TOWARD A THEORY OF REPUTATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

In everyday life, as well as in work organizations, we engage in frequent and quite comfortable discourse about the nature of reputations, and we also see personal reputation used as a basis for important human resources decisions (e.g., promotions, terminations, etc.). Unfortunately, despite its recognized importance, there has been very little theory and research on personal reputation in organizations published in the organizational sciences. The present paper attempts to address this need by proposing a conceptualization of personal reputation in organizations. In this conceptualization, reputation is presented as an agreed upon, collective perception by others, and involves behavior calibration derived from social comparisons with referent others that results in a deviation from the behavioral norms in one's environment, as observed and evaluated by others. Implications of this conceptualization are discussed, as are directions for future research.

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INTRODUCTION

Reputation has been shown to be an important factor in assessing the worth of an organization (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001), or the value of a product (Feldwick, 1996), and it has been positioned as playing important roles in managerial behavior (Ferris, Fedor, & King, 1994) and leadership (Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2002; Blass & Ferris, 2007; Hall, Blass, Ferris, & Massengale, 2004). Nevertheless, very little theory and research on personal reputation has been reported, and the nature and dynamics of how a reputation is developed, and its impact on social interactions, has received limited attention in the organizational sciences literature (e.g., Ferris, Blass, Douglas, Kolodinsky, & Treadway, 2003).

There has been considerable research interest in recent years in corporate reputation (e.g., Rindova, Williamson, Petkova, & Sever, 2005; Fombrun, 1996), and new interest in subunit or department reputation (Ferris et al., in press-a). Unfortunately, after what appeared to be the beginning of a serious stream of research on personal reputation two decades ago (i.e., Gioia & Sims, 1983; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984; Tsui, 1984), and a limited revival of interest in the mid-1990s (Bromley, 1993; Tsui, 1994), little work subsequently has been published in the organizational sciences literature in this area.

The purpose of the present paper is to address this need in the field by articulating the conceptual foundations and dynamics of this construct, and thereby move closer toward the formulation of a theory of personal reputation in organizations. We begin by establishing the construct domain and definition of personal reputation, followed by a review of the existing research on personal reputation in the organizational sciences. Then, we propose a model of personal reputation in organizations, including both antecedents and consequences, which incorporates multiple theoretical perspectives to address both the development (i.e., social comparison and self-regulation theories) and the transmission (i.e., signaling, social information processing and contagion, and communication theories) of reputation.

DEFINITION AND CONSTRUCT DOMAIN OF REPUTATION

Definition of Reputation

Although a single consensus definition of reputation has not been established in the organizational sciences, there does appear to be some

common ground upon which to build one. Common throughout the published work on reputation in a number of disciplines is the notion that personal reputation refers to a generally agreed upon, collective perception of an individual by some referent others, influenced by the individual actors themselves, and which does not occur instantaneously, but emerges over some period of time (e.g., Ferris et al., 2003).

From their review, Ferris et al. (2003) distilled a definition of personal reputation that emphasized the perceptual character of the construct, its intentional nature, its focus on behaviors and characteristics of the individual actor, and its occurrence over time. Furthermore, they implicitly made reference to reputation as reflecting a collective perception by others, and possessing a predictive quality by increasing the likelihood of future behavior.

Thus, we employ the definition of personal reputation developed by Ferris et al. (2003), with the specific addition of the importance of collective perception and the reduced uncertainty of expected future behavior as follows: *Reputation is a perceptual identity formed from the collective perceptions of others, which is reflective of the complex combination of salient personal characteristics and accomplishments, demonstrated behavior, and intended images presented over some period of time as observed directly and/or reported from secondary sources, which reduces ambiguity about expected future behavior*.

Construct Domain Differentiation

Although we conceive of reputation as a separate and distinct construct in its own right, it is important to briefly discuss its construct domain delineation as compared with other constructs potentially construed as similar in nature. Rindova, Pollock, and Hayward (2006) distinguished among the constructs of reputation, legitimacy, status, and celebrity. Suggesting that reputation differs from the others in that it reflects a predictive measure, similar to what marketing scholars have proposed, Rindova et al. implied that both status and legitimacy are based more on networks and abidance with acceptable norms. They contended that both celebrity and reputation are based on others' perception of an individual (or group). Rindova et al. defined celebrity as those entities that "attract a high level of public attention and generate positive emotional responses from stakeholder audiences" (p. 51), and recent research has been conducted on both celebrity firms (Rindova et al., 2006) and celebrity Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) (Hayward, Rindova, & Pollock, 2004; Ranft, Zinko, Ferris, & Buckley, 2006; Wade, Porac, Pollock, & Graffin, 2006).

The model presented in this paper reflects the perspective set out by Rindova et al. (2006) by suggesting that reputation differs from fame and celebrity because it has a predictive nature. Moreover, Rindova et al. proposed that although other defining characteristics, such as status and legitimacy, may carry with them a predictive value, they are normally tied directly to a formal position in an organization; suggesting that status and legitimacy may be achieved by position alone because others will consider them more on station or network rather than on observable actions. Ironically, one can gain a reputation for being anything *but* legitimate when compared with expected norms (Haviland, 1977).

Ravlin and Thomas (2005, p. 968) characterized status as "differences in prestige and deference" that result in some sort of ranking, and de Botton (2004, p. vii) defined status as "one's value and importance in the eyes of the world". Roberts (2005) suggested that image is based on our own assessment of ourselves, rather than an audience's perception of us, which implies that individuals' reputations may be completely different from their images. Furthermore, individuals who are low in social astuteness may perceive their image as being the same as their reputation, rendering them completely erroneous in their assessment, as a function of their "flawed self-assessments," which can be due to an inability to understand other's perceptions of them (Dunning, Heath, & Suls, 2004).

Because it has been studied in so many different intellectual traditions and disciplinary perspectives, it is difficult to provide a single definition of identity. However, most would simply contend that identity refers to "... an internal cognition about the self," or perhaps a bit more specifically, "... a feature of the individual reflecting an internal process of self-definition" (Deaux, 2000, p. 225). Thus, although identity might appear to be similar in nature to reputation, important differences exist concerning the predominant inward looking construct of identity, and the external reflection of reputation. The explanation of reputation presented in this paper acknowledges not only the similarities of such constructs as image, fame, status, legitimacy, identity, and prestige, but also builds upon the revealed differences presented by past authors in order to present a more clearly delineated reputation construct.

RESEARCH ON PERSONAL REPUTATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

Research on the development and outcomes of personal reputation has been limited. However, in a review of the existing literature, Ferris et al. (2003)

suggested that individuals develop personal reputations through behaviors that range from passive conformity to others' expectations to active manipulation of the context. For example, Kilduff and Krackhardt (1994) found personal reputation to be as much a function of perceived associations with prominent others as it was a function of job performance. Furthermore, research has suggested that reputation is developed through accurate perceptions of advice networks (Krackhardt, 1990), and active engagement in political behaviors (Ammeter et al., 2002).

Building on early work on the reputational effectiveness of managers (Tsui, 1984), which is defined as constituents' judgments of the extent to which a manager is responsive to constituent expectations, Tsui (1994) developed a model of the antecedents, mediators, and outcomes of reputational effectiveness. According to this model, structural, social, and individual factors affect the homogeneity of contingency expectations, perceived dependence on and interdependence with other constituencies, and strength of social identification with these constituencies, which ultimately affect the manager's tendency toward responsiveness and attainment of reputational effectiveness. Ultimately, Tsui's (1994) model suggests that reputational effectiveness has positive outcomes for the unit, the manager, and the organization as a whole.

Although the development of personal reputation has been somewhat overlooked, a number of researchers have focused their attention on the outcomes of this construct. For example, in a series of experiments, Rosen, Cochran, and Musser (1990) found that an applicant's reputation was a more important predictor of interviewer evaluations of job suitability than the applicant's self presentation style.

