Do Emotions Pay Off?

Effects of Media Brand Emotions on Cognitive Relief, Identification and Prestige

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Abstract

While in early days of communication research emotions were rather treated as 'noise', today there is a growing number of studies showing the important role of emotions influencing media selection, perception and interpretation. These developments run in parallel to branding theory, where emotional branding has emerged as a highly influential branding paradigm. The present study analyses the emotions recipients associate with different television stations, and it identifies their impact on audience-related functions of media brands as suggested by previous research, i.e., complexity and risk reduction, self-definition, and self-expression. An online study has been conducted for one media category, namely television stations in Austria ($n = 495$). As the results indicate, emotions affect cognitive relief and they support the perception of brands as means for self-definition and self-expression. Joy, trust, pride and boredom are the most influential emotional drivers for these functions. The findings not only suggest concrete implications for communication activities and media branding strategists, they also uncover 'white spaces' on the communication research agenda, where emotions should get a deeper theoretical and methodological debate.

Keywords: Emotions, emotional branding, media brands

Introduction

According to Heath and Nairn (2005, p. 270), "feelings and emotions have primacy over thoughts, and emotional responses can be created even when we have no awareness of the stimulus that causes them."Moreover, Martin and Morich (2011) understand emotions as catalysts that determine what stimuli we attend to or ignore, that affect our behavior and influence what we choose to remember. Also empirical results support the presumption of a significant influence of – even mild – emotions on cognitive processes and human behavior (e.g. Isen, 2000; Krishnan, Trappey, 1999; Lewicky, Hill, Csyzewska, 1992; Russell, 1989; Velmans, 1991). Even so, the role emotions play for processing media messages – also for political topics – has been an integral part in contemporary mass communication research (e.g. Bucy, 2011; Döveling, Scheve, Konjin, 2011; Konjin, Holt, 2011; Nabi, So, Prestin, 2011). As Schwab and Schwender (2011, p. 15) state, "[t]he function of emotion in the perception of media is [..]essential for an understanding of media and the role of media in society today."

At the same time *emotional branding* has seen a growing importance (Bagozzi, Gopinath, Nyer, 1999; Erevelles, 1998; Gobe, 2001; MacInnis, Yoo, Park, 1998; O'Shaughnessy, O'Shaughnessy, 2003; Roberts, 2004; Thompson, Rindfleisch, Arsel, 2006; Westbrook, 1987; Westbrook, Oliver, 1991), which is defined by Rossiter and Bellman (2012, p. 291) "as the successful attachment of a specific emotion to a brand". Several studies supported the positive effects of brand emotions on attitude formation (e.g. Agarwal, Malhotra, 2005; Ruth, 2001), brand loyalty, perceived uniqueness, price premium and word-of-mouth (e.g. Carroll, Ahuvia, 2006; Knackfuß, 2010). In adding this branding perspective to media, we must ask: What relevance do emotions have for media brands?

The notion of media products as brands hasmeanwhile received broad acceptance and increasing attention among scholars and practitioners (e.g. Chan-Olmsted, 2011; Chan-Olmsted, Cha, 2008; Chan-Olmsted, Kim, 2001; Förster, 2011a, 2011b; Lis, Berz, 2011; Machin, Niblock, 2008; McDowell 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2011; Nienstedt, Huber, Seelmann, 2012; Ots, 2008; Siegert, 2003). Media brands perform several functions for media companies and for recipients; they are communicators, symbols, and information memories. Berkler (2008) specifically discussed

media brand functions, suggesting different purposes a media brand fulfills along the recipient's decision process: cognitive relief and activation. While cognitive relief addresses a media brand's function to rationalize search and decision efforts for the recipient through *complexity* and *risk reduction*, *identification*and*prestige* are activating components used for self-definition purposes.Taking these considerations, the question I intend to answer is: What emotions do recipients associate with media brands, and how do emotions affect media brand functions, i.e. complexity reduction, risk reduction, identification and prestige?

