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Functional Values and Brand Personality: The Perception of Consumers and Media Professionals in Six European Countries

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Abstract

The process of consolidation and concentration in the business of traditional media in Western countries was fed by the global financial crisis during the last three years. We argue that after the global financial crisis, branding and differentiation from competitors is becoming even more important. Traditional media need more effort in managing their brands. Our leading research question is: "What functional values and personality do different media brands represent in the minds of media consumers and media professionals in different European countries?" Useful theoretical background to further develop this research problem can be found in literature on journalism cultures and the functions of the media, as well as brand management in the media industry. To answer our research question, we conducted a survey in six big metropolitan areas: Berlin (N=741), Copenhagen (N=749), London (N=740), Paris (N=741), Rome (N=738), and Zurich (N=748). We asked media consumers what purpose their favourite newspaper and favourite TV news programme serves (functional value) and what personality items best fit the image they have of their favourite media brand. The same questions were asked media managers and senior editors (N=58) in the respective areas. ANOVA tests reveal significant differences among all six areas. Our results show that considerably more than consumers, media professionals see their brands in the light of traditional functions of journalism. Moreover, we found some evidence that the perception of functional values and brand personality in the UK is different from all other countries.

Keywords: branding, media management, newspapers, television

Introduction

The process of consolidation and concentration in the business of traditional media is not new at all. The media business has always been dynamic, though the dynamism was accelerated in the last couple of years and has been fed by the global financial crisis during the last three years. As a consequence, media companies and news organizations need to evaluate their corporate profiles and their media brands regularly (McDowell, 2006). We argue that after the global financial crisis, branding and differentiation from competitors is becoming even more important. Financial and time resources are limited, and news consumers find personalized news for free all over the internet. Traditional media need more effort in managing their brands. However, the concept of branding was only introduced into the media industry in the 1990s (Chan-Olmsted, 2006b). Thus, development is still possible (Baumgarth, 2009), especially for small media companies (Gerth, 2010). Managers need to define their brand identity internally and develop positioning strategies that lead to the best possible match between brand identity (in the minds of managers) and brand image (in the minds of consumers) (Aaker, 1996, p. 71). If this process is successful, the result is high-profile brands, high brand equity and competitive advantage.

Following Porter (1991), competitive advantage results from either leadership in cost analysis or a successful differentiation strategy, which in the business of media, could result in quality leadership. We argue that the brand of a firm or a product is a property-based resource (Miller & Shamsie, 1996). Capron and Hulland (1999, pp. 43–44) state that there is widespread agreement that brands can represent valuable firm resources. Furthermore, brands can be viewed as rare resources; they cannot be imitated easily, and their substitutability is low. For Habann (2000, p. 14) brands represent a “core resource.” The simultaneous existence of three characteristics constitutes a “core” resource: 1) the capacity to generate value, 2) non-imitability, and 3) non-substitutability (2006a, p. 70). Chan-Olmsted and Kim (2002) found that US broadcast television managers often considered branding a promotional, tactical function (promoting a station and/or its news), rather than a strategic managerial process or asset management. Siegert, Gerth & Rademacher (2011) argue that media organizations implementing news coverage as a fundamental element of their brand identity produce hard news coverage of good quality as well as in considerable quantity. Brands have an important signaling function for media consumers. Thus, we argue that brands should be carefully managed within media companies in order to reach competitive advantage. For this paper, the research problem is summarized in the following question: What functional values and personality do different media brands represent in the minds of media consumers and media professionals in different European countries? To answer this question, we rely on the theory of identity-oriented brand management and journalism research and our empirical data presented further below.

Identity-oriented brand management

Marketing literature provides various concepts of brand identity (e.g., Aaker, 1996; Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Arvidsson, 2006; Burmann, Zeplin, & Riley, 2009; Elliott & Percy, 2007; Kapferer, 1994; Keller, 2008; Murphy, 1990; Upshaw, 1995). Following Aaker (1996), managers are responsible to define brand identity and keep this definition as stable as possible. Identity-based brand management was used in previous media research (Chan-Olmsted & Kim, 2001; McDowell, 2006; Siegert, 2001; Ots, 2008). Media brand identity is defined by the editorial as well as the business side of a media organization and thus includes all aspects attributed to it by the strategists behind the brand. In short, brand identity summarizes what a media outlet is and what it stands for. The identity of well-established brands should not change regularly, but the positioning strategies can be adopted to certain circumstantial shifts. Generally, branded media outlets are positioned through marketing and advertising activities (McDowell, 2006) but also through the very product itself--that is, the news content too. Marketing and advertising activities communicate the brand identity to consumers. Burmann & Maloney (2008) defined six different elements of brand identity: brand values, brand personality, brand vision, brand competences, brand origin, and brand benefits.

This paper focuses on two different non-visual symbolic aspects of brand identity: functional values and personality of news media brands. Visual aspects such as logos are not important for our purpose. By using the term “functional values,” we refer to brand values and brand competences, i.e., internal business values reflected in the way media content is produced and competences that a media company has in producing a certain kind of content. On the other hand, the concept of brand personality (Aaker, 1997) is a marketing technique to establish a good brand-consumer-relationship. To operationalize the functional values, we rely on empirical research on journalism cultures, the functions and uses of the media and gratifications research (Weaver at al. 2007; Weischenberg, Malik, & Scholl, 2006). For the brand personality analysis, we rely on previous studies (Baumgarth, 2009; Kim, Baek, & Martin, 2010). Our goal is to identify differences in the functional values and personality of media brands across six European countries and to compare the perceptions of the audience and of media professionals in these countries.

