BACHELORARBEIT

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Wie Brand Personality das Konsumentenverhalten durch Fernsehwerbung beeinflusst – eine Veranschaulichung am Beispiel von Southern Comfort

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How brand personality influences consumer behaviour through TV advertising - explained on the example of Southern Comfort

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Abstract

This work concentrates on the frequently used marketing instrument brand personality. Its effect on the consumer and how it drives consumer behaviour through TV advertising are the focus. Scientific material, utilising research results of the last 20 years, has been analysed to investigate this subject. Furthermore, the example of Southern Comfort provides an insight of brand personality being applied to the real world of marketing business.

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1   Introduction

Why do we like our friends? Why are we in love with our partner? Why do we want to be with someone as often as we can, sometimes even for a life time?

When trying to find answers to these questions, sooner or later we will find reasons in the person's character, in the traits that make a person who they are. It is the characteristics which make someone likeable to us which make a person precious and which create a comfortable atmosphere that we want to be in.

> *"The people in the real world who stand out from the crowd always seem to have some kind of "charisma." They have a personality and attitude that others respect and are sometimes in awe of. They have a presence that almost commands people to follow without asking, and others always want to be around them. […] people feel good when they are around"*[1]

As many people there are around us, there are as many brands on the market. Whichever branch or product category, the competition between brands is higher than ever these days. With each brand comes another, sometimes with exactly the same product features and maybe even a cheaper price.

So how can a brand stand out of the crowd? There are several ways to gain differentiation for a product but a very successful one is to give the brand what "great" people have: a strong personality. What makes it so successful is the fact that consumers can build an emotional connection to the brand, almost like a friendship with a person they like and maybe even admire. This friendship can last for a life time, leading to a lifetime of loyalty.

The theory may sound simple but the practice is hard: How does a brand's personality have to be so it is has the strength to create this relationship with the consumer? The only way to find an answer to this question is to find out how brand personality interacts with the consumer. If marketers understand how brand personality influences consumer behaviour, they will be able to use this information in return to create an effective personality for their own brand.

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[1] Temporal, 2010: 31

Additionally the knowledge about each medium in the marketing mix, used to communicate brand personality, is of big importance. Only if the benefits of a medium and how they can be used to interact with the target group are understood and recognised can brand personality be communicated successfully. Television advertising is a great example to be used in this context. With companies spending incredible sums on using this channel and its wide range of communication options, the understanding of using it appropriately is vital.

Several fields of research are important for investigations on this subject. Consumer psychology, brand management and market research are the elemental areas. The state of science is advanced; scientists delivered revolutionary results, explaining consumer behaviour, brand personality and the interaction between them.

The aim of this work is to give an overview of these research results, discussing them and putting them into relation to each other. Furthermore a brand is introduced, as a great example to show how scientific results can be applied to explain how brand personality works on the consumer. Additionally the channel TV advertising is used to show a practical example and to analyse how brand personality can be transformed into a branded message. The results show in-depth psychological processes in connection with the brand, giving the reader ideas of how scientific theories can be of use in the marketing business.

This work is structured to gather all information required to analyse the posed question and to be applied on the Southern Comfort brand. The chapters 'Consumer behaviour', 'Brand personality' and 'TV advertising' have strong scientific content which is summed up in 4.3 and used for the last chapter 'The example of Southern Comfort'. Further summaries can be found after each chapter and a total overview is provided in chapter 5.5.

2 Consumer behaviour

2.1 The understanding of consumer behaviour and its importance for Marketing

"Marketing managers need information about their target markets that will help them perform the jobs of market segmentation, product positioning, and new product development."[2] This includes all kinds of information about the target group that can signify what the ideal product should be like and how any kind of communication can be addressed successfully. To know how the consumer behaves and makes decisions has a vital meaning for the marketing business. "The need to understand buyer or consumer behaviour and reasons for purchase is central to the concept of marketing goods and services to end consumers [...]. If management can understand these customer responses better than the competition, then it is a potentially significant source of competitive advantage."[3] Only if marketers understand consumer's behaviour and what triggers it, will they be able to influence it in their favour. If they will be able to interpret the consumers' feedback correctly, it will be easier to communicate the product more efficiently and therefore gain a strong position in the market and beat competitors. "Marketers who have a thorough understanding of the consumer decision-making process are likely to design products, establish prices, select distribution outlets and design promotional messages that will favourably influence consumers purchase decisions."[4]

There are many factors that influence consumer decisions and actions and they are difficult to evaluate. "Organisations now spend billions of pounds a year attempting to discover reasons behind human behaviour, how the human mind operates and why one brand outsells another, why one product launch is successful while another is a failure [...]."[5] The human psychology plays a big role in answering these questions. Yet it is not only about the person itself. There are many influences to be named. Besides the personal and psychological factors like personality or motivation, there is also the social and physical environment that has to be taken into consideration. And all of

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[2] Foxall, 1998: 157
[3] Wright, 2006: 7
[4] Schiffman, 2012: 18
[5] Wright, 2006: 10

these factors have to be applied when making decisions about the product, its appeal, its promotion and identity.

Within the framework of this work and in terms of consumer behaviour, the focus will lay on the outcomes of personality on consumer behaviour. And furthermore on the communication that influences consumer behaviour, as there shall be drawn a connection to brand personality and its effects.

2.1   Human personality and consumer behaviour

> *„An understanding of personality is […] crucial in the process, especially when it's known that customer needs and wants continually change and become evermore demanding. Many different personality groups have been identified over the years by marketing and advertising agencies recognising the need to communicate clear and relevant benefit messages to the right audiences."* [6]

The consumer's personality plays an important role in the strategy to how the consumer can be targeted. Purchase decisions and attitudes towards a brand are strongly influenced by personality factors.

There are several major personality theories which are of importance in the studies of the relationship between consumer behaviour and personality. They can be named as the:

1. Freudian theory
2. Neo-Freudian theory
3. Trait theory

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[6] Wright, 2006: 298

2.1.1 Freudian theory

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory is a widely known personality analysis which can be well applied to explain consumer behaviour. His beliefs were that the unconscious is the source of human motivation and personality. Therefore the personality is divided in three forces: the id, the ego and the superego. Each of them has their own influence on the human mind and is the reason for how the personality develops. The id is the source of any impulsive or primitive desires, especially of sexual and biological nature. The ego therefore controls the forces of the id and channels the urges and needs into a reasonable balance. The superego follows society's morals and is a very social focused part of the conscious. It operates as the opposite of the id, keeping its outbursts to a minimum with the punishment of guilt. The ego works compensating between those two, to insure even influences.

Furthermore, Freud developed the theory about several stages that a human has to progress through, to gain primary influence of the three subconscious forces and therefore a stable personality in adult life.[7] [8]

Freud's psychoanalytic theory can be very useful to find the origins for consumer's behaviour.

> *"[…] the first major personality theory to influence marketing practice was Freud's. The key feature of his theories that influenced marketing was the role of unconscious wishes and desires in shaping behavior. Much of human behavior is seen as the result of unconscious efforts to control inner drives for sex, hunger and aggression."* [9]

2.1.2 Non-Freudian theory

The Non - Freudian theories rather believe that social relationships underlie the development of personality. Several researchers determined how relationships to other humans can have an impact on why products are purchased. Three personality groups were classified, called the CAD theory by Sullivan and Horney. The groups were named as compliant individuals, aggressive individuals and detached individuals.[10]

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[7] Cf. Foxall, 1998: 138
[8] Cf. Schiffman, 2012: 127
[9]   Foxall, 1998: 141
[10] Cf. Schiffman, 2012: 129

> *"Compliant individuals are those who move towards others (they desire to be loved, wanted and appreciated). Aggressive individuals are those who move against others (they desire to excel and win admiration). Detached individuals are those who move away from others (they desire independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and individualism or freedom from obligations.)"* [11]

This theory can be very interesting for brand positioning. This knowledge can be vital for marketers, as they can make use of how an individual acts in their social context. "[…] marketers who position their products or services as providing an opportunity to belong or to be appreciated by other in a group or social setting would seem to be guided by Horney's characterisation of the compliant individual." [12]

2.1.3 Self and self-image

There are a range of images that consumers have of themselves. And these images are closely connected to why consumers purchase certain products. However there are several opinions found in literature about the self-image being seen as a combination of multiple selves, or as a single construct.[13] But to understand consumer decisions and behaviour it makes more sense to see the self as a multiple construct.[14]
The main images found in literature are:

> *(1) Actual self (defined as how people see themselves).*
> *(2) Ideal self (defined as how people would like to see themselves)*
> *(3) Actual – social self (defined as how people believe they are seen by significant others)*
> *(4) Ideal – social self (defined as how people would like to be seen by significant others)*[15]

This leads to the existence or non- existence of self-congruence, in which a person feels like both self-constructs, for example actual self and ideal self or actual-social self and ideal-social self, are very close to each other. "[…] the closer [they] are in charac-

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[11] Schiffman, 2012: 129

[12] Schiffman, 2012: 129

[13] Cf. Govers, 2005: 190

[14] Cf. Schiffman, 2012: 147

[15] Govers, 2005: 190

teristic content the healthier will be the overall personality."[16] This is the so called self-actualisation, shown in figure 1.
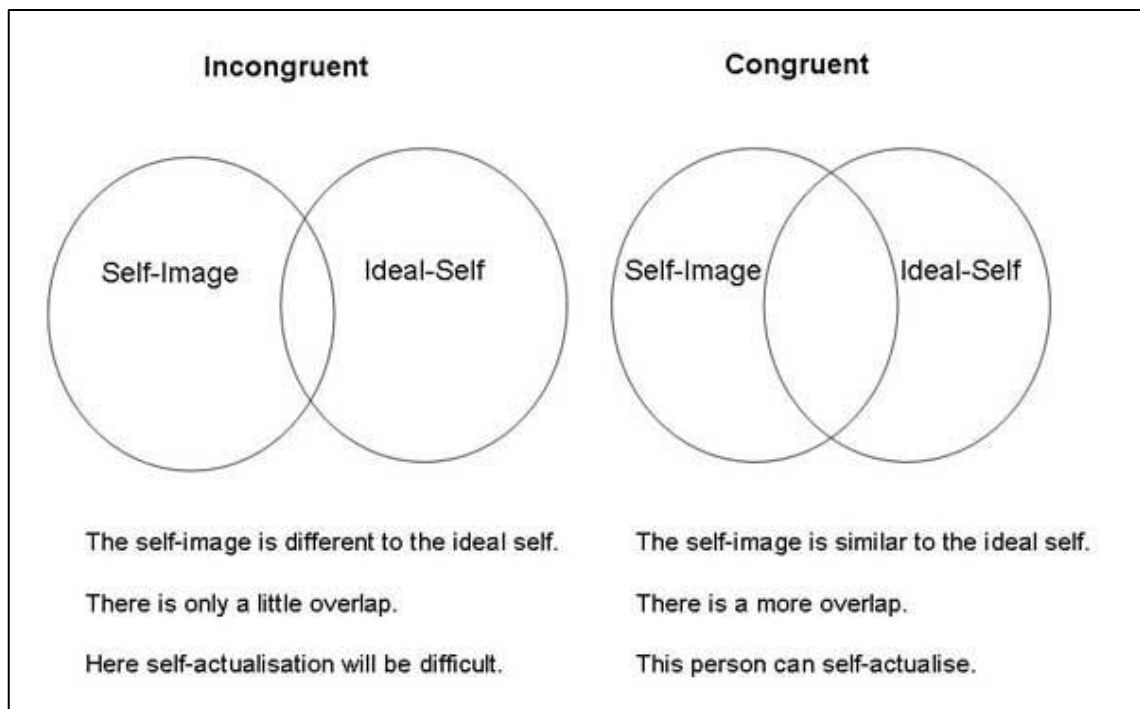
Figure 1: "Self - Congruence"[17]