Media brands and their functions for audiences

The efforts to define the term media brand seem to be an ongoing battle in the literature between communication and marketing scholars, further complicated by discussions between marketing and public relations (McDowell, 2006a). The most commonly accepted definition for brand is the one proposed by the American Marketing Association as "a name, term, sign, design, or a unifying combination of them intended to identify and distinguish a product or service from its competitors" (Kotler, Bliemel, Keller, 2007, p. 509). According to Chan-Olmsted (2006) brands add thoughts and feelings that are designed to enhance the value of a product beyond its product category and functional values. Thus, from an audience's perspective, we may understand a (media) brand as a construct carrying all the connotations of the audience in terms of the emotional, stylistic, cognitive, unconscious or conscious significations. The functions of media brands for audiences, as suggested by Berkler (2008),are thereby similar to non-media brand functions: cognitive relief and activating functions.

Cognitive relief addresses a brand's function to rationalize search and decision efforts for recipients, including two aspects, namely complexity reduction and risk reduction. While complexity reduction is more related to the process of decision preparation (in terms of screening different possibilities), risk reduction supports the actual decision. In more detail, *complexity reduction* is (1) the recognition, the precise identification of a brand by perceiving specific information chunks, such as logo, slogans or house colors, and (2) a simplification of selection and also decision processes based on established brand schemes. These brand schemes can be described as learned, standardized notions and knowings about the appearance and the

characteristics of a brand; they are simplified thought patterns organizing a consumer's brand related knowledge. When activating brand schemes efforts for searching and processing information are reduced and – as a consequence –evaluation and selection processes are experienced as shorter and easier. The function of *risk reduction*can be grasped asthe perception of a brand as a signal of quality, in turnagain supporting informational rationalization and lowering cognitive efforts. Hence, by extrapolating experiences pooled in the brand scheme, recipients compensate their behavioral uncertainties and develop global quality evaluations. Strong media brands thus help the audience to orient itself within a highly competitive market with multiple players. Necessary for this are aspects such as a precise brand promise, a clear-cut content profile and a unique communication proposition (Förster, 2011a).

Besides the cognitive relief function Berkler highlighted two activating components, namely identification as a self-centered goal as well as prestige as a socially determined aspect. Within the *identification* function the author emphasizes the role of brands for self-definition purposes. Evidently, consumer's decisions are (also) driven by self-diagnostic goals, allowing them to discover and define their own preferences, and to express their inner states, their self-identity to themselves (Akerlof, Kranton, 2000; Bodner, Prelec, 2003). Brands thus serve to create and confirm a recipient's self-concept and identity (Belk, 1988; Fournier 1998). Drawing from previous research I call this brand function *self-definition* and understand this as the recipient's desire to reaffirm the perceptions of oneself by choosing compatible media brands.

In contrast, the prestige function of a brand – as defined by Berkler (2008) – mirrors the aspiration to belong to a supposed user group and to excel in one's social environment. A brand thus can serve as an important symbolic marker of identity either to declare membership to a certain social group of 'fans' of this media brand or to draw a distinction towards others who prefer different media brands, thereby increasing the distance to the perceived out-group. This prestige function of media has also been addressed by Bourdieu (1983, 1986), who highlights the function of media use (ownership, usage and knowledge) for individuals to increase their cultural capital. Also Meyen (2007) shows how media knowledge and media menus are used for (social) identity work. This *self-expressive* function of brands is related to the notion of conspicuous

consumption, a term describing the acquisition of products mainly to attain or maintain a certain social status (Chernev, Hamilton, Gal, 2011; Veblen, 1899). Evidently, recipients choose (media) brands that signal a membership of desirable groups and avoid those that signal membership of undesirable groups (e.g. Amaldoss, Jain, 2005; Berger, Heath 2007; Braun, Wicklund, 1989; Escalas, Bettman, 2005; Twitchell, 2002).

FollowingBerkler's (2008) assumption, that recipients use media brands to (1) reduce complexity in media selection, (2) to decrease risks connected to the decision process, (3) to define their selves, and (4) to display their knowledge of culture, taste or style to others, we must ask: How do brand emotions support these functions?