Functional values

Following the traditional “uses and gratifications” approach (Blumler & Katz, 1974), we argue that in the eyes of consumers, the media have to serve a certain purpose. When the media satisfy the uses and expectations of the audience, they are sustainably consumed. Since media content is an experience of good credence (Doyle, 2002), consumers need to have a positive experience to repeat consumption of the same outlet in the long run. By doing so, they develop their own perception (“brand image”) of their favourite media outlets. The basic and traditional roles of the media are information and entertainment. For news reporting, different authors identified different types of roles (McQuail, 1992, p. 85; Patterson, 1998), from the passive disseminator of news to the active watchdog and advocate. Based on the self-perception of journalists, Weaver et al. (2007) used 15 different roles that are summarized by using factor analysis as the “interpretative,” “disseminator,” ”adversarial” and “populist mobilizer.” For our study, we took those items that were most relevant in the definition of the four factors. Based on these theoretical considerations, our first two research questions are:

RQ1: How does the perception of functional values of printed and TV news outlets differ in six European countries?

RQ2: How does the perception of the audience and media professionals of functional values of printed and TV news outlets differ?

Brand personality

A brand personality can be defined as a collection of human characteristics that are used by managers to define and communicate the brand identity that consumers associate with the brand (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). We argue that this concept can be readily applied to the media industry. News media brands can be described by using human personality traits that allow consumers to build an image. “[...] media consumers are likely to choose a news brand that matches their self-images. In other words, an audience’s personal characteristics may contribute to its perception of a news brand” (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2008, p. 35). Brand personality in our case applies to product brands (i.e., media outlets) and not corporate brands, even if in some cases the name of the product is the same as the corporate name. The concept is regularly used in consumer research to analyze consumers' brand choices (Kotler, Keller, & Bliemel, 2006, p. 182), and there are a lot of potential personality items to be used in a study like ours, as previous studies have revealed (Baumgarth, 2009; Kim et al., 2010). From such we derive the next research questions:

RQ3: How does the perception of brand personality of printed and TV news outlets differ in six European countries?

RQ4: How does the perception of the audience and media professionals of brand personality of printed and TV news outlets differ?

Method

Context

Our study was one part of a bigger research project.[1] The results presented in this paper stem from a coordinated research effort. Following Hallin & Mancini (2004), we chose one country with a liberal media system (UK), three democratic corporatist countries (Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland) and two polarized pluralist media systems (Italy and France). This was necessary to potentially identify significant differences in our data. To reduce the number of competitors and to find a considerable number of consumers that use the same media outlets, we decided to conduct the survey in six big metropolitan areas instead of national samples: Berlin, Copenhagen, London, Paris, Rome, and Zurich. To be able to match perceptions of media editors and managers on the one hand and the audience on the

[1] The Swiss National Science Foundation generously funded the project "Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century" as one of its National Centers of Competence in Research (NCCR). For further information see www.nccr-democracy.uzh.ch.

other, we interviewed leading editors and managers and conducted a corresponding online survey in all six areas.

Sample

Our sample of media outlets was systematically selected and consisted of the leading news outlets in the respective metropolitan area. We distinguished elite newspapers, tabloid newspapers, free press and weekly news magazines. Furthermore, we included national and regional TV news from public as well as private TV outlets (see Appendix 1). This leads to a total amount of 100 media outlets (12-19 per country). Even though, the audience sample was composed of members of the metropolitan community, national news media were also included in our sample, as they are included in metropolitan areas as well. It was important to include those outlets that are most read and watched, as we wanted the audience to make a judgement on their favourite newspaper and TV brands. For our online audience survey, we relied on a representative panel in the six areas. The panel was identified by an international survey institute and separately approached in the languages of the six countries. In terms of participants' sex, age, and residence, the samples are representative. The panel was separately built in the six metropolitan areas: Berlin (N=741), Copenhagen (N=749), London (N=740), Paris (N=741), Rome (N=738), and Zurich (N=748).

Measures

Our study was a multi-method approach: audience panel survey and interviews with media representatives (chief editors and senior managers). We conducted standardized telephone interviews with media professionals in their respective languages; interviews in Denmark were conducted in English. Respondents were asked to fill in an online questionnaire while accompanied on telephone. This allowed us to raise the commitment of the high-level representatives of media companies. However, the response was acceptable in Switzerland (N=21, including outlets in French- and German-speaking Switzerland), Denmark (N=12), Germany (N=6), France (N=11), and Italy (N=6). Unfortunately the response in the UK was very low (N=2), and we cannot further evaluate the UK data in our analysis. This is partly explained by the fact that we included CEOs (or deputies) and editors in chief (or deputies) and did not want to have other representatives among our sample. Respondents needed to have comparable roles in their companies and an overview of the media outlet as a whole, including respondents from the UK. The total of N was 58.

