

HOW DO TURKISH BANKS CONSTRUCT THEIR IDENTITIES: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Based on institutional theory, this research studies the role of corporate social responsibility in organizational identity construction and online communication. The textual data analysis software Diction 7.0 and Concordance 3.3 is utilized to understand organizational identity construction by examining corporate websites of Turkey's eight largest banks. Study results revealed that banks construct their identities by utilizing a similar set of themes. Interestingly, the themes mainly communicated on the websites of the eight banks studies do not necessarily include economic outputs such as core banking functions or superiority, but the banks tend to heavily communicate their non-economic agendas such as sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

Keywords: Organizational identity, corporate social responsibility, website, legitimacy, banking sector, Diction, Concordance, Turkey.

1 INTRODUCTION

This study utilizes the textual data analysis software Diction in order to understand the process of organizational identity construction by focusing on the corporate websites of Turkey's eight largest banks. Based on institutional theory, this study aims to understand the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in organizational identity construction and online communication. The role of CSR in establishing a legitimate identity is further investigated in the study.

Turkey's eight largest public and private banks (three public and five privately-owned banks) with more than 300 branches were studied in this paper to reveal their online identities constructed on their corporate websites. As argued by Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) businesses are focused on reflecting their position in the "context of a global community," by emphasizing relation to "the environment, governance, social responsibility, humanitarianism and safety" (p. 1). This tends to be present in the organizational communication efforts all kinds of firms, including banks. This study aims to understand how much of these CSR efforts are visible in the organizational communication efforts of banks in Turkey and what other major themes they utilize to construct their identities. The communication of organizational identity is important as a firm's external stakeholders will perceive the identity of the organization from that perspective, "in response to identity-based communications" (Hatch and Schultz, 1997, p. 356).

Online communication technologies, including websites and social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter, are increasingly becoming used by firms to engage with their stakeholders and communicate to them in a more direct and efficient manner. In fact, Rolland and Bazzoni (2009) argued that organizational websites have become an "influential communication channel that allows a company to showcase commitment to CSR and simultaneously engage in two-way stakeholder communication," allowing firms to manage their identities more strategically online (p. 250). "Messages which were once more locally focused, more monologic and intended as one-way, have now become more dialogic and participatory, relationship-oriented and two-way intended (i.e. stakeholder feedback allowed for)" (Rolland and Bazzoni, 2009, p. 256).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study utilizes institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977) which argues that the existence of the current standardized and rationalized practices in organizations across industries and national boundaries is a result of the regulative, normative, and cognitive processes used by organizations. The largest banks in Turkey have also gone through a similar normative and regulative process where the identities of the banks seem to be

quite similar to each other and major distinctions among bank identities have become the anomaly. Legitimacy is an important component of institutional theory and it suggests that organizational practices are changed or implemented by organizations to be considered legitimate. Organizations gain legitimacy through three key processes: coercive isomorphism, mimetic processes, and normative pressures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Studying the largest banks in Turkey reveals that coercive isomorphism is heavily used for gaining legitimacy, via utilizing or copying externally codified rules, norms, or laws, especially when adopting new management practices (Matten and Moon, 2008, p. 411). The authors of the current study argue that engaging in CSR practices for constructing organizational identity may be explained by coercive isomorphism where the banks aim to present a positive identity and gain legitimacy by imitating each others' best practices.

Organizational identity basically refers to what the organization is. Presenting a strong organizational identity affects how others perceive the organization and its image (Bromley, 1993; Dowling, 1994; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Van Riel, 1995). Hill and White (2000) argued that online communication is being used to construct an organizational identity and engage in public relations functions such as stakeholder and media relationship management. This study aims to understand the identity components or themes emphasized by the largest banks in Turkey in their online communication efforts.

3 METHOD

The researchers analyzed secondary data collected from the websites of the eight banks at the corporate level by utilizing Diction software. The textual data from the website analysis was collected from the *about us, history, mission and vision, and corporate social responsibility* sections of each bank's corporate website. The textual data collected from the websites was analyzed via the Diction 7.0 (*Computer-Aided Text Analysis_CATA*) software to develop a deeper understanding of the major communicated themes and thus the identity of each bank. Diction 7.0 is a computer assisted content analysis software that counts the words (*lexemes*) in a given document, presents the frequencies of those words, lists the distinctive words and enables standard coding which increases the reliability of the analysis. After the content analysis conducted with Diction 7, the distinctive words are grouped under major themes that constitute the identity of the banks.