2.1.4 Trait theory and the Big Five

The trait theory also combines different theories of several researchers who tried to accomplish possible measurements that can help to understand the frame of personality and characteristics. These so called 'traits' are often attempted to be classified in specially tailored personality tests. Researchers started to name as many traits as possible and then categorised them in different groups, depending on what importance or what influence they have on a person's life. Over the years personality theorists reduced the number of traits, to be able to "control and measure in a more detailed and meaningful way."[18] The result is the well-known Big Five-factor Model of personality traits. Those factors are:

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[16] Wright, 2006: 328

[17] Carl Roger, www.simplypsychology.org, [State 01.07.2013]

[18] Wright, 2006: 308

1 Open or shut mind
2 Conscientious or negligent
3 Extrovert or introvert
4 Agreeable or hostile
5 Neuroticism – emotional stability or instability [19]

"Each dimension in Big Five has a bipolar scale in which participants have to rank themselves in order to describe their personality […] The Big five aims to explain individual differences based on several dimensions rather than putting people into boxes of personality categories, which enables researchers to examine individual differences based on different trait factors"[20]

This model is of great meaning for consumer behaviour research and for research in brand personality. Many scales and constructs are based on the traits developed through the big five model.

All personality constructs in this chapter were named to give an overview to how personality can be measured and why it is considered to be of major support in the research about consumer behaviour. Furthermore these theories will be part of the explanation of brand personality in TV advertising and the impact on consumers in chapter 4.3. Also it will help to analyse the example of Southern Comfort's brand personality effect in chapter 5.5.

To provide more fundamental knowledge in this subject, the consumer behaviour in the context of the communication process shall be described in the next chapter.

2.2 The communication process and consumer behaviour

The communication process in marketing includes several components. They can be named as the source/sender, the message, the transmission/channel, the receiver/consumer and the action, that ideally occurs through the communication process.[21] Figure 2, visualises the issued process.

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[19] Wright, 2006: 309

[20] Mulyanegara, 2005: 59

[21] Cf. Peter, 2008: 418
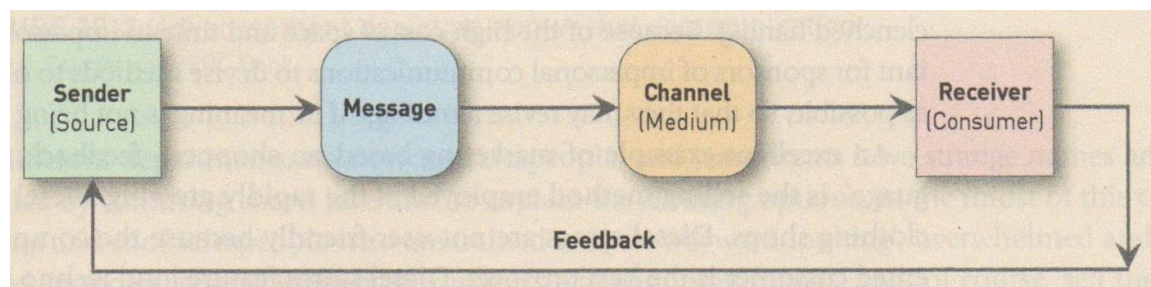
Figure 2: "The Communication Process"[22]

In the first step, the source or sender, which can be a commercial organisation or charity, encodes a message. This message can be verbal, non – verbal, or a combination of both. But most of all, it has to carry the information that the sender wants to transfer. This can be done in a symbolic and emotional way, with pictures, words and images, or in a factual way. [23] "The process begins when the source of the promotion communication determines what information is to be communicated and encodes the message in the form of appropriate symbols […]."[24]

The medium is the carrier of the message. The medium includes many forms of communication instruments like TV, print, web, social media, radio etc. Then the message will be exposed to the receiver/consumer. "The receiver or consumer, if exposed to the promotion, must decode it or interpret its meaning."[25] At this stage there are several barriers to overcome: "Receivers decode the messages they receive on the basis of their personal experiences and personal characteristics. […] A number of factors affect the decoding and comprehension of persuasive messages, including the receiver's personal characteristics, involvement with the product or product category, the congruency of the message with the medium and the receiver's mood."[26]
Within this step lies the biggest difficulty of the communication process. Whether the receiver responds appropriately or miscomprehends, is subject of the consumer's behaviour research. The mentioned personality trait theories provide information that can

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[22] Schiffman, 2012: 265
[23] Cf. Schiffman, 2012: 276
[24] Peter, 2008: 418
[25] Peter, 2008: 418
[26] Schiffman, 2012: 273

be applied to explain the process of encoding the message. Marketers have the great opportunity to use this information and tailor their product and its promotion in a way that matches these criteria.

Especially brand management is a tool to absorb the criteria provided and transfer them into a strategy which not only develops a strong and independent brand, but also supports the encoding process through all appropriated channels.

Building a brand personality, as part of a brand management strategy, is a highly targeted option to reach consumers and their demands. In the following chapter, an extensive definition and the scientific evidence for the effect of brand personality on consumer behaviour will be discussed.

3   Brand personality

3.1   Brand personality - definition and differentiation

There are several definitions for the term 'brand personality'. One of them is:

> *"A set of human characteristics that are attributed to a brand name. A brand personality is something to which the consumer can relate, and an effective brand will increase its brand equity by having a consistent set of traits. This is the added-value that a brand gains, aside from its functional benefits."* [27]

In combination with the functional benefits of a product, these values will lead to differentiation in the products' market.

But there are other expressions used in brand management, describing how a brand can gain uniqueness. Terms like "brand Identity", "brand personality" or "brand Image" are mostly used in the same context. They all describe characteristics of a brand, which make them stand out in the battle against their competitors.

Yet these expressions differ from each other. The named expressions are descriptions of sent or received messages, part of the communication process described earlier: "Identity is on the sender's side. The purpose, in this case, is to specify the brand's meaning, aim and self-image. "[28] The sender has to be very aware of what he is sending. The messages' content, will make the decision about the brand image. "Brand image is on the receiver's side. […] an image is a synthesis made by the public of all the various brand messages, e.g. brand name, visual, symbols, products, advertisements, sponsoring, patronage, articles. An image results from decoding a message, extracting meaning, interpreting signs."[29]

The third expression, which will be the central issue in this paper, can be seen as an extension of brand identity – on the sender's side - which gives it more depth and meaning. "Tactically, the brand personality concept and vocabulary communicates the brand identity with richness and texture to those who must implement the identity-building effort."[30] Brand Personality gives the Brand a face and adds more value to it,

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[27] Definition of Brand Personality, www.investopedia.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[28] Kapferer, 2012: 151

[29] Kapferer, 2012: 151

[30] Aaker, 1996: 151

just like in real life: A person's identity can be proven by identification in form of finger-prints or DNA code. This fingerprint or DNA is unique and just belongs to this person, It differentiates the person from others. Yet someone's personality goes further; it does not only specify a person's character in more detail, it offers a wide variety of characteristics that other people are attracted to and can connect with. The image of a person however, is how the person is perceived by others. People who know the person or only have heard something about him or her, will have their own idea of how they feel about them.

The effectiveness of brand personality in the marketing and advertising world is proven since a while. Researchers have proved that a positive brand personality emerges in an equal positive attitude toward the brand and product. Particularly products that are similar in their attributes and are up against strong competition in the market will benefit from a strong and positive personality. [31]

Therefore the knowledge of what brand personality is and what impact it has on the consumer's behaviour, is already of high importance for marketers. Building strategies based on the evidence of consumer reaction to brand personality, has promising prospects.

Yet this knowledge only just developed over the last 20 years. "Although a considerable amount of research in personality psychology has been done to conceptualize human personality […], no parallel research has been conducted in consumer behaviour on brand personality"[32] until more and more specialists started to draw connections. The research about the subject increased and many specialists and scientists have analysed brand personality in different contexts and from different perspectives. These resulted in more understanding, the possibility of measuring brand personality and a more targeted usage in marketing strategies.

The progress that has been made in recent years and the findings of research in each profession shall be described in the following chapter.

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[31] Cf. Freling, 2005: 410

[32] Aaker, 1997: 347

3.2 Current state of science

3.2.1 Dimensions of brand personality by Jennifer L. Aaker

In 1997, Jennifer L. Aaker published her pioneering work in the Journal of Marketing Research. Her objective was, to "[…] address […] limitations by drawing on research on the "Big Five" human personality structure to develop a theoretical framework of brand personality dimensions […] and a reliable, valid, and generalizable scale that measures theses dimensions." [33] The basic assumptions for her framework were that human personality traits are very similar to traits of a brands personality. This similarity functions as a trigger to influence consumer behaviour. The correlation can be described as "[…] the greater the congruity between the human characteristics that consistently and distinctively describe an individual's actual or ideal self and those that describe a brand, the greater the preference for the brand."[34]

To establish the desired scale, several stages of research were created. Over 300 candidate traits were taken, out of several pre-existing personality scales. These were reduced to a more manageable number of 114. Then over 100 brands in 39 product categories were rated on salience and brand personality. Four brand groups were created with a high similarity among them. Several tests proved that "each of the four brands within each set were similar on all personality traits."[35]

In the next step a sample of subjects, that represented the U.S population were asked to rate the brands in every group on a scale from 1 = not at all descriptive to 5 = extremely descriptive based on the 114 personality traits. The rating system went through several rounds, whilst traits with low rating eliminated. The highest rated traits in the five dimension rating system were: Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness.[36]