Furthermore, we conducted a two-wave panel survey. As the two waves took place within four months only, time was no issue in our study. In the first wave (September 2010), questions focused on the functions and brand personality perception of printed news outlets; in the second (December 2010) wave, the focus was on TV news outlets. In the online questionnaire, media consumers were asked what purpose their favourite newspaper and favourite TV news programme serves (functional value) and what personality items best fit the image they have of their favourite media brand. The same questions were asked media managers and senior editors (N=58). In both groups of respondents—the audience and media professionals--the same battery of 12 different items was applied, describing the roles of the media in democratic societies on the one hand and on the other hand, 10 brand personality items. The goal of our study was to compare the perception of the audience and media professionals on functional values and brand personality. The functional-values-items were developed from self-perception studies of journalists in the US (Weaver et al., 2007) and Germany (Weischenberg, Malik, & Scholl, 2006).[2] The brand-personality items were

[2] The 12 items used in our questionnaire are the following: provides analysis and interpretation of complex problems, investigates claims and statements made by the government, provides information quickly, stays away from stories where factual content cannot be verified, provides entertainment and relaxation, is an adversary of public officials by being constantly sceptical of their actions, is an adversary of businesses by being constantly

developed from the results of Baumgarth (2009) and Kim et al. (2010). We used the items that proved to be most relevant in their studies.[3] Media professionals rated their own media outlets, and consumers rated their favourite newspaper and their favourite TV news programme. We asked what primary purpose their outlets serve (functional value) and what personality items best fit the identity of their brands. As a measure of data analysis, we used ANOVA comparison tests.

Results

According to our research questions, we identified differences between the six countries and between the audience and media professionals. Even though our panel study was conducted in metropolitan areas, we refer to them by naming the countries and not the cities.

Functional values

The audience was asked to indicate to what extent their favourite newspaper and TV-news-programme can be described by using the 12 different functional value items (five-point-scale). The survey revealed significant differences among all six countries (Tables 2 and 3), but not all of them are readily explainable. Five out of 12 functional values are similarly perceived by the audience in all countries, i.e., the F-value in our ANOVA comparison was relatively low. In all countries, the audience thinks that the print media and TV are providing analysis, are investigative, are giving ordinary people a chance to express their views, are pointing to possible solutions, and are helping the audience to cope in a complex world. With

sceptical of their actions, gives ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs, motivates ordinary people to get involved in public discussions of important issues, points people toward possible solutions to society’s problems, helps people to cope in a complex world, contributes to shaping public opinion.

[3] The 10 items used in our questionnaire are the following: smart, professional, trendy, lively, family-oriented, friendly, glamorous, good looking, tough, rugged.

means around 3.0 (Tables 2 and 3), we can say that in the perception of the audience, the media are dealing with these functions in an acceptable or even good way. Based on the differences in the media systems, we would have expected significant differences. Thus, the similarities of those 12 functional values are rather surprising. It is also interesting to note that the differences between printed outlets and TV are very small (see Appendix II, Tables 2 and 3). However, respondents in the different countries also perceived TV outlets to “motivate people to get involved in public discussions” to an acceptable extent. In the case of printed outlets, values are again similar but with the exception of the UK. Here we find a big difference between the answers on printed outlets (mean 3.7, sd 0.8) and TV outlets (mean 3.0, sd 0.9).

The biggest differences among the six metropolitan areas are found for “quick information providing.” The audience in Switzerland thinks that the printed (mean 4.0, sd 0.8) and TV outlets (mean 4.0, sd 0.8) are providing information very quickly, whereas the other extreme is found for TV in the UK (print mean 3.0, sd 1.0). All other countries are still different from Switzerland and the UK, but they are closer to Switzerland than to the UK. Only Italian TV outlets (mean 3.1, sd 1.0) are rated closer to the UK. Surprisingly, there are no relevant differences in the perception of TV and newspaper brands. Based on the fact that it is much easier for broadcast media to convey information quickly than for newspapers, we could have expected a different outcome. However, this result can be explained by successful brand transfer or brand extension to the internet (Keller, 2003, p. 576). The audience was asked about their favourite newspaper brand. Being asked about brands, they don’t necessarily refer to a printed edition only but might have in mind Web sites as well, even though it is still a traditional newspaper brand. In many countries, Web sites of traditional news brands are among the most used news sites on the Internet.

Table 2

Functional values: perception on print media brands (au: audience, mp: media professionals) (au: N=3389, mp : N=33)