As previous research showed, – although not in a media brand context –positive emotions support (cognitive) decision processes (e.g. Agrarwal, Malhotra, 2005; Isen, 2000; Krishnan, Trappey, 1999; Lewicky, Hill, Csyzewska, 1992; Russell, 1989; Velmans, 1991; Watson, Spence, 2007). In terms of media (brand) selection processes the 'uses-and-gratifications' approach by Blumler and Katz (1974) suggests, that media activities are determined by individual needs and goals. But they also presume that these needs are always conscious and communicable. Contrastingly, 'mood-management' theory (Zillman, 1988; Zillman, Bryant, 1985) assumes that individuals are not necessarily aware of their motivation. Based on a hedonistic premise, mood-management theory states that individuals tend to select media (content) that maximizes good mood (pleasure) and diminishes bad mood. We thus can assume, that recipients tend to choose those media brands, which are attached with strong positive emotions, in turn expecting that these media brands evoke pleasure. However, this argumentation follows a more classic view, which proposes that emotions are the result of cognitive appraisals (e.g. Bagozzi, Gopinath, Nyer, 1999; Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1991). In contrast, recent research discusses a primacy of emotions over thoughts, presuming that emotions have various effects on processing (e.g. Heath, Nairn, 2005; Martin, Morich, 2011; Zajonc, 2001). In following the latter I start from the premise, that emotions affect cognitive evaluation, selection and decision processes as well as the perception of brands as means for self-definition and self-expression. But which emotions are relevant for media brands specifically, and – beforehand –

what is an emotion, how can the construct be grasped and what different kinds of brand emotions can be distinguished?

Emotions, their nature and measurement

Plutchik (2001, p. 344), one of the main contributors to emotional psychology, states: "Almost everyone agrees that the study of emotions is one of the most confused (and still open) chapters in the history of psychology. By one estimate, more than 90 definitions of "emotion" were proposed over the course of the 20th century. If there is little consensus on the meaning of the term, it is no wonder that there is much disagreement among contemporary theoreticians concerning the best way to conceptualize emotion and interpret its role in life." As an example, one main approach to define emotions has been the search for primary, basic emotions (e.g. Ekman, 1992; Izard, 1994; McDougall, 1908/1960; Plutchik, 1962, 1980, 2001; Tomkins 1962, 1992) presuming the existence of biologically essential emotions helping human beings to survive. However, the results of these efforts are inconsistent and therefore under strong critique. Thus, in order to conceptualize the construct of emotions, Meyer, Reisenzein and Schützwohl (2001) highlight typical characteristics of emotions: (1) Emotions have a *quality* (e.g. fear, joy, surprise), *intensity* (e.g. weak or strong anger) and *duration* (emotional episodes vs. emotional dispositions). (2) Emotions are *object-related*. (3) Emotions are *subjectively felt*, they cause *physiological changes* (physical reactions, e.g. blushing, perspiration, pulse rate), and they affect *behavioral reactions* (e.g. facial expressions, gestures, posture). This can be applied to (media) brand emotions, as they also have distinct qualities, they are related to brands and they are subjectively felt having different effects on thought processes and behavior.

Thereby, a central issue in research on emotional branding is the question whether there are specific marketing emotions differing from general, basic emotions. Among others, Huang (2001) argues that a mere consideration of basic emotions does not always convey relevant marketing-specific emotions. He thus claims to consider context-free and context-specific marketing emotions for further research. Moreover, empiricalresearch on marketing related emotions provided different taxonomies and scales, which havevarious theoretical foundations and diversemethodological accesses(e.g. Bosch, Schiel, Winder, 2006; Desmet, Hekkert, Jacobs,

2000; Richins, 1997). As these empirical studies suggest, emotional responses can be quantified in at least three different systems – (1) affective self-reports, (2) physiological measurements (e.g. skin conductance, pupillary responses, pulse rate), and (3) behavioral changes (e.g. facial action coding system, e.g. Ekman, Friesen, Ancoli, 1980; Kaiser, Wehrle, 2001). However, physiological and behavioral measurements are difficult to use for a larger sample and in a brand context. Firstly, physiological measurements allow to detect the occurrence of even mild emotions, but they do not uncover which specific emotion is attached to the brand. Secondly, the measurement of behavioral changes, e.g. by using facial action coding systems, does not consider marketing specific emotions yet.Thus, the methodology of affective self-reports is the most appropriate way to measure brand related emotions.They gauge subjective feelings requiring respondents to report their emotions with the use of a set of rating scales or verbal protocols. These self-reports can be basically divided into verbal and non-verbal procedures (*Table 1*).