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[33] Aaker, 1997: 347
[34] Aaker, 1997: 348
[35] Aaker, 1997: 349
[36] Cf. Aaker, 1997: 351 – 352
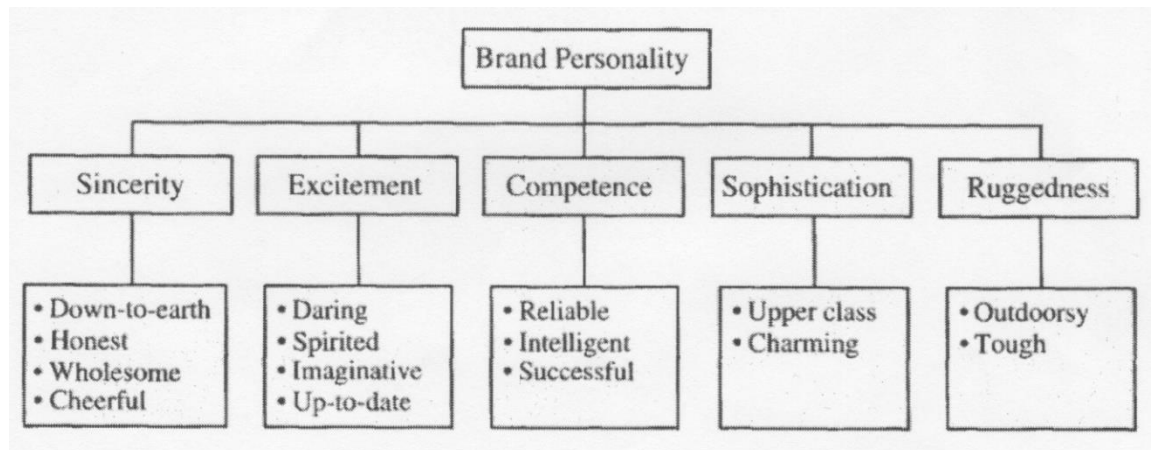
Figure 3: "Dimensions of Brand Personality" [37]

It is apparent, that three of the dimensions are the same as in the big five human personality dimensions but two differ. The researchers explain these similarities and differences as followed: "This pattern might suggest that personality dimensions might operate in different ways or influence consumer preference for different reasons. For example, whereas Sincerity, Excitement, and Competence tap an innate part of human personality, Sophistication and Ruggedness tap a dimension that individuals desire but do not necessarily have."[38]

Aakers scientific approach therefore proves, that brand personality cannot be explained by simply reflecting human personality traits. To understand the construct of brand personality and why it influences and interacts with consumers, it needs more understanding in human needs and desires that origin out of their own personality.

Aakers brand personality dimensions turned out to be revolutionary. With the produced scale it is possible to compare brands and their personalities in all categories. In addition the variables can be amended and the outcome on the brands personality measured. Her work found outstanding attention in marketing research. Pursuing studies were based on the construct established in her work and researchers used the dimensions to develop further scales including several amendments, or applying it in different contexts.[39] Yet there were several points of critique against the established construct. Critics reasoned that the scale was too simple to describe something as complex as

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[37] Aaker, 1997: 352

[38] Aaker, 1997: 353

[39] Cf. Freling, 2005: 405

brand personality.[40] As a result more research was carried out to complement Aakers work and to explore new trails.

3.2.2 Further scientific approaches and literature review

Arora and Stoner developed another dimension scale, very similar to Aakers. In several quantitative and qualitative tests, they analysed two sport brands and two retail brands. Surveys and interviews, based on Aakers five dimensions, showed an almost identical scale. Only one notable difference was that "certain attributes loaded in a different dimension to the one indicated in the original model."[41] This led to Arora and Stoner fusing sophistication and excitement into a single dimension, resulting in an amended four dimensional construct.[42] Another outcome was a notable difference of importance of single dimensions. These differed in each of the tests. The research team was successful in using both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis, to gain more insight of consumer perspectives. Yet their results showed that there are clear restrictions when using just one type of analysis, like the dimension scale. [43]
Another intriguing outcome that can be referred to Arora and Stoner's findings is the approach of Freling and Forbes. In a series of hypotheses testing, they not only proved that brand personality has the expected effect on consumer driven outcomes by creating strong brand associations, but they also discovered that brand attributes are rated differently in terms of their importance, yet also differ in extend of leading to more differentiation within competitors. Therefore an attribute that is rated as very important for a consumer, like 'competence' or 'safety', may not be the decisive attribute when it comes to differentiation, leading to purchase intentions.[44]

There are also several approaches in terms of the earlier mentioned self-congruency in connection with brand personality. Park and Ewah tested in several hypotheses the congruence between self-image and brand personality. The results show, that the con-

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[40] Cf. Arora, 2009: 282
[41] Arora, 2009: 282
[42] Cf. Arora, 2009: 282
[43] Cf. Arora, 2009: 272
[44] Cf. Freling, 2005: 410

sumer brand relationship is stronger, if the brand personality is similar to the consumer's self-image, particularly combined with consumer satisfaction.[45]

Lee, delivered a very similar approach, including the brand with a symbolizing function.

> *"Symbolic benefits refer to the signal effect of using a brand, which is what the brand says about the consumer to the consumer and to others. The signal effect of a brand can be based on the image of a generalized user of the brand and/or the personality of the brand itself. When using a brand, consumers become associated with these signals. A user of a product or retail brand can be personally associated with a brand's particular image through its usage."[46]*

This approach therefore offers the possibility to view the self-image concept as consisting of multiple components as mentioned in chapter 2.1.3. Particularly the symbolic value of a brand interacts with the ideal self and the ideal-social self, as consumers want to be associated with the brand's image. (Assumed it is a strong and positive image). In addition a connection can be made to Sullivan and Horney's characterisation of the compliant individual mentioned in chapter 2.1.2. The symbolic meaning of a brand can be used by consumers to fulfill their desire of belonging to a group, to be accepted and being a part of social life. This would result in congruence between the components of their self- image.

This is also issued in the paper of Govers and Schoormans, who argue that "self-congruence is an important factor in directing consumer preference. […] Motivated by self-consistency, people are expected to prefer a product with a product user image that is congruent with their self-concept."[47]

As a consequence, a brands personality has to fulfil the criteria of delivering the opportunity to congruence a person's ideal self and their actual self. If the consumer finds a brand which personality features create an image that matches the requirements for being able to self-actualise, the attitude towards the brand and the product will significantly improve.

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[45] Congruence between brand personality and self-image, and the mediating roles of satisfaction and consumer-brand relationship on brand loyalty, www.acrwebsite.org, [State 01.07.2013]

[46] Relationship between consumer personality and brand personality as self-concept: from the case of Koran automobile brands, www.freepatentsonline.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[47] Govers, 2005: 190

Belk speaks of 'self-extension' in this context. In his work, published in 1988, he examined the connection between possessions and the extended self. As a result, he claims that "possessions contribute to sense of self […] we learn, define, and remind ourselves of who we are by our possessions."[48] Further he claims: "the concept of possessions as extended self has much to offer the quest for an understanding of consumer behaviour."[49]

Mulyanegara and Tsarenko focused on consumer personality in connection with brand preferences. They argued that personality congruence is strongly related to brand preferences. Based on the 'Big five' personality scale and previously established formulas explaining consumer preferences by means of several factors that influence a purchase decision, they created their own model with an interesting approach regarding brand characteristics and brand preferences.

The initial point is the assumption that there is a difference between 'preferred/expected brand characteristics' and 'perceived characteristics'. Therefor it says: "The gap between expected brand characteristics and perceived brand characteristics reduces brand preference."[50] This leads to the following formula:

BP = DBC – PBC + ∑R (MV)
Where:
BP – Brand preferences
DBC – Preferred (Desirable) brand characteristics
PBC – Perceived brand characteristics
R (MV) – Response towards marketing variables.[51]

The smaller the difference between preferred brand characteristics and perceived brand characteristics, the bigger is the outcome of brand preferences. But what also adds to the whole process is the response to any marketing actions, carried out by the marketers.

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[48] Belk, 1988: 160
[49] Belk, 1988: 160
[50] Mulyanegara, 2005: 62
[51] Mulyanegara, 2005: 62

The formula offers a good overview and puts brand preference and brand personality /character in a logical relation to each other. Although it appears too simple to describe such a complex process it seems to be a good approach to give further insight in the relationship between consumer and brand.

The overview of the existing literature and the current state of science showed a variation of the most important approaches explaining brand personality in an appropriate context with this work. Primarily lead by Aakers work in the late 90's, there has been a strong development to give evidence and provide research results to assist marketers in their venture of developing a powerful strategy around a brand personality.
To sum up the compiled factors, leading to the core of this work, the following figure shows a diagram explaining brand personality.

THE CONCEPT OF BRAND PERSONALITY IN A DIAGRAM

Identity   Visual

                    Brand   Effect
                    Personality   Communication   (marketshare,
                                                                     profit, etc)
Market/
Consumers   Behaviour

(roots of   (expression of
personality)   personality)
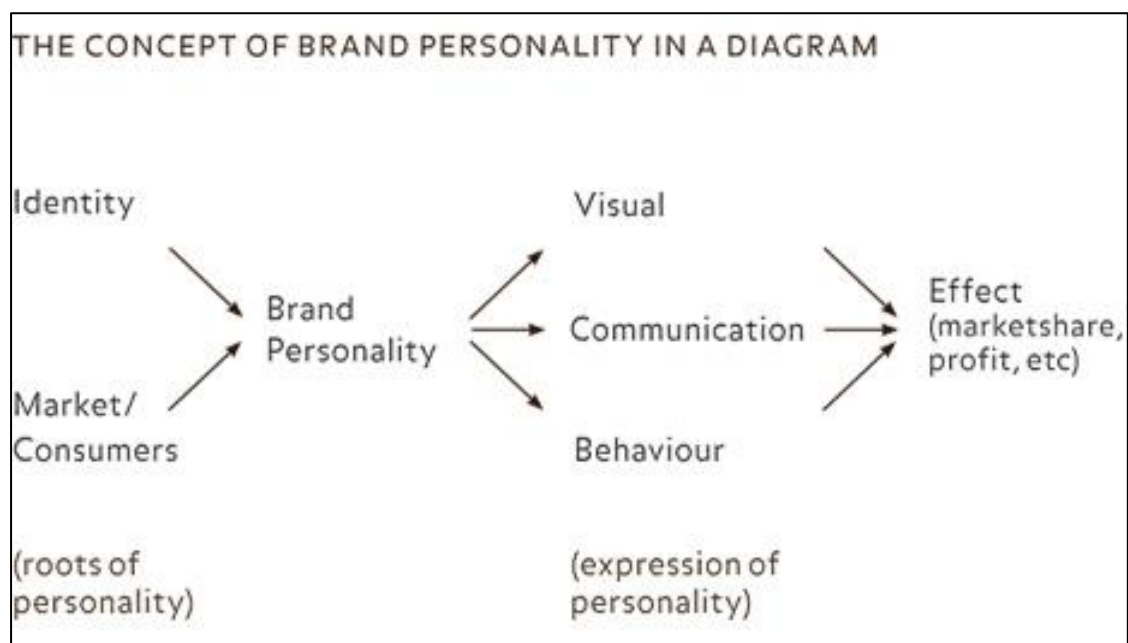
Figure 4: "Brand Personality Diagram"[52]

So far the roots of brand personality, sourcing from human personality and consumer behaviour, have been discussed. In the next step, the expression of personality shall be explained. Referring to Figure 2 on page 9, the message which has to be encoded

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[52] Brand personality, www.rmlaflam.wordpress.com, [State 01.07.2013]

by the sender and decoded by the receiver, has to carry the contents of brand personality. This includes everything associated with the product. "[…] personality traits come to be associated with a brand in an indirect way through product-related attributes, product category associations, brand name, symbol or logo, advertising style, price and distribution channel"[53] But furthermore it also develops through associations with the company producing the products, any public relation issues or any other incidents in connection with the brand, the product and the company.