	Switzerland (mean/sd)	Germany (mean/sd)	France (mean/sd)	Italy (mean/sd)	UK* (mean/sd)	Denmark (mean/sd)	ANOVA
Provides analysis and interpretation of complex problems	au: 3.1/1.2 mp: 3.8/1.0	3.4/1.0 2.5/3.5	3.1/1.1 4.2/0.8	3.3/1.0 3.6/0.8	3.2/1.0 5.0/-	3.3/1.2 4.0/1.3	au: F(5,3383)=8.595, p < 0.01 mp: ns
Investigates claims and statements made by the government	3.2/1.1 4.1/1.0	3.4/1.0 2.5/3.5	3.1/1.0 3.6/0.5	3.3/1.0 3.8/0.8	3.2/0.9 5.0/-	3.3/1.1 4.1/1.2	F(5,3383)=7.590, p < 0.01 ns
Provides information quickly	4.0/0.8 3.5/1.1	3.7/0.9 1.5/2.1	3.8/0.9 3.4/0.9	3.8/0.9 4.8/0.4	3.1/1.0 4.0/-	3.6/0.9 4.1/1.6	F(5,3383)=68.533, p < 0.01 F(5,27)=2.713, p < 0.05
Stays away from stories where factual content cannot be verified	3.0/1.1 4.3/0.8	3.3/1.0 2.0/2.8	3.3/1.0 4.4/0.5	3.4/0.9 4.0/1.0	2.9/1.1 4.0/-	3.0/1.0 3.9/1.7	F(5,3383)=22.130, p < 0.01 ns
Provides entertainment and relaxation	3.8/0.9 3.4/1.1	3.5/1.0 1.0/1.4	3.5/1.0 3.2/1.6	3.1/1.0 3.2/0.8	3.4/0.8 4.0/-	3.6/1.0 3.1/0.9	F(5,3383)=25.384, p < 0.01 ns
Is an adversary of public officials by being constantly sceptical of their actions	2.9/1.1 4.0/0.7	3.1/1.0 2.0/2.8	2.8/1.1 3.4/0.9	3.1/1.1 3.8/0.8	3.3/1.0 3.0/-	3.3/1.1 3.3/1.1	F(5,3383)=22.767, p < 0.01 ns
Is an adversary of businesses by being constantly sceptical of their actions	2.9/1.0 3.5/1.0	3.0/1.0 2.0/2.8	2.8/1.0 3.0/0.7	3.0/1.0 3.6/0.9	3.7/0.8 1.0/-	3.1/1.1 2.9/0.9	F(5,3383)=65.521, p < 0.01 ns
Gives ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs	3.2/1.0 3.2/1.2	3.2/1.0 1.0/1.4	3.1/1.0 3.0//1.6	3.3/1.0 3.2/1.1	3.1/0.9 4.0/-	3.3/1.0 3.6/1.5	F(5,3383)=2.708, p < 0.05 ns
Motivates ordinary people to get involved in public discussions of important issues	3.1/1.0 3.8/1.1	3.2/1.0 -	3.2/1.0 3.4/0.5	3.2/1.0 3.8/0.8	3.7/0.8 3.0/-	3.2/1.0 3.6/0.8	F(5,3383)=32.438, p < 0.01 F(5,27)=4.714, p < 0.01
Points people toward possible solutions to society’s problems	3.1/1.1 3.6/0.5	3.2/1.0 1.5/2.1	2.9/1.0 3.6/0.5	3.0/1.0 3.4/0.9	3.1/0.9 5.0/-	3.1/1.1 3.4/0.8	F(5,3383)=5.208, p < 0.01 F(5,27)=3.610, p < 0.05
Helps me to cope in a complex world	2.9/1.1 4.1/0.7	3.1/1.0 2.0/2.8	3.1/1.0 3.8/0.4	2.9/1.0 4.0/0.7	2.8/0.9 4.0/-	3.0/1.1 4.4/0.8	F(5,3383)=5.498, p < 0.01 F(5,27)=2.648, p < 0.05
Contributes to shaping public opinion	3.7/0.9 4.5/0.5	3.6/0.9 2.5/3.5	3.4/0.9 3.4/0.5	3.6/0.9 4.4/0.5	3.2/1.0 4.0/-	3.6/1.0 4.3/0.8	F(5,3383)=21.217, p < 0.01 F(5,27)=2.676, p < 0.05

**Note:* The number of respondents in the UK was very low, so results in the UK are not included in the calculation.

Table 3
Functional values: Perception on TV news media brands (N=3389)

	Switzerland (mean/sd)	Germany (mean/sd)	France (mean/sd)	Italy (mean/sd)	UK (mean/sd)	Denmark (mean/sd)	ANOVA
Provides analysis and interpretation of complex problems	3.4/0.9	3.5/0.9	3.3/1.0	3.3/1.0	3.5/0.8	3.4/0.9	$F(5,3383)=13.532$, $p < 0.01$
Investigates claims and statements made by the government	3.2/1.0	3.4/1.0	3.0/1.0	3.1/1.1	3.1/0.9	3.4/0.9	$F(5,3383)=18.014$, $p < 0.01$
Provides information quickly	4.0/0.8	4.1/0.8	3.7/0.9	3.1/1.0	3.0/1.0	3.7/0.9	$F(5,3383)=226.737$, $p < 0.01$
Stays away from stories where factual content cannot be verified	3.4/1.0	3.6/1.0	3.3/1.0	3.4/1.0	3.2/0.9	3.1/0.9	$F(5,3383)=34.335$, $p < 0.01$
Provides entertainment and relaxation	2.6/1.1	3.1/1.1	2.9/1.1	2.7/1.1	3.5/0.8	3.0/1.0	$F(5,3383)=93.643$, $p < 0.01$
Is an adversary of public officials by being constantly sceptical of their actions	2.9/1.0	3.1/1.0	2.8/1.1	3.1/1.1	3.6/0.8	3.4/0.9	$F(5,3383)=79.005$, $p < 0.01$
Is an adversary of businesses by being constantly sceptical of their actions	2.8/1.0	3.0/1.0	2.8/1.0	3.0/1.0	3.9/0.8	3.3/0.9	$F(5,3383)=161.560$, $p < 0.01$
Gives ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs	2.9/1.0	3.0/1.1	3.2/1.1	3.0/1.1	3.2/0.9	3.0/1.0	$F(5,3383)=11.528$, $p < 0.01$
Motivates ordinary people to get involved in public discussions of important issues	3.1/1.0	3.2/1.0	3.1/1.0	3.1/1.0	3.0/0.9	3.3/0.9	$F(5,3383)=6.895$, $p < 0.01$
Points people toward possible solutions to society's problems	2.8/1.0	3.1/1.0	2.9/1.0	2.9/1.1	3.1/0.9	3.0/0.9	$F(5,3383)=12.894$, $p < 0.01$
Helps me to cope in a complex world	2.9/1.0	3.2/1.0	3.0/1.0	2.8/1.1	3.0/0.9	3.1/1.0	$F(5,3383)=15.366$, $p < 0.01$
Contributes to shaping public opinion	3.7/0.9	3.8/0.9	3.5/0.9	3.5/0.9	3.0/1.0	3.6/0.8	$F(5,3383)=84.947$, $p < 0.01$

Differences between the UK and all other countries were also found for the function of “being an adversary to business representatives.” In this regard, the audience in the UK newspapers (mean 3.7, sd 0.8) and TV outlets (mean 3.6, sd 0.8) are doing quite a good job in fulfilling this function. We found much lower values for all other countries (Tables 2 and 3). The results are slightly different for another important function of the media: “being an adversary of public officials.” For printed outlets, values are similar in all six countries, even though differences are still significant (means range from 2.8 to 3.3). However, compared to TV outlets, the differences are small. The value for the perception on British media is 3.6 (sd 0.8), but this time, we found another country with similar values: Denmark (mean 3.4, sd 0.9). For the audience in the UK and Denmark, TV is fulfilling the function in a good way, whereas for the TV audience in other countries, the performance is weaker.