Reputation also has been found to have implications for job incumbents. For example, when a novice negotiator knows his opponent has a negative reputation for distributive negotiation, the novice negotiator is more likely to use distributive tactics, thus hindering his or her opponent's performance (Tinsley, O'Connor, & Sullivan, 2002). Furthermore, Hall et al. (2004) suggested that leaders with positive reputations are afforded more trust, receive less monitoring, and are held to lower accountability standards. Finally, empirical research has found an interaction between reputation and helpful behaviors, such that helpful people with good reputations receive more rewards than helpful people with poor reputations (Johnson, Erez, Kiker, & Motowidlo, 2002).

Not only does an individual's reputation affect the way others approach him or her, but it also affects the behavior of the individual. For example, when individuals believe their reputation is threatened, they experience

anxiety that spills over into their home life (Doby & Caplan, 1995). Furthermore, individuals' perceptions of their external reputation, which is communicated to other organizations through organizational events or cues that signal the organization's opinion of the individuals' job performance, affects their probability of searching for another job and leaving the organization (Kydd, Ogilvie, & Slade, 1990).

As can be seen in the previous discussion, most of the existing research on personal reputation has either focused on its antecedents or outcomes. However, with the exception of Tsui's (1994) work on reputational effectiveness, no research has provided a comprehensive explanation of the development *and* consequences of personal reputation. Therefore, the following sections will provide a theory of personal reputation that more precisely articulates the antecedents, consequences, moderators, and mediators of this important construct.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF REPUTATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

The theoretical model presented in this paper not only supports the assumptions presented by Ferris et al. (2003), but also suggests several more. First, individuals will compare themselves with their peers (Festinger, 1954), and if that image does not match the impression they hold in their minds regarding their self worth or perceived worth by others (Baumeister, 1982a, 1982b), they may act in a reputation-building manner (Caste & Burke, 2002). Second, reputations are created by referent others who discuss observed or reported actions (Elmer, 1984; Carroll, Green, Houghton, & Wood, 2003).

Third, we contend that the formation of a reputation is contingent upon behavior deviating from the norm (Haviland, 1977; Levin & Arluke, 1987). Personal reputations are formed by standing out from the pack, by doing something different. Finally, we suggest that reputations are used to reduce uncertainty regarding an individual's future behavior (e.g., Kreps & Wilson, 1982; Milgrom & Roberts, 1982; Ferris et al., 2003).

Although the use of the term reputation is omnipresent in everyday work life, its scientific examination has been surprisingly neglected. With the exception of common anecdotal use, the fact of the matter is that we simply know very little about personal reputation, and how and why it is important. Consideration of the above assumptions begins to illuminate the factors that contribute to the formation of a reputation. Indeed, our model

of how personal reputation forms seeks to incorporate these assumptions, along with relevant theory, in an effort to develop a systematic conceptualization of reputation in organizations that can help shed light on the process dynamics of this construct, and guide future research.

Theoretical Foundations of Reputation Development and Transmission

Social Comparison Theory

Social comparison theory was developed by Festinger (1954) to address how people evaluate their opinions and abilities when no objective standards are available, by comparing themselves with other people. Subsequently, Festinger's theory has been applied beyond "opinions and abilities" to include a number of personal attributes (e.g., Wood, 1989), which makes it relevant for the conceptualization of reputation in organizations. A considerable amount of research over the past several decades, since the articulation of social comparison theory, has dealt with the different types of referent comparisons people choose, the conditions under which each type is selected, and the effects of different choices on individuals' attitudes and behavior (e.g., Kulik & Ambrose, 1992; Wood, 2000).

Festinger (1954) initially suggested that individuals would compare themselves with people who were similar. However, in the subsequent half century, research has identified a number of different comparison bases or referents, including self-present, self-past, self-future, other (past, present, and future), and system (e.g., Goodman, 1974; Kulik & Ambrose, 1992). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that individuals do not necessarily compare themselves only with others who are similar, as Festinger originally argued. Instead, individuals have been found to also engage in downward comparisons (Wills, 1981), and upward comparisons (Collins, 1996).

Self-Regulation Theory

Self-regulation or self-control can be thought of as the effort people put forth in order to alter their own responses, which can include both attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994). It entails starting, stopping, changing a process, or substituting one response or outcome for another in efforts to meet or achieve some standard. Much of the work on self-regulation originally stemmed from systems or control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1982).

The initial step refers to the input or perception of the current circumstances, and a comparison of these circumstances with some

standard. A standard is a conception of how things should be, such as social norms, personal goals, and expectations of others (Baumeister et al., 1994). If there is a discrepancy between the current circumstances and the standard, then the person performs a behavior directed at achieving the standard. Once the person has performed the behavior, another test is performed in order to assess whether the standard was reached (i.e., the discrepancy has been reduced). If the standard was not met, the individual continues to try to achieve the standard by repeating the process, and monitoring progress until the standard is met. When the discrepancy has been reduced, the cycle ends (Baumeister et al., 1994; Carver & Scheier, 1982).

For purposes of the present conceptualization of reputation development in organizations, we suggest a modification of self-regulation theory in order to model the behavioral action involved in reputation building. That is, instead of adjusting one's behavior to meet some accepted standard, we argue that individuals building reputations monitor what behavioral norms or standards happen to be, but then demonstrate behavior that deviates from that standard in some particular way designed to convey certain impressions.

Then, it is this deviation from behavioral norms that becomes salient and attracts attention by an observing audience, which begins the cognitive processing that results in reputation development. In some ways, this perspective is not dissimilar from the adaptive self-regulation approach to managerial effectiveness proposed by Tsui and Ashford (1994). However, we would argue that the standard setting that managers would attempt to achieve in order to satisfy each of their constituencies would be gauged at a level that would be considered deviations (i.e., typically in a positive direction) from behavioral norms.

Therefore, we propose an integration of social comparison and self-regulation theories brought to bear on the systematic conceptualization of the reputation development process. Individuals formulate reputational aspirations and select referent comparisons that serve motivational, modeling, and social comparison evaluative objectives. Then, implementation of steps to accomplish and attain reputational objectives is conducted through self-regulation of work behavior.

Social Information Processing Theory

This theory is an extension of social learning theory. Social information processing theory suggests people must consider all of the mental processes that others use in relating to the social world around them in order to

comprehend how individuals perceive the actions of others (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Individuals receive a set of cues that are based on social norms and expectations as input. The person's behavioral response to the cues occurs as a function of a mental processes that begins with encoding of those cues through sensation and perception. Most of the cues are inputted via selective attention, so the storage of cues in memory is not consistent with objective experience. This selective encoding is partially predictive of how the individual will respond to the observed situation.

The mental representation and interpretation of the cues (e.g., possibly involving attributions about cause) is dependent on the environment in which the cues were received. Once the stimulus cues are absorbed, the individual retrieves one or more possible behavioral responses from memory. The final step of processing is response evaluation and decision-making. This is where the individual evaluates the situation and decides how to respond (Dodge & Coie, 1987).

Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) used social information processing theory to explain job attitudes as they relate to job design. They suggested that when approaching a job, part of the attitude of the worker comes from experiences as well as how others portray the position. The emphasis on the social environment in explaining how individuals view jobs can be applied to how reputation is viewed. Ferris and Mitchell (1987) suggested that social information processing theory applies to self-monitoring in that it applies a set of conditions where individuals can alter their actions depending on the environment.

This suggests that individuals may behave in certain ways in attempts to build specific reputations (Bromley, 1993). It is based on the understanding that others will use social information processing to explain the actions of individuals attempting to build reputations. Those actions can be used to communicate a specific social message that will be interpreted in light of the contextual backdrop within which both the individual and the audience interact and operate (Elmer, 1984).

Social Contagion Theory

Social contagion theory is "the spontaneous spread of emotional and behavioral reactions among a group of people" (Yukl, 1998, p. 307). This theory suggests that organizational actors engage in a form of social 'talk' that allows them to arrive at a shared, socially constructed interpretation of their social environment. This social interaction not only works as a shared sense-making mechanism, but also helps collectively define the meaning of events (Degoey, 2000). This also explains the phenomenon that rumors are

more often believed than are formal communications in organizations (Robbins, 2000).

