The results showed significant main effects of projected reputation as well as internal (conflict) communication on the dependent variables. More specifically, projected reputation showed significant effects on organizational identification and information exchange whereas internal (conflict) communication showed significant effects on job satisfaction trust relationship with the leader as well as information exchange. Even though, both main effects showed significant results, no significant interaction effect between the independent variables was found. **Conclusion:** This study provides more insights on how a projected corporate reputation and internal (conflict) communication influence the evaluation of an organization's communication climate. In particular, the study revealed that internal conflict induces a less positive evaluation of the communication climate. This finding implies that organizational leaders should establish an organizational climate in which interpersonal conflict is minimized since it negatively influences how the organization is perceived by external parties. However, future research needs to investigate whether a positive reputation can compensate the effects of interpersonal conflict, since this study did not find support for this relationship.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Theoretical framework	6
2.1 Organizational reputation and internal communication	6
2.2 Communication Climate.....	7
2.3 Projected corporate reputation	11
2.4 Internal (conflict) communication	13
2.5 Reputation buffer: Interaction between projected corporate reputation and internal (conflict) communication.....	15
2.6 Conceptual research model.....	17
2.7 Hypothesis Overview	19
3. Method	20
3.1 Research design	20
3.2 Stimuli	21
3.3 Pre-test of stimuli	22
3.4 Stimuli main research	28
3.5 Participants	28
3.6 Procedure	31
3.7 Measures.....	31
4. Results.....	34
4.1 Manipulation check	34
4.2 Multivariate analysis of variance	35
4.3 Main effects of projected reputation	35
4.4 Main effects internal (conflict) communication.....	37
4.5 Interaction effect: Testing the reputation buffer.....	37
4.6 Overview Hypotheses testing	38
5. Discussion and Conclusion	40
5.1 Discussion of the findings	40
5.2 Academic implications and future research.....	44
5.3 Practical implications.....	45
6. Reference list:.....	48
7. Appendices	55

1. Introduction

In the not-too-distant past corporate reputation and in general, the external image of an organization were concepts of rather little importance. Back in the days, these concepts were primarily of interest for design consultants and public relations departments (Gray & Balmer, 1998). However, due to increasing debate in scientific as well as professional literature corporate reputation, and its' associated benefits have been elevated in importance. In consequence, today, a favorable corporate reputation is increasingly recognized as the number one strategic asset, hence, a great deal of effort and resources is utilized in order to establish and maintain it.

Even though organizations manage to establish and maintain a favorable corporate reputation, it is not guaranteed that this image is automatically absorbed by the organizational inside. Hence, it does not mean that if an organization has a positive corporate reputation the communication climate, the working atmosphere or the working moral of employees mirrors this status of excellence. Consider for example Amazon, the organization has been nominated as the company with the best reputation in the United States, outperforming globally known and valued companies such as Apple and Google. In 2016, Harris Poll (as cited in Vuong, 2018) conducted a survey among American individuals who considered Amazon to have the most favorable reputation in the categories: social responsibility, emotional appeal, products, and vision as well as perceived leadership. Although, external stakeholders perceive Amazon as a reputable company, internal stakeholder groups seem to have a widely differing point of view. Several employees have recently voiced their constraints and related work experiences with Amazon in public, as for instance a former Amazon Books Marketing employee, who elaborated in a New York Times interview on the internal climate. The former employee reported that nearly every person he worked with sat crying at their desk from time to time, due to the unpleasing work environment and rough climate (Kantor & Streitfeld, 2015). Further, he added that interpersonal conflicts were not exceptional at all. In addition, an area manager from Texas reported extreme work hours and a horrible work-life balance, and that the upper management does not respect your work life balance. Moreover, he adds that due to the rough and impersonal leadership style employees were largely dissatisfied and unmotivated to reach organizational objectives (Kantor & Streitfeld, 2015). The described experiences clearly emphasize that even though a corporation who has a top-of-the-line reputation in external stakeholder's minds, this external perception is not automatically reflected by the internal climate and internal communication. One of the most crucial

strategic assets that an organization may possess is a favorable corporate reputation. A good organizational reputation is of great importance for an organization as it is extremely hard to imitate, turning it into valuable source of competitive advantage and financial performance (Mahon, 2002; Hunt & Morgan, 1995). Besides the crucial importance of a good corporate reputation for the financial bottom line, the corporate reputation affects individual employees and their behaviors as well (Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012). Recent research has established the relationship between corporate reputation and internal, employee related aspects, for instance turnover intentions, perceived job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work performance, and organizational identification (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Greening & Turban, 1996; Riordan, Gatewood & Bill, 1997; Turban & Cable, 2003). Therefore, an essential stakeholder group, who influences corporate reputation and is influenced by it are the employees of an organization. Since employees share the corporate brand with potential and existing customers and also with other stakeholders outside the organization.

Conflict, regardless of whether it involves the entire organization or only a limited number of individuals, is an aspect of great importance for any organization, since it affects both, the entire organizational climate as well as individual employees. As emphasized in multiple studies organizational conflict is likely to have a great influence on individual's identification processes with the organization, (Frone, 2000) individual job satisfaction, (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003) as well as information exchange processes (Chen, Zhao, Liu & Wu 2012). Consequently, frequent organizational conflict indirectly affects the organizational reputation since employees contribute to a large extent to the construction and projection of it. Since previous research has already established the relationship between a corporate reputation and its effects of the communication climate, this study aims at taking it a step further and investigate how a corporate reputation influences the evaluation of the organizational communication climate in internal conflict situations. This will be done by answering the following research question:

RQ: What is the effect of a projected corporate reputation and internal (conflict) communication on the evaluation of the communication climate?

1.1 Academic and practical relevance

The findings of this study might contribute to the fields of reputation management as well as internal conflict management, since it provides further insights on the extent to which internal (conflict) communication affects outsider perceptions of the communication climate.

Moreover, there appears to be a need to further investigate whether a positive organizational reputation can compensate the notion of interpersonal conflict, and whether conflict situations have a less negative effect on organization which are perceived as reputable. This is of particular relevance since the current state of literature solely focuses on buffering capabilities of a positive reputation in the context of external organizational crisis. Thus, scholars seem to ignore that crisis similar situations can also root from the inside of an organization, internal communication. Hence, the outcome of the study might be relevant for organizational leaders and in particular for corporate strategy developers, since insights on how internal conflict scenarios affect the perception of the communication climate are provided. Thus, these insights might make a practical contribution on how a corporate reputation can compensate for internal conflict situations perceived by the broad public.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Organizational reputation and internal communication

In today's increasingly globalized and interconnected world, an organization's identity represents an important aspect, since it provides the foundation for potential customer and employee recognition. In recent decades, the understanding of a corporate identity and the associated importance have been broadened, and its relevance for organizational survival has been identified. Besides the ongoing discourse in scientific literature, attempting to define the concept of corporate identity, an increasing number of scholars acknowledged, that a corporate identity is composed of three 3 major components: the corporate behavior, corporate symbolism, and corporate communication (van Riel & Balmer, 1997). The three-folded composition of the corporate identity, presented in the corporate identity mix, was introduced by Birkigt and Stadler (1986) and later recognized by other scholars as well. According to van Rekom, van Riel, and Wierenga (1991) as cited in Melewar and Jenkins (2002) the corporate identity mix refers to the "self-presentation of an organization; it consists of cues which an organization offers about itself via the behavior, communication and symbols which are its forms of expression" (p.80). Thus, the major objective of establishing and maintaining a corporate identity is to create a favorable reputation in stakeholder's minds, which consequently should encourage them to buy that organization's products and services, or to invest in the corresponding organization (Balmer, 2010).

The identity of a corporation can be regarded as mean to express core values and distribute them among stakeholders, utilizing corporate symbols and corporate communications. Thereby, the corporate image is recognized by stakeholders and the organization establishes its reputation. However, the external image of an organization also affects internal elements since employees of an organization construct their organizational image based on outsider perceptions. Smidts, Pruyn and van Riel (2001) refer to this as "construed external image" (p. 1052) and point out that employee's perception of an organization is based on various types of information as for instance "the opinions of reference groups, word of mouth, publicity, external company-controlled information, and even internal communication of how the corporation is perceived by outsiders" (p. 1052). Moreover, if employees perceive to be part of an organization, which is commonly regarded to be a reputable employer the emotional connection with that organization is strengthened and feelings of pride are induced, thereby the internal climate is positively influenced

(Watson, 2012). The influence of a positive external corporate image on employee characteristic and the organizational climate is also recognized by Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994), who points out that such an image facilitates employee's identification with organizational values, attitudes, and norms thus, affecting the overall organizational climate and internal communications. Therefore, in this study it is argued that employees are not only an important part in constructing and communicating an organization's external image but are also influenced by it to a large extent due to outsider perceptions and their perception of how organizational outsiders perceive the corresponding organization.

2.2 Communication Climate

Establishing a pleasing communication climate is essential when creating an effective organization, since it influences the atmosphere in the entire organization (Redding, 1973). Thus, the organizational communication climate either hinders or encourages horizontal, upward, or downward communication among the employees (Nordin, Silvapalan, Bhattacharyya, Ahmad, & Abdullah, 2014). Therefore, the communication climate within an organization or department refers to the "subjectively experienced quality of the internal environment of an organization" (Dennis, 1974, p.29). Thus, according to Goldhaber (1993) as cited in Bartles, Pruyn, De Jong, and Joustra (2007) the term communication climate can be defined as "the perception of employees with regard to the quality of the mutual relations and the communication in an organization" (p. 177). Moreover, it concerns collective communication components within the work environment for instance the relationship to supervisors and managers, and the exchange of information taking place in the organization (Bartels, Peters, De Jong, Pruyn, & van der Molen, 2009). The communication climate represents a fundamental component of an organization, since it influences the productivity of the organization, employee wellbeing and affects the extent to which individuals commit themselves to an organization (Nordin et al., 2014). In an organizational context, establishing a high-quality communication climate directly relates to employee's mental well-being, their job satisfaction, personal motivation and personal relationship among employees and supervisors (Verma, 2013). However, the majority of recent studies investigated the relationship between an organization's communication climate and employee commitment as well as productivity related measures (Guzley, 1992). Although, the importance of a positive communication climate is recognized by the majority of studies, none of the past studies

clearly linked it to individual's job satisfaction, organizational identification, information exchange, and the trust relationship organizational leaders. However, the above-mentioned aspect clearly relates to an organization's communication climate, since the communication within an organization clearly influences employee's job satisfaction, the extent to which employees identify with the organization, and personal relationships. Thus, in the context of the present study individual's job satisfaction, organizational identification, information exchange, and the trust relationship with supervisor will be regarded as the organization's communication climate.

2.2.1 Job satisfaction

As the importance of a supportive communication climate is increasingly recognized, scholars have related various effects which result from a positive communication climate. The increase of academic interest in the topic was recognized by several scholars, as for instance Locke (1976), who assumed that several thousand papers and dissertations on the subject exist. According to a widely accepted definition established by Locke (1976), job satisfaction can be defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state, resulting from one's job and experiences made during that particular job. As job satisfaction is based on experiences made with a particular organization or a particular job it represents a combination of positive and negative feelings that employees have towards their work (Aziri, 2011). Since the extent to which an individual perceives their job to be satisfied is based on experiences with the organization, organizational communication and the organizational communication climate embody influential aspects of individual's job satisfaction. Generally, job satisfaction has been related to several beneficial outcomes for the corresponding organization as well for the wellbeing of the individual employees. Aziri (2011) for instance, identified job satisfaction as the key component to fulfillment and identified an increased workplace performance of employees, who reported to be satisfied with their jobs. This is consistent with research conducted by Spector (1985) as well as with a study conducted by Crossmann and Abu-Zaki (2003), who conducted research among Lebanese baking staff and found that those, who reported to be more satisfied with their jobs were more productive as compared to the employees, who reported to be less satisfied. On the other hand, a low level of job satisfaction was found to affect employee commitment and subsequently the achievement of organizational objectives as well as individual performance.

2.2.3 Organizational identification

Another important aspect which is tightly interwoven with an organization's communication climate is the extent to, which individuals identify themselves with the organization. The relationship between these two concepts is identified in multiple studies (e.g., Smids, Pruyn, & Van Riel, 2001; Bartles, Douwes, De Jong, & Pruyn, 2006). The extent to, which an individual identifies with an organization can be explained by social identity theory. Social identity theory postulates that a person's identity is not solely defined by personal characteristics, but rather, that memberships of different social groups, as for instance the membership of a certain organization, represents a major part of someone's identity (Turner, Bown & Tajfel 1979). Social identity theory is based on the idea that individuals prefer membership of groups that are rather positively evaluated, compared to other potential social categories. Membership of positively perceived groups is assumed to contribute to an individual's self-esteem and hence, enhances their identity (Bartels, Pruyn, De Jong, and Joustra, 2006). As a result, employees are motivated to engage in actions in favor of the organization, and to support organizational interests (Neill, Men, & Yue, 2019). This is in line with Bell and Menguc (2002), who contend that employees, who identify themselves more strongly with the employing organization and thereby, embody organizational values are more likely to engage in activities which reflect these values. Homburg, Wieseke, and Hoyer (2009) build up on this assumption and conclude that an employee, who incorporates organizational values will display a higher level of customer orientation and hence contribute to organizational productivity.

2.2.4 Information exchange

The frequent and continuous exchange of knowledge and task or social related information related represents an important aspect of the daily organizational life. The exchange of information enables an organization to meet organizational objectives, thus information exchange embodies an integral part of today's work environment across jobs and industries (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; Johnson et al., 2006). The frequency and quality of information exchange processes depend to a large extent on the communication climate of an organization since the atmosphere within an organization and individual relationships among employees largely affects employee's willingness to share information or to engage in interpersonal communication.

The exchange of knowledge is of particular importance when employees are

confronted with new and complex tasks since exchanging knowledge enables them to connect previously unconnected knowledge thus, enabling them to get new insights (Kogut & Zander, 1993; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Therefore, information exchange processes contribute to employee's development since new knowledge is gathered and differing viewpoints on work related tasks are exchanged. On the other hand, the exchange of information is not only of importance for the alignment of work-related tasks but also enables individuals to enhance their divergent thinking as they are confronted with diverse ideas and opinions (Gong, Kim, Lee & Zhu, 2013). In addition, information exchange is assumed to be beneficial for the social environment and personal relationships among employees since it stimulates team cohesion and thereby contributes to a more pleasing atmosphere (Mesmer-Magnus & De Church, 2009). However, most of the time the importance of an effective information exchange becomes evident when it fails, this can be the case when information is not available, wrong, or it is already too late to take appropriate action (Guenter, Emmerik, & Schreurs, 2014). Thus, timeliness and flawlessness are of major importance for the information exchange since delays or flaws can have substantial consequences for an entire organization, especially when the overdue information is necessary before further action can be taken and when immediate reaction is required (Guenter et al., 2014). Therefore, it can be concluded that a frequent and high-quality information exchange is not only necessary prerequisite for organizational success but also affects emotional well-being and the atmosphere in the corresponding organization, which in turn affects organizational effectiveness.