Table 1: Emotion measurement (based on Richins,1997; Bosch, Schiel, Winder, 2006)

|	Scales	Description
Verbal	Emotions Profile Index (Plutchik, Kellerman, 1974)	• 62 forced-choice emotion descriptor pairs • Scales represent Plutchik's eight basic emotions
	Holbrook, Westwood, 1989	• Three adjectives for each of Plutchik's eight emotions • Reporting of the felt intensity
	Differential Emotions Scale (DES) (Izard, 1977)	• Consists in four different forms • DES-II: 30 adjective terms, three to measure each of Izard's ten fundamental emotions
	Pleasure Arousal Dominance (PAD) (Mehrabian, Russell, 1974)	• 18 items (six for each dimension)
	Standardized Emotional Profile	• 27 items for pleasure, arousal and

	(SEP) (Holbrook, Batra, 1987)		dominance
	Consumption Emotion Set (CES) (Richins, 1997)	•	17 categories with 45 items
Non-verbal	Self Assessment Manikin (SAM) (Bradley, Lang, 1994)	•	Three scales with five pictograms for each dimension (pleasure, arousal, dominance)
	Imagery scale (Bosch, Schiel, Winder, 2006)	•	Three pictures for 12 emotions (based on Plutchik's typology of emotions)

It should be underlined that verbal scales show some considerable disadvantages. First, they contain a large number of items, requiring a high effort in reflecting personal feelings resulting in fatigue phenomena and reactivity effects. The latter is closely related to one profound question: If respondents are forced to think about their emotions, if they have to name how they specifically feel and to rate it on a Likert-scale, are we still measuring emotions? This has also been addressed by Bradley and Lang (1994), who question what is assessed when measuring people's reports of internal feelings as differences in affective meanings among stimuli – words, objects, events – are likely. It thus leads to the second main disadvantage; verbal scales are difficult to apply between cultures. As Desmet (2004, p. 113) states, "translating emotion words is known to be difficult because for many emotion words a one-to-one, 'straight' translation is not available."To overcome these problems, a small number of non-verbal scales has been developed using pictograms or images instead of words to represent emotional responses. As an example, Self-Assessment Manikin (Lang, 1985) uses different puppets, and respondents are asked to point out the ones that in their opinion best portray their emotions. Nevertheless, this non-verbal scale has an important limitation, which is that it does not measure distinct emotions but generalized emotional states, such as valence, arousal and dominance. Hence, in an emotional branding context there is still the question, which specific emotions are associated with the single brands.

Up to now, the imagery scale developed by Bosch, Schiel and Winder (2006) provides the most promising emotion measurement scale with a profoundtheoretical andempirical grounding.

Based on Plutchik's emotion theory, the authors developed a marketing specific imagery scale involving twelve emotions. The scale does not require an explicit denotation of the single emotions by the respondents, but allows an assignment of these emotions to brands as particular brand image associations (*Figure 1*).

Figure 1: Imagery Scale for Emotions (Bosch, Schiel, Winder, 2006)
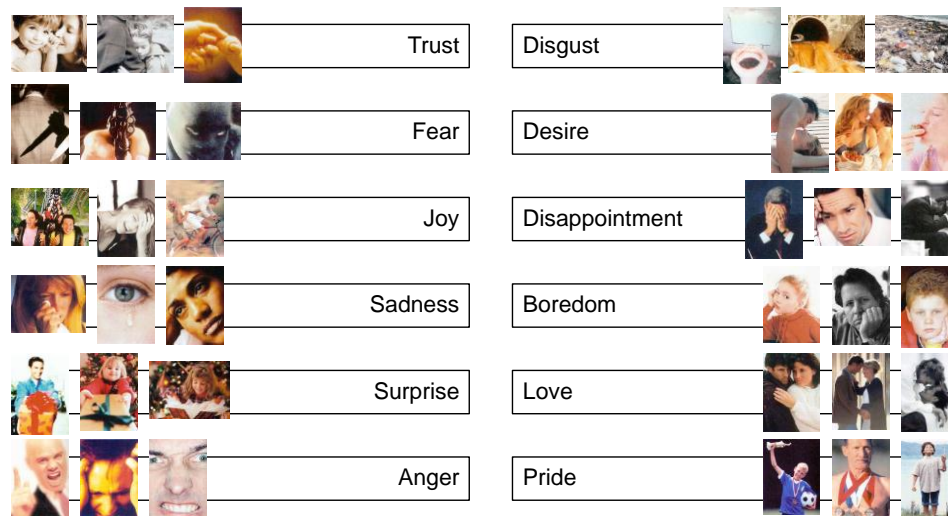
Methodology