Social contagion theory has been used to help explain such phenomena as feelings of job satisfaction (Krackhardt & Porter, 1985), levels of organizational commitment (Hartman & Johnson, 1989), and attributions regarding leadership (Meindl, 1990). In the case of personal reputation, social contagion helps explain not only the construct of reputation, but also the transference of reputation. Because reputation is a socially constructed concept (Ferris et al, 2003), which is transferred by informal conversations such as gossip (Elmer, 1984), agreement by others regarding its meaning is essential. Social contagion theory explains this agreement. Furthermore, because the audience that is agreeing upon the reputation of another may not actually be in direct contact with the reputation-building individual (Bromley, 1993), this shared, socially constructed interpretation of a reputation is essential.

Communication Theory

Basic communication theory is based on the sender-message-receiver communication model. Modern day adaptations take into account the various codes and subcodes that make up society, and allow for intermediaries or multiple source senders or receivers (Stern, 1994). In the case of personal reputation, the sender must consider not only the immediate audience, but also the context, environment, and possible intermediaries. In the field of management, attempts at communicating reputation most often have been referred to as signaling (e.g., Ferris et al., 2003; Tsui, 1984).

Signaling theory states that individuals coexist in markets of exchange, and that individuals signal others in these markets in attempts to transmit information or alter beliefs of others. In an effort to differentiate between potential and actual signals, Spence (1973, 1974) argued that potential signals represent observable, alterable characteristics, and actual signals are potential signals that influence others. Using this argument, reputation can be viewed as an actual signal because it represents observable and alterable characteristics that influence others.

It has been argued that reputation can be construed as an intentional effort at signaling (e.g., Ferris & Judge, 1991; Carroll et al., 2003). More specifically, reputation builders send as signals to others, and these signals tend to be more political than scientific in that they attempt to influence perceptions and meaning. Ferris, Hochwarter, Buckley, Harrell-Cook, and Frink (1999) suggested that reputations may be shaped or influenced by the

individual to which the reputation is referent. They cited the influential role of reputation and its signaling capacity in an organizational setting by introducing tournament theory.

Proposed by Rosenbaum (1989), tournament theory suggests that those who are successful early in their careers are likely to experience greater success over the course of their careers. The theory suggests that this success is due to the perceptions that others form of them; and in the case of reputation, fast-track employees are promoted based on the reputation gained by early success. This idea is further supported by the theory that first impressions play an important part in building reputations because little is known about individuals when they first enter an organization, and a reputation is established in order to provide information in predicting future events (Baiman, 1991). In the case of tournament theory, reputation may be considered a signal to decision makers, whereby fast-track employees are identified and subsequently promoted based on their reputations of early success.

MODEL OF REPUTATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

Although the formation of a reputation can be unintentional, most often reputations are the result of volitional, conscious efforts (Bromley, 1993). Fig. 1 presents a conceptualization of the reputation development process, which moves from antecedents of reputational aspirations to social comparisons and self-regulation of work behavior, to observer assessed deviations from behavioral norms in the situation, to the search for causes and the reputation labeling process. Then, both the direct and secondary consequences

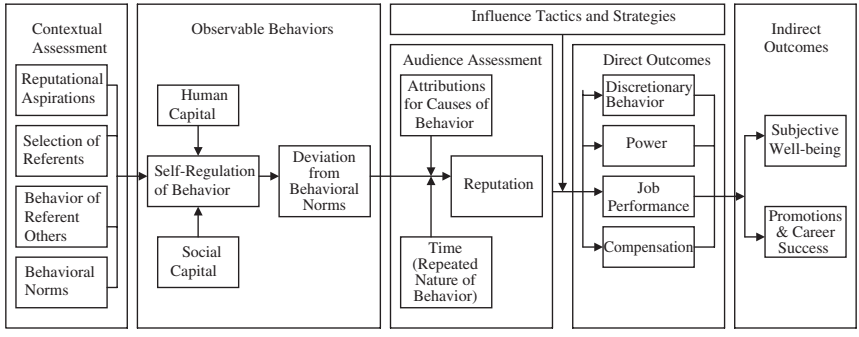

Fig. 1. Conceptualization of Reputation in Organizations.

of reputation are considered in the second phase of the model. In the following sections, we examine each of the linkages in the model in greater detail.

Antecedents of Reputation

Reputational Aspirations

Festinger (1954) hypothesized that individuals have an inherent desire to accurately evaluate their own opinions and abilities. When objective measures are not available (i.e., as is often the case in social settings), individuals often measure themselves against their colleagues. This evaluation of self will take into account not only individuals' self-esteem, but also how others view them. It is argued that individuals gain understanding of their own reputations through the behavior reflected back to them by others (Emler & Hopkins, 1990). Emler (1990) suggested that reputations reflect information that is shared and transmitted within a social context, and thus reputations are not developed, nor do they operate, in a vacuum. As stated previously, the main reasons for engaging in reputation-building behavior are to obtain rewards, or to fulfill an inner desire to convey to others around them a message concerning who individuals think they are (Baumeister, 1982a, 1982b).

Whether this drive is external (i.e., an attempt to gain external rewards) or internal (i.e., brought on by a desire to establish an identity in a group), the process of reputation building is the same. These aspirations are based on personal desires, and, as such, are subjective. That being said, individuals often will observe the treatment and rewards others receive, and wish the same for themselves. In doing so, they attempt to attribute what actions the individual (or group) is performing in order to receive these rewards, and then may try to emulate such actions in hopes of receiving the same treatment (Schunk, 1987).

Selection of Referents

Early research on social comparisons in organizational behavior suggested that individuals assess their situation using essentially the three referents of other, self, and system (Goodman, 1974), which may differentially affect the attitudes and behavior of those individuals. However, subsequent work in this area has identified a number of different referents used by individuals, including self-present, self-past, self-future, and other (i.e., past, present, and future). Indeed, Kulik and Ambrose (1992) identified twelve different potential referent categories.

According to Festinger (1954), a unidirectional drive upward is a desire by individuals to be slightly better then those with whom they compare themselves. This drive can "… be viewed as an indication of the desire to change one's position relative to others" (p. 127). In order to effectively fulfill the goal of changing one's position in an organization, an individual will assess the referent "self" as well as the "system." This assessment of self (Goodman, 1974) will consider the current standing the individual has in the company, compared with the reputational goals or aspirations of the focal individual. It will evaluate inputs and outputs of both positions, determining the discrepancies that need to be addressed.

The assessment of the "system" referent will help define the path reputation-building individuals must take in order to achieve their goals. The system referent refers to the structural aspects of the organization; for example, contractual agreements that the organization will provide for levels of power attained (March & Simon, 1958). Whereas these inputs and outcomes traditionally have been considered to be tied to formal positions and power, it can be assumed that in today's organizations, more informal power also could be tied to such positions. Based on the information gained by observing "system" as well as informal norms, individuals building reputations will attempt to deliver their message through actions that are intended to be received and interpreted by a specific audience (Elmer, 1984; Reicher & Elmer, 1988).

As mentioned earlier, time also has been suggested as an aspect of social comparison, whereby the past, present, and future may all cross, and create different combinations of, the referent categories. For example, anticipated self-future relates to reputation, where self-future is a comparison of the current self against the expected future self (Oldham, Kulik, Ambrose, Stepina, & Brand, 1986). This future self will reflect the goals toward which the present self is currently striving.

In order for individuals to achieve these goals (i.e., and become the future-self), they will find individuals (or groups) who have already achieved the goals, and model the aspects of their behavior after those of the referents they believe are responsible for the desired attributes (Schunk, 1987), within the context of the system. The individuals who are models or referents often are considered to be "standard setters" (Feldman & Ruble, 1981). That is, such "standard setters" help define the inputs and outputs for their level of achievement, and they often are individuals of extremely high ability. Therefore, to use them as a referent for upward social comparison is appropriate. Due to the complex nature of reputation, the referent selection process involves the self (i.e., comparing the present with future), other

(i.e., comparing the self with a model or standard setter in an effort to define the behaviors that would grand the desired rewards), and the system that grants the rewards for specific behaviors.

Behavioral Norms

Norms for individual behavior largely are defined by an individual's role within a context of the network. As individuals interact with others, a network of roles and their attending behavioral expectations, known as a role-set, is established. These role-sets are laden with certain prescriptions for expected behavior (Merton, 1968; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Tsui, 1984).