One of these channels will be chosen for the analysis of this work. The medium – TV advertising – shall be described in the following chapter.

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[53] Aaker, 1997: 348

4 TV advertising

In this work, the focus will lay on advertising, namely TV advertising. This medium has been chosen as it belongs to one of the strongest and most commonly used channels for communicating products. Although recently developed mediums like social media are much cheaper and show great success in reaching consumers, companies still invest enormous sums in producing advertising spots. And this is not without a reason: TV advertising is an ideal platform on which several human senses are targeted at the same time. Therefore it provides all necessary fundamentals to communicate brand personality accurate and reach the consumer on the right level. "[…] in the development of advertising and in the measurement of the effects of advertising, a great deal of attention should be paid to the content of a brand's messages brand image and brand personality."[54]

Because of the costs of producing and broadcasting advertising spots, it is from significant importance to know how brand personality can be communicated through this channel. This knowledge can be used in reverse to tailor TV spots in accordance with the given requirements, to insure brand personality is communicated successfully.

In the following, an overview over TV advertising and its features shall be given.

4.1 The strength of TV advertising

"Television advertising can be advertising at its very best. With the benefit of sight and sound, color and music, action and special effects, television advertising can be the most powerful advertising of it all."[55] Therefore one of the biggest strength of TV advertising is the **creative opportunities** which have a potentially high impact on consumers. The latest developments show that TV devices became more important in households. The quality of picture and sound has improved significantly over the last decade. With enormous sized TVs in HD quality attached to big sound systems, ordinary TV watching transformed into a different experience. This presents an immense range of possibilities to create advertising so it can make use of these developments and reach the audience on the highest possible level.

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[54] Relationship between consumer personality and brand personality as self-concept: from the case of Koran automobile brands, www.freepatentsonline.com, [State 01.07.2013]
[55] O'Guinn, 2009: 507

Another big advantage of using TV commercials for promoting a product is the **high reach of the medium**. With TV devices in almost every household (often even more than one), on mobile devices and in public areas like bars, restaurants, airports etc., it is almost guaranteed that everyone has access. TV viewing levels in Europe are high and are constantly rising. [56] Therefore a high coverage can be archived.

In addition, this high coverage can be defined and specified, to reach the target group directly. By **audience selectivity**, marketers can communicate their product with more efficiency. As TV programmes have fragmented and follow demographic and psychographic patterns to reach their viewer's demands, TV advertising can make use of that. "The increase in the number of channels allows the advertisers to target selectively – sport enthusiasts, film buffs, music lovers, young viewers, news and documentary devotees and so on."[57] Marketers can pick the programmes that fit to their target group and tailor their own individual concept.

TV advertising may be expensive, but in proportion it is considerably less expensive than other advertising media. As the audience reach is very large, the cost per contact is very low. No other media can compete with this **cost – efficiency**. [58] [59]

Obviously, there are no advantages without disadvantages. Although TV advertising has many benefits, there are also limitations. Besides the high absolute cost, which makes it hard for companies with a small budget to afford TV advertising, there is also the big problem of a highly rejecting attitude and attentiveness from the audience. "The involuntary and frequent intrusion of advertisements on television has made television advertising the most distrusted form of advertising among consumers."[60] Therefore, consumers tempt to avoid advertising breaks, by leaving the room, changing the channel, or not paying attention. Furthermore, the new generation of TVs, with a recording and skipping option, allow advertising breaks to be cut out of the program completely. An overload of information, during one 15 minute ad break, also leads to rejection by the audience. The sent message has not the chance to be decoded by the receiver, as the competition already takes up too much processing space in the consumers mind.

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[56] TV viewing levels still rising in Europe, www.warc.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[57] Fill, 2013: 232

[58] Cf. Fill, 2013: 232

[59] Cf. O'Guinn, 2009: 507

[60] O'Guinn, 2009: 507

Furthermore, studies revealed the consumer's claim TV advertising was not affecting their purchase decisions. Other media channels were ranked higher in terms of triggering purchasing intentions.[61]

Nevertheless, these problems can be overcome. There may be several obstacles before a message reaches the consumer and even then it might not lead to higher selling rates. But "image building and awareness are the key achievements for television ads."[62] TV ads have the ability to transfer brand values, brand identity and brand personality. In a research of Pricewaterhouse Coopers – "a leading global advisor in the Communication, Entertainment & Media sectors"[63] - about the effectiveness of advertising media in 2008, interesting facts about brand value and advertising channels was published. In a survey that included several brands in several categories, the researchers figured out a set of brands with the highest perceived brand value within their category group. They investigated in how they advertise and how much they spent on each channel. The results show: "The brands that have generated the most brand value in their categories use disproportionately more TV than their competitors."[64]
These are shown in figure 5.

Figure 7: 5-year advertising spending by the most valuable brands

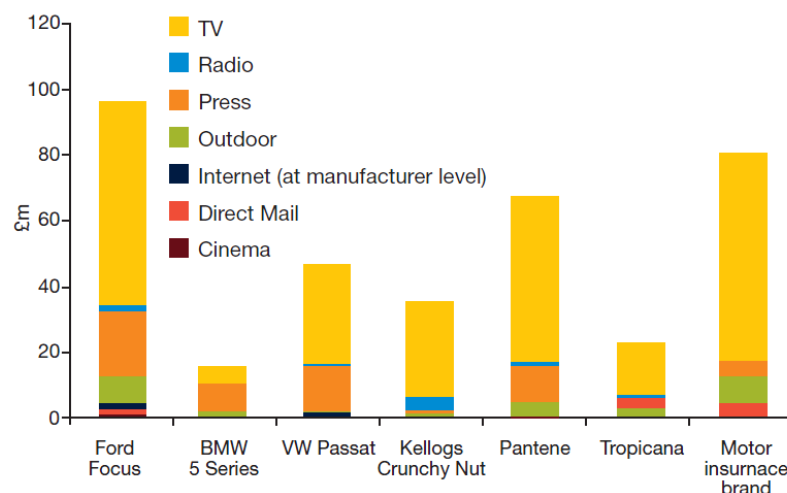*Figure 5: "PWC - Advertising spending chart"[65]*

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[61] Cf. O'Guinn, 2009: 509

[62] O'Guinn, 2009: 509

[63] Advertising payback – is TV advertising still effective?, www.pwc.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

[64] Advertising payback – is TV advertising still effective?, www.pwc.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

[65] Advertising payback – is TV advertising still effective?, www.pwc.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

Yet there is to say: "They also use other media too, which suggests that optimum communication mixes exploit potential cross-media synergies."[66]

Nevertheless the results provide evidence for the strength of television advertising and its effect on brand image.

In the following, several tools of TV advertising shall be described.

4.2   Instruments of TV advertising

4.2.1 Low involvement vs. high involvement purchases

There are several possibilities of how a TV spot can be created to encode a message. Generally it depends on the promoted product, as consumers have different expectations about different products. First of all, there has to be differentiated between high involvement products and low involvement products. Low involvement purchases come without any risk. Is the product not how the consumer expected it to be, it has no big impact on the consumer's lifestyle, or finances. Food and drinks are the best example for low involvement products. Purchase decisions involve less processing and are often carried out spontaneously. High involvement purchases however pose a risk. These products are either very expensive or of high importance for the consumer. A house, a car or a big investment can be named as high involvement products. Purchase decisions will evolve out of a long decision process, which can be influences by product features, price but also the image of the brand.[67] [68]

> *"Involvement theory (…) suggests that individuals are more likely to devote active cognitive effort to evaluate the pros and cons of a product in a high-involvement purchase situation and more likely to focus on peripheral messages cues in low-involvement situations."* [69]

Based on these facts is the elaboration likelihood model, which proposes two different approaches for how each product should be advertised:

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[66] Advertising payback – is TV advertising still effective?, www.pwc.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

[67] Cf. Percy, 2012: 192

[68] Cf. Low involvement product, www.businessdictionary.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[69] Schiffmann, 2012: 280

> *"The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) proposes that, for high-involvement products, marketers should follow the central route to persuasion; that is, they should present advertisements with strong, well-documented, issue-relevant arguments that encourage cognitive processing. When involvement is low, marketers should follow the peripheral route to persuasion by emphasizing non-content visual or symbolic material (e.g. background scenery, music or celebrity spokespeople) that provide the consumer with pleasant, indirect associations with the product and provoke favourable inferences about its merits."[70]*

Yet, this model seems to be too strict. It seems to be very difficult to create clear-cut transitions between the peripheral route and the central route to persuasion and for which product they are best. Although these restrictions appear reasonable, the real advertising world shows that marketers operate in a mix of both to advertise their product. So there are peripheral route designed advertising spots for cars that use a strong background scenery and music, without any arguments or feature describing elements; central route designed spots for toilet paper, which uses well documented material to describe the products benefits to the consumer and spots for a product of each category that uses both strategies.

A very similar approach to classify advertising tools is to divide them into information-based appeals or emotions and feelings-based appeals. This again, is said to be dependent on the involvement in the product category.[71] Both appeals include different ways of presentation, which show the wide variety of tools available.

4.2.2 Information-based appeals

As mentioned earlier, the elaboration likelihood model suggests the **factual approach** as part of the information based appeals. Facts are presented very rationally and logically reasoned. The aim is to provide all details – described in the best words - to the consumer, so his or her decision making is based on facts.

The appeal **'slice of life'** represents a daily life situation, very similar to a possible incident happening in the life of the target group. The advertised product is used to solve a

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[70] Schiffmann, 2012: 280
[71] Cf. Schiffmann, 2012: 284

problem or make life easier - mostly presented by persons who are very similar to the targeted consumer. The aim is for the consumers to identify themselves with the presenting person and therefore draw a connection to how the product could make their life easier too. This technique is used very often and particularly for household products aimed at housewives.

The **demonstration** of a product is very similar to the slice of life appeal. The product is shown in action, to show off its positive features. The credibility of the product is important to gain belief in its function. This can be formed by the performance of other products by the brand or the brand image.[72]

Comparative advertising is used to compare the own brand with existing competitor brands. "Comparative advertising is useful for product positioning, for target market selection, and for brand positioning strategies."[73] Furthermore this tactic can be useful for newer brands to enter new markets.

4.2.1 Emotions and feelings-based appeals

"Brand image is a synthesis of impressions: a summation that can take the form of a gut emotional reaction or a mental flash of recognition, which typically reflects attitude toward the brand and its perceived benefits."[74] To communicate brand personality – as a building component of brand image - an emotions and feelings-based appeal therefore seems to be the best option. All kind of mediums in the marketing mix can be used to appeal to the target's emotions and feelings. But once again, TV advertising offers many possibilities to make use of emotion provoking instruments.