We now turn to the view of media professionals. Due to a lacking response, the number of respondents in some countries was very low. This is especially true for TV professionals. We had to exclude the view of TV professionals (Table 3) and also for print professionals in the case of the UK (Table 2). However, comparing the perception of print media professionals across the countries, we still found some significant differences. Being a quick provider of information is very important for professionals in Italy and Denmark, still important for Switzerland and France but not important at all for professionals in Germany. However, as the standard deviation was very high in this case, we should not overestimate this result. Even though the core business of printed media outlets is providing information the next day, professionals perceive themselves as a quick information provider. Particularly in Italy and Denmark, they think they are doing pretty well; in Switzerland and France, professionals think they are doing an acceptable job in fulfilling this function. Other significant differences were only found for the function of “motivating ordinary people to get involved in public discussions.”

To compare the perception of the audience and media professionals, we aggregated the data (Table 6). We compared the internal brand perception of news professionals with the external brand image (audience). For newspaper outlets, we found differences in some of the traditional functions of journalism, such as watchdog to the political elite, provider of analysis and factual coverage, giving orientation in a complex world, and influencing public opinion. Media professionals perceive their performance as good or very good (means range from 3.8 to 4.2). But their own view is not reflected in the perception of the audience (means range from 3.0 to 3.5). This result is confirmed by the comparison of TV audience and TV professionals. Still, there are some functional values that are equally perceived by the audience and media professionals. Among them, being an adversary towards business representatives, the forum function of giving ordinary people a chance to express their views, and the function of motivating people to get involved in public discussions were quite congruous.

To answer RQ1 and RQ2, we can summarize and refer to the typology by Hallin & Mancini (2004) again. The media in the liberal system are different from the democratic corporatist and polarized pluralist countries, whereas there is almost no significant difference between democratic corporatist and polarized pluralist media systems. The audience in Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, France and Italy perceive their favourite newspaper outlets as quick information providers that contribute to shaping public opinion, and in the case of Germany, Denmark and France, offer some relaxation. On an aggregate level, media professionals are adhering to traditional roles of journalism much stronger than are the audience members.

Table 4
The perception of audience and media professionals on functional values (au: N=3389, mp: N=33)

	Audience	Media professionals	ANOVA
Provides analysis and interpretation of complex problems	print: 3.2/1.1 TV: 3.4/0.9	3.8/1.2 4.1/0.8	$F(1,3419)=13.347$, $p < 0.01$ $F(1,3396)=4.815$, $p < 0.05$
Investigates claims and statements made by the government	3.2/1.0 3.2/1.0	3.9/1.2 4.1/0.8	$F(1,3419)=19.207$, $p < 0.01$ $F(1,3396)=6.791$, $p < 0.01$
Providers information quickly	3.7/0.9 3.6/1.0	3.7/1.3 4.8/0.5	ns $F(1,3396)=10.472$, $p < 0.01$
Stays away from stories where factual content cannot be verified	3.1/1.0 3.3/1.0	4.0/1.2 4.5/0.5	$F(1,3419)=32.201$, $p < 0.01$ $F(1,3396)=11.605$, $p < 0.01$
Provides entertainment and relaxation	3.5/1.0 3.0/1.1	3.2/1.2 1.8/1.0	ns $F(1,3396)=10.105$, $p < 0.01$
Is an adversary of public officials by being constantly sceptical of their actions	3.1/1.1 3.1/1.0	3.6/1.1 3.5/0.9	$F(1,3419)=10.331$, $p < 0.01$ ns
Is an adversary of businesses by being constantly sceptical of their actions	3.1/1.0 3.1/1.0	3.1/1.1 3.3/1.0	ns ns
Gives ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs	3.2/1.0 3.1/1.0	3.1/1.4 2.6/1.3	ns ns
Motivates ordinary people to get involved in public discussions of important issues	3.3/1.0 3.1/1.0	3.5/1.1 2.9/1.1	ns ns
Points people toward possible solutions to society's problems	3.1/1.0 3.0/1.0	3.5/0.9 3.9/0.6	$F(1,3419)=7.928$, $p < 0.05$ $F(1,3396)=6.835$, $p < 0.01$
Helps me to cope in a complex world	3.0/1.0 3.0/1.0	4.0/1.0 4.4/0.7	$F(1,3419)=38.841$, $p < 0.01$ $F(1,3396)=14.828$, $p < 0.01$
Contributes to shaping public opinion	3.5/0.9 3.5/1.0	4.2/1.0 4.8/0.5	$F(1,3419)=20.375$, $p < 0.01$ $F(1,3396)=13.356$, $p < 0.01$