Organizations can be characterized as collections of roles organized to meet some demand for goods or services, and to serve the needs of the individuals that make up the organizations (Friedkin, 1998; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Merton, 1968; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). These roles are defined by the nature of the goods and services produced, as well as the organization level in which the roles reside. Tsui (1984) argued that the effectiveness of managers (i.e., as analyzed from their role set and the expectations of peers, superiors, and subordinates) is grounded in their self-interests, and their ability to satisfy their multiple (and often quite different) constituencies. As individuals deviate from these norms, others take notice (Elmer, 1984), and tend to reevaluate the individual based on the expected actions of the individual versus actual events (Weick, 1979).

Human Capital

Human capital theory argues that individuals generate increased worth or value for themselves by acquiring knowledge, skills, and credentials through educational and experiential attainments. Attainment of additional educational degrees contributes to the value of one's human capital, as does the prestige of the institutions from which the degrees were granted. Job knowledge and experience also build human capital, as do the skills one acquires through training. So, human capital is the knowledge and skill that an individual possesses, which are the direct result of their investments in education and training (Becker, 1993). Studies have indicated that factors such as age, race, and gender can affect the return on investments made in human capital.

As a component of reputation, human capital represents investments made by individuals to enhance their public image. In the form of credentials, human capital provides instant creditability and status for the holders, sending signals to others based on individual attributes they possess (Spence, 1973). Similarly, certain characteristics make individuals more marketable and mobile (Trevor, 2001).

Education, Experience, Expertise, and Demographic Characteristics. Because lifetimes are finite, age has to be considered in any discussion concerning the value of human capital. The timing of investments in human capital is a factor in the resulting value, with early investments in education and training being likely to yield greater life-long returns. The age of a college graduate reflects the potential stream of contributions, in that a younger person would be expected to have greater long-term potential. Also, age serves as a proxy for experience, whereby older individuals are believed to be more experienced.

Education and experience are both components of an individual's reputation that are affected by age, but the relationship is not always linear. As an example, consider Steve Jobs in his career at Apple computer. Early in his career, Jobs' reputation as a business visionary far exceeded any multiple of his age with either years of education or experience. In contrast, former IBM CEO John Akers had a reputation that developed over time as a more linear combination of age and experience.

Expertise. Most fields that study reputation would agree that individuals often are known for excelling in certain areas. In marketing, companies wish to be known for producing the "best" product (Scherer, 1980). In organization theory, companies wish to acquire a reputation for being considered at the top of their field (Barney, 1991). The study of inner city gangs has shown us that youths wish to gain a reputation for being tougher than those around them (Elmer, 1984). Most intentional, positive reputations are based on being known for excelling in a specific task. In fact, it can be argued that perceived expertise by one's peers is the first step toward gaining a reputation.

From the human capital perspective, gender and race have strong implications for reputation. Drawing from signaling theory, value is placed on various individual attributes in lieu of information on the person's actual capabilities (Spence, 1973). Demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, and age, are part of one's human capital, and thus one's reputational make-up. These characteristics might operate directly, as well as interactively with other attributes, to load into the composite personal reputation construct.

Reputation also is influenced by the set of personal characteristics individuals possess, and therefore, is reflective of one's intelligence, personality, and social effectiveness skills. Such characteristics serve as both foundational and facilitative bases of overt behavior, and they influence how people are perceived and evaluated in work settings, as well as

affecting how individuals perform various aspects of their work roles. We identify and discuss representative constructs in this area, rather than conducting a comprehensive or exhaustive examination.

General Mental Ability. One personal characteristic that we suggest has an influence on reputation, and has been actively researched for years, is intelligence, cognitive ability, or general mental ability (GMA). Schmidt and Hunter's (1998) review suggested that GMA tends to be the single most valid predictor of future job performance and learning. We would argue that GMA demonstrates its influence on reputation the extent to which it guides and facilitates work performance effectiveness.

Possessing GMA, and using it productively in the work environment, is important for reputation, but it is by no means the sole aspect of such personal capital. Indeed, the direct influence of GMA, as the primary predictor of individual performance, has been called into question when non-cognitive variables have been proposed to challenge its predictive effectiveness (McClelland, 1993; Sternberg & Wagner, 1993). Instead of posing arguments promoting a single personal characteristic, contemporary thinking seems to favor consideration of predictors that supplement the contribution of GMA, which might include personality measures and social effectiveness skills. We certainly see this is to be the case for the reputation construct.

Personality and Social Effectiveness. Personality characteristics and social effectiveness reflect a second category of personal qualities that collectively we believe build personal capital and reputation. Patterns of behavior that individuals demonstrate at work, which are generated by personality traits, can expect to exert a strong influence on the reputations they earn. The program of research by Mount and Barrick (1995) has helped to establish the role of personality in the prediction of job performance (i.e., with particular reference to the Five-Factor Model). As a consequence of this research, personality generally is viewed by organizational scientists as possessing considerable potential to improve our understanding of people in organizations and their work behavior, including shedding important light on reputation.

Social effectiveness competencies contribute to personal reputation as well. The ability to effectively read, understand, and control social interactions in the workplace has been of interest to behavioral scientists for quite some time. In the organizational context, social effectiveness is reflected in the effective exercise of persuasion, explanation, and other

influence mechanisms that reveal the ability to control others (Argyle, 1969). Political perspectives on organizations have suggested that in order to be effective in such environments, individuals must be socially astute and skilled interpersonally (e.g., Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981).

Perhaps the most critical type of social effectiveness needed in organizational settings is political skill, which is regarded as an interpersonal style construct that combines interpersonal perceptiveness or social astuteness with the capacity to adjust one's behavior to different contextual demands in ways that build trust, confidence, and genuineness, and effectively influence and control the responses of others (Ferris, Davidson, & Perrewé, 2005a; Ferris et al., 2005b). People high in political skill not only know precisely what to do in different social situations, but also exactly how to execute behavior with a sincere, engaging manner that disguises any ulterior motives, inspires believability, trust, and confidence, and renders influence attempts successful.

Recently, scholars have discussed the relationship between personality and social effectiveness. Hogan (1991) and Hogan and Shelton (1998) defined personality as including both an internal 'identity' component and an external 'reputation' component. According to Hogan, identity refers to how we think about ourselves and how we want others to think about us, and it serves to guide our behavior in social interactions. Reputation is viewed as the outside perspective on personality, and it refers to how others think about and evaluate our efforts to achieve our goals and be successful. In essence, identity is reflective of individuals' potential, and reputation is indicative of how successful they are at realizing their potential.

Hogan (1991) and Hogan and Shelton (1998) argued for an intricate relationship between personality and social effectiveness, suggesting that social effectiveness is what translates identity into successful goal accomplishment or reputation. Block and Kremen (1996) also addressed the relationship between social effectiveness and personality, suggesting that social effectiveness essentially maintains the personality system within tenable bounds, and allows for acceptable adaptation.

Mayer (2005) proposed a "systems framework" of personality, which focuses on the complete psychological functioning of the individual, and he organized personality into four major subsystems: Energy Lattice, Knowledge Works, Social Actor, and Conscious Executive. The Social Actor subsystem is most relevant for our purposes here, and Mayer (2005, p. 299) argued that it "represents the expression of personality in a socially adaptive fashion. It includes social skills, role knowledge, and emotionally preferred expressions."

Such views suggest the important connection between personality and social effectiveness, whereby personality brings to life, and external observation, the internal dynamics of one's personality characteristics. Ferris et al. (in press-b) proposed a conceptualization of the characteristic themes reflected by certain personality or dispositional constructs, and how they serve as antecedents or predictors of political skill.

Therefore, we envision personality as more distal constructs that shape and predict features of social effectiveness (e.g., political skill), which in turn are more proximal antecedents of reputation. Liu, Ferris, Zinko, Perrewé, Weitz, and Xu (in press) recently provided empirical support for these linkages. We suggest that political skill is a critical component in personal reputation development because it enables workers to more effectively navigate political environments and influence others in the work setting by conveying the proper image (Ferris et al., 2005a). As one's responsibilities increase, particularly in managing and leading others, political skill may be the one factor that best enables individuals to rise to lofty heights in their careers. To the degree that navigating organizational politics and influencing others are critical factors in managerial success, political skill will help individuals build reputations for savvy and leadership influence that is so valued in organizations today (Ferris et al., in press-b; Ferris et al., 2005b; Ferris et al., 2005a).