The textual data of the study further analyzed with Concordance 3.3 Text Analysis Software to count and list words, word frequencies, and to develop thematic categories in order to identify the words used to construct organizational identity of banks. Concordance Software allows textual analysis in all languages and enables users to examine words in the original text and evaluate its meaning for each use.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Concordance Analysis

After the completion of the data collection process from the corporate websites of banks, data was translated into English by using 'Google translate' and data was analyzed first by using Concordance 3.3 Data analysis software. Concordance listed all words and where it appears in the text (its use in a sentence) included in the data and gave a numerical count of how many times they were used in the text. Based on these frequencies of the repeated words the authors were able to identify distinctive words that were emphasized by banks to construct their identities. The authors listed the most repeated words based on their counts and according to their contextual meaning, and grouped related terms and concepts to further develop theme categories. Table 1 presents the theme categories that identify organizational identity and some examples of distinctive words emphasized for each category. As corporate social responsibility stands out as an extremely distinct identity category relative to all other, CSR related identity categories are presented in another table below (Table 2).

Table 1. Organization Identity Categories and Examples of Distinctive Words Emphasized for Each Category

Superiority	Future Orientation	Extensive Impact & Development	Cooperative Efforts	Capacity & Resources	External Constraints	Internal Constraints	Governance	Structure & Identity	Banking & Finance
Dynamic	Determination	Growth	Collaboration	Information	Privatization	Principles	Administration	Organization	Transaction
Quality	New	Development	Federation	People	Municipality	Discipline	Management	Corporate	Equity
Oldest	Future	Improvement	Integration	Product	Legal	Measures	Director	Company	Money
Good	Change	Contribution	Merger	Resource	Chamber	Policy	Business	Industry	Economy
Best	Transformation	Benefit	Partnership	Service	Legislation	Protocol	Manager	Establishment	Trade
First	Innovation	Sustainability	Network	Source	Ministry		CEO	Sector	Commerce
High	Renewal	Productivity	Cooperation	Employee	Country		Chairman	Institution	Fund
Successful	Technology	Country	Participation	Experience	Domestic		Director	Strategy	Financial
Pride	Creativity	Nation		Efficiency	Government		Governance	Aim	Factoring
Large	Contemporary	Value		Staff	Governor		Leadership	Objective	Banking
Prestigious	Modern	Global		Team	Local		Expert	Target	Credit
Great	Vision	International		Capacity	Market		President	Purpose	Funding
Strong	Progress	Awareness		Material	Context		Professional	Mission	Leasing

Champion Important Reputation Status	Customer Audience Opportunity Profitability	Supply	Culture	Shareholder Decision	Reputation Brand	Stock Interest Loan Investment
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Table 2. CSR Categories and the Distinctive Words Emphasized for Each Category

Arts & Culture	Disadvantaged	Education	Environment	Health & Safety	Sports	General CSR
'Aphrodisias'	Diversity	Academy	Environment	Health	Basketball	Foundation
'Zeugma'	'Daruşşafaka'	Children	Green	Safety	Sailing	CSR
'Çatalhöyük'	Disability	Conference	Forestry	Hospital	Sports	Ethics
'Rodin'	Elderly	Congress	Water	'Lösev'	Tennis	Volunteerism
'Salvador Dali'	Wheelchair	Education	Energy	Nursing	Football	Association
Anatolia	Women	Library	TEMA		Volleyball	Donation
Archeology		Scholarship	Greenhouse		Chess	Safety
Architecture		School	Waste		Athlete	Sponsorship
Art		Seminar	Recycling		Golf	Responsibility
Biennale		Training	Ecosystem		Olympic	Sensitivity
Concert		Workshop	Wildlife			Community
Craftsman			Green			
Drawings			Forestry			
Entertainment			Water			
Exhibition						
Festival						
Film/Movie						
Museum						
Music						
Opera						
Sculpture						
Theater						

As corporate social responsibility stands out as an extremely distinct identity category relative to all other themes, CSR activities were grouped according to their focus in order to gain a deeper understanding and make comparisons between CSR initiatives implemented by each bank. Garanti Bank followed by İş Bank are the two banks that heavily emphasis their CSR initiatives and tend engage more in responsibility efforts in different areas (Atakan-Duman and Ozdora-Aksak, 2014).