2.2.5 Trust relationship with leader

Interpersonal relationships do not only present a crucial aspect of individuals life outside the organizational context as they include the relationship to family and friends but also represent a meaningful component of the organizational life itself. An essential part of interpersonal relationship in the workplace context is interpersonal trust since it enables people to take risks in order to reach a certain organizational goal (McAllister, 1995). Trust is generally based on the expectation that others will not take advantage of oneself, thus adding to its importance for relationships among team leaders and members (Gong et al., 2013). Team leaders can be considered as having a high level of power, since they are responsible for reaching certain outcomes and further, they evaluate team members and determine the consequences within teams (Gong et al., 2013). Due to the power represented by the team

leader, a trustful relationship is of great importance since the leader constitutes the environment, in which team members operate. Besides trust the quality of the exchange relationship between an organizational leader and a member is of particular importance, which can be explained by leader-member exchange theory (LMX) (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). The central assumption behind LMX is that within an organizational context, multiple types of relationships between organizational members and leaders develop over time (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). These relationships are characterized by a differing exchange of resources among the involved parties. Within these relationships “physical or mental effort, material resources, information and/or emotional support are exchanged” (Liden et al., 1997, p.48). Within LMX theory two types of relationships are identified, which are characterized based on their quality of the relationship itself. On the one hand, as proposed by Danserau, Graen, and Haga (1975), low quality LMX relationships are those, which do not exceed the exchanges manifested by the employment contract. Hence, low quality LMX relationships do not exceed the formal interactions and exchanges necessary for the employee’s task. On the other hand, high quality LMX relationships, are assumed to include the exchange of material and non-material resources, which goes beyond the exchange specified in the in the formal job description (Danserau et al., 1975). In terms of the outcomes resulting from quality LMX there is general consensus among scholars that LMX relationships, which are strictly based on the employment contrast will result in less positive consequences for organizational members. However, high quality LMX relationships are expected to induce a more positive job attitude and members are assumed to engage in more positive behaviors towards the organization (Liden et al., 1997).

In order to test to what extent, the above-mentioned components representing the organizational communication climate are affected by the organizational reputation, narratives which project a corporate reputation were created. The underlying assumptions how the projected corporate reputation will affect the communication climate will be elaborated on the following. In addition, the above-mentioned components will be set in relation with organizational conflict, which will be elaborated afterwards.

2.3 Projected corporate reputation

During times of further increasing competition on globally connected markets, establishing, and maintaining a favorable organizational reputation embodies a crucial aspect in order to secure organizational success, and future competitiveness. Thus, a great amount of effort and

resources is devoted to the maintenance and establishment of a favorable reputation (Rose & Thomsen, 2004). However, a direct experience, for instance a purchase of a product, is not a prerequisite in order to perceive an organization's reputation. Therefore, in line with Loudon and Della Bitta (1993) it is postulated that an organization's reputation can also be recognized by means of communication, for example word of mouth. This is reflected by Yoon, Guffey, and Kijewski (1993), who argue that based on information diffusion either by the organization itself or by past customers, employees, and external parties a reputation of the corresponding organization is communicated. Based on this it is argued that a corporate reputation can be projected towards individuals by providing them with information about an organization which replaces direct experiences.

A crucial aspect of an organization's communication climate which is influenced by a corporate reputation is job satisfaction. As presented by Carmelli (2004) individuals are likely to perceive a feeling of pride if the organization they are part of, is perceived as a reputable employer. Consequently, the feeling of pride induced due to organizational membership strengthens the connection between the organization and the corresponding individual which is assumed to lead to an increased job satisfaction (Helm, 2012). In the context of a projected reputation, it is argued that individuals are likely to transfer their perceptions of the organization to other aspects, for instance job satisfaction. Hence, individuals imagine that employees must be satisfied with their jobs, since they perceive the organization as reputable or even prestigious employer.

Moreover, recent research has identified a strong relationship between an organization's reputation and the extent to which individuals identify with the organization. As emphasized by Helm (2012) organizational members who believe their organization is defined by qualities, which are related to competence, power, efficiency, virtue, and moral worth are likely to perceive the organizational identity as attractive and transfer these characteristics to their own identity. In consequence, member's self-esteem is enhanced, since members link these characteristics to their own personality as they perceive themselves to be part of the organization (Dutton et al., 1994). In the context of a projected corporate reputation individuals who are confronted with the organizational reputation, might assume that individuals are more likely to identify with that organization, since the organization projects positive attributes and values to the outside, making it desirable to be part of it. Thus, individuals conclude that employees identify with the organization, since the organization is publicly perceived as reputable, which in turn positively adds to employee's self-concepts (Bartels, Pruyn, De Jong, and Joustra, 2006).

Due to the fact that information exchange is widely perceived as being a crucial part for any kind of business, a flawless and continuous information exchange is likely to be associated with a reputable company (Jain, Sandhu, & Goh, 2015). The effectiveness of information exchange tightly depends on good relationships among the workforce, since individuals are more likely to exchange knowledge and information with individuals, they have a good relationship to (Mesmer-Magnus & De Church, 2009). Moreover, high quality relationships more frequently exist in rather reputable organizations, since they are more likely to have a positive organizational climate, which makes good employee relationships more likely (Cheikhrouhou, Pouly & Madinabeitia, 2012). Similarly, in the context of a projected reputation individuals imagine that the atmosphere within the organization is likely to be positive due to the overall positive appearance. Thus, they assume that employee relationships are rather likely to be positive as well which induces the perception of a positive information exchange, since good employee relationships are a necessity for effective information exchange.

As mentioned above interpersonal relationships are an important aspect of any organization since they drastically influence organizational effectiveness and are hence, considered as determinant for organizational success. Of major importance are relationships among organizational leaders and employees, since organizational leaders constitute the general environment, in which the workforce performs (Gong et al., 2013). In the context of a positive projected reputation, it can be argued that individuals who perceive the organizational reputation will evaluate employee supervisor relationship in accordance with that reputation. Consequently, individuals are likely to transfer this positive perception of the organizational reputation to a manager or supervisor, since they perceive this person as being responsible for the positive organizational climate. Thus, it is expected that:

H1: *A positive projected reputation will result in a more positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of a) job satisfaction, b) organizational identification, c) information exchange, and d) relation to organizational leaders as compared to a negative projected reputation.*

2.4 Internal (conflict) communication

Conflict is an ever-present part of any kind of relationship individuals engage in, regardless of whether the relationship serves private purpose or a professional one (Hall, Loomis,

Loomis & Moore, 1965). Interpersonal conflict situations also occur within organizational environments, since the goals and objectives of different stakeholders are often incompatible with each other (Jones, Gorge & Hill, 2000). Organizational conflict might have serious outcomes for an organization as it affects the way stakeholders perceive an organization, and thus affects their evaluations of it.

Recent studies investigated the relationship between interpersonal workplace conflict and individual employee variables, as for instance job satisfaction and overall employee wellbeing (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005). The majority of studies point towards a strong negative correlation between organizational conflict and job satisfaction. Moreover, organizational conflict is associated with a decrease in motivation which in consequence results in lower job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2012). Similarly, when external parties witness, that the internal communication climate is characterized by rough and intense conflict situations, they might be likely to assume that organizational members wellbeing and satisfaction is negatively affected. Thus, they are likely to assume that employee's satisfaction must be low, since conflict, in a professional environment is regarded as something undesirable and signals malfunctioning social relationships, which are regarded as a crucial part of workplace satisfaction (Chen et al., 2012).

Moreover, multiple studies investigated the relationship between interpersonal conflict and identification processes (Loh, Restubog & Zagenczyk, 2010). As emphasized by Loh, Restubog and Zagenczyk (2010) an individual's identification process is affected by interpersonal organizational conflict, since conflict leads employees to perceive the organization as less prestigious. Consequently, organizational conflict makes it less desirable to be part of such an organization as it is commonly perceived as a negative aspect and undesirable. Similarly, if organizational outsiders witness organizational conflict, they might imagine that organizational members evaluate their membership more critically, since being part of an organization which internal communications are marked by conflict is not desirable at all. Which in consequence, leads them to assumption that organizational identification is weaker for organizations which are characterized by interpersonal conflict.

Further, scholars have investigated the relationship between organizational conflict and knowledge exchange processes (Chen 2011). Interpersonal conflict is regarded as predictor for individual's knowledge exchange behavior, since knowledge exchange is considered as relationship orientated. Thus, individuals are more likely to engage in such processes if the relationship is characterized by trust as well as a rather harmonic state, which is the contrary to interpersonal conflict (Chen, 2011). In consequence, if organizational

outsiders perceive a threatening atmosphere and interpersonal conflict, they might perceive the information exchange as being less effective as well as less frequent.

Although only a limited part of studies specifically investigated the relationship between organizational conflict and its influence on leader member relationships there is some evidence that organizational conflict affects interpersonal relationships within organizations (Chen, 2011). There is scientific evidence which emphasizes that interpersonal conflict is likely to interfere leader member relationships, since organizational leaders are considered as being responsible to create a work environment, in which every employee can perform at their best (Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris & Noble, 2012). However, if organizational leaders do not manage to minimize conflict situations or are even frequently involved in such themselves, members are likely to consider them as being a less effective leader. Therefore, if the climate of an organization is perceived as being cruel and harsh these impressions are transferred to the interpersonal relationships in the organization, and in particular to those involving organizational leaders. Therefore, it is expected that:

H2: *The perception of an interpersonal conflict will result in a less positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of a) job satisfaction, b) organizational identification, c) information exchange, and d) relation to organizational leaders as compared to the presence of a no-conflict situation.*

2.5 Reputation buffer: Interaction between projected corporate reputation and internal (conflict) communication

Both, a projected corporate reputation, and the perception of interpersonal conflict situations are shown to affect internal aspects of an organization. Building on findings from previous studies which identified the relationship between several individual level variables and an organizations reputation, it is argued that a projected corporate reputation induces similar effects on stakeholder's perception of the organization, compared to a reputation which is based on direct interactions and experiences. Besides the consensus in scientific literature that a positive corporate reputation positively influences organizational productivity (Lange et al., 2010), organizational effectiveness (Bouckaert, 2001) as well as positively affects the workforce (Helm, 2011; 2012) it can be argued that it can compensate the effect of undesirable events and crisis situations (Sohn & Lariscy, 2012). In the context of a projected

corporate reputation, it can be expected that the established organizational reputation is still strong enough if the information on, which the reputation is established is considered as trustworthy (Bouckaert, 2001). Thus, it is argued that a positive projected external perception of the organization can potentially function as buffer, hence compensating the effect of undesirable events on the corporate reputation. This is emphasized in a study conducted by Jones, Jones, and Little's (2000) who conducted an analysis of share price fluctuations resulting from the stock market crash in 1989. The study reported that corporations with a good reputation experienced significantly less declines in sales and overall market value as compared to those without a positive reputation. Thus, it can be argued that a positive corporate reputation compensated the negative events and the resulting rather negative perception of external stakeholders.

However, besides external factors, which influence the organizational standing and might induce a crisis situation, perceptions of undesirable internal affairs also affect the external standing of an organization. An example for such an undesirable event which is brought to the eyes of external stakeholders is a rough and harsh internal communication climate. A rather bad perception of internal aspects of an organization are assumed to affect the overall external perception it. This is in line with Liden and Graen (1980), who proposed that the external reputational standing of an organization is affected if external organizational parties witness a rather bad organizational climate and interpersonal conflict. However, if the corresponding organization has been evaluated as being good or doing good in the past the perception of conflict will have less of an effect on the corporate reputation.

The general assumption of compensating capacities of corporate reputation is often presented in the light of an organizational halo "which can soften the blow when organizational crisis hits" (Fombrun, 1996, p. 79). However, the underlying assumption that a corporate reputation might compensates undesirable events can be explained by stakeholder's motivation to keep internal cognitive consistency (Sohn & Lariscy, 2012). Individual's unconscious desire to keep a consistent image of an organization over a certain period of time can be explained by the cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). The cognitive dissonance theory suggest that inconsistent fragments of information induce an unpleasing feeling, to which Festinger (1957) refers to as feeling "uneasy" (p.58). However, this emotional perception is commonly referred to as cognitive dissonance (Sohn & Lariscy, 2012). This unpleasing emotional state consequently increases individual's motivation to reduce the perceived informational inconsistency. Individuals cope with this inconsistency by selectively focusing on information that is in line with held beliefs based on past

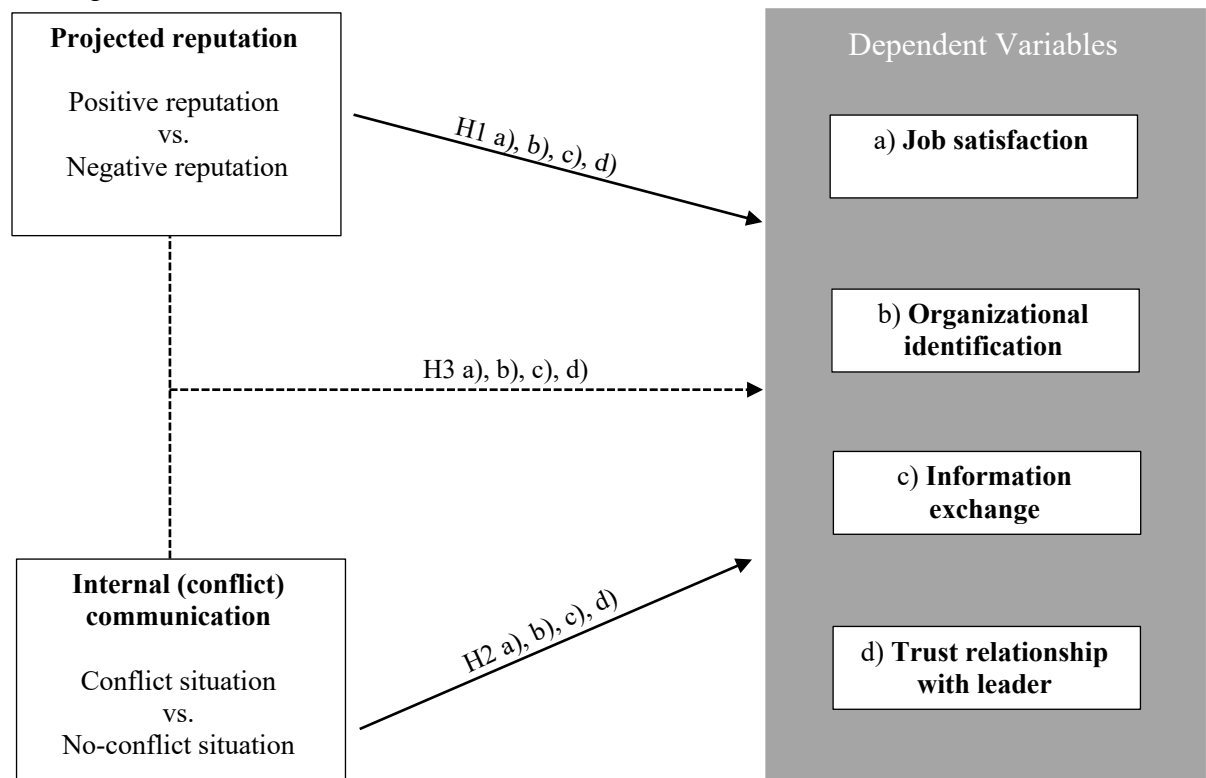
interactions and experiences. Hence, if past interactions with an organization as for instance the purchase of a product were evaluated as positive individuals are likely to eliminate other perceptions regarding this organization which are not in line with it (Sohn & Lariscy, 2012). Therefore, if an individual was recently confronted with positive information of an organization, and thus established a positive image of the organization the individual is more likely to focus on this positive indirect experience and eliminate negative perceptions of the organization in case they occur. This cognitive strategy, which is applied to eliminate cognitive dissonance and keep the perceived image and past experiences in line is referred to as confirmatory bias (Grunwald & Hempelmann, 2011). Based on above elaborated foundations it is expected that:

H3: *A positive projected organizational reputation in combination with an internal conflict situation will result in a less negative evaluation of the communication climate represented by a) job satisfaction, b) organizational identification, c) information exchange, and d) relation to organizational leaders as compared to a negative projected organizational reputation in combination with a conflict situation.*

2.6 Conceptual research model

In the following a visualization of the study components (figure 1) as well as an overview of the hypothesis is presented (table 1).