Self-Regulation of Behavior

As individuals assess their positions in organizations, they often feel a desire to alter their status. To do this, they must convince those around them of their new reputation. Once individuals find appropriate referents who are receiving the rewards or status to which they aspire, such individuals must identify and demonstrate those similar behaviors that should produce similar rewards. These behaviors must be considered in the context of the norms of the organization. The (other) referent chosen may be outside the organization (Oldham et al., 1986), so reputation-building individuals may need to adapt their behavior to the norms and referent system of the current environment.

The regulation of behaviors must be done with an awareness of the referent system, as well as consideration of the audience's response (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). As the model suggests, we propose that human capital affects one's ability to self-regulate behaviors. It does this not only by supplying the necessary cognitive abilities to properly assess the surrounding norms, but also by providing the will power necessary to self regulate one's actions (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998).

Shearmur and Klein (1997) interpreted Adam Smith's *The Great Society* as viewing society as a "patchwork of reputational nexuses," and as such, it

creates a framework within which impressions of others are formed. These authors argued that individuals' desire for approbation is socially learned, and is developed within the reputational patchwork. In line with our argument, they suggested that individuals can craft their own reputations, and more importantly, they suggested that individuals can alter the very framework that defines their reputations. This suggests that individuals who are self regulating, not only try to affect their behavior, but also may change the norms that are used to evaluate their behavior. That is, they might adapt their behavior to fit the situation, or they might maintain the existing behavioral repertoire, but exercise influence over and alter the contextual norms in acceptable ways, thus, effectively adapting the context to their behavior.

In order to discuss behavioral norms, it is necessary to define the context of the workplace. Jaques (1989) presented a useful perspective from which to view individuals in organizations, framing organizations as intricate webs of roles or positions that possess explicit and implicit expectations for behavior. These behavioral norms then become the baseline for judging behavior within the context of the organization.

Similarly, role theory proposes that each position in an organization has an inherent set of role expectations, which take the form of implicit contracts between individuals and their peers, subordinates, and supervisors (e.g., Katz & Kahn, 1978; Merton, 1968). Such sets of role expectations include cues on aspects of work-related behavior, such as, desired behaviors, organizational norms, values, attitudes, and justice. According to role theory, the behavior of individuals is judged against these behavioral norms in the eyes of their subordinates, peers, and supervisors, thus forming expectations that become cues for determining conformity (Tsui, 1984). To the extent that individuals deviate from the behavioral norms, their behavior becomes salient in the eyes of others. Therefore, at its most basic level, reputation formation is simply a measure of behavioral incongruence with specific role expectations.

The relationship between reputation and behavior in the workplace is significant because reputation inconspicuously affects not only the choice of work behaviors, but also the effectiveness of those behaviors. These behaviors simultaneously craft and reinforce the very reputation from which the actions and interpretations were derived. The ebb and flow of this reputational balance represents both the temporal and delicate nature of the context of social influence behavior in organizations. It is within this context that our personal reputation within the organization resides, and it is the inability to detach individual behavior from this context that makes the

further evaluation of reputation necessary to extend our understanding of social influence within organizations.

Social Capital

Social capital is the ability to take advantage of opportunity through social networks (Burt, 1997). More specifically, social capital has been defined as "the actual and potential resources individuals obtain from knowing others, being part of a social network with them, or merely from being known to them and having a good reputation. In a sense, social capital provides individuals with an important type of credential – a favorable social identity that can be converted into significant, tangible benefits" (Baron & Markman, 2000, p. 107).

Within organizations, social capital at the individual level is the product of one's human capital and social networks. Burt (1997) has viewed human capital as individual ability and social capital as opportunity, where the organization provides opportunities through networks and individuals must possess the ability to take advantage of such opportunities. The mix of human capital and the ability to use social networks help define the personal reputations of organization members.

There are two opposing views on social capital development. Useem and Karabel (1986) suggested that social capital development results from "class-linked" personal contacts, whereas Coleman (1990) subscribed to the structural view, linking social capital to access to information and resources provided by structural networks. In either case, social capital helps to construct reputation because it conveys information concerning creditability that people will use to make judgments (Belliveau, O'Reilly, & Wade, 1996).

Several empirical studies have supported the value of social capital in providing useful outcomes that may contribute to one's reputation. For example, Siebert, Kraimer, and Liden (2001) found that social capital, through network development, had a positive impact on career success. Specifically, their study reported that access to information, resources, and mentoring were positively related to career success. To the extent that one can build a reputation for early success in one's career, the development of networks and use of the social capital in these networks can facilitate such success. Kilduff and Krackhardt (1994) found that the perception that individuals associated with prominent friends at work sent a signal of importance or distinction, and favorably influenced those individuals' performance reputations.

In a study of research scientists, Bouty (2000) discovered a positive relationship between social capital, measured by network affiliation, and

resource acquisition. Interestingly, she found that access to resources was given based on personal contact and mutual trust. Thus, we might expect that trust would develop over time as part of one's reputation within the research networks.

In general, individuals attempt to influence others' perceptions of the social networks within which they are embedded (Cialdini & De Nicholas, 1989). They can be successful at this task because perceptions of the context in even relatively small organizational networks vary considerably from one person to the next (Krackhardt, 1990). Even when individuals are not trying to actively influence others, their actions may be interpreted by an audience as unusual (Haviland, 1977).

We believe that the various components of reputation combine in interesting, important, and quite complex ways. Indeed, similar in nature to how the resource-based view of the firm discusses this construct at the organization level, we envision a synergistic combination of qualities whereby the whole that is created is greater than the simple sum of the individual components (e.g., Barney, 1991). This creates a unique quality to personal reputation, and one that provides a source of personal sustained competitive advantage for the individual in social environments.

Deviation from Behavioral Norms

As shown in Fig. 1, reputation is based on observable actions, and these actions must stand out in such a way that observers will find them interesting enough to report to others (Haviland, 1977). When judging an incident, observers view the event with anticipations and assumptions about that event based on past information about the individual in question (Weick, 1979). These anticipations are based on the expected norms derived from roles that consist of those behaviors that are characteristic of the person and context being observed (Biddle & Thomas, 1966). The "surprise" (Weick, 1979, p. 4) is any deviation that varies too greatly from the norms for expected behavior in that context to be part of the role (Becker, 1963). When there is an inconsistency or surprise, the observer feels a need to explain it (Weick, 1979). Once the event is understood, the observer will attempt to attribute the cause of the event (Heider, 1958).

Also distinguishing the behavioral deviation in the eyes of observers is the way it is made salient and commands attentional focus. Social cognition scholars have defined salience as "the phenomenon that when one's attention is differentially directed to one portion of the environment rather than to others, the information contained in that portion will receive disproportionate weighting in subsequent judgments" (Taylor & Thompson,

1982, p. 175). Particularly in somewhat ambiguous situations, attention will be drawn to individuals who demonstrate behaviors that set them apart from others, leading to extreme evaluations (Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Thus, it is the salience of the deviant behavior that will attract observer attention, and begin the process of reputation building.

The possible deviations are anything that varies too widely from the average to be part of the role (Becker, 1963). Rindova et al. (2006) suggested that such deviance is what fuels celebrity status because the media reports on actions that represent deviations from the norm. Behaviors deviating from these roles force audiences to reevaluate the individual being observed (Biddle & Thomas, 1966). This reevaluation leads individuals to consider whether the focal individual is part of a group into which he/she was originally classified, or is regarded as an outsider (Becker, 1963). If an observer is able to reclassify an individual into a different group (i.e., dissolving the relationship between the norm and the individual), one where the repeated deviations are considered the norm, the future actions of the individual once again will be predictable, and make sense to the audience (Weick, 1979). Additionally, this new classification should reduce ambiguity regarding the individual in question.

Even if the deviations from the norm do not propel the reputation-building individual to a different normative status, it is still beneficial. Research has shown that when decision makers lack information about an employee, they rely on prevailing cognitions, such as stereotypes (Drazin & Auster, 1987). Furthermore, one manifestation of such prevailing cognitions can be reputation, and it could increase beneficial treatment in the workplace.