Primary stimuli:

Language
The use of language in advertising spots is of great meaning for the message. Not only does it carry the message in the first place, it also can influence feelings, mood and perspective. Words can carry strong emotions and can be used to be associated with a product or brand.[75]

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[72] Cf. Fill, 2013: 136
[73] Schiffmann, 2012: 282
[74] O'Shaughnessy, 2003: 179
[75] Cf. O'Shaughnessy, 2003: 202

Paralanguage

"Paralanguage can negate any attempt to attribute a fixed ideological meaning and can aid ambiguity when this is desirable."[76] Not only can the variations of a voice, but also vocalizations be used to encode a message.

Music

Music and sound effects trigger emotions and memories. "Music in advertising messages is used primarily either to create a mood or to send a branded message. In addition, music can also be used to signal a lifestyle and so communicate a brand identity through the style of music used."[77] Also noise, jingles, melodies or tunes can be used to create an association with the brand. There have been several artists, who gained fame through their songs being played in advertising spots. In return brands benefit from popular songs being linked with their product. [78]

Pictures

TV spots have the ability to be artistic short-films. There are no set limits to how a product can be presented. whether real camera shots, special effects, animations or comics; minimalistic or dramatic; colourful or black and white; with action or relaxed; storytelling or as an individual expression; there is a wide range of possibilities to choose from. "Pictures evoke feelings, and visual metaphors can be more effective than verbal ones."[79]

Additional stimuli:

Fear

Fear in advertising is used in different ways. In order to prevent potentially dangerous behaviour or damage of product usage, fear is an often used appeal. It is used more indirectly when it comes to social acceptance and popularity. Advertising can be designed in a way of threatening the consumer with unpopularity, shame or disapproval if the advertised product is not used.

Humour:

Humourous advertising spots are known to be very successful. To make the audience like a TV spot, humour is a very effective stimulus. "The use of humour as an emotional

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[76] O'Shaughnessy, 2003: 202

[77] Fill, 2013: 140

[78] Cf. Fill, 2013: 141

[79] O'Shaughnessy, 2003: 202

appeal is attractive because it can attract attention, stimulate interest and foster a positive mood."[80]   A positive mood in connection with the brand advertised, can lead to recognition and consequential a positive brand image. [81]

A certain type of humour, which is different and new compared to already existing spots, can also develop in a trait of the brand.

Sex

"Using sex as an appeal in messages is excellent for gaining the attention of buyers."[82] Often combined with humour, this is a good tool to gain interest of the audience. It is a very often used appeal, which has not changed over recent years. 'Sex sells' has always been a well- known fact.[83] Yet "research shows, however, that it often achieves little else, particularly when the product is unrelated. Therefore, sex appeals normally work well for products such as perfume, clothing and jewellery but provide for poor effectiveness when the product is unrelated, as with cars, photocopiers and furniture."[84]

After all, each of the named stimuli can be used to communicate brand personality. Especially in combination, they are very effective. Yet renouncing several appeals and keeping it simply, can make the ad interesting. Whatever catches the attention of the audience and offers a good opportunity to en- and decode a message easily, helps to communicate brand personality.

4.3   Integrated brand promotion and brand personality on TV

So far, a whole lot of information about brand personality, consumer behaviour and TV advertising has been gathered in this work. It became clear what brand personality is, how it can be measured, what connection it has to human personality, what importance human personality has for consumer behaviour and how communication plays a vital role in influencing consumer behaviour.

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[80] Fill, 2013: 137
[81] Cf. Fill, 2013: 137
[82] Fill, 2013: 139
[83] Cf. O'Shaughnessy, 2003: 202
[84] Fill, 2013: 139

Advertising spots on television can be a strong part of this process. Integrated in the marketing mix and with its enormous variety of possibilities, this medium presents great opportunities to be a strong communicator for brand personality. Several steps are included in the process of a successful communication strategy:

First of all, marketers should be aware of the target market they want to aim for. They should realise which personality traits their target market has, what interests they have, what ideals they follow, what perception of society they have and how they might see their ideal self and their social-ideal self in comparison to their actual self. This requires broad knowledge about the human psychology, about the structures of society and psychographic patterns. It is important that brand managers know who exactly their ideal target person is and what differentiates them from others. To raise the chances of the receiver being able to decode the message, both sender and receiver have to speak the same language. As the receiver takes a passive role in this process, the sender has to adjust to the receiver's way of communicating, to guarantee a communication on the same level. The more detailed the gathered information turns out to be, the easier it will be to create a message that will hit the target group precisely and effectively.

The next step is to create the brand with a personality that will attract the target group. As described in chapter two, consumers prefer products with personalities that are similar to their own. Therefore, marketers should orientate on the personality traits of their target group and base their decisions on research results about preferred characteristics of brands. Yet it is important to keep in mind that some traits which are rated as important for consumers, are not necessarily leading to differentiation (Cf. p. 15).
It is also important to keep the desired self-congruency of consumers in mind. Creating a brand that with its traits and image helps the consumer to self-actualize by buying the product, is very effective. The symbolizing factor of a product is also of great value. Creating a brand with strong features and a strong image, that consumer want to be associated with, has to be an objective for marketers.

When the characteristics and values of a brand are set, the process of transforming this information into a message that can be communicated begins. As a matter of course, the chosen medium influences this process. Yet, as mentioned in chapter two, choosing more than one medium is more efficient when communicating brand personality. A cross media strategy is the best way to not only reach consumers on several channels at the same time, but also to create a whole picture of the brand and generate a consistent concept with strong features.
Choosing TV advertising as one of the channels, the communication to the right target audience can be done by segmentation. As the target group and its preferences should be well known, TV shows and films that suit those can be picked. Furthermore, all

available tools of creating a TV spot can be used to represent the brand's traits and what the targeted audience likes.

Ingredients like music are a great example of how tools can be used to reflect what a brand wants to stand for. There is an incredible amount of different types and styles to choose from. And each individually can represent a different message. The same applies to language, camera technique and style of the spot.

Telling a story, if factual or emotional, has to be the centre. This story has to contain the core of the brand's personality, which then has to be interpreted by the audience. If through humour, fear or sex, it has to represent the brands character, which – if planned correctly - will be to the audiences liking.

When the objective is reached and the message sent over the TV spot accompanied by other mediums used in the marketing mix, is decoded in the same way as it was encoded, the brand will gain differentiation. This may not automatically lead to a purchase, yet the chances of recognition are significantly higher. As mentioned earlier, communicating brand personality is not necessarily leading to purchase decisions, but to building a strong and individual brand image, that sticks in the consumer's mind.

A great example to show how TV advertising can communicate brand personality and how it influences the audience is the spot of Southern Comfort. The example shall be presented in the last chapter of this work.

5   The example of Southern Comfort

5.1   Southern Comfort - The product and its history

Southern Comfort describes itself as a "unique blend of natural fruit, spice and whiskey flavours that together create a distinct taste"[85] The drink therefore cannot be classified as whiskey, but as liqueur. Markus Wilkes Heron from New Orleans, USA, created the drink in 1885. "Even back then, Southern Comfort was in a category all of its own. So, at the time, many of M.W. Heron's rivals were trying to copy his secret recipe"[86] In 1998 the brand officially got registered and the until today existing promise 'None Genuine But Mine' was printed on the label. Over the next 100 years the drink got more and more popular – also internationally in over 90 countries - and won several prizes. The drink entered the cocktail market, providing several recipes for mixed drinks and even food, published in several magazines and a book. The bottle and label design went through several stages of change. Although the font style of the brand name stayed the same. Also a few new product variations came on the market in the recent years. Southern comfort liqueurs with new flavours completed the product range. [87]

5.2   Spirits and their promotion

"Emerging markets are becoming increasingly important as consumers of spirits and imported brands are growing rapidly, being now key markets for the global spirits industry."[88] This is a statement of IPSOS, a leading UK market research company, who published a 'trends in the spirits industry' research paper. This research claims that the spirit market is in a healthy state and rapidly growing. Therefore the competition market is enormous, as new innovation products are released and pre-existing brands grow stronger. Yet - as a low involvement product - spirits are very high in price, compared to soft drinks or beer and wine. Furthermore the products taste is not a factor that differentiates them to their competitors. Non-specialists may not be able to differentiate one high - quality vodka to another. And as mixed drinks and cocktails are high in trend, the taste of the spirit itself may not be the reason for a purchase decision. Spirits with a unique taste like Jägermeister can gain more differentiation on the market. Also

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[85] Southern Comfort Timeline, www.southerncomfort.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[86] Southern Comfort Timeline, www.southerncomfort.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[87] Cf. Southern Comfort Timeline, www.southerncomfort.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[88] Drinking to the future. Trends in the spirit industry, www.ipsos.com, [State 01.07.2013]

spirits which can be mixed in many different ways and with many different drinks could have it easier. Yet spirits need a special marketing treatment, to sway the target market and make them buy into the brand.

The product design is playing a big role in the game. The drink's colour, the bottle shape, the design of the label, the logo or writing style will be the first part of the product that the consumer comes in contact with when standing in front of a supermarket shelf. A unique style can catch the attention easier and gain the consumer's interest.

Yet further marketing strategies are necessary to make consumers aware of the brand and communicate what it stands for. Creating strong brand values, orientated on what the consumer wants and what fits the product has to be the first step.

As the market is expansive, there are several brands high in the running and each of them follows their own strategy of values and promotion.

5.3   The competition market

The International Wine and Spirits Research organisation published a report in August 2012, with the top 50 international brands of spirits. The top 5 are named as: Smirnoff Vodka, Bacardi Rum, Johnnie Walker Scotch, Absolut Vodka and Jack Daniels Whiskey.[89]

Each of these brands has different values and attributes which they communicate in their product design and marketing strategies. A positioning map can be useful to put brands in proportion to each other. This also reveals eventual market gaps, that can be used to change the positioning of the own brand or develop a new product.

The chosen brands which shall be used to demonstrate the differences in the market, are: Absolut vodka, Havanna club rum, Johnnie Walker whiskey, Bacardi rum, Skyy vodka, Captain Morgan rum and Jägermeister liqueur. These have been chosen to represent a wide range of available spirits and a similar target market. The variables on the axes for the positioning map shall be 'fashionable/luxurious' vs. 'traditional' and 'relaxed' vs. 'sexy'.