Figure 1
Conceptual Research Model



2.7 Hypothesis Overview

Table 1

Hypotheses Overview

Hypotheses	
H1A	A positive projected reputation will result in a more positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of job satisfaction, as compared to a negative projected reputation.
H1B	A positive projected reputation will result in a more positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of organizational identification, as compared to a negative projected reputation.
H1C	A positive projected reputation will result in a more positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of information exchange, as compared to a negative projected reputation.
H1D	A positive projected reputation will result in a more positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of the relationship to organizational leaders, as compared to a negative projected reputation.
H2A	The perception of an interpersonal conflict will result in a less positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of job satisfaction, as compared to the presence of a no-conflict situation.
H2B	The perception of an interpersonal conflict will result in a less positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of organizational identification, as compared to the presence of a no-conflict situation.
H2C	The perception of an interpersonal conflict will result in a less positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of information exchange, as compared to the presence of a no-conflict situation.
H2D	The perception of an interpersonal conflict will result in a less positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of relationship to organizational leaders, as compared to the presence of a no-conflict situation.
H3A	A positive projected organizational reputation in combination with an internal conflict situation will result in a less negative evaluation of the communication climate in terms of job satisfaction, as compared to a negative projected organizational reputation in combination with a conflict situation.
H3B	A positive projected organizational reputation in combination with an internal conflict situation will result in a less negative evaluation of the communication climate, in terms of organizational identification, as compared to a negative projected organizational reputation in combination with a conflict situation.
H3C	A positive projected organizational reputation in combination with an internal conflict situation will result in a less negative evaluation of the communication climate, in terms of information exchange, as compared to a negative projected organizational reputation in combination with a conflict situation.
H3D	A positive projected organizational reputation in combination with an internal conflict situation will result in a less negative evaluation of the communication climate, in terms of relationship to organizational leaders, as compared to a negative projected organizational reputation in combination with a conflict situation.

3. Method

The present study aims to provide insight into how a reputation of an organization affects the evaluation of the internal communication climate, if organizational members engage in a conflict. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested, in order to investigate the influence of a projected reputation and internal conflict communication on the evaluation of the communication climate. First, the stimuli for the main study were tested in order to ensure that the desired characteristics of the materials are recognized. After analyzing the results, the final four stimuli for the main study were created. Lastly, by utilizing an online survey, data was gathered in order to investigate how participants evaluate the communication climate after the stimuli were presented.

3.1 Research design

This study investigated how a projected organizational reputation affects the evaluation of the communication climate, in conflict as well as no conflict scenarios. In order to test the formulated hypothesis, an experimental study was executed incorporating a 2 x 2 experimental design. The first independent variable tested was projected reputation, this variable is divided into ‘positive reputation’ and ‘negative reputation’. Moreover, the second independent variable included was video, which includes the categories ‘conflict’ and ‘no-conflict’. Utilizing this design, it was tested whether a favorable description of the company emphasizing the pleasing work environment versus a rather unfavorable description of the company, emphasizing the rough and competitive work environment results in a more positive evaluation of the corresponding communication climate. Moreover, the study also tested whether a short video clip presenting a verbal conflict situation, in an office setting, versus a non-conflict situation in the same office setting results in a less positive evaluation of the internal communication climate. In addition, it was explored whether there is an interaction effect between the projected corporate reputation (positive vs. negative), and the video stimulus (conflict vs. no-conflict).

Table 2
Overview Experimental Conditions

		Reputation prime	
		Positive	Negative
Communication Episode	Conflict	<i>Condition 1:</i> Positive reputation prime followed by a conflict video of a communication episode	<i>Condition 3:</i> Negative reputation prime followed by a conflict video of a communication episode
	No-conflict	<i>Condition 2:</i> Positive reputation prime followed by a no conflict video of a communication episode	<i>Condition 4:</i> Negative reputation prime followed by a no conflict video of a communication episode

3.2 Stimuli

Two types of stimuli were created in order to test their effect on the evaluation of the 4 communication climate measures. The first category of stimuli were two primes which either projected a positive reputation or a negative reputation towards the participants. The primes described the working atmosphere of a fictitious office either presented in a positive and pleasing manner or in a rough and competitive manner. Moreover, the primes presented the same office environment which was shown to the participants in the second step, thus providing a congruent experience in which both stimuli can easily be related to each other. In order to increase the comparability of the effects resulting from the narratives, care was taken to create two differing versions which only differ in the way the work environment and the atmosphere were described. Therefore, the only point of difference between the textual primes was the wording which described the general atmosphere, employee supervisor relationships, and the relationships among the employees. Both versions can be found in Appendix I.

The second category of stimuli were short video clips, which were extracted from the series “Suits”. This series was chosen, since a major part of it takes place in an office environment which is clearly recognizable as such. Further, the characters presented in the fragments tend to frequently have verbal conflicts, which ultimately resulted in a greater range of potential stimuli. The video sequences were extracted using a screen recording software and were further edited in order ensure that every fragment is of equal lengths. In order decrease the dropout rate of participants, video fragments were no longer than one minute and 40 seconds. Figure 2 shows both characters which were shown in the video clips.

The following link leads to the four video clips which were included in the pre-test:
<https://bit.ly/3hfyFIS>.

Generally, testing the two types of stimuli served multiple purposes. First, it was tested whether participants were able recognize the positive and negative aspects of the work environment and whether they consequently connected this information to a positive or reputation of the organization. Further, it was investigated how respondents evaluate the communication climate as well as working atmosphere within the described office setting. Subsequently, the pre-test was conducted in order to gather information about which of the presented video clips was perceived to include a conflict or non-conflict situation, and which clips are deemed as being realistic.

Figure 2

Characters Presented in Visual Stimuli



3.3 Pre-test of stimuli

Before the hypotheses can be tested it is necessary to investigate whether the established stimuli possess the desired characteristics and whether these characteristics are sufficiently recognized. Therefore, the written narratives as well the video fragments were pre-tested (see Appendix II). The pre-test was divided into two parts. In the first part respondents were asked to carefully read both of the presented texts which were presented in random order.

Afterwards, participants answered 10 questions, asking them to evaluate the reputation, the working climate within that particular office, and the atmosphere within the office. Further, the second part of the pre-test consisted out of four video fragments of which two showed a conflict situation and two a non-conflict situation, which were displayed in random order. Subsequently, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they perceive a conflict or no-conflict to be present, to evaluate the realism of the clips, and to evaluate the communication climate. The pre-test was conducted using Qualtrics Survey Software and was distributed via WhatsApp. In total, 6 males and 4 females participated in the pre-test, resulting in ten participants. Respondents were between 21 and 25 years old.

3.3.1 Pre-test of textual primes

Since the textual stimuli provide the basis of the study it is crucial to ensure that participants perceive the descriptions as initially intended. In order to ensure this the two priming conditions were created and included in the pre-test. The first narrative solely presents the work atmosphere, employee relationships, and employee supervisor relationship in a positive way emphasizing the helpfulness of supervisors while presenting the reader with an office culture in which an open and friendly way of communication is practiced. Further, every individual's opinion is valued and respected regardless of the hierarchical position. The positively connotated words which emphasize the pleasurable and supportive work environment are assumed to project a positive organizational reputation.

In contrast, the second stimulus merely focused the competitive and rather rough work environment. Therefore, the atmosphere is characterized by a large degree of tension and the tone of voice is being presented as rough and impersonal. Contrasting to the first description here the communication climate is aimed to be characterized by jealousy and resentment, which results in competitive behavior among the workforce. Therefore, this was assumed to project a negative reputation towards the participants. First the version projecting a negative reputation was created. After the text was considered to be decent, the crucial signaling words were highlighted and the antonyms were searched using an online antonym dictionary. If no exact antonym was found a word with a similar meaning was used. Next, the highlighted negative signaling words were then exchanged with the positive signaling words in order to create the positive version. Both primes can be found in Appendix I.

In order to test the textual primes, a set of 10 questions was included after each text. The responses were recorded using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. As the major function of the primes is to establish an either positive or

negative reputation in the respondent's mind, the first statement presented was "*the described organization has good reputation*" in order to ensure participants were determined while answering this first statement, the second statement presented was "*the described organization has a bad reputation*". Moreover, it was measured how the participants perceive the working climate in the described office. Therefore, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree to the following four statements "*the working climate is pleasing*", "*the working climate is rough*", "*the working climate is competitive*" and, "*the working climate is supportive*". Lastly, it was measured how participants evaluate the working atmosphere within the office. Therefore, the following statements were presented to the participants: "*the atmosphere in the office is friendly*", "*the atmosphere in the office is alerting*", "*the atmosphere in the office is motivating*", and "*the atmosphere in the office is frightening*".

3.3.2 Results of textual primes

The results from the pre-test were exported and subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistics. For each statement, the mean and standard deviation of the corresponding prime were calculated. When looking at the results for the statement "*the organization has a good reputation*" in the positive priming condition, it can be concluded that participants evaluated the reputation as being better as opposed to when participants were presented with the negative priming condition. A one sample t-test showed significant results for "the organization has a positive reputation" as well as for "the organization has a negative reputation" see table 3.

Further, participants perceived the working climate as being more pleasing in the positive priming condition as opposed to when asked to evaluate the working climate in the negative priming condition. In line with the expectations, the working climate was considered to be rougher in the negative priming condition compared to the positive priming condition. The competitiveness of the working climate was almost perceived as equally intense in both conditions.

When looking at the results of the statements which asked the participants to evaluate the atmosphere in the office, it can be stated that the atmosphere in the positive priming condition was evaluated as being more friendly and more motivating as opposed to the negative priming condition. However, as intended, the atmosphere of the negative priming condition was evaluated as being more alerting and frightening.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics Textual Primes

	Positive M (SD) ^{a)}	Sig.	Projected reputation	Negative M (SD) ^{a)}	Sig.
<i>Reputation</i>					
Good	5.50 (1.87)	.00		2.83 (1.72)	.02
Bad	2.33 (1.86)	.02		5.17 (1.72)	.00
<i>Working climate</i>					
Pleasing	5.18 (1.83)			2.50 (2.07)	
Rough	2.83 (1.83)			5.33 (1.63)	
Competitive	4.17 (2.13)			4.50 (1.76)	
Supportive	5.50 (2.34)			3.00 (1.78)	
<i>Atmosphere</i>					
Friendly	5.33 (1.75)			2.83 (1.94)	
Alerting	3.50 (2.16)			4.83 (1.60)	
Motivating	5.83 (1.47)			3.00 (1.78)	
Frightening	2.33 (1.96)			5.33 (1.75)	
a) 7- point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree / 7= strongly agree)					

Based on the results which are presented in table 3, it was concluded that participants recognized the office descriptions in the intended way, hence the pre-test was successful. Consequently, it was decided to include both priming conditions in the main study. However, when looking at table 3 table, it becomes apparent that respondents more clearly perceived the positive office description in the intended way.

3.3.3 Pre-test of visual stimuli

Different video clips were tested in order to determine, which clip of the corresponding category is most clearly perceived as including the desired characteristics. Therefore, two video clips which were assumed to include a conflict scenario and two, which were assumed to include a non-conflict scenario were included in the pre-test. The extent to which a video is perceived to include a conflict varies among individuals as every individual has differing sensibility towards the perception of conflict. Therefore, it was necessary to test different video fragments in order to determine which videos were most clearly perceived as including a conflict scenario versus a non-conflict situation. Since it was planned to also include a non-conflict video in the main study it was necessary to determine which video was most clearly perceived as including no conflict as well. The four video clips can be found by following this link <https://bit.ly/3hfyFIS>.

In addition, it was tested to what extent both video categories are perceived as being realistic, and the overall communication climate was measured as well asking participants to indicate to what extent they would evaluate it as being constructive, respectful, alerting, and threatening. Therefore, participants were asked to answer a set of 9 questions on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The video clips were presented in random order allowing every participant to see all four videos. In order to check whether the video fragments would be perceived as including a conflict or non-conflict situation, the first statement was “the presented video shows a conflict”. The following statements focused on the extent to which the video content was evaluated as being realistic, therefore the statement was “the presented situation is realistic”. The other statements focused on the communication climate in the presented scenario. Therefore, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree to the following statements “*the communication climate is constructive*”, “*the communication climate is aggressive*”, “*the communication climate is respectful*”, and lastly “*the communication climate is threatening*”.

3.3.4 Results of visual stimuli

3.3.4.1 Conflict one vs. conflict two

In order to analyze the data which were collected by means of the pre-test, the mean and standard deviation of the different statements were calculated. The analysis of descriptive statistics was performed in all four video conditions in order to identify the most appropriate video fragment per category. Moreover, one sample t-tests were performed in regard to the presence of conflict and perceived realism.