Brand personality

The audience was asked to indicate to what extent their favourite newspaper and TV news programme can be described on a five-point scale measured by 10 different brand personality items. Media professionals were asked to do the same for the media outlet they were representing. The results show the same pattern as with functional value items: the media in the liberal system (UK) slightly differs from the media of all other countries in our sample (Tables 4 and 5). Again, differences are significant for our audience survey but only partly significant for the media professionals. From the perspective of the newspaper audience, Table 4 reveals the biggest country-specific differences for the items “glamorous”, “good looking”, “family oriented”, and “tough”. Newspapers are perceived as very glamorous in the UK (mean 3.6, sd 0.9), still slightly glamorous in Italy (mean 2.9, sd 1.0) and France (mean 2.9, sd 1.0), but not so much in Switzerland, Denmark and Germany (means between 2.0 and 2.2). The same was found for the item “family oriented.” These results perfectly reflect the typology of Hallin & Mancini (2004), but it’s the only result that confirms this typology. However, with regard to the item “good looking,” the lowest value appears for the UK (2.6, 1.0). All other countries have quite similar values (from 3.4 to 3.7). People in the UK perceive newspapers as “glamorous” and “trendy”, but at the same time, they are not perceived as “good looking”. Last but not least, newspapers in the UK are perceived as “tough” (3.2, 0.9; other countries’ means range from 2.6 to 2.9). Professionals in the UK do not perceive their newspaper outlets as very “professional” (mean 3.3, sd 0.9) or “smart” (mean 2.7, sd 1.0), whereas in all other countries, they are perceived as slightly more “professional” (means from 3.6 to 3.8) and “smart” (means from 3.0 to 3.4).

Table 5
Brand personality: perception of print media brands (au: audience, mp: media professionals) (au: N=3389, mp: N=33)

	Switzerland (mean/sd)	Germany (mean/sd)	France (mean/sd)	Italy (mean/sd)	UK* (mean/sd)	Denmark (mean/sd)	ANOVA
Smart	3.1/1.0 3.8/1.2	3.4/1.0 3.2/2.0	3.0/1.0 3.4/1.1	3.0/1.0 3.0/2.0	2.7/1.0 4.0/-	3.3/1.1 3.7/1.0	$F(5,3383)=37.625$, $p < 0.01$ ns
Professional	3.7/1.0 4.6/0.7	3.8/1.0 3.8/2.2	3.6/1.0 4.3/0.9	3.6/1.0 4.2/0.4	3.3/0.9 4.0/-	3.7/1.0 4.3/0.9	$F(5,3383)=20.273$, $p < 0.01$ ns
Trendy	3.2/1.1 3.2/1.3	2.8/1.0 1.8/1.1	3.2/1.0 3.6/0.9	3.2/1.0 4.2/1.8	3.5/1.0 2.0/-	3.1/1.0 3.2/1.4	$F(5,3383)=21.535$, $p < 0.01$ $F(5/38)=2.153$, $p < 0.1$
Lively	3.6/0.8 3.8/0.7	3.5/0.9 2.4/1.5	3.3/1.0 3.6/1.7	3.3/1.0 4.2/1.3	3.1/1.0 5.0/-	3.2/1.0 3.3/1.1	$F(5,3383)=28.731$, $p < 0.01$ ns
Family-oriented	2.6/1.0 2.9/1.3	3.0/1.0 2.2/1.6	3.3/0.9 2.8/0.7	3.3/0.9 4.0/0.7	3.5/0.9 4.0/-	2.8/1.0 2.6/1.0	$F(5,3383)=72.703$, $p < 0.01$ ns
Friendly	3.5/0.9 3.2/0.8	3.5/0.9 2.4/1.5	3.3/0.9 2.4/1.3	3.3/0.9 3.8/1.3	3.0/0.9 3.0/-	3.2/1.0 3.2/1.4	$F(5,3383)=21.279$, $p < 0.01$ ns
Glamorous	2.2/1.0 2.4/1.4	2.2/1.0 1.4/0.9	2.9/1.0 2.1/0.8	2.9/1.0 3.4/0.9	3.6/0.9 3.0/-	2.0/0.9 1.9/0.8	$F(5,3383)=269.652$, $p < 0.01$ $F(5/38)=2.022$, $p < 0.1$
Good looking	3.7/0.9 3.9/0.9	3.5/1.0 2.6/1.7	3.6/0.9 2.9/1.5	3.6/0.9 4.4/0.5	2.6/1.0 4.0/-	3.4/1.0 3.2/1.1	$F(5,3383)=164.583$, $p < 0.01$ $F(5/38)=2.258$, $p < 0.1$
Tough	2.6/1.0 3.2/1.2	2.9/1.0 2.8/1.6	2.8/1.0 1.9/0.8	2.8/1.0 3.0/1.4	3.2/0.9 3.0/-	2.7/1.1 3.9/1.3	$F(5,3383)=49.436$, $p < 0.01$ $F(5/38)=2.393$, $p < 0.1$
Rugged	3.1/1.0 3.5/1.0	3.2/1.0 2.8/1.6	3.0/1.1 3.5/1.2	3.0/1.1 2.4/1.1	2.9/1.0 3.0/-	3.2/1.1 3.1/1.9	$F(5,3383)=13.854$, $p < 0.01$ ns

**Note:* The number of respondents in the UK was very low, so results in the UK are not included in the calculation.

Table 6
Brand personality: perception of TV news media outlets (N=3389)