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[89] Cf. Spirits review. The top 50 international brands, www.iwsr.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]
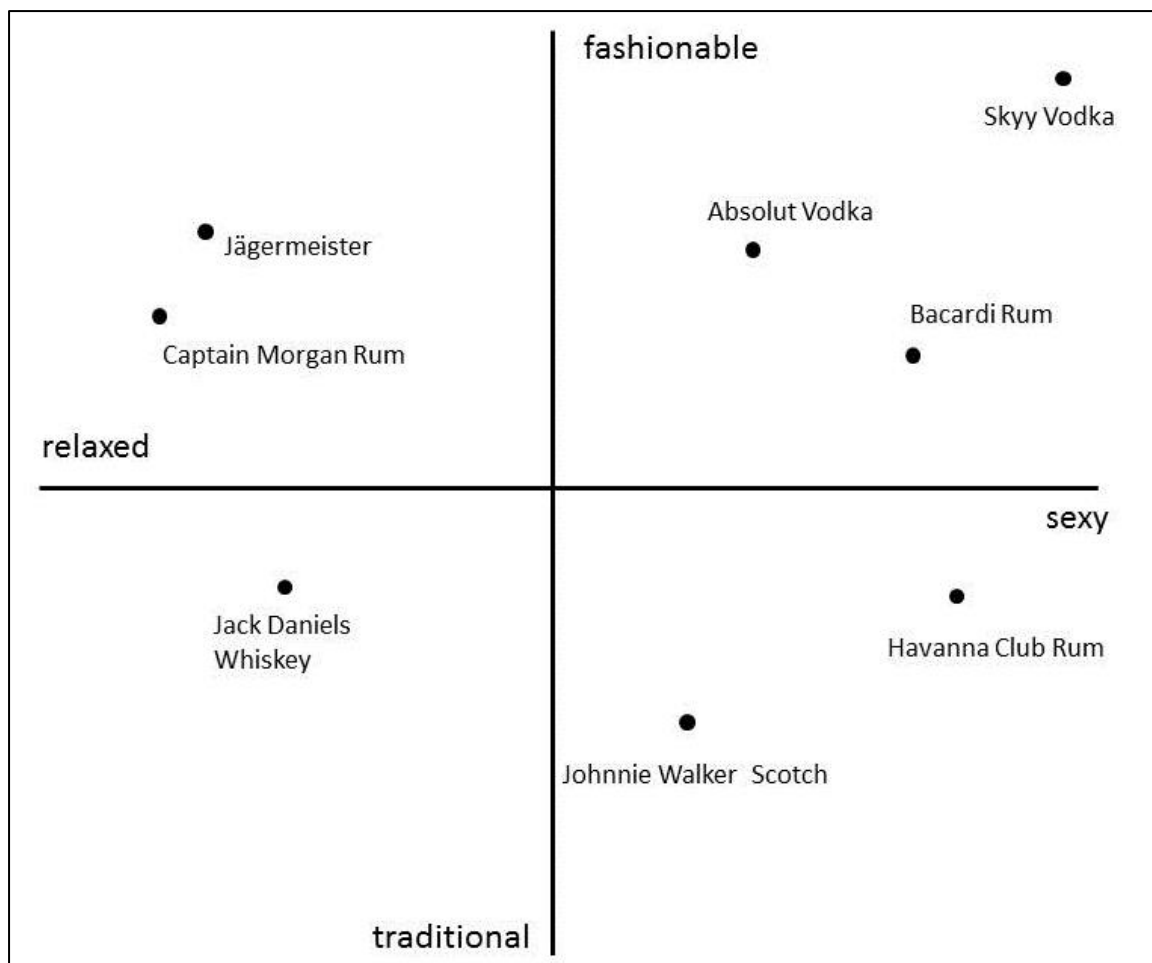
Figure 6: "Positioning Map: Competitor Market"[90]

The comparison shows a trend towards the attributes sexy and fashionable within the leading brands on the market. Traditional and relaxed seem to be rather uninteresting for marketers. Also the paper of IPSOS claims that choosing a 'premium' attribute for spirits is a successful strategy. This is based on the consumer's desire of a high quality product that is worth paying extra money for, which is perfect in every detail and gives the consumer a luxurious feeling.[91] Many of the strongest spirit brands seem to follow this guide of success.

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[90] Own illustration

[91] Cf. Drinking to the future. Trends in the spirit industry, www.ipsos.com, [State 01.07.2013]

In Aakers brand personality dimensions paper, (Cf. p 14) it has been mentioned that two dimensions in her construct describing brand personality differ from the 'Big five' model, describing human personality. The dimensions 'Ruggedness' and 'Sophistication' were added, as they represent traits that human desire but not necessarily have. The traits of Sothern Comfort's competitors origin from these dimensions and the advertising strategies inherit these values.

Advertising spots of Skyy vodka, Havanna Club and Bacardi rum are using the appeal of sex. But also social appeals like partying, having fun with friends and just living the latest trends, are used in their spots. Absolut vodka which always showed a strong influence of art – meanwhile using big artists like Andy Warhol for their promotion – transmit a feeling of being trendy, fashionable, yet luxurious and high in quality. Johnnie Walker scotch on the other side seems to be rather traditional and equally relaxed and sexy. Aiming at a slightly different target group, their adverts show a strong aspect of power and success, sophistication and self- confidence. Jägermeister, as a unique tasting liqueur on the market is aimed at younger people. Positioned highly on the fashionable and relaxed axe, it has a unique position too, which helps the brand's success. Captain Morgan with a very relaxed position is also orientated towards being fashionable, going with trends, fun and social appeals. Jack Daniels Whiskey can be seen as one of the strongest competitors to Southern comfort. As a very traditional drink from Tennessee USA, the drink is very traditional based. The brand always had a very strong connection with rock music. Being known as the drink of famous rock stars, gave the brand its image. Therefore 'relaxed' is one of their strong attributes. At the same time the brand is very fashionable and high in trend, without trying to be so.

With the help of the positioning map, the spirit market and its trends become clearer. Before Southern Comfort can be given its position, the brand's marketing strategy in development through the time shall be analysed.

5.4   The marketing of Southern Comfort

5.4.1 The advertising over the last 50 years

To understand how Southern comfort developed its own personality and why marketers initiated this strategy, it is vital to see the progress in the promotion strategy through the last years. To give an impression of followed strategies in the past and show the progress, print material shall be analysed.
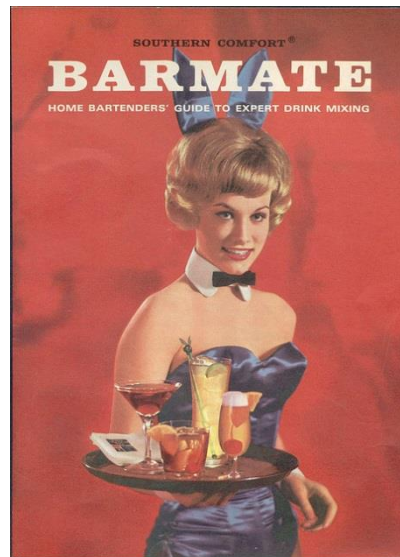
Figure 7: "Southern Comfort Ad 1964"[92]

One of their earliest recipe books was published in coordination with the Playboy magazine in 1964, showing Playboy Bunnies serving drinks. Sharing the popularity of playboy with using its sexual glamour seemed to be one of the earliest approaches.

Later on, in the 1980s, the message behind the ads became more relaxed, aimed at couples and middle aged people, coming more in term with the slogan "whatever's comfortable".

Figure 8: "Southern Comfort Ad 1980"[93]

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[92] Advertising Archives, Southern Comfort, www.advertisingarchives.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

[93] Advertising Archives, Southern Comfort, www.advertisingarchives.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

The product claim of being comfortable stayed with the brand. In 2001 a new ad with a sexual appeal was released. Notable is the very modern outlay. The chosen font and style do not seem to fit the more traditional style of Southern Comfort's bottle and label, already transformed into the new design at that time.
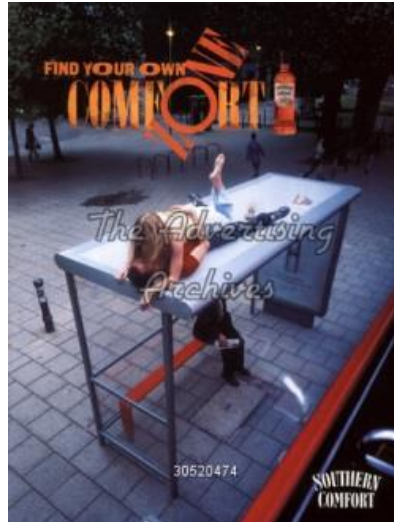

Figure 9: "Southern Comfort Ad 2001"[94]

In 2004, the strategy changed again. A new approach, orientated on social values, the new claim "Come out and play" follows once again the trend of spirit marketing approaches

Figure 10: "Southern Comfort Ad 2004"[95]

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[94] Advertising Archives, Southern Comfort, www.advertisingarchives.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

Again, the design is not following the guidelines given by the bottle's design. The layout seems almost cheaply produced and without any corporate design elements.

In 2009 the new magazine ad, shows a high similarity to the design of the competitor's ad of Absolut Vodka.

Figure 11: "Southern Comfort Ad 2009"[96]

The bottle presented in the middle, surrounded by food, cutlery and jewellery, gives the ad a very fashionable and artistic look. The brand being presented in a luxurious way breaks all advertising styles which have been used so far.

Looking at the examples of Southern Comfort ads over the last 50 years, it occurs that there has been no consistent marketing strategy. Whilst strong competitors like Absolut Vodka or Jack Daniels followed one consistent theme over the years – like the connection to arts, music or a strong traditional base – Southern Comfort is not striking with a similar promotion plan. It rather seems like a random mixture of everything: Sometimes sexy, sometimes traditional, sometimes luxurious and stylish, sometimes relaxed and

[95]   Advertising Archives, Southern Comfort, www.advertisingarchives.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]
[96]   Southern Comfort: "PURE CAJUN THUNDER" Outdoor Advert by Arnold Worldwide, www.coloribus.com, [State 01.07.2013]

fun orientated. Almost every named approach that spirit brands generally seem to catch on has been used in the past of Southern Comfort.

In the ranking of the best 50 international spirits of 2012, Southern comfort was listed on place 46.[97] It is no surprise that Southern Comfort decided to change their strategy.

5.4.2 The spot 'Beach' of 2012

In summer 2012, Southern Comfort launched their new advertising campaign, produced by the advertising agency Wieden & Kennedy New York.

In the spot called 'Beach', a middle aged man walks along the beach. He is overweight with a hairy chest, is wearing rather unfashionable swimwear and rubber shoes, as shown in figure 12. All in all his appearance would normally be considered as very unattractive.