When looking at the results of the two videos which were assumed to present a conflict, it can be concluded that participants more clearly perceived that the video 1 “*conflict one*” as including a conflict as opposed to the video “*conflict two*”. When participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree to the statement “*the presented situation is realistic*” the video “*conflict one*” was evaluated as being more realistic. Further, participants were asked to evaluate the communication climate based on the presented video fragments. Hereby, the communication climate in the video “*conflict one*” was evaluated as being more aggressive, more constructive, and also as being more respectful. Subsequently, the communication climate in the video fragment “*conflict two*” was evaluated as being more threatening as opposed to “*conflict one*”. When looking at the result from the two different conflict video fragments, it can be observed that some of them are not that straight forward,

for example the communication climate of the video conflict one was evaluated as being more constructive and respectful even though it was perceived as being more aggressive. An overview of the corresponding mean values, standard deviations, and *p*-values is presented in table 4.

3.3.4.2 No-conflict one vs. No-conflict two

In the context of the remaining two video fragments, which were assumed to present a non-conflict scenario it can be concluded that the video “no conflict one” was evaluated as being less conflicting as opposed to the video “no conflict two”. Further, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they perceive the video clips as realistic. Hereby, “no conflict two” was perceived as more realistic. Next, participants were asked to evaluate the communication climate of the presented scenario. Hereby, the communication climate in the video “no conflict two” was evaluated as being more constructive, more respectful, and less aggressive. However, the communication climate in the video “no conflict one” was perceived as being more threatening. An overview of the corresponding mean values, standard deviations, and *p*-values is presented in table 4.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics Visual Stimuli

	Video							
	Conflict one		Conflict two		No-Conflict one		No-Conflict two	
	M (SD) ^{a)}	Sig.	M (SD) ^{a)}	Sig.	M (SD) ^{a)}	Sig.	M (SD) ^{a)}	Sig.
<u>Conflict</u>								
Presents conflict	6.17 (1.17)	<i>p</i> < .01	2.33 (1.50)	<i>p</i> = .01	2.14 (1.46)		1.86 (0.90)	
Presents no conflict ^{b)}	3.5 (2.73)		2.50 (1.87)		5.71 (1.79)	<i>p</i> < .01	4.57 (2.37)	<i>p</i> = .01
<u>Realism</u>								
Realistic	6.17 (0.73)	<i>p</i> < .01	2.33 (1.03)	<i>p</i> = .03	2.43 (0.97)	<i>p</i> = .01	6.29 (0.75)	<i>p</i> < .01
Not realistic ^{b)}	3.17 (2.40)		2.17 (1.16)		6.00 (1.15)		1.86 (0.69)	
<u>Communication climate</u>								
Constructive	3.33 (1.96)		4.67 (1.86)		4.71 (1.70)		6.00 (0.81)	
Aggressive	6.33 (0.81)		3.00 (1.54)		2.71 (1.60)		2.14 (1.46)	
Respectful	3.17 (1.47)		4.33 (1.96)		4.43 (1.81)		6.29 (0.48)	
Threatening	5.67 (2.11)		2.83 (0.75)		2.71 (0.75)		1.86 (1.06)	

^{a)} 7- point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree / 7 = strongly disagree)

^{b)} Item was reverse coded (1 = strongly disagree / 7 = strongly agree)

3.4 Stimuli main research

Based on the results of the pre-test, four stimuli were included in the main study. The results of the pre-test showed that the intended characteristics of both text-based stimuli are sufficiently recognized by the respondents and thus trigger the predetermined associations of either having a good or bad reputation. Moreover, the working climate in both office descriptions was also recognized in the intended way, hence both priming conditions were included in the main study. In addition, the pre-test showed that the video fragment “*conflict one*” was on average more frequently perceived as presenting a conflict situation whilst also being perceived as more realistic. Thus, it can be assumed that respondents recognized that a conflict situation was presented and hence, the video fragment was included in the main study. Moreover, the communication climate within that particular video fragment was perceived as more aggressive, which in turn intensifies the perception of a conflict. In regard to the second video stimulus, it was decided to include the video “no conflict two” in the main study as respondents more frequently indicated that hereby no conflict situation was shown. In addition, this video fragment was evaluated as being more realistic and the communication climate was perceived as less aggressive. In the main study the characters which were shown in the video stimuli were first introduced to the respondents in order make sure that participants remember them and are thus able to answer the questions in the intended way. Moreover, the introduction of the characters also aimed at providing the respondent with a context in which the study takes place, and further elaborates on the relationship between the presented characters and the fictitious company described in the priming conditions.

3.5 Participants

Once the questionnaire was developed and the final versions of the stimuli created, the initial process of collecting data started. There were no restrictions for participating in the study, except the minimum age of 18 years. In order to recruit participants a non-probability method was applied; thus, participants were included who were the most accessible to the researcher. The anonymous link to the survey was distributed using different messenger applications such as WhatsApp. Further, the link was shared on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. In total, 123 were recorded. However, it was recognized that not every

participant was able to provide an answer to every item. Therefore, it was decided to exclude uncomplete answers from the analyses in order to get clear results. After excluding uncomplete answers, responses of 119 participants were used in the analysis.

3.5.1 Descriptive statistics

Utilizing a SPSS analysis, descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation were calculated. Means and standard deviations were calculated for individual respondent characteristics such as the age, gender and, educational level. Table 5 provides an overview of the distributions of age, gender, and the education level. Based on the table it can be stated that the mean age for each condition is approximately the same since it ranges between 23 and 27 years (*Condition 1: $M = 24.13$, $SD = 4.47$*), (*Condition 2: $M = 22.93$, $SD = 3.42$*), (*Condition 3: $M = 24.93$, $SD = 6.77$*), (*Condition 4: $M = 26.69$, $SD = 8.38$*). This was also supported by a one-way ANOVA analysis which indicated that there is no significant effect for age between the conditions ($F(3, 116) = 2.03$, $p = 0.11$). This implies that the data is evenly distributed in the conditions with regard to the age of respondents.

In addition, when looking at the distribution of gender, within each condition, it can be concluded that the number of female participants is considerably higher as the number of male participants. However, a chi-square test did not show significant effects of gender between the conditions, thus the data is evenly distributed with regard to gender ($\chi^2(6) = 6.70$, $p = 0.34$).

When looking at the distribution of education levels among the individual conditions it becomes apparent that the research subjects are equally distributed based on education as indicated by a chi-square test ($\chi^2(9) = 8.04$, $p = 0.52$). However, 56% of the respondents are displayed in the second lowest education category representing the completion of secondary school.

Moreover, 37% of the respondents reported to be “somewhat experienced” in working an office environment. Further, a chi-square test showed that the respondents were evenly distributed among the conditions in terms of working experience in an office environment ($\chi^2(12) = 12.58$, $p = 0.40$).

Table 5

Distribution of Sample Characteristics

Variable	<i>Condition 1:</i>	<i>Condition 2:</i>	<i>Condition 3:</i>	<i>Condition 4:</i>	<i>All</i>
	Positive prime & Conflict communication episode	Positive prime & No-conflict communication episode	Negative prime & Conflict communication episode	Negative prime & No-conflict communication episode	<i>Sample</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
Gender:					
Male	26.7	27.3	28.6	10	22.7
Female	73.3	72.7	71.4	90	77.3
Age:					
18 – 24	70	83.9	70.4	64.3	72.4
25 – 34	26.7	12.9	18.5	28.6	21.6
35 – 44	3.3	3.2	7.4	3.6	4.3
45 – 54	0.0	0.0	3.7	3.6	1.7
Level of education:					
Primary school	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.8
Secondary School	56.7	64.5	60.7	43.3	56.3
Bachelor ^{a)}	33.3	29.0	35.7	43.3	35.3
Master ^{a)}	10.0	3.2	3.6	13.3	7.6
Work experience in office ^{b)} :					
1	23.3	16.1	28.8	10.0	19.3
2	10.0	22.6	17.9	13.3	38.7
3	3.3	0.0	7.7	0.0	2.5
4	43.3	38.7	32.1	40.0	16.0
5	20.0	22.6	14.3	23.5	19.3
N of obs.	30	31	28	30	119

^{a)} Bachelor / Master or equivalent level^{b)} Measured on 5-point Liker scale (1=Not at all / 5= Yes, very much)

3.6 Procedure

The questionnaire of the main study was constructed utilizing Qualtrics Survey Software. Once participants clicked on the link, which most of the time was included in a WhatsApp message, they would be redirected to the first page of the survey. This first page included general information regarding the study and individuals were thanked for considering participation. In addition, the purpose of the study was briefly explained. Lastly, the informed consent form was presented to the participants, which emphasized that participation is voluntarily, that data will be anonymized, and that participants can withdraw at any point time. Respondents were asked to actively consent before they were able to continue, as it was required by the BMS ethic committee who approved the study. The approval of the BMS ethics committee can be found in Appendix III.

Subsequently, the initial study started by asking demographic questions related to participant's age, educational level, gender, nationality, and work experience. Afterwards participants were randomly presented to one of the four stimuli conditions. Next, the four dependent variables, representing the communication climate were tested. In a last step participant were asked to answer a short set of questions which were part of the pre-test in order to enable the researcher to judge whether the stimuli were recognized in the intended way. An overview of the study can be found in Appendix IV.

3.7 Measures

This research aims at investigating how a reputation affects participants perception of the internal communication when being exposed to either scenario showing a conflict vs. a non-conflict. Different measures were included in the questionnaire in order to evaluate to what extent the evaluation was influenced by the independent variables. These dependent measures include job satisfaction, organizational identification, information exchange and, trust relationship with supervisor.

3.7.1 *Job satisfaction*

The extent to which a participant would consider the job of Harvey Spector as satisfying was measured utilizing 10 items in total. The statements were based on Spector's (1994) Job Satisfaction Survey", however the scale was adapted to fit the context of the study. The construct was measured using a 7-Point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Participants were asked to evaluate the statements based on the prime and

visual stimulus they were exposed to. A factor analysis indicated that items which were initially assumed to measure the construct job satisfaction load on two different components. Therefore, the construct was separated into the constructs job satisfaction attitude and job satisfaction support. The construct job satisfaction attitude included items like “do you think he would perceive his jobs as being enjoyable”, “do you think he would enjoy his co-workers?” and, “do you think he would feel a sense of pride in doing his job?” and was measured by six items in total. A reliability analysis showed that the items have relatively high reliability ($\alpha = 0.87$). Further, the construct job satisfaction support was measured by four items in total. The construct included items like “Do you think he would consider that there is too little support for those who work for the organization”, “Do you think he would not feel that the work he does is appreciated?” and, “Do you think he would perceive that his supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of the subordinates?”. A reliability analysis indicated a relatively high reliability ($\alpha = 0.81$).

3.7.2 Organizational identification

In order to measure the extent to which participants assume Harvey Specter identifies with the organization, a set of six items was used. The construct was measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The scale was adapted from a study conducted by Mael and Ahsforth (1992) and included statements such as “Do you think he would feel personally insulted when someone would criticize the company he works for?”, “Do you think he would be interested in what other say about the organization he works for?” and, “Do you think he would rather say “we” then “they” when talking about the organization he works for?”. In order to fit the context of the study items were adapted and formulations were changed. A reliability analysis was conducted, and it was concluded that the reliability of the scale is decent since the Cronbach’s Alpha score of this measure is $\alpha = 0.84$.

3.7.3 Information exchange

Five items were used to measure the construct information exchange. The construct was measured utilizing a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items “information, which is used to make decisions, is freely shared among members of the team?”, “team members work hard to keep one another up to date on their activities?” and, “team members are kept in the loop about issues affecting the entire company?” were based on a study conducted by Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002). The remaining two items “team members exchange information and learn from each other?” and, “team members

exchange ideas with each other to analyze and solve problems?” were based on research conducted by Gong, Cheung, Wang, and Huang (2012). The conducted reliability test showed that these items have a high reliability $\alpha = 0.91$.

3.7.4 Trust relationship with the leader

In order to measure the construct “trust relationship with supervisor” a set of four items was included in the questionnaire. The statements were based on research conducted by McAllister (1995) however they were reformulated, in order to be valuable in the context of this study. The scale included statements like “Do you think he would have found it necessary to work around Harvey in order to get things done the way he would like them to be done?”, “Do you think he would keep close track of his interactions with Harvey, taking note of instances where Harvey did not keep his end of the deal?” and, “Do you think he would try to have a back-up plan rather than being dependent on Harvey?”.

Based on an analysis the reliability of this measure can be considered as decent with a Cronbach’s Alpha score of $\alpha = 0.83$.

4. Results

After the main study was conducted the gathered data was analyzed. In the following, an explanation of the stimuli check will be provided, which was conducted in order to investigate whether the stimuli worked as initially intended. Further, the hypothesis testing of the main effects as well as interaction effects will be presented.

4.1 Manipulation check

4.1.1 Textual stimuli

First, a manipulation check was performed in order to investigate whether the stimuli worked as initially intended, and thus, can be included in the analysis. Therefore, participants needed to respond, on a 7-point bipolar scale, whether they perceive the organization which was presented in the primes, as having a positive or negative reputation. Results showed that participants who were exposed to the positive reputation prime evaluated the reputation being better ($M = 5.90$, $SD = 1.54$) as compared to when participants were presented with the negative reputation prime ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.67$). The difference between the reputation mean scores was insignificant. Further, it can be observed that in both conditions the reputation was slightly perceived as being positive since both reputation scores were above the midpoint of the scale.

4.1.2 Video stimuli

A similar manipulation check was also performed for the second independent variable “video”. First, an Independent Samples T-Test was conducted, which indicated significant differences $t(177) = 9.51$, $p = 0.00$ in the scores of perceived conflict, in the conflict ($M = 6.33$, $SD = 0.98$) and no- conflict condition ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.88$). The results indicate that participants recognized the desired characteristics of the video stimuli either presenting a conflict or no conflict situation. In addition, the perceived realism of the individual conditions was tested. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. The results do not show significant differences in terms of perceived realism among the four conditions ($F(3, 118) = 0.78$, $p = 0.50$). The results imply that all conditions were perceived as similar in regard to realism. It can be concluded that the manipulations work to a certain extent since, no significant results were found for the textual stimuli although participants recognized that the versions differ. However, significant results were found in regard to the video stimulus

indicating that the conflict and no-conflict scenario were recognized as intended. Further, it can be concluded that the four stimuli conditions were perceived similarly in regard to realism.

4.2 Multivariate analysis of variance

A multivariate analysis of variance was conducted in order to investigate the effects of a projected corporate reputation and internal (conflict) communication on the evaluation of the communication climate. A Wilk's Lambda test was done in order to examine the general effects of the independent variables on the combined dependent variables. The results of the multivariate analysis are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Multivariate Tests

	Independent variable	F-value	Sig.
<i>Wilk's Lambda</i>	Projected reputation	3.12	$p = .01$
	Internal (conflict) communication	23.54	$p < .01$
	Projected reputation*Video	0.80	$p = .54$

A Wilk's Lambda test showed that there is a significant main effect of projected reputation on the combined dependent variables ($\Lambda = 0.87$, $F(5,111) = 3.12$, $p < .001$) as well a significant main effect of video ($\Lambda = 0.48$, $F(5,111) = 23.54$, $p = .00$). However, there was no significant interaction effect between the independent variables found.

