

Can we adequately assess
corporate reputation?

Ummmm, that's a no

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Thought Exercise

Please close your eyes...



Thought Exercise

Please close your eyes...

Three problems prevent us from “adequately” measuring reputation



Problem – Why can't we have a common definition

Ability to create **value** (Kindova et al., 2006)

Signal of key **characteristics** (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990)

A perceptual representation...that describes the firm's
overall **appeal** (Fombrun, 1996)

The fact of being highly **esteemed** (Webster Dictionary, 1961)

Collective judgments...based on assessments of the...
impacts attributed to the corporation (Barnett et al.,
2006)

Problem #1: We don't have a



Problem #1 – We don't have a common definition

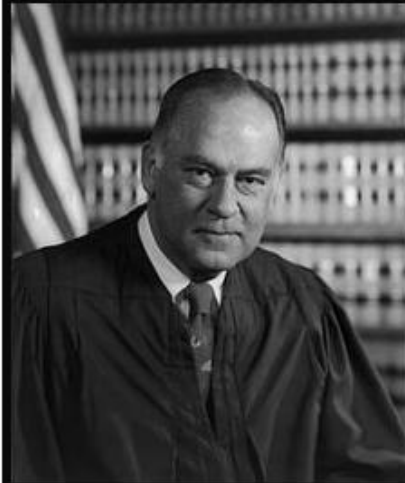


I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material [pornography]... but I know it when I see it.

(Potter Stewart)

IZQuotes

Problem #1 – We don't have a common definition



I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material [reputation] ... but I know it when I see it.

(Potter Stewart)

IZQuotes

Problem #2 – Reputation for what?



- > Multiple reputations: organisations do not have a single reputation; they have a reputation for something with someone, which can mean several different, even competing, reputations. There is no single measure of reputation.

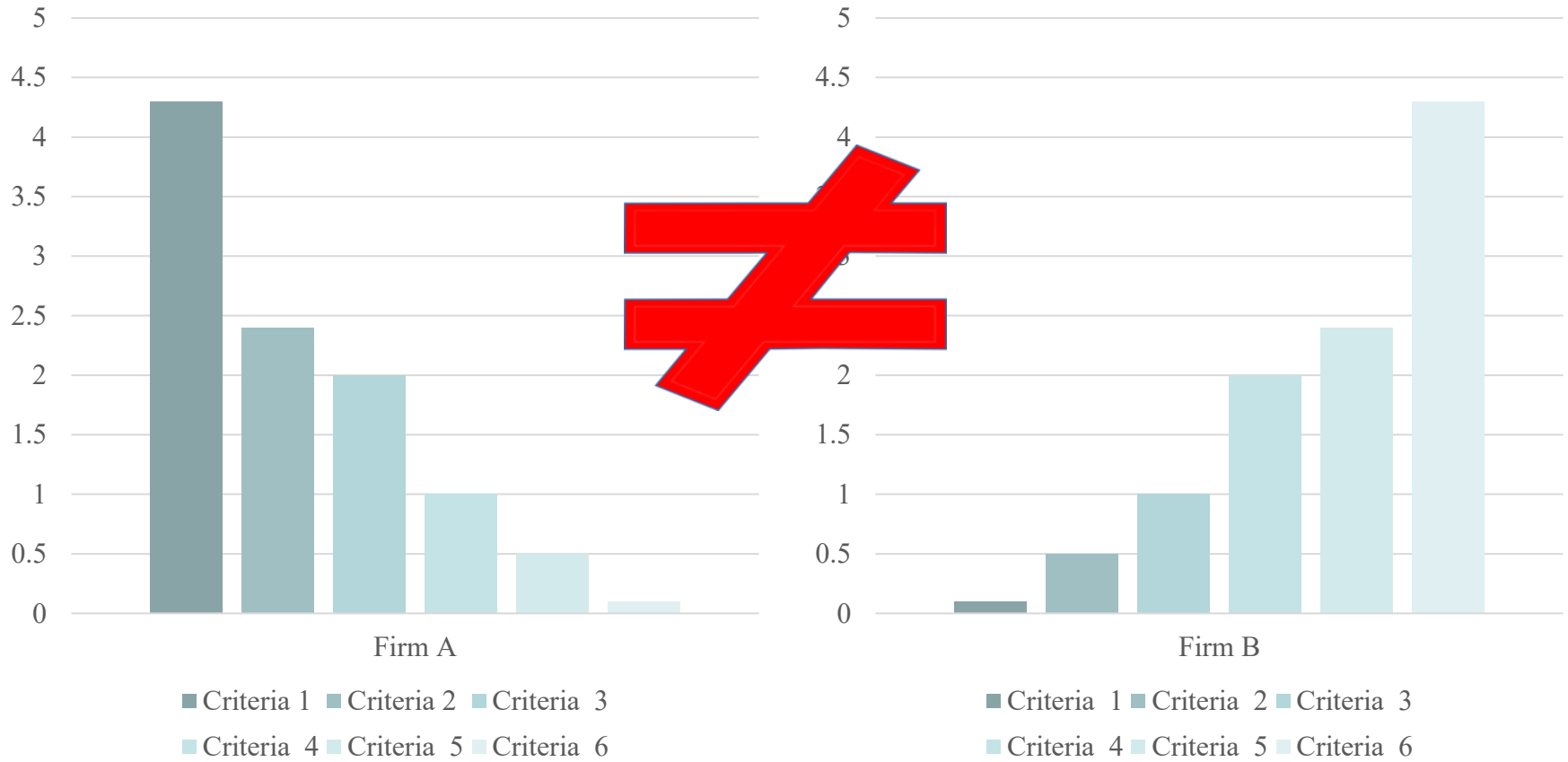
Problem #2 – Reputation for what?