To approach our research question – i.e. What emotions do recipients associate with media brands and how do emotions affect media brand functions? –anexploratory study has been conducted for one media category on a national level, namely television stations in Austria. Brand architecture of television brands typically consists of the *station brand* (e.g. BBC1) and its sub-brands with *genre* (e.g. news on NBC), *format* (e.g. Desperate Housewives on ABC), and *persona* brands (e.g. David Letterman on CBS) (Wolff, 2006). We selectedfive television station brands in Austria: The public service broadcasting station ORF provides two channels ORFeins and ORF2 with a market share of 14.0 and 22.0% respectively in 2012 (AGTT/ GfKTeletest, 2013). The biggest Austrian commercial broadcaster is ATV with a market share of 3.4%. Since the Austrian media market is strongly influenced by its neighboring states such as Germany and Switzerland, ProSieben (5.2%) and RTL (5.7%) as German commercial broadcasters have been selected for this study. However, the nature of this exemplary study will limit the results to the

Austrian television market only. Undoubtedly, further research should emphasize other geographical areas and different media categories.

The survey has been conducted utilizing an external provider. The online-panel offered by OGM (ÖsterreichischeGesellschaftfür Marketing) mainly recruits its panelists offline (via telephone). Data collection took place in September 2011.Thelink for thesurvey has been sent to 2,182 persons, 495 respondents completed the online survey (22.6% response rate). The participants are between 14 and 62 years *(M*=39.0*, SD*=11.95*)*; 49% are female, 51% are male. The sample mirrors the structure of the Austrian population in this age range in terms of gender and geographical distribution. Respondents were provided with a set of questions, starting with aided and unaided recall measures of television stations in Austria, followed by general aspects of media use, the likability and frequency of use of the television stations of interest. Thereafterthe participants were randomly assigned to one of the television stations to avoid habituation effects and they were asked about emotional image aspects and brand functions. Personal questions completed the questionnaire.

To measure *brand emotions*we used the imagery scale by Bosch, Schiel and Winder (2006). It covers six positive (trust, joy, surprise, desire, love, pride) and six negative emotions (fear, sadness, anger, disgust, disappointment, boredom). These single emotions are depicted by three pictures each *(Figure 1)*. The images were displayed for one second successively as suggested by Bosch et al. (2006). Afterwards the respondents were asked to rate on a six-point-scale how strongly they associate this emotion with the brand. The sequence of the emotions (with the three pictures each) was randomized to avoid any order effects. The emotions scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 in the pretest ($n = 120$; employees of five different media agencies in Austria). *Disgust* has been eliminated for the study because of its low interscorrelations. The imagery scale applied in the present study has valuable advantages compared to verbal scales, but reveals some weaknesses especially in a media environment. This is especially the case, as it cannot be detected, if the displayed images are connected to specific format or genre brands (e.g. fear with crime). Nevertheless, these sub-brands also shape the emotional associations of the station brand.

Television*brand functions* have been measuredby applying the items suggested by Berkler (2008). Ten items reflect complexity reduction, risk reduction, self-definition and self-expression*(Table 2).*Items were measured using a six-point Likert-scale. We calculated Cronbach's alpha and aggregated the items to four indicators (unweighted mean).