4.3 Main effects of projected reputation

As shown in Table 7, there were significant main effects of projected reputation on organizational identification and information exchange, whereas no significant main effects on job satisfaction in terms of support and attitude as well as trust relationship with the leader were found. An overview of the means and standard deviations of the dependent variables can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

Overview Projected Reputation

Dependent variable	Projected reputation positive / negative		Positive projected reputation N=61		Negative projected reputation N=58	
	<i>F-value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Job satisfaction support	0.04	$p = .84$	4.01	1.37	4.04	1.31
Job satisfaction attitude	3.14	$p = .79$	4.04	1.34	3.70	1.22
Organizational identification	4.22	$p = .04$	4.99	1.16	4.54	1.24
Trust relationship with leader	0.14	$p = .70$	4.10	1.35	4.00	1.24
Information exchange	13.90	$p < .01$	4.07	1.33	3.24	1.23

Analysis of the dependent variables revealed no significant effects of projected reputation on job satisfaction in terms of support. However, the positive projected reputation led to a lower score of job satisfaction in terms of support as compared to the negative projected reputation. Although, this score might appear as being confusing it will be elaborated later on. The main effect of projected reputation on job satisfaction in regard to attitude was not found to be significant. However, the positive projected reputation led to a higher score on imagined job satisfaction in terms of attitude as compared to the negative projected reputation.

A significant effect of projected reputation was found on organizational identification ($F(1,115) = 4.22, p = 0.04$). Respondents evaluated the organizational identification as being higher when presented with the positive reputation prime ($M = 4.99, SD = 1.16$) as compared to the negative reputation prime ($M = 4.54, SD = 1.24$).

In regard to the trust relationship with the leader, no significant main effect of projected reputation was found. However, the positive projected reputation led to higher values in terms of trust towards the supervisor.

Lastly, the effect of projected reputation on information exchange was found to be significant ($F(1,115) = 13.90, p = 0.00$). Hence, the mean values for information exchange were higher in the context of a positive projected reputation ($M = 4.07, SD = 1.33$) as compared to a negative projected reputation ($M = 3.24, SD = 1.23$). As a result, from the above-mentioned findings, Hypothesis H1 b) and c) are supported.

4.4 Main effects internal (conflict) communication

As indicated in table 8, a significant main effect of video on the combined dependent variables was found. The analysis of the dependent variables, which are presented in table 10, indicate that significant main effects of video were found on job satisfaction in terms of support ($F(1,115) = 59.43, p = 0.00$) and attitude ($F(1,115) = 65.19, p = 0.00$). Further the independent variable also yielded a significant effect on trust relationship with the supervisor ($F(1,115) = 18.16, p = 0.00$) as well the imagined information exchange ($F(1,115) = 15.28, p = 0.00$). In addition, an overview of the corresponding mean values and standard deviations of the dependent variables are presented in table 10. The results of the analysis indicate that there are differences in regard to job satisfaction in terms of support and attitude, trust relationship with the leader, as well as information exchange when participants were exposed to the conflict video. Consequently, Hypothesis H2 (a, (b and (c were supported.

Table 8

Overview video (Conflict vs. No-conflict)

Dependent variable	Video Conflict / No- con:flict		Conflict scenario <i>N</i> = 58		No-conflict scenario <i>N</i> =61	
	<i>F-value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Job satisfaction support	59.43	$p < .01$	4.82	0.94	3.27	1.21
Job satisfaction attitude	65.19	$p < .01$	3.06	0.93	4.64	1.21
Organizational identification	0.00	$p = .94$	4.77	1.29	4.77	1.15
Trust relationship with leader	18.16	$p < .01$	4.53	1.20	3.58	1.21
Information exchange	15.28	$p < .01$	3.22	1.18	4.09	1.36

4.5 Interaction effect: Testing the reputation buffer

There was no interaction effect found between the independent variables projected reputation and internal (conflict) communication on the dependent variables, as shown in table 9. An overview of the means and standard deviations of the dependent variables can be found in table 10. As a result, Hypothesis H3 a), b), c), and d) are not supported.

Table 9

*Test of between subject effect projected reputation*video*

Independent variable	Dependent variable	F-value	Sig.
Projected reputation * internal (conflict) communication	Job satisfaction support	0.637	0.41
	Job satisfaction attitude	2.16	0.14
	Organizational identification	0.32	0.56
	Trust relationship with leader	0.37	0.53
	Information exchange	0.19	0.65

Table 10

*Overview projected reputation*internal (conflict) communication*

		Positive reputation		Negative reputation	
		M	SD	M	SD
Conflict video	Job satisfaction support	4.88	0.94	4.76	0.95
	Job satisfaction attitude	3.06	0.91	3.03	0.97
	Organizational identification	5.05	1.35	4.46	1.16
	Trust relationship with leader	4.64	1.26	4.42	1.15
	Information exchange	3.57	1.21	2.84	1.03
No-Conflict video	Job satisfaction support	3.17	1.18	3.38	1.26
	Job satisfaction attitude	4.96	1.23	4.32	1.11
	Organizational identification	4.94	0.95	4.61	1.33
	Trust relationship with leader	3.56	1.22	3.61	1.21
	Information exchange	4.45	1.28	4.04	1.30

4.6 Overview Hypotheses testing

Table 11

Overview of Results Hypotheses Testing

	Hypotheses	Result
H1A	A positive projected reputation will result in a more positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of job satisfaction, as compared to a negative projected reputation.	Rejected
H1B	A positive projected reputation will result in a more positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of organizational identification, as compared to a negative projected reputation.	Supported
H1C	A positive projected reputation will result in a more positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of information exchange, as compared to a negative projected reputation.	Rejected
H1D	A positive projected reputation will result in a more positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of the relationship to organizational leaders, as compared to a negative projected reputation.	Rejected
H2A	The perception of an interpersonal conflict will result in a less positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of job satisfaction, as compared to the presence of a no-conflict situation.	Supported
H2B	The perception of an interpersonal conflict will result in a less positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of organizational identification, as compared to the presence of a no-conflict situation.	Supported
H2C	The perception of an interpersonal conflict will result in a less positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of information exchange, as compared to the presence of a no-conflict situation.	Supported
H2D	The perception of an interpersonal conflict will result in a less positive evaluation of the communication climate in terms of relationship to organizational leaders, as compared to the presence of a no-conflict situation.	Rejected
H3A	A positive projected organizational reputation in combination with an internal conflict situation will result in a less negative evaluation of the communication climate in terms of job satisfaction, as compared to a negative projected organizational reputation in combination with a conflict situation.	Rejected
H3B	A positive projected organizational reputation in combination with an internal conflict situation will result in a less negative evaluation of the communication climate, in terms of organizational identification, as compared to a negative projected organizational reputation in combination with a conflict situation.	Rejected
H3C	A positive projected organizational reputation in combination with an internal conflict situation will result in a less negative evaluation of the communication climate, in terms of information exchange, as compared to a negative projected organizational reputation in combination with a conflict situation.	Rejected
H3D	A positive projected organizational reputation in combination with an internal conflict situation will result in a less negative evaluation of the communication climate, in terms of relationship to organizational leaders, as compared to a negative projected organizational reputation in combination with a conflict situation.	Rejected

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The following will discuss the findings of the research. Next, implications concerned with academic and practical aspects will be given followed by limitations, which were encountered while conducting the study. Subsequently, recommendations for future research will be given. Lastly, a conclusion related to the main findings will be given.

5.1 Discussion of the findings

The main aim of this study was to investigate the effects of a projected corporate reputation and internal (conflict) communication on the evaluation of the communication climate with respect to job satisfaction in terms of support and attitude, organizational identification, trust relationship to the supervisor as well as information exchange.

5.1.2 *Projected reputation*

First of all, the findings of the independent variable projected reputation will be elaborated on. As indicated by the results of the study, main effects were found on organizational identification and information exchange, which is in line with the expectations. However, no results were found in terms of job satisfaction in regard to support and attitude as well as trust relationship with the leader, which is contrary to the expectations. Although not all results turned out to be significant, the dependent variables were scored lower when participants were presented with the negative reputation (see table 8). Hereby, job satisfaction in terms of support represents an exception since the items measuring this construct were negatively formulated, thus dealing with lacking support. Although, the score in the positive reputation condition is lower as opposed to the negative reputation condition it needs to be interpreted as the “higher” score due to the formulation of the items.

The findings related to organizational identification and a positive reputation are supported by literature as well. For example, a study conducted by Fisher and Wakefield (1998) found a positive significant effect of perceived external prestige on organizational identification. External prestige can be regarded as incorporating a positive reputation, since it is grounded on past organizational success and reflects how the organization is perceived by external parties. The study postulated that employees are likely to experience a higher level of organizational identification if the corresponding organization is characterized by a positive reputation, since a positive reputation as well as a large extent of external prestige add to an individual’s self-concept as well as self-esteem (Bartels, Pruyn, De Jong, and

Joustra, 2006). In addition, this finding is also supported by a study conducted by Öncer and Yildiz (2012), who found a strong positive relationship between a corporate reputation and organizational identification of employees. In more detail the study points out that a high corporate reputation results in a great extent of employee identification (Öncer & Yildiz, 2012). The greater extent of organizational identification induced by a positive reputation might be explained by the perception of joy and proudness to be part of an organization, which is associated with socially valued characteristics as well as the notion of organizational success (Dutton et al., 1994).

Moreover, the findings of an increased information exchange in the context of a positive reputation are supported by literature as indicated by Mesmer-Magnus and De Church (2009). The reason for an increased information exchange in organizations with a rather positive reputation is not directly due to reputation itself but can be explained by high quality relationships among the employees which in turn are more likely to be prevalent in organizations with a positive organizational climate. A positive organizational climate is more likely to be found in organizations which also do well in other aspects and are known for that, thus having a positive reputation (Cheikhrouhou et al., 2012). Since the organizational climate in the positive reputation condition was presented as being positive emphasizing well-functioning employee relationships it seems to be applicable that participants transferred their overall positive perception towards their perception of the information exchange, although information exchange processes were not described nor mentioned in the narrative which projected the reputation.

The insignificant effect of the projected reputation on job satisfaction was not in line with expectations nor is it line with what is postulated in literature (e.g. Yang, Yaacob & Teh, 2015). However, the insignificant results might be explained by the stimuli which were assumed project the reputation. As indicated by the results of the manipulation check participants had difficulties to clearly recognize the intended characteristic of the described organization. This can be observed when looking at table 8 since the mean values for both job satisfaction variables as well trust relationship with the leader in both prime conditions are close to each other.

5.1.3 Internal (conflict) communication

In line with the hypothesized effects for internal (conflict) communication, results support that the presence of an internal conflict situation negatively influences the evaluation of the

communication climate. Thus, the result show that the presence of an internal conflict situation resulted in a less positive perception of the communication climate in regard to job satisfaction (support & attitude), trust relationship with the leader, and information exchange (see table 8). However, contrary to the expectations, no significant result was found for organizational identification. Further, the results of the conducted study were found to be in line with findings mentioned in literature since multiple studies reported a strong negative correlation between interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005). In addition, a study conducted by Chen et al., (2012) proposed that interpersonal conflict will also result in a decrease of task related motivation, which in consequence affects individual job satisfaction. However, the decrease in imagined job satisfaction in the conflict condition can also be explained by considering the importance of interpersonal relationships in the workplace context. As postulated by Chen et al., (2012) the presence of interpersonal conflict induces the perception of malfunctioning interpersonal relations, which are an important for individuals workplace satisfaction.

Further, results related to the trust relationship with the leader are supported by literature as well. As for example a study conducted by Kacmar et al., (2012) explains that organizational leaders are perceived as being responsible to create a communication climate, in which employees can perform and their best. However, if leaders are not able to establish a decent organizational climate and are even involved in interpersonal conflict themselves, the relationship towards the employees might be perceived as being characterized by less trust (Kacmar et al., 2012). Since trust represents an essential part of supervisor relationships, thus relationships in which a trustful foundation seems to be lacking are considered to less valuable for the individual employee (Kacmar et al., 2012).

Lastly, as hypothesized the information exchange was found to be lower when participants were exposed to the conflict situation. This finding is in accordance with prior assumptions as well as with the general position in literature. Due to the fact that information exchange is regarded as relationship oriented, the presence of interpersonal conflict situations negatively influences the effectiveness as well as the quality of such processes (Chen, 2011). Thus, the findings of this study argue in line Chen (2011) that interpersonal conflict situations result in negative assumptions about the quality and frequency of information exchange processes.

5.1.4 Interaction effect: Testing the reputation buffer

The results of the study did not show a significant interaction effect of a projected reputation and internal (conflict) communication on the dependent variables. The missing interaction effect is not in line with the corresponding hypotheses, since it was expected that a positive projected reputation will result in a more favorable evaluation of the communication climate in the context of the conflict scenario, as opposed to a negative reputation in combination with the conflict scenario. However, the hypothesis is not supported by the conducted research. Although, insignificant results were found for the interaction hypothesis it can be observed that the mean values of the dependent variables are slightly higher when participants were presented with a positive reputation and saw the conflict scenario afterwards (see table 10). The missing interaction result is not in line with what is presented in literature, since scholars as for example Sohn and Ruthann Weaver Lariscy (2012) expressed that a positive reputation provides an organization with buffering capabilities, which consequently reduce the harm of organizational crisis on the external perception of the organization. Even though the majority of articles supports buffering capabilities of a favorable reputation during crisis situations a second stream advocating for a “boomerang effect” could be found (Grunwald & Hempeplmann, 2011). However, this study could also not provide support for a reputational “boomerang effect” as proposed by Grunwald and Hempelmann (2011).

Although both independent variables, individually showed significant main effects on the evaluation of the communication climate, no significant interaction between the variables was found. This can be explained by the fact that the negative reputation was not recognized as being negative enough. However, as indicated by the results of the manipulation check participants recognized the textual stimuli as being different, although the differences in terms of perceived reputation were marginal. In addition, the missing interaction effect can also be explained by the fact that participants might not felt sufficiently involved in the company when they were exposed with the negative textual stimulus. Even though, the stimuli materials were evaluated as being realistic in regard to the presented organizational climate and atmosphere participants might have experienced difficulties to develop an emotional connection to the company, which resulted in the perception of less involved. The lacking perception of involvement in combination with an insufficiently recognized bad reputation might provide an alternative explanation for unsupported interaction hypothesis.