Table 3. Results of the Concordance Analysis: Relative Emphasis of CSR Initiatives

CSR Categories	Banks															
	Ak Bank		Garanti Bank		Halk Bank		İş Bank		Vakıf Bank		TEB		Yapı Kredi		Ziraat Bank	
Arts and Culture	136	71.96	465	46.73	83	40.10	283	44.43	31	17.03	114	33.53	149	47.30	40	81.63
Disadvantaged	-0-	-0-	47	4.72	32	15.46	22	3.45	20	10.99	2	0.59	27	8.57	-0-	-0-
Education	38	20.11	112	11.26	31	14.98	94	14.76	53	29.12	176	51.76	66	20.95	7	14.29
Environment	15	7.94	237	23.82	16	7.73	136	21.35	-0-	-0-	25	7.35	54	17.14	2	4.08
Health and Safety	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	23	11.11	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	13	4.13	-0-	-0-
Sports	-0-	-0-	134	13.47	22	10.63	102	16.01	78	42.86	23	6.76	6	1.91	-0-	-0-
Total	189		995		207		637		182		340		315		49	

4.2 Diction Analysis

The content presented on corporate websites of banks were also analyzed with Diction 7, and the distinctive words were grouped under major themes that constitute the identity of the banks. Diction uses software embedded dictionaries (word-lists) to examine a text for certain variables in order to determine the tone of a verbal message. Table 4 presents the mean scores of contingency variables of organizational identity. Those contingency variables are explained below in Table 5.

Table 4. Contingency Table of Organizational Identity and CSR among Banks

	Ak Bank	Garanti	Halk Bank	İş Bank	Vakıf Bank	TEB	Yapı Kredi	Ziraat Bank
Collectives	9.96	17.28	17.72	12.54	9.69	9.89	9.08	9.80
Leveling	5.47	3.76	4.92	3.38	4.51	5.52	6.00	7.17
Self Reference	7.84	5.78	9.54	4.53	10.54	4.70	6.46	6.14
Tenacity	15.03	12.68	15.57	19.02	15.35	15.38	18.23	13.34
Variety	49.66	51.14	50.73	51.97	50.97	52.30	52.08	49.06

Table 5. Descriptions of Contingency Variables

Contingency Variable	Description of the Contingency Variable
Tenacity	All uses of the verb to be (<i>is, am, will, shall</i>) three definitive verb forms (<i>has, must, do</i>) and their variants, as well as all associated contraction's (<i>he'll, they've, ain't</i>). These verbs connote confidence and totality.
Leveling	Words used to ignore individual differences and to build a sense of completeness and assurance. Included are totalizing terms (<i>everybody, anyone, each, fully</i>), adverbs of permanence (<i>always, completely, inevitably, consistently</i>), and resolute adjectives (<i>unconditional, consummate, absolute, open-and-shut</i>).
Collectives	Singular nouns connoting plurality that function to decrease specificity. These words reflect a dependence on categorical modes of thought. Included are social groupings (<i>crowd, choir, team, humanity</i>), task groups (<i>army, congress, legislature, staff</i>) and geographical entities (<i>county, world, kingdom, republic</i>).
Self-Reference	All first-person references , including <i>I, I'd, I'll, I'm, I've, me, mine, my, myself</i> . Self-references are treated as acts of indexing whereby the locus of action appears to reside in the speaker and not in the world at large thereby implicitly acknowledging the speaker's limited vision.
Variety	This measure conforms to Wendell Johnson's (1946) Type-Token Ratio which divides the number of different words in a passage by the passage's total words. A high score indicates a speaker's avoidance of overstatement and a preference for precise, molecular statements.

Source: Hart, R. P. and Carroll, C.E. (2014). *Diction 7.0 The Text Analysis Program Help Manual*. USA: Digitext Inc.

In addition, as CSR came out as a distinct and significant identity component in previous analyses, CSR related constructs were further examined with Diction as well. The language analysis revealed accomplishment, communication, cooperation, diversity, human interest, inspiration, praise and present concern as relevant constructs related to CSR. The detailed explanation of each construct is presented below in Table 6.