Table 2: Measurement of brand functions

Brand function	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Complexity reduction	I do not have to inform myself about the program in advance, they always show something I like.	-
Risk reduction	Very often I turn on *(brand)*, because I know I will like the program. When I watch *(brand)* I always feel well entertained. When I watch *(brand)* I know I won't miss any important information. I can't remember being disappointed by *(brand)*.	0.82
Self-definition	*(Brand)* fits to me perfectly. I see myself as a typical viewer of *(brand)*.	0.80
Self-expression	I talk to my friends about *(brand)* very often. In order to belong to my peer-group, you have to watch *(brand)* *(Brand)* is the topic of conversation very often in my peer group.	0.82

Results

As the results show, the overall strongest emotions associated with the examined television stations are joy (M=3.48, SD = 1.50), love (M=3.16, SD = 1.45) and surprise (M=3.02, SD =1,44). The weakest emotions attached to the station brands are anger (M=2.42, SD = 1.47), disappointment (M=2.55, SD = 1.41) and fear (M=2.57, SD =1.43).We calculated two-way analyses of variance and found significant differences between the emotions attached to the television stations; namely for joy, surprise, desire, trust, pride, boredom, disappointment and fear. While joy (F (4, 490) = 14.27, p< .001), surprise (F(4, 490) = 5.75, p< .001) and desire (F(4, 490) = 5.66, p< .001) are strongest for the commercial broadcasters ProSieben and RTL, trust (F(4, 490) = 3.10, p< .05) and pride (F(4, 490) = 7.85, p< .001) show the highest measures for the public broadcasters ORFeins and ORF2.Furthermore, ORFeins, the public broadcaster, reveals the highest measures for boredom (F(4, 490) = 5.93, p< .001) and disappointment (F(4, 490) = 4.49, p< .01). Moreover, the low association of fear with ORF2 (F(4. 490) = 3.06, p< .05) is remarkable, especially because it is averaged for the other television stations.

To test for the impact the single emotions have on brand functions, regression analyses have been calculated. Bivariate correlation analyses (two-tailed, Pearson) reveal multicollinearity between the independent variables (emotions). As the correlation coefficients are below 0.6, we left the models in their origin version, despite multicollinearity, as suggested by prior research (e.g. Gujarati, 2003). The results show some significant effects of emotions on the examined brand functions (*Table 3*).

Table 3: Impact of emotions on brand functions (n = 495)

	Model 1 Complexity Reduction		Model 2 Risk Reduction		Model 3 Self-definition		Model 4 Self-expression	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Joy	.16	.18**	.17	.22***	.10	.12*	.11	.17*
Love								
Surprise								

Desire							
Trust	.20	.22***	.18	.23***	.23	.27***	.13	.19**
Pride	.10	.12*	.12	.16***	.15	.17***		
Sadness								
Boredom	-.13	-.15**	-.11	-.15**	-.14	-.16***		
Fear								
Disappointment								
Anger								
R^2	.215		.297		.264		.132	
Adjusted R^2	.197		.281		.248		.112	

Notes: Simultaneous regression analyses. * $p< .05$. ** $p< .01$. *** $p< .001$.

Specifically, the positive emotions joy, trust and pride as well as the negative emotion of boredom determine cognitive and activating brand aspects. The strongest effects on complexity and risk reduction are caused by trust ($\beta = .22$ resp. $\beta = .23$; $ps< .001$).Also self-definition and self-expression are strongest affected by trust ($\beta = .27$ resp. $\beta = .19$; $ps< .01$).The weaker, but also significant negative effect of boredom as a negative emotion on complexity and risk reduction ($\beta = -.15$ resp. $\beta = -.15$; $ps< .01$) as well as on self-definition *($\beta = -.16$; $p < .001$)* underlines the threat of negative emotions. To sum up, emotions especially impact risk reduction and self-definition explaining 28 respectively 25 percent of variance.

Discussion

The results show that emotions play a vital role for television station brands. Indeed, the emotions attached to the examined broadcastersvary in regard to their quality and intensity among the televisionstation brands. Given the results of the variance analyses, *love* is an important emotion of television stations in general, but it does not display significant differences

between the examined stations. In other words: *Love* seems to be a more basic requirement than as it acts as a means for creating a unique positioning in the television market. Amajor distinction can be seen between public service broadcasters on the one hand, and commercial broadcasters on the other: the latter are stronger associated with hedonistic emotions, such as *joy, surprise* and *desire*. Contrastingly, public service broadcasters reveal strong measures for more conservative-oriented emotions, such as *trust* and *pride*. Evidently, German commercial broadcasters achieved a clear emotional positioning in the Austrian television market, which is considerably dominated by the public broadcasting channels ORFeins and ORF2 unifying almost 40 percent of the market.