Figure 12: "Southern Comfort 'Beach' Spot Screenshot "[98]

His walking style is very casual and comfortable. On his path he steps over an elderly man, sleeping in his beach chair. He passes a couple with a dog, and the dog starts to follow him along the beach. Further down he passes a young attractive lady and he acknowledges her nonchalantly. Against all odds she smiles back at him and seems to appreciate his acknowledgement. Towards the end of the spot, the man disappears out

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[97] Cf. Spirits review. The top 50 international brands, www.iwsr.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

[98] Watch the coolest advert of 2012 - Southern Comfort Whatever's Comfortable Beach advert, http://www.theestablishingshot.com, [State 01.07.2013]

of the picture for a few seconds and returns with a Southern Comfort glass with a little flag that says 'Whatever's comfortable'.[99] In the background plays a very bluesy, relaxed song, called 'Hit or miss' from Odetta. The lyrics say:

"Can't you see
I gotta be me
Ain't nobody
Just like this
I gotta be me
Baby hit or miss
Look at you sitting there
All by yourself
Listening to everybody
Everybody saying be everybody else
Can't you see
You gotta be thee
Aint nobody
Just like you
You gotta be you
Baby hit or miss"[100]

The 'Beach' spot comes in several lengths. The shortest version is 30 seconds long. The original length is 1:42 minutes. It was shown in a 60 second version for the first few weeks and got shortened to 30 seconds afterwards. The spot won several awards: At the British Arrows Awards, the spot won gold twice in the categories 'Alcoholic drinks' and 'Over 30 and up to 60 seconds TV commercial'.[101] Furthermore it won at the Andy Awards 2013 in the category 'television'.[102]

5.4.1 The marketing mix

In addition, further steps have been taken to create a consistent strategy. As mentioned in chapter 3.1, "[…] an image is a synthesis made by the public of all the various brand messages […]"[103]. Therefore more than one medium should be used to send

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[99] Cf. Youtube, Southern Comfort | Beach | Whatever's Comfortable, www.youtube.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[100] Odetta – hit or miss, www.lyricsnmusic.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[101] Gold Award, www.britisharrows.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[102] W+K NY, www.andyawards.adforum.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[103] Kapferer, 2012: 151

brand messages. The campaign started off with the launch of the TV spot in summer 2012, with the new slogan 'Whatever's comfortable'. The spot was accompanied by out-of-home media in the form of posters, showing the beach guy's hairy chest, holding a Southern Comfort glass.

Figure 13: "Southern Comfort 'Beach' Ad"[104]

As the poster does not have any written message, the intention is obviously for the audience to draw a connection with the TV spot. This helps to build up awareness and raises the chance of the product being recognised.

Southern Comfort's already existing Facebook page also experienced some changes. When the new advertising spot was launched, it also was published on the Facebook page. The video was to the fans' liking and went viral, leading to over 1.5 million hits on Southern Comfort's YouTube channel.[105] This also had a striking effect on the fan count of all social media pages, giving it "a 500 per cent spike in popularity"[106]

Daily updates of the Facebook page, now reach about 900,000 fans. The updates are very humorous but also follow along the branded message of the TV spot. Phrases like: "There's no such thing as a 'perfect beach-body', just you being perfectly comfortable on the beach."[107], "Nothing wrong with checking yourself out when you look this

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[104] Comfortable down South, www.garysgoods.blog.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

[105] Cf. Case study: Southern Comfort, www.marketingweek.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

[106] Case study: Southern Comfort, www.marketingweek.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

[107] Facebook, Southern Comfort, www.facebook.com/southerncomfortuk, [State 01.07.2013]

fine."[108] or "Southern Comfort was created by a humble bartender, just doing his own thing. Someone who knew what he was doing, for people who know what they like and are comfortable with that. Greatest Invention."[109], go hand in hand with the TV spot's content.

Social media has proven to be a successful tool, when marketing spirits. The research paper of IPSOS claims that the reason behind this is the active relationship between spirit brand and consumer. Marketers can figure out easier what the consumer likes and reacts to. In addition research for big spirit brands shows that 45 – 48 % of consumers interact with a spirit brand online to let friends know they like the brand. [110] This is convenient for spirit marketers, as they can make use of this fact with giving their brand a symbolic character that the consumer wants to be associated with. (Cf. p. 16 – Symbolisation benefits)
All in all social media proves to be an advantageous instrument for spirit marketers to reach their audience and gain brand awareness.

The campaign was complemented internationally by further TV commercials in Australia and the USA. The style is similar and both spots contain the same message with the tagline 'Whatever's comfortable'. The Australian version shows a young guy who cannot stop 'body popping' - a form of dance - which is constantly causing him problems. Yet he is explaining why he likes to be himself and nobody else. He advises: "Be yourself because everyone else is taken"[111]
The USA version is very similar to the 'Beach' spot. Accompanied by similar relaxed music, a middle aged man is having his hair washed in a barber's shop. He is drinking of a Southern Comfort glass, getting attention from a lady nearby who looks bad-tempered at first but then gives him a smile.

The marketing mix used by Southern Comfort communicates their new values and therefore their new personality through several mediums. All used channels are connected with each other and transfer one consistent message, ready to be decoded by the receiver. As the research results of Pricewaterhouse Coopers show, (Cf. p. 22) brands which gained most brand value, used TV advertising in combination with other mediums. "[…] optimum communication mixes exploit potential cross-media syner-

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[108] Facebook, Southern Comfort, www.facebook.com/southerncomfortuk, [State 01.07.2013]

[109] Facebook, Southern Comfort, www.facebook.com/southerncomfortuk, [State 01.07.2013]

[110] Cf. Drinking to the future. Trends in the spirit industry, www.ipsos.com, [State 01.07.2013]

[111] Youtube, Southern Comfort Australia "Whatever's Comfortable" 60" Product, www.youtube.com, [State 01.07.2013]

gies."[112] Hence using several communication channels to transfer brand personality is vital.

The process of how their new values are transformed into personality and how it is encoded into a branded message is issued in the next chapter.

5.5 How Southern Comfort communicates brand personality

5.5.1 Southern Comfort's new values and personality

The new advertising campaign of Southern Comfort goes against conventions set by modern society. The constant pressure of the media to be skinny, sexy, attractive, rich and successful reaches the audience every day. TV, Films, magazines, adverts and other media often intimidate their viewers, telling them how they have to be, how they have to act and how they have to change themselves to become like the idealistic person they have created. People aim for a perfection that is set by unreal actors or models and actually loose themselves whilst trying to be someone else.

Being part of a society that trims themselves to become someone different, Southern Comfort creates a statement very different to anything that was there before: To be who you are and no one else because it is the best way to go.

Particularly advertising is a world with an ideal picture of life, with unnatural perfection and often stubborn views of society that sets a standard that very few will ever be able to reach. Creating a world that the audience deeply desires to be a part of, is a frequently used strategy when creating adverts. Particularly spirit promotions use those values intensely to make their product appear full in trend. But Southern Comfort decided to go against this in their new strategy. In an interview published by Marketing Week, a big marketing blog in the UK, Gwen Ridsdale, marketing manager for Southern Comfort UK & Ireland states:

> *"'The Southern Comfort brand has been chugging along and hasn't been growing exponentially in recent years, despite us investing in a lot of product innovation during this time. Because we're a brand aimed at young-adults we've looked at similar brands to us like Jägermeister and*

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[112] Advertising payback – is TV advertising still effective?, www.pwc.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]

tried to do what they do. This hasn't worked for us and a result some consumers haven't had an emotional connection to the brand.

We're moving the brand into different drinking occasions than we have done in the past. It's a very different approach to what typical alcohol brands are doing. They often tell consumers you have to be more beautiful and richer, whereas we're just saying its ok to be yourself.'"[113]

The product therefore takes a place on the positioning map that is far off its competitors. With New Orleans as a strong origin and the design of bottle and label, Southern Comfort can be described as rather traditional.
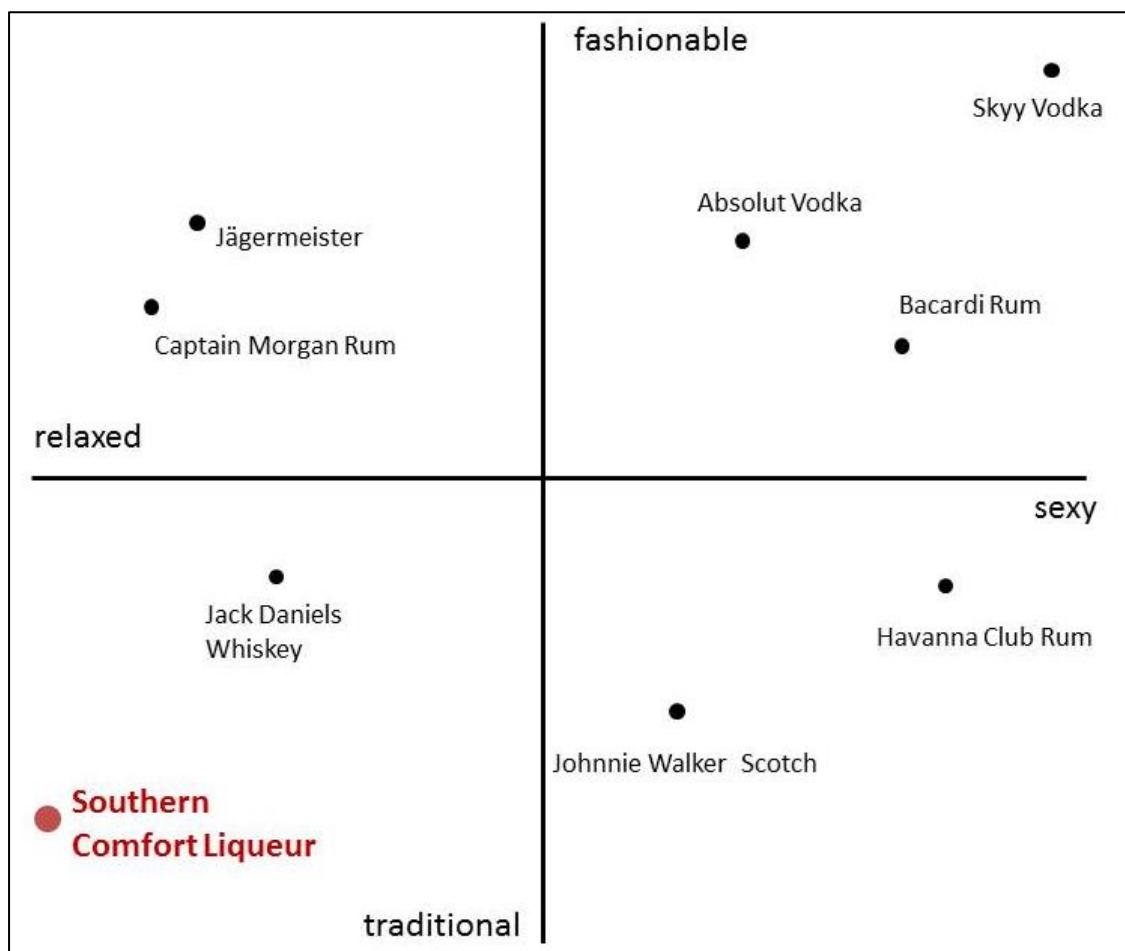

Figure 14: "Positioning Map: Southern Comfort"[114]

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[113] Southern Comfort outlines plan for growth, www.marketingweek.co.uk, [State 01.07.2013]
[114] Own illustration

Their newly created values are intentionally the exact opposite of fashionable. There-fore Southern Comfort's new position is down the traditional axe. Being 'relaxed', is one of their new key values. Hence the new position is down the relaxed axe, see figure 14.