	Switzerland (mean/sd)	Germany (mean/sd)	France (mean/sd)	Italy (mean/sd)	UK (mean/sd)	Denmark (mean/sd)	ANOVA
Smart	2.8/1.0	3.4/1.0	2.6/1.1	2.9/1.1	2.6/1.0	3.4/0.9	$F(5,3383)=115.872$, $p < 0.01$
Professional	4.0/0.9	4.2/0.9	3.7/1.0	3.8/1.0	3.6/0.9	3.9/0.9	$F(5,3383)=45.683$, $p < 0.01$
Trendy	2.8/1.0	3.0/1.2	2.9/1.1	3.0/1.1	4.1/0.8	3.0/1.0	$F(5,3383)=183.175$, $p < 0.01$
Lively	3.4/0.9	3.5/1.0	3.4/1.1	3.2/1.0	2.8/1.0	3.2/0.9	$F(5,3383)=66.651$, $p < 0.01$
Family-oriented	2.6/1.0	3.0/1.1	3.0/1.1	3.3/1.0	3.2/0.9	3.0/1.0	$F(5,3383)=62.924$, $p < 0.01$
Friendly	3.6/0.9	3.8/0.9	3.4/1.1	3.6/1.0	3.2/1.0	3.4/0.9	$F(5,3383)=48.305$, $p < 0.01$
Glamorous	1.9/0.9	2.3/1.1	2.0/1.0	2.8/1.1	3.6/0.8	2.2/1.0	$F(5,3383)=350.458$, $p < 0.01$
Good looking	3.4/1.0	3.7/0.9	2.6/1.1	3.4/1.0	2.6/0.9	3.5/0.9	$F(5,3383)=232.096$, $p < 0.01$
Tough	2.5/1.0	2.7/1.0	2.4/1.1	2.7/1.1	3.1/0.9	2.7/0.9	$F(5,3383)=54.728$, $p < 0.01$
Rugged	3.0/1.0	3.2/1.0	3.0/1.1	3.1/1.1	3.0/1.0	3.2/0.9	$F(5,3383)=9.664$, $p < 0.01$

For TV outlets, the biggest country-specific differences can be found in “glamorous,” “good looking” (both similar to newspapers), “trendy,” and “smart” (both different from newspapers). British TV is perceived as glamorous (mean 3.6, sd 0.8), and Italy is also perceived as slightly “glamorous” (mean 2.8, sd 1.1), whereas in Switzerland (mean 1.9, sd 0.9), France (mean 2.0, sd 1.0), Denmark (mean 2.2, sd 1.0), and Germany (mean 2.3, sd 1.1), TV is not perceived as “glamorous.” TV news outlets in France and the UK are not really perceived as “good looking” (mean 2.6 in both cases), whereas TV in all other countries is perceived as “good looking,” particularly in Germany (means from 3.4 to 3.7). “Trendy” was found to be a very high value in the UK (mean 4.1, sd 0.8) but not in the other countries (means 2.8 to 3.0). The highest values on the item “smart” were found for Germany and Denmark (mean 3.4) and the lowest values for France and the UK (mean 2.6). Even though the “liberal case” UK is joined by a “polarized pluralist case” (France), it is still true in general that all other countries are closer to each other than to the UK.

When we turn to media professionals, we have to remind ourselves that results for TV outlets and for UK-professionals cannot be taken into account. However, we found significant country-specific differences for the items “trendy,” “glamorous,” “good looking” and “tough.” In contrast to the audience perception, newspaper professionals in Italy think that their brands can be portrayed as “trendy” (mean 4.2, sd 1.8), “glamorous” (mean 3.4, sd 0.9) and “good looking” (mean 4.4, sd 0.5). For all three items, the values are highest for Italy. The other extreme is Germany, where professionals don’t think that their brands are “trendy” (mean 1.8, sd 1.1), “glamorous” (mean 1.4, sd 0.9) or “good looking” (mean 2.6, sd 1.7). Again, there are some items that are perceived in more or less the same way in all countries.

In general, we can say that for the brand personality items, values are much more different in the six countries than in the case of functional value items. This may be explained by the fact that functional values are pointing at general functions of journalism established cross-nationally and over time, whereas neither the audience nor media professionals in particular are confronted with the concept of brand personality on a daily base.

Table 7
The perception of audience and media professionals on brand personality (au: N=3389, mp: N=33)

	Audience	Media professionals	ANOVA
	print: 3.1/1.0	3.6/1.2	F(1,3396)=11.151, p < 0.01
Smart	TV: 3.0/1.1	3.1/1.4	ns
	3.6/1.0	4.4/0.7	F(1,3396)=32.070, p < 0.01
Professional	3.9/0.9	3.1/1.4	F(1,3396)=12.516, p < 0.01
	3.1/1.1	3.3/1.3	ns
Trendy	3.1/1.1	3.1/1.4	ns
	3.4/1.0	3.8/1.0	F(1,3396)=6.807, p < 0.01
Lively	3.3/1.0	3.4/0.7	ns
	3.0/1.0	3.0/1.1	ns
Family-oriented	3.0/1.0	3.2/1.2	ns
	3.3/0.9	3.2/1.0	ns
Friendly	3.5/1.0	3.2/1.3	ns
	2.5/1.1	2.4/1.1	ns
Glamorous	2.5/1.1	1.7/0.9	F(1,3396)=6.145, p < 0.05
	3.2/1.1	3.7/1.0	F(1,3396)=7.194, p < 0.01
Good looking	3.2/1.1	3.2/1.4	ns
	2.7/1.0	3.1/1.3	F(1,3396)=6.066, p < 0.05
Tough	2.7/1.0	2.8/1.4	ns
	3.0/1.0	3.3/1.2	ns
Rugged	3.1/1.0	3.4/1.4	ns