Attributions for the Causes of Behavior

Attribution theory is based on the assumption that individuals have an inherent need to explain the causes of events that surround them (Heider, 1958). So, this part of the model indicates that the relationship between the audience assessment of the behavioral deviation from norms and the conferring of reputation on the actor by the audience is moderated by the cause to which the behavior is attributed. Certainly, this relationship should be stronger the extent to which the audience makes a personal or dispositional (i.e., internal) attribution for the behavior, as opposed to a situational (i.e., external) one. The ascription of a dispositional attribution allocates causal responsibility for the behavior to the person, so that it cannot be explained away as a function of contextual forces, which would deprive the actor of such responsibility.

Markus and Zajonc (1985) suggested that individuals tend to draw attention from others the extent to which they possess features, or demonstrate behavior, that sets them apart from others. Furthermore, Taylor and Fiske (1978) concluded that when individuals distinguish themselves by attracting attention, they tend to be rated more extremely, are better remembered by others, and are more likely to have their focal behavior attributed dispositionally, so as to allocate causal responsibility to themselves.

Time (Repeated Nature of Behavior)

Although many scholars most likely would agree that a reputation may be lost or greatly diminished with one wrong move (e.g., Nixon and Watergate, Exxon and the Valdez, Firestone and the Ford Explorer), most have proposed that reputation must be proactively maintained over time (i.e., Ferris et al., 2003; Biddle & Thomas, 1966). Indeed, the very nature of reputation suggests that it is a time-dependent phenomenon, whereby it does not occur based on a single demonstration of a behavioral deviation from the norm. A single deviation from the norm, if radical enough, may launch an individual into celebrity status (e.g., Monika Lewinski), but by established definition, this does not create a reputation, because the deviation from the norms is not consistently repeated (Kreps & Wilson, 1982; Ferris et al., 2003).

Although an individual may become "known for an action," this would manifest itself in the form of fame or notoriety (Johnson, 2004), but because the information that is provided offers no predictive qualities (Scherer, 1980), it would not greatly aid in reputation building. We view reputation as becoming a solidified and stable shared perception by an audience only as the focal behavior is repeated over time, thus leading others to expect certain behaviors and actions from the focal individual.

In recent years, systematic attention has been drawn to the issue of time in the organizational sciences, suggesting that time be incorporated in meaningful ways to enrich theory and research (e.g., George & Jones, 2000). Phenomena like socialization and career progress, in addition to reputation, have a temporal component that is critical to an informed understanding of these constructs.

Reputation

Ferris et al. (2003) suggested a "capital as metaphor" perspective on reputation, which borrows from Fombrun's (1996) notion of "reputational capital" (i.e., as it applies to corporate reputations), and highlights the common notion that reputation has value. Ferris et al. argued that the

source of a reputation's value lies in how it allows others to use individuals' reputations to predict their future behavior. Tyler and Kramer (1996) suggested that the value of reputational effects stem from the degree of trust elicited in social interactions. From this social network perspective, indirect or third-party ties are a source of information that serves to enhance the trust one places in another.

This triangulation effect on an individual's reputation serves to increase the reputation's value among multiple constituents, and consequently, the reputational costs of non-cooperative behavior as well (Gulati & Westphal, 1999). Similarly, Tyler and Kramer (1996) noted this effect when they suggested that social institutions sanction those who violate trust, and that by making untrustworthy behavior costly, these social institutions assert both formal and informal control. This market conceptualization implies that the prediction of future behavior is a form of information that has value commensurate with its accuracy.

Klein (1997) argued that reputation is a proxy for trust, and he contended that social interactions take place under conditions of uncertainty. Furthermore, he argued that this uncertainty extends to the contextual details of the myriad of interactions in our daily lives, and in an effort to reduce uncertainty, individuals look for seals of approval on others, and covet those same seals for themselves. Complicating these interactions is the notion that an individual's reputation is constantly being redefined beyond the level of the dyadic exchange.

It has been proposed that personal reputation is a difficult to imitate asset that is acquired through social interaction. This is because personal reputation is developed in an environment of imperfect information, where individuals may use reputation to "signal" their intentions in a manner that suggests to the audience information that may or may not be known about the individual (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Spence, 1973, 1974). This "signaling" is based on the assessment individuals make of their environment, and it can be used to force an audience to reassess how an individual is viewed (Ravlin & Thomas, 2005).

The motivation to send these signals has been addressed in the sociological view of reputation, suggesting that reputation is used to link people to specific identities. These identities are employed to acknowledge an individual's attributes and status in the group (Elmer, 1984; Carroll et al., 2003). Individuals assess their status in an organization by comparing themselves with others around them (de Botton, 2004; Festinger, 1954). If this position is objectionable to them, they will attempt to change the image others have of them (Baumeister, 1982a) by sending out signals that are consistent with the group to which they aspire (Ravlin & Thomas, 2005).

Consequences of Reputation

As noted in the model in Fig. 1, reputation has both direct, or immediate, consequences, and indirect outcomes that work through the direct consequences. Because reputation is defined as a collective and shared perception by others, it is appropriate to consider consequences of reputation that operate on others, including performance ratings and compensation given by supervisors, and power and discretionary behavior granted to the focal person by both coworkers and superiors. However, it is also important to acknowledge that the reputation individuals develop also exert effects on themselves in the form of attitudes. Both are considered in this phase of the model.

Direct Outcomes

Discretionary Behavior. As individuals establish their reputations, they are allotted more discretion regarding their actions (Diamond, 1989). Studies dealing with agency theory show organizations are willing to pay more for individuals with established reputations (Wernerfelt, 1988) because their reputations can act as socially mediated controls for self-interested behavior (Arrow, 1985). This ability to predict the actions of another suggests that a strong reputation can lead to trust in the individual regarding certain actions and behaviors (e.g., Tyler & Kramer, 1996). This reflects Whitmeyer's (2000) views of reputation, who suggested reputation is important "because it informs the formation of the subjective probability relevant to placing trust" (p. 190).

Both Greenberg (1990) and Knoke (1983) reflected similar views regarding reputation. Greenberg supported this argument using Hollander's (1958) notion of "idiosyncrasy credits" as a vehicle, by proposing that marginal latitude or "benefit of the doubt" was granted to those with particularly defined reputations. Knoke (1983) showed that greater freedom was given to organizations that have a high "influence reputation," defined as "an actor's reputation for influence" (p. 1068). These notions suggest that reputation has informational, predictive, and trust-enhancing value, and that those with strong, powerful reputations will be treated differently then those with lesser reputations.

Power. Pfeffer (1992) suggested that as individuals gain reputation, they gain power, and that power gives individuals the ability to get things done easier, resulting in a stronger reputation, which brings more power. This idea that reputation brings power relates to Hollander's (1958) idiosyncrasy credit and referent power (as discussed above). Hollander suggested that

individuals are able to store idiosyncrasy credits by being of value to a group. These credits then can be 'cashed in' to 'buy' increased discretion (within reason). Gioia and Sims (1983) showed reputation contributed significantly to subordinate perceptions of legitimate, referent, and expert power in the study of managers. Matthews (1988) supported the idea that reputation is purely a social construct, suggesting that reputation is power that is based less on reality than appearance.

French and Raven (1959) theorized five bases of power: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power. Legitimate power is granted to individuals giving them power over other individuals. Because this basis is tied to a formal position (i.e., by the organization), reputation (i.e., being a social, not formal construct) may not have a direct effect upon it, but would likely have an indirect effect through autonomy and career success. Furthermore, because legitimate power is granted by organizations to individuals based on their positions, others holding that position may expect similar power. This again suggests that legitimate power is not based on reputation, since it is so easily passed on to whoever holds that particular position.

Both reward and coercive power depend on the ability of a subject to reward or punish an individual or group. It has been suggested that an increase in reputation results in an increase in power (Pfeffer, 1992). More powerful individuals have been shown to attract a larger allotment of resources than normally designated to their position (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). This control of excess resources would allow a highly reputed individual the ability to grant rewards or punishments to others as consistent with their reputation (Stevens, 2002). Furthermore, as information and resources contribute to social power bases, personal reputations of individuals should increase as they can more readily access such information and resources (Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994; Tsui, 1984), which should enhance their perceived influence and power (Brass, 1984; Brass & Burkhardt, 1993).