5.2 Academic implications and future research

This study contributes to the academic field since it broadens the knowledge and literature available concerning underlying effects of a projected reputation and internal (conflict) communication on the perception of the organizational communication climate. More specifically, it contributes to the investigation of how interpersonal workplace conflicts affect outsider perceptions of an organization. Nevertheless, it should be noted that further research focusing on potential buffering capabilities of an organizational reputation is needed in order to support its' existence in the context of interpersonal workplace conflicts. Moreover, it is necessary to conduct further research in order to gather light on the question, whether a positive reputation does provide a certain buffer for unfavorable events which are related to internal aspects of the organization, since this could not be supported by the present study. However, this study provides an impetus, in order to investigate this relationship further since the majority of studies only investigate buffering capacities of a positive reputation in the context of external crisis situations.

Moreover, in regard to the video stimulus either presenting an interpersonal conflict or a conversation in a workplace environment, it would be worth to investigate the effect of an organizational conflict in the context of a different type of organization. Thus, it could be investigated how the effect of a conflict situation changes when the context of the study changes as well. Hereby, it could be investigated to what extent the effect of organizational conflict on the perception of the communication climate depends on the type of organization.

In addition, further research needs to be done in regard to the potential interaction between the projected corporate reputation and the internal (conflict) communication since no significant effect was found in this study. Especially, it needs to be investigated, whether the in literature described buffering capabilities of a favorable corporate reputation are only prevalent in the context of external crisis situation or if a positive reputation can also compensate for crisis similar situations as for example interpersonal conflict. Therefore, it is necessary to repeat the study after the stimuli materials were optimized and changes on the general set up, as for example the environment of the study, are performed. By optimizing the above-mentioned aspects future research can might shed light shed on question whether a positive reputation can also compensate undesirable internal aspects of the organizational live.

5.3 Practical implications

The findings in regard to the effect of interpersonal conflict on the evaluation of the communication climate demonstrate that the perception of organizational conflict can be harmful for the organizational perception of external audiences. Therefore, the perception of interpersonal conflict might influence the willingness for future interactions since individuals tend to see the organization in less positive light when they witness interpersonal conflict. Consequently, organizational leaders should aim at minimizing interpersonal conflict in a workplace environment in order to make sure that the organization and the associated climate are presented in the most favorable light. However, if organizational leaders do not decrease interpersonal conflict or at least manage that the conflict is not brought to the outside, purchase intentions and possible alliances with other organizations might be affected thus, decreasing the financial performance as well as the attractiveness as strategic partner and potential employer for talented individuals.

Moreover, the findings in regard to a projected corporate reputation imply that, even though the reputation was only projected, it does have an influence on how external parties evaluate any other aspect of the organization. Especially, practitioners and strategists should note that an organizational reputation provides input in order to establish attitudes towards the organization even though specific information about certain aspects might be missing. Thus, if an organizational reputation is perceived as being unfavorable individuals are likely to transfer this perception to other aspects related to that organization and thereby create a coherent impression although their impression might diverge from reality. Consequently, effort and resources should be invested in order to create and maintain a favorable reputation in stakeholder's minds.

5.4 Limitations

Multiple limitations can be addressed in the context of this study. First and foremost, it should be acknowledged that the utilized stimuli turned out to be not optimal. Especially, the textual stimuli were not recognized with the desired characteristics as for example the negative textual stimulus was not evaluated as being highly negative. As indicated by the results of the pre-test respondents did not associate the negative stimulus to a highly negative reputation. This had the consequence that participants might not were influenced by the negative prime as it was intended. The lacking negative perception of the fictitious organization, which was described in the textual stimulus might therefore provide an

explanation of the missing interaction effect. Therefore, for future research it would be applicable to create multiple versions of textual stimuli, which describe the organization using different words. However, care should be taken that even though differing words are used an identical emotional reaction is induced. Thereby, a broader selection of stimuli can be evaluated and the one with the most desirable characteristics can be included in the main study. Moreover, care should be taken that the stimuli are pre-tested with a sufficient number of participants in order to ensure that the results are at least to a certain extent generalizable on the population of the main study.

The second limitation is represented by the setting in which the study was conducted. Due to the fact that the study was conducted in an online environment, the participants could not be observed while filling out the survey, and especially while reading and watching the stimuli. As a result, it could not be controlled how much time each participant spent while reading the materials, as for example the description of the office environment and the general description of the task. Consequently, some participants might have devoted less attention towards the stimuli and were thereby less influenced by them. Moreover, due to the fact the whereabouts of the respondents differed while they participated in the study it was not possible to control for any additional effects induced by the environment. Thus, for further research it suggested to conduct the survey in a laboratory like setting which enables the researcher to observe the participants and further control for environmental effects in order to increase the quality of the data.

Thirdly, some participants reached out to the researcher after they participated in the study in order to express that they perceived certain aspects as being strange. Some participants, for example, who reported to be familiar with the series from which the video fragments were extracted reported that they considered it is quite confusing that one of the characters was introduced as the supervisor of the other character. This supervisor-subordinate relationship does not exist in the series itself but was established for the purpose of this study. This unexpected relationship might have caused a large degree of confusion for some participants, which ultimately might result in a decrease of attention towards the stimuli. As a consequence, it would be advisable for future to make sure that participants do not have any experiences with the presented stimuli materials, thus it might be applicable to create the materials especially for the research.

A last limitation is represented by the composition of the population sample, since the majority of participants have similarities in regard to age as well as their work experience. However, in a controlled experiment like this study, it is desirable to have a homogenous

sample in order to be able to attribute the effects to the stimuli and not to the individual differences in the sample population. Further, the majority of respondents reported to only have limited working experiences in an office environment therefore it is questionable whether the sample is a decent representation for this study, since the overarching topic of this study is related to work relationships. Thus, it can be assumed that the results might be different if the sample would rather be homogenous in regard to work experience in an office environment.

5.5 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate how a projected corporate reputation and internal (conflict) communication influence the evaluation of the communication climate. More specifically, this study investigated whether a projected positive reputation could compensate the notion of interpersonal organizational conflict, in regard to the evaluation of job satisfaction, organizational identification, trust relationship with the leader, and lastly information exchange. This study includes a conceptual discussion of the effects resulting from a positive reputation. Moreover, the effect effects of interpersonal conflict on the organizational communication climate were discussed. A 2 x 2 experimental research was composed, which included 2 versions of a company description, projecting either a positive or a negative reputation as well as internal communication scenarios, which either presented an interpersonal conflict situation or a conversation in an office environment. Thus, four experimental conditions resulted from the study design, which were presented using an online questionnaire.

The findings of the analysis show that the projected reputation as well as internal conflict communication do have a significant effect on the evaluation of the communication climate. For the projected reputation significant results were found in regard to organizational identification, whereas internal conflict communication yielded significant effects in terms of job satisfaction, trust relationship with the leader as well as information exchange. Although, two significant main effects were found the independent variables did not interact. Hence, it is necessary to further, explore the buffering capabilities of a positive reputation, which are proposed in literature.

6. Reference list:

- Alniacik, E., Alniacik, U., & Erdogmus, N. (2012). How do the dimensions of corporate reputation affect employment intentions? *Corporate Reputation Review*, 15(1), 3-19. doi:10.1057/crr.2011.25
- Aziri, B. (2011). Job satisfaction: a literature review. *Management Research & Practice*, 3(4). doi:10.1103/042045675606350433741
- Balmer, J. M. (2010). Corporate identity: The power and the paradox. *Design Management Journal (Former Series)*, 6(1), 39-44. doi:10.1111/j.1948-7169.1995.tb00422.x
- Baron, R. A. (1991). Positive effects of conflict: A cognitive perspective. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 4(1), 25-36. doi:10.1007/bf01390436
- Bartels, J., Douwes, R., Jong, M., & Pruyn, A. (2006). Organizational identification during a merger: Determinants of employees' expected identification with the new organization. *British Journal of Management*, 17(S1). doi:10.1111/j.1467-8551.2006.00478.x
- Bartels, J., Peters, O., De Jong, M., Pruyn, A., & Van der Molen, M. (2009). Horizontal and vertical communication as determinants of professional and organizational identification. *Personnel Review*, 39(2), 210-226. doi:10.1108/00483481011017426
- Bartels, J., Peters, O., De Jong, M., Pruyn, A., & Van der Molen, M. (2010). Horizontal and vertical communication as determinants of professional and organisational identification. *Personnel Review*, 39(2), 210-226. doi:10.1108/00483481011017426
- Bartels, J., Pruyn, A., de Jong, M., & Joustra, I. (2006). Multiple organizational identification levels and the impact of perceived external prestige and communication climate. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28(2), 173-190. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.420>
- Bell, S. J., & Menguc, B. (2002). The employee-organization relationship, organizational citizenship behaviors, and superior service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 78(2), 131-146. doi:10.1016/s0022-4359(02)00069-6
- Birkigt, K., Stadler, M. M., & Funck, H. J. (2002). *Corporate identity Grundlagen, Funktionen, Fallbeispiele*. Moderne Industrie.
- Bouckaert, G. (2001). Pride and performance in public service: Some patterns of analysis. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 67(1), 15-27. doi:10.1177/0020852301671002
- Bunderson, J. S., & Sutcliffe, K. M. (2002). COMPARING alternative conceptualizations of functional diversity in Management TEAMS: Process and performance
- Carmeli, A. (2004). The link between organizational elements, perceived external prestige and performance. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 6(4), 314-331. doi:10.1057/palgrave.crr.1540002

- Cheikhrouhou, N., Pouly, M., & Madinabeitia, G. (2012). Trust categories and their impacts on information exchange processes in vertical collaborative networked organisations. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2149541
- Chen, X., Zhao, K., Liu, X., & Dash Wu, D. (2012). Improving employees' job satisfaction and innovation performance using conflict management. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 23(2), 151-172. doi:10.1108/10444061211218276
- Chen, Z. (2011). The Interactive Effects of Relationship Conflict, Reward, and Reputation on Knowledge Sharing. *Social Behavior and Personality: an International Journal*, 39(10), 1387–1394. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2011.39.10.1387>
- Crossman, A., & Abou-Zaki, B. (2003). Job satisfaction and employee performance of Lebanese Banking Staff. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 18(4), 368-376. doi:10.1108/02683940310473118
- Dansereau, F., Graen, G., & Haga, W. J. (1975). A vertical dyad linkage approach to leadership within formal organizations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 13(1), 46-78. doi:10.1016/0030-5073(75)90005-7
- De Dreu, C. K., & Beersma, B. (2005). Conflict in organizations: Beyond effectiveness and performance. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 14(2), 105-117. doi:10.1080/13594320444000227
- De Dreu, C. K., & Weingart, L. R. (2003). Task versus relationship conflict, team performance, and team member satisfaction: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(4), 741-749. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.88.4.741
- Dennis, H. S. (1974). *A theoretical and empirical study of managerial communication climate in complex organizations*. Purdue University.
- Dienesch, R. M., & Liden, R. C. (1986). Leader-member exchange model of leadership: A critique and further development. *The Academy of Management Review*, 11(3), 618. doi:10.2307/258314
- Dowling, G. R. (1986). Managing your corporate images. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 15(2), 109-115. doi:10.1016/0019-8501(86)90051-9
- Dutton, J. E., & Dukerich, J. M. (1991). Keeping an eye on the mirror: Image and identity in organizational adaptation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 34(3), 517-554. doi:10.5465/256405
- Dutton, J. E., Dukerich, J. M., & Harquail, C. V. (1994). Organizational images and member identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 39(2), 239. doi:10.2307/2393235
- effects. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45(5), 875-893. doi:10.2307/3069319
- Emerson, R. W. (2021). Convenience sampling revisited: Embracing its limitations through thoughtful study design. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 115(1), 76-77. doi:10.1177/0145482x20987707

- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.
- Fisher, R. J., & Wakefield, K. (1998). Factors leading to group identification: A field study of winners and losers. *Psychology and Marketing*, 15(1), 23–40.
[https://doi.org/10.1002/\(sici\)1520-6793\(199801\)15:1<23::aid-mar3>3.0.co;2-p](https://doi.org/10.1002/(sici)1520-6793(199801)15:1<23::aid-mar3>3.0.co;2-p)
- Fombrun, C. J. (1996). *Reputation: Realizing value from the corporate image*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Frone, M. R. (2000). Interpersonal conflict at work and psychological outcomes: Testing a model among young workers. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5(2), 246-255. doi:10.1037/1076-8998.5.2.246
- Gong, Y., Kim, T., Lee, D., & Zhu, J. (2013). A multilevel model of team goal orientation, information exchange, and creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(3), 827-851. doi:10.5465/amj.2011.0177
- Gray, Edmund R., and John M.T. Balmer. "Managing Corporate Image and Corporate Reputation." *Long Range Planning* 31.5 (1998): 695-702.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08933189920050345>
- Greening, D. W., & Turban, D. B. (1996). Corporate social performance and organizational attractiveness to prospective employees. *Proceedings of the International Association for Business and Society*, 7, 489-500. doi:10.5840/iabsproc1996746
- Grunwald, G., & Hempelmann, B. (2011). Impacts of reputation for quality on perceptions of company responsibility and Product-related dangers in times of Product-Recall and public Complaints crises: Results from an empirical investigation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 13(4), 264-283. doi:10.1057/crr.2010.2
- Grunwald, G., & Hempelmann, B. (2011). Impacts of reputation for quality on perceptions of company responsibility and Product-related dangers in times of product-recall and public Complaints crises: Results from an empirical investigation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 13(4), 264-283. doi:10.1057/crr.2010.23
- Guenter, H., Hetty van Emmerik, I., & Schreurs, B. (2014). The negative effects of delays in information exchange: Looking at workplace relationships from an affective events perspective. *Human Resource Management Review*, 24(4), 283-298.
doi:10.1016/j.hrmr.2014.02.001
- Guzley, R. M. (1992). Organizational Climate and Communication Climate. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 5(4), 379–402.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318992005004001>
- Hall, P. M., Loomis, C. P., Loomis, Z. K., & Moore, W. E. (1965). Modern socialtheories. *American Sociological Review*, 30(6), 974. doi:10.2307/2091010
- Hargie, O., & Tourish, D. (2009). *Auditing organizational communication: A handbook of research, theory and practice*. London: New York.