But, how do emotionsaffectcognitive relief and activating brand functions? The empirical results show, that these functions are primarily affected by positive emotions. *Joy,trust, pride* and *boredom*– as the sole negative emotion – significantly impact a media brand's function to reducecomplexity and risks, and to define and express their selves with a television station brand.Interestingly, emotions most strongly affect *risk reduction* and to a lower extent *complexity reduction*. This might be an indication for the high extent of habituation within media (brand) selection processes. When brand schemes are shaped and the brand is subjectively experienced as reliable, brands work as information chunk only. Thus, the lower cognitive effort raises the importance of brand emotions used by recipients to rationalize decision processes on media selection.

Furthermore, the purpose of television brands for *self-definition* is strongly affected by emotions, and this impact is stronger than on self-expression. In other words: the audience's underlying tendency to seek out media brands that reflect the recipient's self is not only affected by cognitive evaluations, but also by emotional aspects, especially by trust and pride. Moreover, the *self-expressive* function of media brands, i.e. the use of brands to signal a membership to groups or to distinguish from out-groups, is positively affected if joy or trust are involved. This suggests, that emotional image aspects (also) act as 'glue' for social ties and reinforces group cohesion, although not to the same extent as emotions impact the role of media as means for self-definition.

Considering these effects of brand emotions on media brand functions helps us to better understand how media channels can be successfully navigated within the highly competitive market, as only four emotions – i.e. joy, trust, pride and boredom – explain 20 percent of perceived complexity reduction, 28 percent of risk reduction, and 25 percent of self-definition. However, there is still a high proportion of unexplained variance. Of course, the examined brand functions are complex constructs determined by a variety of different variables. First, cognitive aspects such as perceived competence or trustworthiness play a significant role for media brands (Chan-Olmsted, Cha, 2008; Kim, Baek, Martin, 2010). Second, personality traits may also influence the evaluation of a media brand, especially in terms of its suitability for identity work. As Lounsbury, Levy, Leong and Gibson (2007) found, the sense of identity is significantly related to the Big Five traits (agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion and openness) as well as for narrow personality traits (aggression, optimism, tough-mindedness, and work drive).

Implications

Emotional branding has emerged as an influential paradigm recently. The present study brought into question, whether the stated role of emotions applies to media brands also. As the results show, emotions affect cognitive relief and they support the perception of brands as means for self-definition and self-expression purposes. However, what do these results imply for further research? The prevalent emphasis on rational features of media brands, such as the perceived quality in information and entertainment, seems rather limited, and does in fact neglect the emotional nature of human beings. Thus, emotional image characteristicsshould be considered in contemporary brand management approaches in more detail, namely as key performance indicators for branding activities on the one hand, and as antecedents for brand functions on the other.

The results further indicate, that the stimulation of joy, trust and pride should be emphasized by television stations. Doubtlessly, emotional brand associations are the result of different branding activities, such as programming, on- and off-air promotion (e.g. advertising, public relations) as

well as self-reference communication activities (self-thematization in media). In other words, programming and content strategies,as well as communication strategiesshould intent to induce these emotions. Here, further research needs become apparent as research on program effects on emotions is rather rare. In fact, aspects such as the exclusivity of content, the role of news and sportscasts have been discussed regarding their general effects on the credibility, the perceived competence, and the image of a television station only (e.g. Heinrich, 1999; Holtmann, 1999; Paus-Hasebrink et al., 2005). But, whichelements in a program profile do lead to the development of the intended emotional associations at the recipient's side? Moreover, how do promotion and communication instruments cause this emotional attachment? Furthermore, what is more important for television station brands: content or communication?

Research on the role of media brand emotions is rather at a beginning than at an end. This might also be caused by difficulties connected to emotion's conceptualizations and measurement methods. Evidently, emotions are an important predictor for media brand functions, helping us to better understand media selection processes and media effects. Undoubtedly, a theoretical debate and more empirical results in media contexts are needed to attach emotions the scientific importance they already have in related disciplines, or as Freud (1921,p. 159)puts it: *"We remain on the surface so long as we treat only memories and ideas. The only valuable things in psychic life are, rather, the emotions. All psychic powers are significant only through their fitness to awaken emotions."*

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