Referent power is the "ability to administer to another feelings of obligation or responsibility" (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1989). When individuals have a strong, positive reputation, others around them will wish to be identified with such individuals. Current research regarding the phenomena of "basking in reflected glory" suggests such actions (see Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986 for a review of the "basking in reflected glory" literature). Expert power is based on the perception of an individual or group regarding a subject. Individuals compare their knowledge or proficiency regarding a topic against what they believe the subject's

knowledge is regarding the same topic. If individuals or groups decide that the subject has advanced knowledge or skills, they will defer to the subject regarding that topic. Like referent power, expert power is not based on intimidation or external pressure, but a giving of the power by others.

As individuals gain reputation, they gain power (Pfeffer, 1992). However, because reputation is a social construct, the direct power gained will not be legitimate. Additionally, both reward and coercive power are based on the individual's ability to reward and punish others. This power may come from not only formal but also informal authority, and the authority to delegate tasks is an example of these powers. In order for a subject to act in such a manner, a certain level of autonomy first must be gained (e.g., if an individual is being closely monitored by a supervisor, this behavior may, or may not, be allowed). Therefore, it is proposed that although reputation can bring about coercive and reward power, it does so through autonomy (and career success), and therefore is not a direct outcome of reputation.

Job Performance. We propose that reputation affects job performance, which is often measured by subjective ratings by a supervisor. Supervisor ratings have been known to be influenced by others, whereby influence tactics have been found to affect performance ratings, even when there are no actual differences in job performance. Furthermore, such ratings have been shown to be biased, distorted, and often not reflective of actual job performance (e.g., Ferris & Judge, 1991; Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003). Because reputation is used to fill in where perfect information is not available, managers may use reputation to rate employees on related areas (see Thorndike, 1920 for an explanation of halo effect).

The idea that individuals may try to manage their reputations by getting others to evaluate them on the basis of process measures, such as effort, rather than outcomes, such as actual objective results, is not a new idea (e.g., March, 1984; Ferris et al., 1994). When individuals are hired based on reputation, they are paid more then their counterparts who lack such reputation (Wade et al., 2006). Because the reputation implies expertise in a specific area (Haviland, 1977), individuals with strong, positive reputations often may be given higher goals by their superiors as justification for the higher pay. Even if those reputable individuals do not accomplish the goals set forth, supervisors will still often rate high-reputation individuals higher than those with lesser goals, regardless of fulfilment of the goals set (Dossett & Greenberg, 1981). Furthermore, the more ambiguous the performance criteria, the more likely an enhanced reputation may affect evaluations (Eisenberg, 1984; Williams & Goss, 1975).

Compensation. Compensation has been linked to reputation in a number of studies (i.e., Wade et al., 2006; Zajac & Westphal, 1995). There are several ways that compensation can be evaluated to include actual money paid as well as symbolic and status-enhancing indicators sent out about the individual in question. Managers have been shown to award higher pay raises to subordinates when the managers were dependent on the subordinates' expertise. This implies that a reputation for expertness is directly related to financial reward (Bartol & Martin, 1990). Furthermore, empirical research has shown that those with a stronger reputation receive more rewards than their counterparts (Wade et al., 2006).

Indirect Outcomes

Promotions and Career Success. Promotions are considered some of the most political decisions made in organizations (e.g., Ferris & Judge, 1991). Early impressions by decision makers are said to affect this process greatly. Similarly, reputations can have considerable influence early on, due to lack of information that is available regarding the individual. The effects of these first impressions can be seen in the discussion of tournament mobility, and how people get positioned and can influence their ability to be successful in such competitions (e.g., Cooper, Graham, & Dyke, 1993; Rosenbaum, 1989).

Furthermore, as individuals are promoted at a rapid rate, they may gain a reputation as being "on the fast track." In such situations, these rising stars may enter into a loop of being promoted based on reputation, which gives the individual a more powerful reputation due to fast promotion, which leads to more promotions. Modeled after the idea that power brings more power (Pfeffer, 1981), those with strong, positive reputations may see not only faster promotions, but also other forms of career mobility.

Mobility suggests not only vertical movement though a single organization, but also passage through different positions, perhaps in a number of different organizations, over a reasonably extended period of time (e.g., over a person's entire career). The number of moves over a specified time period is not the focal issue, but the nature of the positions obtained as well as the quality of the organizations at which one accepts positions are indicators of reputation.

Subjective Well-Being. Exploration into the subject of reputation suggests that almost all individuals strive for what they perceive to be a positive reputation. It has been suggested that this desire to be admired by ones peers is a basic drive to gain contentment (Caste & Burke, 2002). Subjective

well-being can be explained as one specific measure of mental health, and it focuses on people's own evaluations not only of their lives as a whole, but also about specific domains of life, such as work, both in affective and cognitive terms (Warr, 1990). Diener (2000) defined subjective well-being as "people's evaluations of their lives – evaluations that are both affective and cognitive" (p. 34).

The various direct outcomes (i.e., discretionary behavior, power, job performance and compensation) of reputation discussed above are not totally independent of one another. Those individuals responsible for making decisions about performance ratings also may be in charge of assessing promotability and salary for a particular individual. Therefore, there is inevitably going to be cross-decision biases.

Because these outcomes may be granted to an individual in an overlapping manner, one can argue that they can be viewed as a form of resources to be gained by reputation. Because a strong, positive reputation may result in such reserves, reputation can be viewed as a manner of conserving such resources, because once a reputation is built, less energy may be spent maintaining it. The ability to replenish such resources has been shown to affect all aspects of well-being, such as burnout (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004), emotional exhaustion (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003), and stress (Hobfoll, 2001). Indeed, a powerful reputation not only helps replenish resources, but also provides opportunities to defend one's resources.

Moderators of the Reputation–Outcomes Relationships

In addition to the investigation of the direct effects of personal reputation on work outcomes, research should consider the potential moderating effects of reputation. Influence tactics and strategies that individuals employ should reflect their intended reputation. Both Donald Trump (i.e., *The Apprentice*) and Simon Cowell (i.e., *American Idol*) have established reputations as bullies. The influence tactics employed by both men are consistent with their reputations (i.e., harsh and direct), which all contribute to the desired "bully" image they worked at constructing, because it serves their purposes (Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley, & Harvey, in press-c).

In support, Tedeschi and Melburg (1984) argued that the selection and effectiveness of influence tactics by individuals will differ as a function of their reputations, and research has demonstrated initial support for such interactions when testing these notions in the laboratory, where reputation was manipulated (Rosen et al., 1990), and in the field, where positive

reputation facilitated the favorable effects of political behavior on job performance and affective work outcomes (Hochwarter, Ferris, Zinko, Arnell, & James, 2007).

Implicit Model Assumptions

Although not included in Fig. 1, for purposes of clarity and ease of reading, the proposed conceptualization of reputation includes three feedback loops that have important meaning, which is consistent with the temporal nature of reputation noted above. One loop extends from Reputation back to Human Capital, and this suggests that as one cycles through this reputation-building process over time, "reputational capital" accrues, which is an indication of the relative value associated with a reputation (Fombrun, 1996). In essence, then, reputation (and the capital it accrues) becomes an important part of individuals' personal asset portfolio, and therefore, it becomes part of their human capital.

Another feedback loop extends back from Reputation to Deviation from Behavioral Norms, and this is included because as individuals build reputations, the very definition of what constitutes a deviation from conventional norms of behavior changes. Essentially, as reputations build, trust in the individual increases (e.g., Whitmeyer, 2000), there is less perceived need to monitor the individual's behavior (Wernerfelt, 1988), and such individuals are granted more "idiosyncrasy credits" (Hollander, 1958), and thus more latitude to deviate from norms for behavior, and incur greater discretion and autonomy (e.g., Ferris et al., 2003; Knoke, 1983).