THE WORLD'S MOST ADMIRABLE COMPANIES



To determine the best-regarded companies in 52 industries, **Korn Ferry** asked executives, directors, and analysts to rate enterprises in their own industry on nine criteria, from investment value and quality of management and products to social responsibility and ability to attract talent. A company's score must rank in the top half of its industry survey to be listed. (For complete rankings, visit [fortune.com](https://www.fortune.com)).

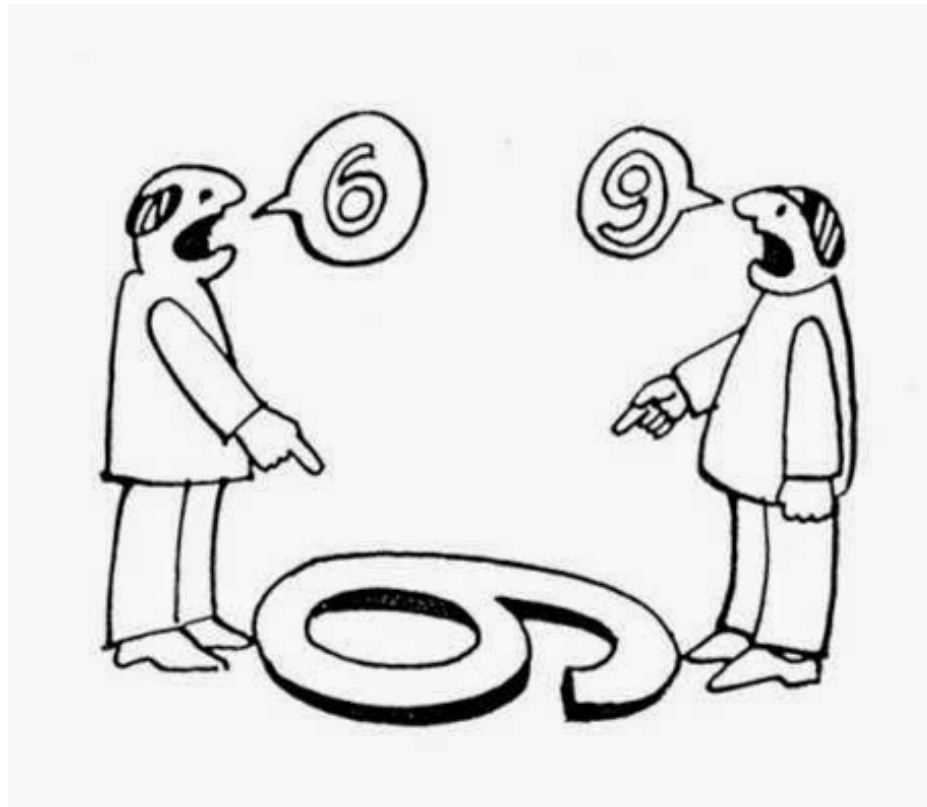
Problem #2 – Reputation for what?



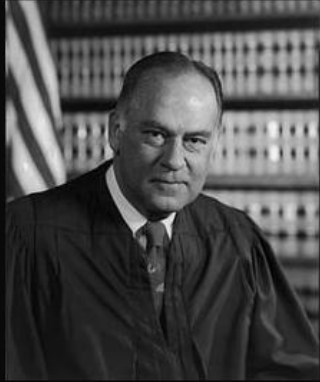
Problem #2 – Reputation for what?



Problem #3 – According to whom?