- Helm, S. (2011). Employees' awareness of their impact on corporate reputation. *Journal of Business Research*, 64(7), 657-663. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2010.09.001
- Helm, S. (2012). A matter of reputation and pride: Associations between perceived external reputation, pride in membership, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. *British Journal of Management*, 24(4), 542-556. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8551.2012.00827.x
- Homburg, C., Wieseke, J., & Hoyer, W. D. (2009). Social identity and the Service-Profit Chain. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(2), 38-54. doi:10.1509/jmkg.73.2.38
- Hunt, S. D., & Morgan, R. M. (1995). The comparative advantage theory of competition. *Journal of Marketing*, 59(2), 1. doi:10.2307/1252069
- Hup Chan, S. (2006). Organizational identification and commitment of members of a human development organization. *Journal of Management Development*, 25(3), 249-268. doi:10.1108/02621710610648178
- Jain, K. K., Sandhu, M. S., & Goh, S. K. (2015). Organizational climate, trust and knowledge sharing: insights from Malaysia. *Journal of Asia Business Studies*, 9(1), 54-77. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jabs-07-2013-0040>
- Johnson, M. D., Hollenbeck, J. R., Humphrey, S. E., Ilgen, D. R., Jundt, D., & Meyer, C. J. (2006). Cutthroat cooperation: Asymmetrical adaptation to changes in team reward structures. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(1), 103-119. doi:10.5465/amj.2006.20785533
- Jones, E., Watson, B., Gardner, J., & Gallois, C. (2004). Organizational communication: Challenges for the new century. *Journal of Communication*, 54(4), 722-750. Doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2004.tb02652.x
- Jones, G. H., Jones, B. H., & Little, P. (2000). Reputation as reservoir: Buffering against loss in times of economic crisis. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 3(1), 21-29. doi:10.1057/palgrave.crr.1540096
- Jones, G. R., George, J. M., & Hill, C. W. (2000). *Contemporary management*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Kacmar, K. M., Bachrach, D. G., Harris, K. J., & Noble, D. (2012). Exploring the role of supervisor trust in the associations between multiple sources of relationship conflict and organizational citizenship behavior. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(1), 43-54. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.11.004
- Kantor, J., & Streitfeld, D. (2015, August 15). Inside Amazon: Wrestling Big Ideas in a Bruising Workplace. Retrieved May 27, 2021, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/16/technology/inside-amazon-wrestling-big-ideas-in-a-bruising-workplace.html>
- Kogut, B., & Zander, U. (1993). Knowledge of the Firm and the Evolutionary Theory of the Multinational Corporation. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 24(4), 625-645. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490248>

- Liden, R. C., & Graen, G. (1980). Generalizability of the VERTICAL dyad linkage model of leadership. *Academy of Management Journal*, 23(3), 451-465. doi:10.5465/255511
- Locke, E.A. (1976), "The nature and causes of job satisfaction", in Dunnette, M.D. (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Rand McNally, Chicago, IL, pp. 1297-349.
- Loh, J., Restubog, S. L., & Zagenczyk, T. J. (2010). Consequences of workplace bullying on Employee identification and satisfaction Among Australians and Singaporeans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 41(2), 236-252. doi:10.1177/002202210935464
- Mael, F., & Ashforth, B. E. (1992). Alumni and their alma mater: A partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13(2), 103-123. doi:10.1002/job.4030130202
- Mahon, J. F. (2002). Corporate reputation. *Business & Society*, 41(4), 415-445. doi:10.1177/0007650302238776
- McAllister, D. J. (1995). Affect- and cognition-based trust as foundations for interpersonal cooperation in organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(1), 24-59. doi:10.2307/256727
- Melewar, T. C., & Jenkins, E. (2002). Defining the Corporate Identity Construct. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 5(1), 76-90. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1540166>
- Mesmer-Magnus, J. R., & DeChurch, L. A. (2009). Information sharing and team performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(2), 535-546. doi:10.1037/a0013773
- Mishina, Y., Block, E. S., & Mannor, M. J. (2011). The path dependence of organizational reputation: How social judgment influences assessments of capability and character. *Strategic Management Journal*, 33(5), 459-477. doi:10.1002/smj.958
- Nahapiet, J., & Ghoshal, S. (1998). Social Capital, Intellectual Capital, and the Organizational Advantage. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(2), 242-266. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1998.533225>
- Neill, M. S., Men, L. R., & Yue, C. A. (2019). How communication climate and organizational identification impact change. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 25(2), 281-298. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ccij-06-2019-0063>
- Nikolić, M., Vukonjanski, J., Nedeljković, M., Hadžić, O., & Terek, E. (2013). The impact of internal communication satisfaction dimensions on job satisfaction dimensions and the moderating role of lmx. *Public Relations Review*, 39(5), 563-565. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2013.09.002
- Nordin, S. M., Sivapalan, S., Bhattacharyya, E., Ahmad, H. H., & Abdullah, A. (2014). Organizational Communication Climate and Conflict Management: Communications Management in an Oil and Gas Company. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 109, 1046-1058. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.587>

- Öncer, A. Z., & Yıldız, M. L. (2012). The Impact of Ethical Climate on Relationship between Corporate Reputation and Organizational Identification. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 58, 714-723. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.1049
- Panteli, N., & Sockalingam, S. (2005). Trust and conflict within virtual inter-organizational alliances: A framework for facilitating knowledge sharing. *Decision Support Systems*, 39(4), 599-617. doi:10.1016/j.dss.2004.03.003
- Redding, W. C. (1973). Communication within the organization. New York: Industrial Communication Council; Lafayette. *Purdue Research Foundation*.
- Riordan, C. M., Gatewood, R. D., & Bill, J. B. (1997). Corporate image: Employee reactions and implications for managing corporate social performance. *Journal of Business ethics*, 16(4), 401-412. doi:10.1007/25600959781
- Rose, C., & Thomsen, S. (2004). The impact of corporate reputation on performance: Some Danish evidence. *European Management Journal*, 22(2), 201-210. doi:10.1016/j.emj.2004.01.012
- Schaubroeck, J., Ganster, D. C., Sime, W. E., & Ditman, D. (1993). A field experiment testing supervisory role clarification. *Personnel Psychology*, 46(1), 1-25. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.1993.tb00865.x
- Smidts, A., Pruyn, A. T., & Van Riel, C. B. (2001). The Impact of Employee Communication and Perceived External Prestige On Organizational Identification. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(5), 1051–1062. <https://doi.org/10.5465/3069448>
- Sohn, Y., & Lariscy, R. W. (2012). A “buffer” or “Boomerang?”— the role of corporate reputation in bad times. *Communication Research*, 42(2), 237-259. doi:10.1177/0093650212466891
- Sparrowe, R. T., Liden, R. C., & Wayne, S. J. (1997). Process and Structure in Leader-Member Exchange. *The Academy of Management Review*, 22(2), 522. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259332>
- Spector, P. E. (1985). Measurement of human service Staff Satisfaction: Development of the job satisfaction survey. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 13(6), 693-713. doi:10.1007/bf00929796
- Thomas, C. H., & Lankau, M. J. (2009). Preventing burnout: The effects of lmx and mentoring on socialization, role stress, and burnout. *Human Resource Management*, 48(3), 417-432. doi:10.1002/hrm.20288
- Tkalac Verčič, A. (2021). The impact of employee engagement, organisational support and employer branding on internal communication satisfaction. *Public Relations Review*, 47(1), 102009. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102009

- Tkalac Verčič, A., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2012). Internal communication: Definition, parameters, and the future. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 223-230.
Doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.019
- Turban, D. B., & Cable, D. M. (2003). Firm reputation and applicant pool characteristics. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24(6), 733-751.
doi:10.1002/job.215
- Turner, J. C., Brown, R. J., & Tajfel, H. (1979). Social comparison and group interest in ingroup favouritism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 9(2), 187–204.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420090207>
- Van Riel, C. B., & Balmer, J. M. (1997). Corporate identity: The concept, its measurement and management. *European Journal of Marketing*, 31(5/6), 340-355.
doi:10.1108/eb060635
- Verma, P. (2013). Relationship between organizational communication flow and communication climate. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Business Management*, 1(1), 63-71. doi:11.1204/1563275406214664387
- Yang, L., Yaacob, Z., & Teh, S. Y. (2015). The impact of corporate reputation on job satisfaction and Financial Performance: A study of small and medium sized enterprises in Hebei, china. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business*, 3(1), 72-87.
doi:10.17687/jeb.0301.06
- Yoon, E., Guffey, H. J., & Kijewski, V. (1993). The effects of information and company reputation on intentions to buy a business service. *Journal of Business Research*, 27(3), 215–228. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963\(93\)90027-m](https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963(93)90027-m)

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix I: Textual primes

7.1.1 Positive projected reputation

Pearson Hardman is one of the top three major New York City law firms, specialized in corporate law. The agency was established in 2003 by Daniel Hardman and Jessica Pearson, who led the company during the early days of success. Currently the company has multiple operating offices in the United States. Within the United States the organization is known for long term employee relationships even though these are quite unusual during current times, and got rewarded “best office of the company” three years in a row. The atmosphere in the office is characterized by friendly and open interactions even during important discussions managers and employees interact with each other in an appreciative way. Further, employees always engage with each other in a respectful manner regardless of hierarchical positions thus, creating a climate of open conversations in which innovative ideas and individual opinions are valued. The outstanding work environment is the reason why the office as a whole got rewarded “Best office in the company” for 3 years in a row. Employees think that the office’s success came with the manager who can best be described as supportive and emphatic individual who stimulates the career development of his employees. The management also provides support for the employees even if employee’s concerns are not related to daily business. Similar aspects count for the relationships between the employees which are marked by empathy and goodwill for the success of the team. Generally, there is much support among the workforce for each other, employees commonly work towards the accomplishment of collective goals. This results in an environment in which frequent interactions take place since employees like to share their personal information with their colleagues as the majority of employees perceives their colleagues as friends.

7.1.2 Negative projected reputation

Pearson Hardman is one of the top three major New York City law firms, specialized in corporate law. The agency was established in 2003 by Daniel Hardman and Jessica Pearson, who led the company during the early days of success. Currently the company has multiple operating offices in the United States. Recently the organization had to tackle several issues among which only few were of financial nature. However, the atmosphere in the office is characterized by tension as the tone of voice is rather rough and managers are not afraid of yelling at employees and slamming office doors. Loud and rough discussions between managers are also, a daily occurring phenomenon in the office. However, the office as a whole got rewarded “Best office in the company” for 3 years in a row. Employees think that the office’s success came with the manager who can be described as man who doesn’t laugh nor talk too much but always wants to be the best of the best. There are a lot of rumors going on in the office one of them deals with the aspect that the manager tries to keep his employees small in order to secure his own position and therefore, does not support his employees during tough times nor provides any guidance that isn’t necessary. Similar aspects count for the relationship between the employees which are marked by jealousy and resentment. Generally, there is little support among the workforce for each other, rather employees utilize situations in which colleagues made a mistake in order to present themselves in the best way possible, secretly hoping for a promotion. This results in an

environment in which as little as possible communication takes place since employees don't want to share information they heavily worked for, which could be advantageous for a colleague.

7.2 Appendix II: Pre-test

Dear Participant,

thank you taking part in this research as part of my Bachelor Thesis. The data gathered by means of this survey will be used as a pre-test.

This survey consists of two different parts. In the first part you will be asked to evaluate an organization which will be introduced to you. Subsequently, you are asked to evaluate the content of four short video clips.

The survey will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes. The collected data will be anonymised and kept confidential.

If you continue with the survey, you agree to have read the above mentioned information, and that you participate voluntarily. You have the right to withdraw at any point in time.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Moritz Press

☐ I have read the information and wish to participate

What gender do you identify as?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

How old are you?

What is your nationality?

☐ Dutch

☐ German

☐ Other

☐ Prefer not to say

Please read the text below and answer the corresponding questions.

Pearson Hardman is one of the top three major New York City law firms, specialized in corporate law. The agency was established in 2003 by Daniel Hardman and Jessica Pearson, who led the company during the early days of success. Currently the company has multiple operating offices in the united states. Within the united states the organization is known for long term employee relationships even though these are quite unusual during current times and got rewarded "best office of the company" three years in a row. The atmosphere in the office is characterized by friendly and open interactions even during important discussions managers and employees interact with each other in an appreciative way. Further, employees always engage with each other in a respectful manner regardless of hierarchical positions thus, creating a climate of open conversations in which innovative ideas and individual opinions are valued. The outstanding work environment is the reason why the office as a whole got rewarded "Best office in the company" for 3 years in a row. Employees think that the office's success came with the manager who can best be described as supportive and emphatic individual who stimulates the career development of his employees. The management also provides support for the employees even if employee's concerns are not related to daily business. Similar aspects count for the relationships between the employees which are marked by empathy and goodwill for the success of the team. Generally, there is much support among the workforce for each other, employees commonly work towards the accomplishment of collective goals. This results in an environment in which frequent interactions take place since employees like to share their personal information with their colleagues as the majority of employees perceives their colleagues as friends.

Please evaluate the reputation of the described company.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The organization has good reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization has a bad reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the working climate in the above described office.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The working climate is pleasing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The working climate is rough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The working climate is competitive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The working climate is supportive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the atmosphere in the above described office.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The atmosphere in the office is friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The atmosphere in the office is alerting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The atmosphere in the office is motivating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The atmosphere in the office is frightening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please read the text below and answer the corresponding questions.

Pearson Hardman is one of the top three major New York City law firms, specialized in corporate law. The agency was established in 2003 by Daniel Hardman and Jessica Pearson, who led the company during the early days of success. Currently the company has multiple operating offices in the United States. Recently the organization had to tackle several issues among which only few were of financial nature. However, the atmosphere in the office is characterized by tension as the tone of voice is rather rough and managers are not afraid of yelling at employees and slamming office doors. Loud and rough discussions between managers are also a daily occurring phenomenon in the office. However, the office as a whole got rewarded "Best office in the company" for 3 years in a row. Employees think that the office's success came with the manager who can be described as a man who doesn't laugh nor talk too much but always wants to be the best of the best. There are a lot of rumors going on in the office one of them deals with the aspect that the manager tries to keep his employees small in order to secure his own position and therefore, does not support his employees during tough times nor provides any guidance that isn't necessary. Similar aspects count for the relationship between the employees which are marked by jealousy and resentment. Generally, there is little support among the workforce for each other, rather employees utilize situations in which colleagues made a mistake in order to present themselves in the best way possible, secretly hoping for a promotion. This results in an environment in which as little as possible communication takes place since employees don't want to share information they heavily worked for, which could be advantageous for a colleague.

Please evaluate the reputation of the described company.