Table 6. Mean Language Scores for CSR Concepts of Banks

	Ak Bank	Garanti	Halk Bank	İş Bank	Vakıf Bank	TEB	Yapı Kredi	Ziraat
Accomplishment	19.38	18.84	17.14	17.47	25.24	23.84	22.39	17.98
Communication	3.67	6.58	2.91	4.71	3.43	4.36	1.61	5.01
Cooperation	7.09	10.06	8.10	9.22	8.75	7.62	9.57	7.38
Diversity	3.23	1.99	2.49	2.29	2.12	2.33	6.00	4.16
Human Interest	8.57	9.07	20.49	11.86	17.27	9.37	17.35	11.85
Inspiration	5.78	4.70	10.54	4.53	9.54	6.46	6.14	7.84
Praise	4.83	4.62	6.09	2.72	4.39	4.46	5.43	5.44
Present Concern	9.10	6.48	5.21	7.24	9.18	9.31	6.70	4.75

Table 7. Descriptions of CSR Related Concepts

CSR Related Concepts	Description of the CSR Related Concept
Accomplishment	Words expressing task-completion (<i>establish, finish, influence, proceed</i>) and organized human behavior (<i>motivated, influence, leader, manage</i>). Includes capitalistic terms (<i>buy, produce, employees, sell</i>), modes of expansion (<i>grow, increase, generate, construction</i>) and general functionality (<i>handling, strengthen, succeed, outputs</i>). Also included is programmatic language : <i>agenda, enacted, working, leadership</i> .
Communication	Terms referring to social interaction, both face-to-face (<i>listen, interview, read, speak</i>) and mediated (<i>film, videotape, telephone, e-mail</i>). The dictionary includes both modes of intercourse (<i>translate, quote, scripts, broadcast</i>) and moods of intercourse (<i>chat, declare, flatter, demand</i>).
Cooperation	Terms designating behavioral interactions among people that often result in a group product. Included are designations of formal work relations (<i>unions, schoolmates, caucus</i>) and informal associations (<i>chum, partner, cronies</i>) to more intimate interactions (<i>sisterhood, friendship, comrade</i>).
Diversity	Words describing individuals or groups of individuals differing from the norm. Such distinctiveness may be comparatively neutral (<i>inconsistent, contrasting, non-conformist</i>) but it can also be positive (<i>exceptional, unique, individualistic</i>) and negative (<i>illegitimate, rabble-rouser, extremist</i>).
Present Concern	A selective list of present-tense verbs extrapolated from C. K. Ogden's list of general and picturable terms, all of which occur with great frequency in standard American English. The dictionary is not topic-specific but points instead to general physical activity (<i>cough, taste, sing, take</i>), social operations (<i>canvass, touch, govern, meet</i>), and task-performance (<i>make, cook, print, paint</i>).
Human Interest	An adaptation of Rudolf Flesch's notion that concentrating on people and their activities gives discourse a life-like quality. Included are standard personal pronouns (<i>he, his, ourselves, them</i>), family members and relations (<i>cousin, wife, grandchild, uncle</i>), and generic terms (<i>friend, baby, human, persons</i>).
Inspiration	Abstract virtues deserving of universal respect. Most of the terms in this dictionary are nouns isolating desirable moral qualities (<i>faith, honesty, self-sacrifice, virtue</i>) as well as attractive personal qualities

Praise	(<i>courage, dedication, wisdom, mercy</i>). Social and political ideals are also included: <i>education, justice</i> . Affirmations of some person, group, or abstract entity. Included are terms isolating important social qualities (<i>dear, delightful, witty</i>), physical qualities (<i>mighty, beautiful</i>), intellectual qualities (<i>bright, reasonable</i>), entrepreneurial qualities (<i>successful, conscientious</i>), and moral qualities (<i>faithful, good, noble</i>).
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Source: Hart, R. P. and Carroll, C.E. (2014). *Diction 7.0 The Text Analysis Program Help Manual*. USA: Digitext Inc.

The results of the Diction analysis revealed that the banks analyzed do not differ from each other significantly and seem to use a similar language and tone to construct their identities. In addition, similar to Concordance analysis results, CSR comes out as critical identity component for banks.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study are parallel to previous studies as Concordance analysis revealed overlapping results with the thematic content analysis conducted by Atakan-Duman and Ozdora-Aksak (2014). More over, the Concordance analysis results were also significantly similar to Diction analysis results. In both studies highlight CSR as a distinctive theme category used by banks in their identity construction process. In fact, CSR runs at par with constructs related to a bank's core business functions. Authors believe that banks uses these themes strategically in order to construct a moral identity.

Study results revealed that banks construct their identities by utilizing a similar set of themes. Interestingly, the themes mainly communicated on the websites of the eight banks studies do not necessarily include economic outputs such as core banking functions or superiority, but the banks tend to heavily communicate their non-economic agendas such as sustainability and corporate social responsibility in order to gain legitimacy (Ozdora-Aksak and Atakan-Duman, 2014).

This study is granted by The Scientific and Research Counsel of Turkey_TUBITAK. Grant No: 114K096.

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