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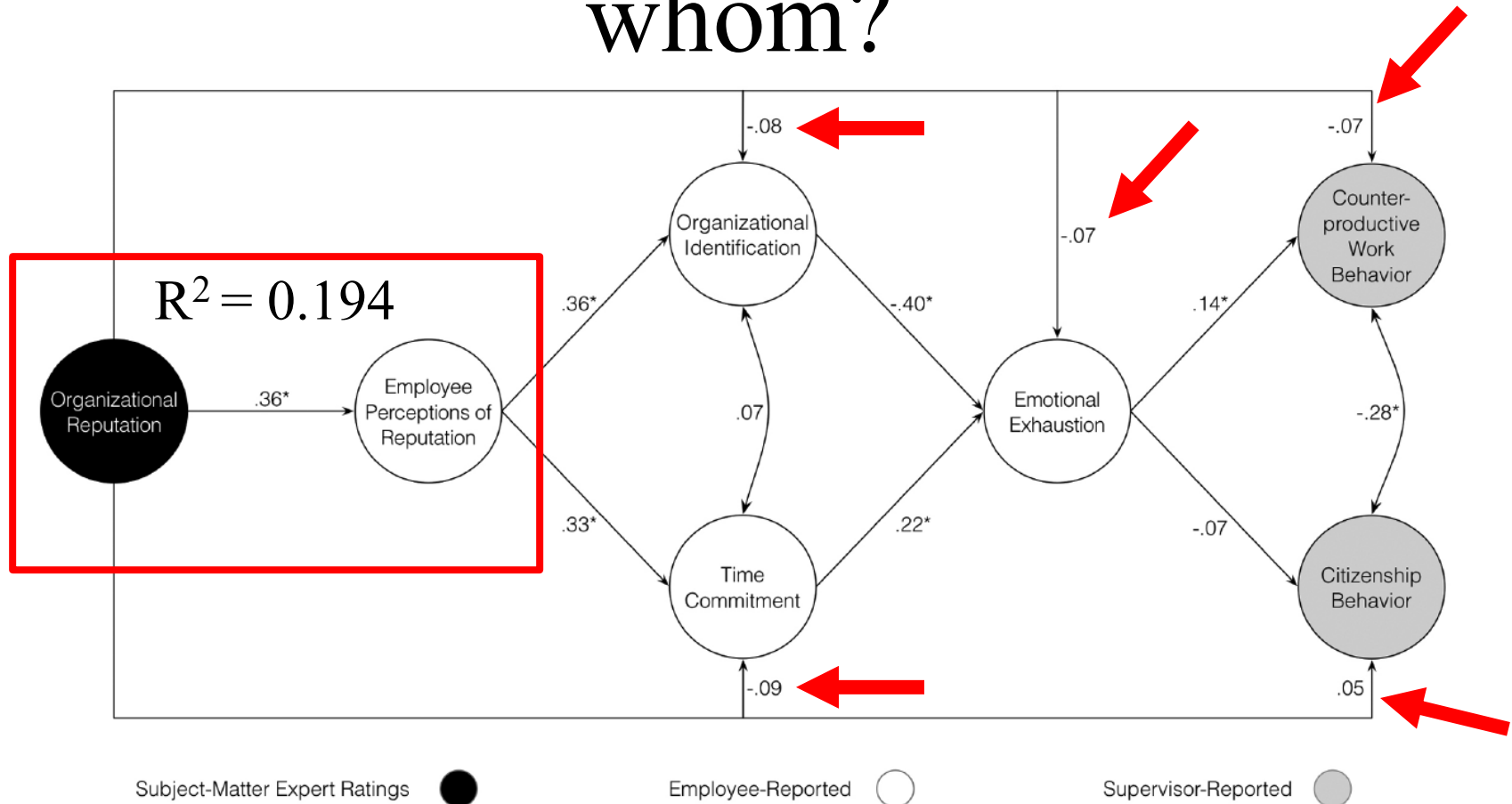
"I regret a little bit that if I'll be remembered at all I'll be remembered for that particular phrase."
(Potter Stewart)

IZQuotes

"I know it when I see it, and someone else will know it when they see it, but what they see and what they know may or may not be what I see and what I know, and that's okay."

-William T. Goldberg

Problem #3 – According to whom?



Source: Baer, M. D., Bundy, J., Garud, N., & Kim, J. K. 2018.
 The benefits and burdens of organizational reputation for employee well-being:
 A conservation of resources approach. *Personnel Psychology*, 71(4): 571-595.

A Better Question?

- How can we adequately assess the corporate reputations that matter for the critical outcomes of interest within a given context, according to a specified time period, and for specifically identified stakeholders?

OR

- Is “know it when I see it” good enough?