When we aggregate the audience and media professionals' data (Table 7), we find the most significant result for the item "professional." Print professionals think they are professional (mean 4.4, sd 0.7), but the perception of the audience slightly differs (mean 3.6, sd 1.1). Surprisingly, for TV it is different. The audience has a much more positive perception (mean 3.9, sd 0.9) than media professionals (mean 3.1, sd 1.4). Based on earlier work, we could say that TV news, in some countries, is gaining an equal or even higher credibility than newspapers (McManus, 1994, p. 11; Moy, McCluskey, McCoy, & Spratt, 2004, p. 534). Another explanation might come from different perspectives: the journalistic professionalism in the perception of media professionals and the more technical and content-based professionalism in the perception of the audience. Differences were also found for the items “smart,” “lively,” “good looking” and “tough.” Media professionals perceive their brands to be better described by these characteristics than in the minds of the audience. Furthermore, TV professionals don’t think their brands can be described as “glamorous” (mean 1.7, sd 0.9), whereas the audience thinks there is at least some glamour in TV news (mean 2.5, sd 1.1). As for functional values, we found some equally perceived items. Values for the items “trendy”, “family-oriented”, “friendly”, “tough”, and “rugged” are only slightly and not significantly different in the views of the audience and media professionals.

With regard to RQ3 and RQ4, the results can be summarized as follows: Different from the results on functional values, we can now find indications to support the typology of Hallin & Mancini (2004) for three different kinds of media systems (and not only two). This applies to the items “smart”, “professional”, “family-oriented”, “glamorous”, and “rugged” in the case of newspapers, but only to a smaller extent in the case of TV outlets (the UK was different from all other countries again). Compared to the audience, media professionals perceive their own brands much more in the light of professionalism, toughness and ruggedness than in the light of glamour or friendliness.

Conclusion

The ANOVA comparison tests reveal a striking overall pattern regarding the cross-national comparison. In the UK, media professionals and the audience see media brands almost thoroughly different from the respondents of the other countries. The differences can be interpreted as an indication of the typology of media systems according to Hallin & Mancini (2004). Regarding the other countries, the typology is not generally reflected in the cross-national differences.

Differences between the brand perceptions of media professionals and the audience are somewhat manifold. Media professional see their brands as more professional, tough and rugged. The audience image differs from this point of view, and it is rather surprising that the audience ascribes higher professionalism to TV news programmes than newspapers. With regard to the functional values of media outlets, media professionals perceive their performance as good, whereas the audience is not in total agreement with this view. In particular, this pattern is found with the items “watchdog of political elite”, “provider of analysis and factual coverage”, “giving orientation in a complex world”, and “influencing public opinion”. This pattern holds true for both TV and newspapers.

For media professionals in Western Europe, these results point to what we have assumed. The perception of media professionals and audience is different, so media companies need to make an effort to rethink their brand-positioning strategy. They either need to increase their effort to communicate the advantage of traditional journalistic values and professionalism and to use this as a point of difference towards competitors or media managers need to decide to invest more in service and soft-news elements, i.e., they try to change their own perception. Further cross-national research is needed to understand how media managers in different media systems develop their own brand identities and how they are facing increasing competition and shrinking financial resources after the crises. They might ask themselves how they could invest money into brand management when all money is used to produce content.

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Appendix I

Sample of media outlets

	Switzerland (Zurich)	Germany (Berlin)	UK (London)	Denmark (Copenhagen)	Italy (Rome)	France (Paris)
elite press	Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ), NZZ am Sonntag, Sonntagszeitung, Le Temps	Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), FAZ am Sonntag, Die Welt, Welt am Sonntag	The Daily Telegraph, The Sunday Telegraph The Times, Sunday Times, The Observer	Berlingske Tidende, Politiken, Jyllands Posten, Information	La Repubblica, Corriere della Sera, La Stampa, Il Messaggero	Le Monde, Le Figaro, Le Journal du Dimanche
tabloid press	Blick, Sonntagsblick, Le Matin, Le Matin Dimanche	Bild, Bild am Sonntag	The Sun, News of the World, Daily Mail, The Mail on Sunday	Ekstra Bladet, B.T.	-	-
free press	20 Minuten, 20 Minutes, Blick am Abend	-	Metro	MetroXpress, Urban, 24 Timer	Leggo, City, Metro	20 Minutes, Metro
regional press	Tages-Anzeiger, Zürichsee-Zeitung, Der Landbote	Berliner Zeitung, B.Z., B.Z. am Sonntag, Berliner Morgenpost	London Evening Standard, The London Paper, London Lite	-	Il Tempo	Le Parisien, Le Parisien Dimanche
weekly news magazines	Weltwoche	Spiegel, Focus, Die Zeit	Private Eye, The Economist (UK Edition), The Week	Berlingske Nyhedsmagasin, Weekendavisen	Il Venerdì di Repubblica, Panorama, L ‘Espresso	L'Express, Le Nouvel Observateur, Le Point
national TV news	SF Tagesschau, SF 10vor10, SF Rundschau	ARD Tagesschau, ZDF heute, RTL aktuell	BBC 1 ten o'clock news, BBC 1 news 18.30, six o'clock news, ITV news, BBC 2 Newsnight	TV2 Nyhederne, DR 1 TV-Avisen	RAI 1 Telegiornale, Canale 5 TG 5, RAI 2 TG2	TF 1 Le Journal, France 2 Le Journal de 20h
regional TV news	Tele Züri	rbb aktuell	BBC London News	TV 2 Lorry (19.30)	RAI 3 Tg Regioni	-