Therefore, the very nature of what constitutes a deviation from behavioral norms becomes redefined for people with greater reputations. The third feedback loop extends from Reputation back to Social Capital, and indicates that as reputations grow, so do the alliances, coalitions, networks, and social capital one accrues. So, social capital both affects the development of reputations, and also is affected by reputation development over time.

DISCUSSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Personal reputations at work play an important role in the selection of behaviors individuals choose to exhibit, as well as the audiences they choose to have view such behaviors. Although reputation is a construct we discuss actively in everyday life and in work settings, to date, there has been very

little systematic work in the organizational sciences regarding the nature and process dynamics of personal reputation in organizations. The proposed conceptualization in this paper is an attempt to address that need, and to generate scholarly interest in this important area.

Although these initial results are encouraging, more research is needed to investigate how different influence tactics and strategies (i.e., particular combinations of tactics) interact with types of reputations to affect work outcomes of individuals. Thus, the notion of reputation as it applies to social influence may be one of the most promising, and yet challenging, areas of future inquiry, and builds on theoretical notions presented by Tedeschi and Melburg (1984). Reputation and influence behavior appear to be inextricably intertwined in everyday behavior, and it may be difficult to isolate on whether it is the reputation itself, or the influence behaviors strategically selected to create and/or reinforce the reputation, which explain the outcomes of reputation, such as interpersonal attraction and affect (Jones & Schrauger, 1970).

The active, intentional efforts individuals engage in to help form their own reputation is motivated by a desire to exercise control over the specific impressions that others form of them, and the images they convey (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997). Therefore, individuals exhibit behaviors that are consistent with the reputation they desire (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Tsui, 1984), and then are constrained in the future to demonstrate behaviors consistently that reinforce the reputation developed (Baumeister, 1982b).

Greenberg (1990) argued that "impression management strategies have the effect of reputation-building" (p. 138), and the consistent subsequent demonstration of such behaviors can contribute to reputation formation and solidification (Ferris et al., 2003). Also, Bromley (1993) argued that impression management behaviors can be used not only to sustain reputations, but also to deliberately manipulate them. Furthermore, adding to the complexity is that individuals are believed to possess multiple reputations (Schlenker, 1980; Tsui, 1984), and so they need to ensure that each is reinforced by the consistent display of reputation-appropriate behaviors. Recently, Roberts (2005) discussed similar issues of impression management behavior consistency and inconsistency in her conceptualization of professional image construction.

As we learn about how reputations are constructed, we may gain new insights into personal motivation. As individuals seek to establish or maintain their reputations within specific contexts, their behavior within those contexts should be predictable to the degree commensurate with their reputations' value. This argument posits that, as the costs of establishing

and maintaining a reputation increase, so does its value within a given context. Furthermore, as the value of an individual's reputation to others increases, so then does the potential reward to the individual who possesses that reputation. Finally, as the reward potential of a reputation increases, the greater is the incentive for an individual to act in accordance with the expected behaviors suggested by the reputation.

This notion that reputation holds value is both implicitly understood, and has been explicitly addressed by Fombrun (1996) when discussing his idea of "reputational capital," and how firms accrue such benefits. He defined reputational capital as: "the amount by which the company's market value exceeds the liquidation value of its assets" (Fombrun, 1996, p. 92). Ferris et al. (2003) proposed a "capital as metaphor" perspective to suggest that personal reputations can be valuated in much the same way as Fombrun argued on behalf of corporate reputations.

This seems somewhat akin to the "human resource accounting" perspective that was introduced nearly half a century ago by Rensis Likert at the University of Michigan, working on a multidisciplinary team that included psychologists and behavioral accountants (e.g., Flamholtz, 1999). The perspective was simple in concept, but difficult in practice. Essentially, it argued that accounting principles could be used with human resources just as it is used with material resources, and investment, valuation, and return on investment calculations could be made. Although the actual practice of human resource accounting was shown to be impractical at the time, the contemporary notion of the valuation of personal reputation appears conceptually appealing. Indeed, Bok (1993) makes similar points implicitly (if not explicitly) about assigning value to reputations when he discussed the cost of talent today, with particular reference to corporate executives and other professionals.

Additionally, research is needed to explore the perceived dimensionality of the reputation construct. For example, it might be the case that reputations in organizations have a performance dimension that is distinct from a character (e.g., morals, values, integrity, etc.) dimension, or even an interpersonal dimension. Certainly, one of the many challenges facing researchers interested in reputation is the need to develop and validate a scale for measuring individual reputation. Until such a scale is developed, we will be unable to empirically explore the myriad of potential relationships between reputation and important work outcomes in organizations.

In exploring these dimensions, reputation should be considered in the context of groups. One may ask how the reputation of an individual affects that of the group. Although the construct of corporate reputations is well

established, how a leader's reputation affects an organization is only just beginning (i.e., Hayward et al., 2004; Ferris et al., in press-c; Ranft et al., 2006; Wade et al., 2006). The interaction between an individual's reputation and his or her unit's reputation should be explored.

Furthermore, reputation should be explored as it relates to formal position. The power variable included in Fig. 1 only addresses one aspect, that being formal power. We suggest that there is an interaction between reputation and position, in that reputation may assist in the formation of prestige. Prestige, often defined as a reputation arising from success (Shenkar & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1997), is dependent on the position held by an individual. Indeed, for a time, position alone may grant an individual prestige (e.g., the President of the United States). By the same token, some positions, regardless of the reputation an individual may hold, will never be considered prestigious (e.g., sanitation worker). Because most positions fall somewhere in between, reputation may interact with the formal position to create prestige. Being "the best" in most fields can be considered prestigious.

Finally, research needs to explore the consequences of reputation, such as job performance, promotions and mobility, compensation, and career success. Theory and research has suggested that promotions and mobility decisions are made in tournament competitions, based on early signals of potential (e.g., Cooper et al., 1993). Perhaps future research will find that such signals of potential driving these decisions are reflective of the reputations developed early for these upwardly mobile individuals.

In discussing the career as tournament metaphor, Cooper et al. (1993) discussed the importance of the integration–differentiation balance in individuals' effectiveness in tournament competition. Integration involves conformity, fitting in, and so forth, and differentiation refers to standing out and being distinctive. How individuals develop reputations that allow them to stand out and be distinctive, as is the basis of our model, and at the same time still appear to fit with the norms can be a delicate balance to achieve, with potentially high stakes.

Future research in reputation should explore the effects of different reputations as they affect job and career outcomes in short, medium, and long-range time frames; thus, longitudinal research designs will be important. Also, in examination of long-term outcomes, we need to examine how people develop and maintain reputations through conscious and calculated strategies of influence that are designed or become emergent over a long period of time, and how the choice of reputation enhancement tactics/strategies might change at different points in the evolution of one's reputation.

The proposed conceptualization of personal reputation in organizations addresses the formation or development of reputation, which is an important part of the construct, but does not completely exhaust the full extent of the phenomenon. Indeed, once reputations are formed, they must be maintained, which involves some of the same processes that are discussed in this paper, particularly regarding the demonstration of consistent reputation-appropriate behavior over time. However, other processes may be involved in reputation maintenance. Additionally, the defense of a reputation involves more proactive and even aggressive attempts to polish up a perhaps tarnished image, which also goes beyond the scope of the present conceptualization. Ferris et al. (2003) have explicitly addressed issues regarding both reputation maintenance and defense in a preliminary manner. However, more specific theory and research is needed in the future.

CONCLUSION

Individual reputations represent a yet largely unexplored aspect of how people interact within organizations. The proposed conceptualization of personal reputation integrated a number of mutually reinforcing behavioral science theories in an effort to systematically articulate how reputations at work are formed or developed. Indeed, reputation may begin to address some of the inconsistent findings in research to date. Additionally, the potential implications of knowledge about personal reputation for what we know and think about managing human resources are significant, and may be of considerable interest to managers.

Certainly, reputations are likely an important consideration when making decisions to hire, retain, or promote individuals organizations. Finally, research on reputation offers promising insights into how and why certain individuals are valued more or less than others within specific contexts. Personal reputation may significantly contribute to our understanding of the interactions of individuals in organizations, and therefore, represents an important and exciting area for future research. We hope the present paper stimulates further work in this area.

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