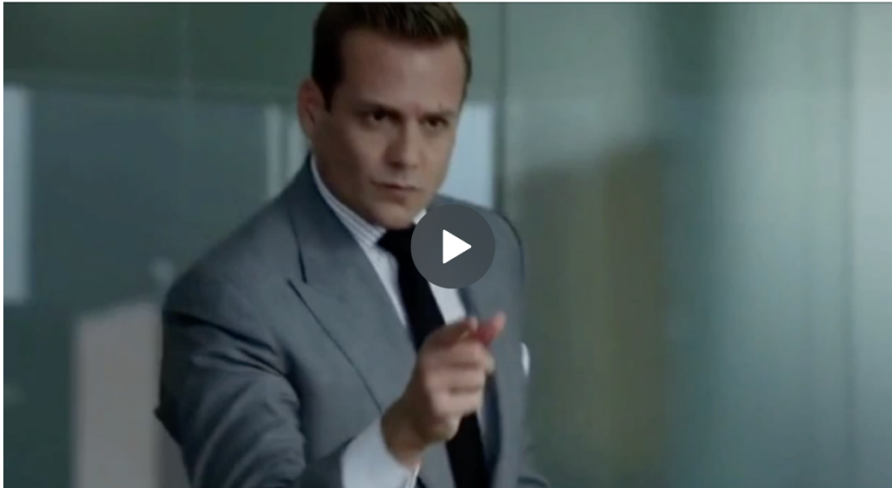
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The organization has good reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization has a bad reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the working climate in the above described office.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The working climate is pleasing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The working climate is rough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The working climate is competitive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The working climate is supportive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the atmosphere in the above described office.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The atmosphere in the office is friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The atmosphere in the office is alerting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The atmosphere in the office is motivating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The atmosphere in the office is frightening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please watch the video and answer the questions below.

Please indicate to which degree you perceive a conflict or non-conflict situation to present.

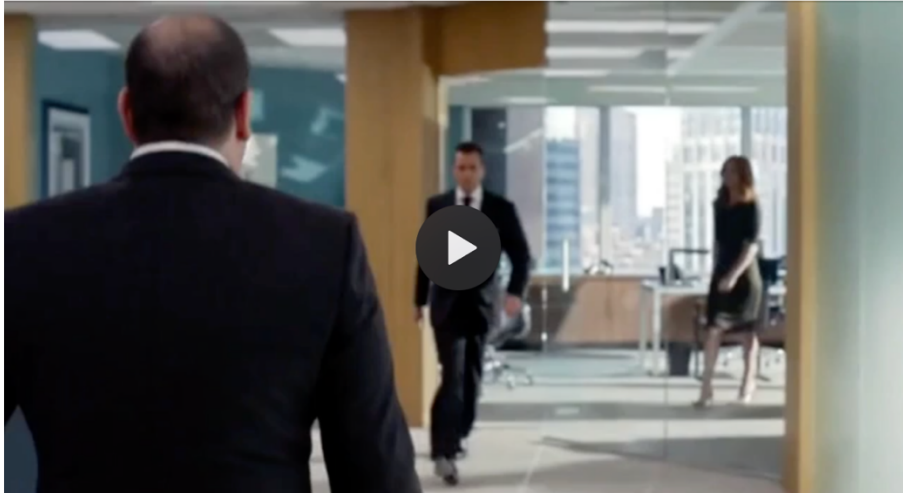
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The video presents a conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The video presents no conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the degree to which you perceive the situation as being realistic or not realistic.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The presented situation is realistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The presented situation is not realistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the communication climate of the conversation in the presented video.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The communication climate is constructive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is aggressive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is respectful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is threatening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please watch the video and answer the questions below.

Please indicate to which degree you perceive a conflict or non-conflict situation to present.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The video presents a conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The video presents no conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the degree to which you perceive the situation as being realistic or not realistic.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The presented situation is realistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The presented situation is not realistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the communication climate of the conversation in the presented video.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The communication climate is constructive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is aggressive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is respectful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is threatening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please watch the video and answer the questions below.

Please indicate to which degree you perceive a conflict or non-conflict situation to present.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The video presents a conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The video presents no conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the degree to which you perceive the situation as being realistic or not realistic.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The presented situation is realistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The presented situation is not realistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the communication climate of the conversation in the presented video.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The communication climate is constructive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is aggressive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is respectful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is threatening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please watch the video and answer the questions below.

Please indicate to which degree you perceive a conflict or non-conflict situation to present.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The video presents a conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The video presents no conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>


Please evaluate the degree to which you perceive the situation as being realistic or not realistic.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The presented situation is realistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The presented situation is not realistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the communication climate of the conversation in the presented video.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The communication climate is constructive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is aggressive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is respectful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The communication climate is threatening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7.3 Appendix III: Approval Ethics Committee



UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

APPROVED BMS EC RESEARCH PROJECT REQUEST

Dear researcher,

This is a notification from the BMS Ethics Committee concerning the web application form for the ethical review of research projects.

Requestnr. : 210728
Title : Assessing organisations: Exploring the reputation buffer
Date of application : 2021-04-23
Researcher : Press, M.
Supervisor : Tempelman, M.H.
Commission : Galetzka, M.
Usage of SONA : Y

Your research has been approved by the Ethics Committee.

The BMS ethical committee / Domain Humanities & Social Sciences has assessed the ethical aspects of your research project. On the basis of the information you provided, the committee does not have any ethical concerns regarding this research project.

7.4 Appendix IV: Main Study

Dear respondent,

You are being invited to participate in a study investigating communicative aspects in the context of a fictitious company.

This study is being done by Moritz Press from the Faculty of Behavioral, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente. The study will take you approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any point in time. Further, there are no right or wrong answers. Please choose the answer option that you believe fits the best or is most appropriate.

There are no risks associated with this study. Your data will always be treated confidentially. The provided data will be processed in an anonymized way thus, decreasing traceability of the respondent. Moreover, the data will be handled confidentially and anonymously and will not be shared with any third parties.

Contact details of the researcher: Moritz Press, m.press@student.utwente.nl
If you have any complains about the research, please contact the ethics committee: ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl.

Thank you for considering participation in this study!

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to provide a reason.

By continuing on the next page you agree to voluntarily participate in this study and agree to the above mentioned information.

Nationality

What is your nationality?

- ☐ Dutch
- ☐ German
- ☐ Other,

What gender do you identify as?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary / third gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

How old are you?

What is your highest obtained educational level (highest education that you successfully completed)?

- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ Secondary School
- ☐ Bachelor's or equivalent level
- ☐ Master's or equivalent level
- ☐ PhD or equivalent level
- ☐ Other namely

Do you have any experiences working in an office environment?

- ☐ Yes, very much
- ☐ Yes, somewhat
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Not much
- ☐ Not at all

In the present study you are asked to answer questions regarding the communication in a law office located in New York City. Two of the employees are Harvey Specter and Louis Litt who already work there for a longer time. Louis is one of the supervisors in the office both work in, and Harvey is one of the regular subordinates. You will encounter a more detailed description of the office on the next page.

Below you see a picture in which both are shown. Louis Litt is the man standing on the left and Harvey Specter on the right. Please make sure that you remember both of them.

Click on the bottom right in order to continue on the next page.



Please carefully read the text below.

Pearson Hardman is one of the top three major New York City law firms, specialized in corporate law. The agency was established in 2003 by Daniel Hardman and Jessica Pearson, who led the company during the early days of success. Currently the company has multiple operating offices in the United States. Recently the organization had to tackle several issues among which only few were of financial nature. However, the atmosphere in the office is characterized by tension as the tone of voice is rather rough and managers are not afraid of yelling at employees and slamming office doors. Loud and rough discussions between managers are also, a daily occurring phenomenon in the office. However, the office as a whole got rewarded "Best office in the company" for 3 years in a row. Employees think that the office's success came with the manager who can be described as man who doesn't laugh nor talk too much but always wants to be the best of the best. There are a lot of rumors going on in the office one of them deals with the aspect that the manager tries to keep his employees small in order to secure his own position and therefore, does not support his employees during tough times nor provides any guidance that isn't necessary. Similar aspects count for the relationship between the employees which are marked by jealousy and resentment. Generally, there is little support among the workforce for each other, rather employees utilize situations in which colleagues made a mistake in order to present themselves in the best way possible, secretly hoping for a promotion. This results in an environment in which as little as possible communication takes place since employees don't want to share information they heavily worked for, which could be advantageous for a colleague.

Please click on the bottom right in order to continue to the next page.

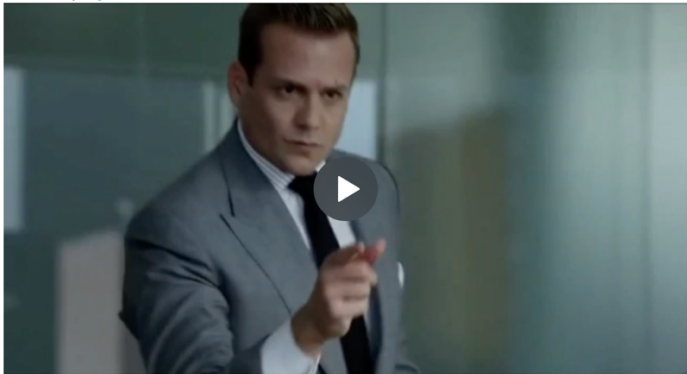
Note: Participants were only exposed to one of the two versions.

Pearson Hardman is one of the top three major New York City law firms, specialized in corporate law. The agency was established in 2003 by Daniel Hardman and Jessica Pearson, who led the company during the early days of success. Currently the company has multiple operating offices in the United States. Within the United States the organization is known for long term employee relationships even though these are quite unusual during current times, and got rewarded "best office of the company" three years in a row. The atmosphere in the office is characterized by friendly and open interactions even during important discussions managers and employees interact with each other in an appreciative way. Further, employees always engage with each other in a respectful manner regardless of hierarchical positions thus, creating a climate of open conversations in which innovative ideas and individual opinions are valued. The outstanding work environment is the reason why the office as a whole got rewarded "Best office in the company" for 3 years in a row. Employees think that the office's success came with the manager who can best be described as supportive and emphatic individual who stimulates the career development of his employees. The management also provides support for the employees even if employee's concerns are not related to daily business. Similar aspects count for the relationships between the employees which are marked by empathy and goodwill for the success of the team. Generally, there is much support among the workforce for each other, employees commonly work towards the accomplishment of collective goals. This results in an environment in which frequent interactions take place since employees like to share their personal information with their colleagues as the majority of employees perceives their colleagues as friends.

Please click on the bottom right in order to continue to the next page.

Please carefully watch the video below, and while doing so imagine yourself to be in the position of Harvey Specter.

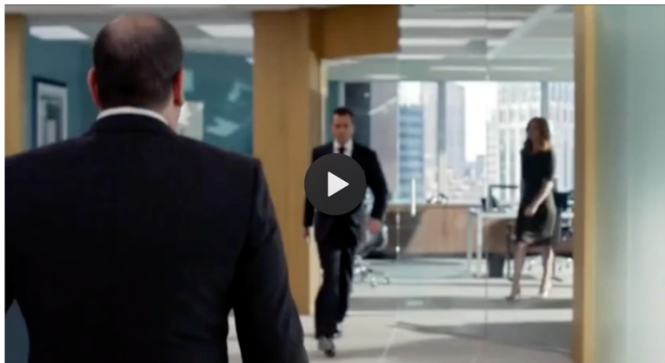
Click the play button in order to start the video.



Note: Participants were only exposed to one of the two versions.

Please carefully watch the video below, and while doing so imagine yourself to be in the position of Harvey Specter.

Click the play button in order to start the video.



In the following, please answer the presented questions by indicating the extent you (dis)agree to the present statements. Make sure your answer is based on the video you just saw.

While answering these questions you are asked to imagine yourself to be in the position of Harvey Specter and answer the questions accordingly.

While imagining to be in the Position of Harvey Specter, do you think he would....

	Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
consider his supervisor as competent in doing his job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
be convinced that there are too many rules and procedures in place which make it difficult to do a good job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
like the people he works with?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
consider his job to be meaningless?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
consider the communication within the organization as being good?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
consider his supervisor as being not fair to him?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

not feel that the work he does is appreciated?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
consider his efforts to do a good job be blocked by regulatory and bureaucratic aspects of the organization?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
have to work harder because of the incompetence of other people he works with?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
perceive that his supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
consider that there is too little support for those who work for the organization?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
enjoy his coworkers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
feel a sense of pride in doing his job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
like his supervisor?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
perceive his job as being enjoyable?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the following, please answer the presented questions by indicating the extent you (dis)agree to the present statements. Make sure your answer is based on the video you just saw.

While answering these questions you are asked to imagine yourself to be in the position of Harvey Specter and answer the questions accordingly.

While imagining to be in the Position of Harvey Specter, to you think he would...

	Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
feel personally insulted when someone would criticize the company he works for?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
be interested in what others think about the organization he works for?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
usually say "we" rather than "they" when talking about the organization he works for?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
perceive the organizational success as his personal success?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
feel flattered when someone would praise the organization he works for?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
feel embarrassed if a story in the media would criticize the company he works for?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the following, please answer the presented questions by indicating the extent you (dis)agree to the present statements. Make sure your answer is based on the video you just saw.

While answering these questions you are asked to imagine yourself to be in the position of Harvey Specter and answer the questions accordingly.

While imagining to be in the Position of Harvey Specter, do you think he would feel that...

	Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
team members exchange ideas with each other to analyze and solve problems?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
team members are kept in the loop about issues affecting the entire company?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
information, which is used to make decisions, is freely shared among members of the team?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
team members exchange information and learn from each other?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
team members work hard to keep one another up to date on their activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This time, while answering these questions you are asked to imagine to be in the position of Louis Litt, who is the supervisor in the office.

While imagining to be in the position of Louis Litt, do you think he would...

	Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
feel that Harvey is not the sort of co-worker he needs to monitor closely?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
believe that the quality of work he receives from Harvey is only maintained by his diligent monitoring?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
have found it necessary to work around Harvey in order to get things done the way he would like them to be done?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
keep close track of his interaction with Harvey, taking note of instances where Harvey did not keep his end of the bargain?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
try to have a backup plan ready rather than being dependent on Harvey, when he needs assistance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please evaluate the reputation of the company based on the office description which was presented to you in the beginning of this survey.

Based on the company description I think the company has a...

Bad reputation | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | Good reputation

Please evaluate the working climate in the office, based on the office description which was presented to you in the beginning of this survey.

The working climate in the office is...

	Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
pleasing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
rough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
competetive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
supportive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Based on the video you saw, please indicate to which degree you perceive a conflict or non-conflict situation to be present.

No Conflict situation | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | Conflict situation

Based on the video you saw, please indicate to which degree you perceive the situation as being realistic or not.

Not realistic at all | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | Very much realistic

Thank you for your time and participation!

The aim of this study was to investigate to what extent either a positive or negative prime affects participant's perception of internal communication, if either a conflict or non-conflict situation was presented. The underlying assumption of this study was that the favorable office description establishes a rather positive reputation in the mind of the observer and thus, acts as buffer in case the conflict situation was shown. Therefore, it was assumed that the favorable office description in combination with the conflict situation was less harmful to the evaluation of the internal communication.

If you have any further questions or are interested in the results of the study, please feel free to send an email to Moritz Press: m.press@student.utwente.nl.

If you have any complains about the research, please contact: ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl.