The new inherited values of Southern Comfort, give the brand character. Paul Tem-poral writes in 'Advanced brand management', that a set of strong features can give a brand personality and creates some depth in image.[115] As the brand takes a very dif-ferent position on the market and does not follow the conventions of the spirit market, strong features are developed. A person's personality can be described as strong when it sets itself apart from others, if it becomes recognisable. Someone with an unrecog-nisable personality will be someone who is like everyone else, who follows what other people say and do. Tim Kirby from Naked Communications, Business Lead of the Aus-tralian Southern Comfort TV spot states: "'The new positioning for Southern Comfort is refreshingly honest. Our challenge was to change people's behaviour from just follow-ing the herd to having the confidence to just rock their thing, no matter what that 'thing' is. The stories we're telling in this campaign show people that bring that attitude to life.'"[116]

Southern comfort encourages their audience to do what they do themselves: be differ-ent by being yourself. As the brand itself implements what it advises its audience to do, the message not only becomes credible but gives the product and the brand a strong personality that consumers can connect with.

5.5.2 How Southern Comfort communicates brand personality in the 'Beach' spot

According to figure 2 in chapter 2.2, the communication process starts by encoding a message. The content of the message - the brand's personality and values – were cre-ated when Southern Comfort's marketers decided to change their strategy and head in a different direction. The new personality had to be transformed into a message that could be communicated over the chosen medium to reach the receiver.

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[115] Cf. Temporal, 2010 : 27 - 32

[116] Southern Comfort returns to local advertising with a compulsive body popper, www.mumbrella.com.au, [State 01.07.2013]

TV was the chosen lead medium of the new marketing strategy. To understand how the message was transformed, the advertising tools described in chapter 4.2 are used to analyse the commercial

It is clearly the emotions and feeling based appeal that found usage in the 'Beach' spot. There is no demonstration of the product - in fact it is only shown in the last few seconds. There is no comparison to competitors and the spot does not show an every-day situation in which the product could solve problems or improve way of living. The spot is purely based on emotions, renouncing any facts. As mentioned in chapter 4.2.1, recognition and attitude towards a brand can occur out of an emotional reaction [117] and is therefore an effective approach, when creating the idea for a spot and campaign.

Out of the primary stimuli set, the choice was set on two strong appeals when the spot was designed: Pictures and music. The spot uses no off-speaker, no one is talking about the product, describing its features and benefits or trying to convince the audience.

The music in the spot – the song 'Hit or miss' by Odetta – plays a big role. The message of the lyrics (Cf. p 38) represents what Southern Comfort's personality stands for. It could almost be seen as a mediate off-voice, speaking out what the spot wants to say. In addition, the type of music creates a relaxed and casual mood, suiting the guy's walk perfectly. The song is part of the branded message; it signals a lifestyle that Southern Comfort wants to stand for.

The second appeal which has been used in the spot is the story and camera use. The camera shots are very simple: The camera moves ahead the beach guy, following his walk. When he leaves the picture to get his Southern Comfort drink, the camera keeps going. This way of filming is simple but refreshing. It suits the relaxed feeling of the spot, lays the whole focus on the main character and raises attention for the entrance of the product when the guy leaves for a few seconds and comes back with his drink.

Also the story is simple but effective: a guy is walking along the beach. His appearance is a stereotype of an unpleasant person. His body shape, his outfit, his hairstyle, his moustache and glasses are the exact opposite of what is conceived to be fashionable and attractive. But there are several factors which make the guy appear likeable. The couple's dog follows him from half way through the spot, obviously enjoying his company. There is also the young attractive lady, who despite all expectations is reacting very positively towards his nonchalant salute. But most of all it is his walking style and

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[117] Cf. O'Shaughnessy, 2003: 179

self- confidence which are strikingly congenial. Against all odds his appearance is very charismatic. And this is because he is not afraid of who he is, he is comfortable in his own skin and this is visible for everyone. The branded message was transformed into a person of common life, into an idol of what the brand stands for. The spot celebrates people who like the way they are, and encourages others to do the same.

When the branded message is designed and the medium chosen, it is up to the audience to decode the message. Ideally this should lead to a reaction and occur in a change of attitude and consumer behaviour.

How Southern Comfort's personality is influencing consumer behaviour can be analysed based on previously discussed scientific results regarding consumer behaviour and brand personality. In the last chapter of this work, these connections shall be drawn.

5.6   How Southern Comfort's personality influences consumer behaviour

In chapter 2.1 and 3.2 several scientific approaches were explained, which can be applied to the investigation of how the personality of Southern Comfort interacts with the consumer. Facts about the human personality, consumer behaviour and brand personality deliver methods of resolution for this question.

Southern Comfort's personality traits are represented in Aakers revolutionary brand personality scale. Comparing them to the dimensions found in her scale, Southern Comforts personality can be classified by the dimension 'sincerity' and 'excitement'. (Cf. p. 16) The sub-traits of 'sincerity' called 'Down-to earth' and 'honest' are good descriptions of how Southern Comfort presents itself. Also the traits 'daring' and 'spirited' describe the brand very well and underline the more 'exciting' side of its personality.

As Aakers dimensions are based on the assumption that the similarity between the brand's personality and the audience's personality works as a trigger, the target group's personality can be concluded. As stated in chapter 3.2 she claims "[…] the greater the congruity between the human characteristics that consistently and distinc-

tively describe an individual's actual or ideal self and those that describe a brand, the greater the preference for the brand."[118]

Therefore Southern Comfort's campaign targets people whose personality is very similar to the brand's personality: People who are down to earth, know who they are, are honest with themselves and dare to be who they are without being scared of what other people may think. The theory of self-congruence is playing a vital role: Gover and Schoorman stress that self-consistence is a big factor for product preference. If the perceived brand image is in congruence with their self-concept, the attitude towards the brand improves. Transferred to the example of Southern Comfort this means that people who share the same values, who share the same idea of life – that being who you are is most important – are more likely to like the brand, as the message harmonises with their self-concept.

The self-congruence theory claims, that the closer the components self-image and ideal-self are, the healthier is the overall personality.[119] Southern Comfort's personality gives the consumer the possibility to self-actualize, by buying into a brand which represents the ideals and values which their ideal-self requires: People generally prefer to be comfortable with themselves, but maybe just not dare to as they feel like they are not living up to the high expectations that modern media implements. They actually cannot be how they would like to be.

Also Freud's theory can be applied to this process. The superego which follows society's morals and is very social focused operates as the opposite of the id, which is more impulsive. The superego controls the Id and the ego, by forcing to reservation. Society may make people think they are not sexy enough, too fat and just not good enough. The superego has inherited these restrictions and controls the other parts of the human mind, so people remain critical with themselves.

Yet there is the brand, acting like a friend, encouraging them to live their ideals, to break out of their own restrictions and live their life how they want to. The target group feels acknowledged in their desire of being comfortable with themselves and is able to self-actualize. This leads to a strong affinity towards the brand.

The symbolizing function of a brand, which is described by Lee and Wan works also for Southern Comfort. They claim: "When using a brand, consumers become associated

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[118] Aaker, 1997: 348
[119] Cf. Wright, 2006: 328

with these signals"[120] In chapter 3.2.2, the connection with Sullivan and Horney's characterization of the compliant individual has been described. They are defined as: "Compliant individuals are those who move towards others (they desire to be loved, wanted and appreciated)."[121] Therefore a brand is used by the 'compliant individual' to gain social acceptance, by being associated with it. This works for many brands. Particularly for those who use their advertising to create a world of desire and by making the consumer feel it is possible to enter this world by consuming their product. The two added dimensions on Aaker's construct which distinguish it from the 'Big Five' - 'Ruggedness' and 'Sophistication' - are the source for traits used by marketers when creating this world. Traits that people do not have themselves but do wish for.

But once again, Southern Comfort makes a difference: Another personality group described by Sullivan and Horny in the CAD theory (Cf. p 5) is the 'detached individual': "Detached individuals are those who move away from others (they desire independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and individualism or freedom from obligations)"[122]
Southern Comfort is making use of the symbolization of a brand, but for another personality group: For people who fit into the personality group of the 'detached individual', the brand works as a symbolization too, as the brands personality reflects exactly how their personality is: independent and individualistic. Therefore they will want to be associated with the brand, as it classifies them into the social class they want to be in. The brand works as an extension of their personality. And consuming the product is a way of showing it to other people."[Brand personality] can provide a vehicle for customers to express their own identity. Self-expression is usually more vivid when the brand has a strong personality, because it is a personality that is being expressed."[123]

To sum up the difference: Symbolization for the 'compliant individual' means the consumer uses the positive image of a brand to be accepted by others. This works for Skyy Vodka, Jack Daniels or Absolut Vodka, as they create a desirable image that consumers want to share.
Symbolization for the 'detached individual' means the consumer wants to be different to others and stand out as an individual. This is a very rarely used tactic in advertising. And using this technique becomes a strong attribute of Southern Comfort, which leads to differentiation and a strong individual position on the market.

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[120] Relationship between consumer personality and brand personality as self-concept: from the case of Koran automobile brands, www.freepatentsonline.com, [State 01.07.2013]
[121] Schiffman, 2012: 129
[122] Schiffman, 2012: 129
[123] Aaker 1996: 173

This thesis is confirmed by the discovery of Freling's and Forbes' research. (Cf. p 15) The ratings of a product's attributes differ when it comes to importance and the outcome on differentiation and purchase decisions. For the example of Southern Comfort and the spirit market this means that standard attributes like 'good fun' 'sociable' or 'high quality' may be rated as very important for consumers. But attributes that separate the product from its competitors will lead to differentiation and eventually purchase decisions. This is the reason why Southern Comfort had to develop new attributes, as their previous ones may have been of importance for consumers but did not provide the requirements for differentiation.

Science in consumer behaviour, brand management and consumer psychology delivers a wide range of theories that can explain how consumer behaviour is influenced. The applied theories in this work show how the newly created brand personality of Southern Comfort interacts with the psychology of the consumer. The more intense the processing procedure the consumer goes through when exposed to the advertising spot, the higher the awareness of the brand. The more time the receiver will spend on thinking about the message behind the brand, the more likely a product will be recognized when standing in front of a shelf in the supermarket. Catching the attention of the audience is the key to success and the start of the journey to long time loyalty. "Awareness comes first, followed by involvement and purchase […] which can lead to friendship and trust level, which in turn lead to brand loyalty and lifetime customer relationships."[124]

Southern Comfort should continue their strategy, as only continuity will strengthen the effect of the campaign. Evidence of the campaigns success showing in the brand's ranking of the 50 most successful spirit brands will be revealed in the IWSR paper in August 2013.

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[124] Temporal, 2010: 30

6   Conclusion

The posed question, how brand personality influences consumer behaviour, has been answered in the frame of this work. Facts and scientific results from different fields of science have helped to find a reasonable explanation for the question. Some constructs showed some limitations. Others seemed too simplified, when describing something as complex as brand personality.

But in summary the demonstration shows that all individual theories and constructs are not only based on each other but also can be combined into a whole structure that can be used to explain how brand personality works.

The main findings can be named as:

- **Similarities attract**: This does not only work in human relationships. Brand personality has a bigger influence on the consumer if the consumer's personality shows similar traits. It works like in real life: if there is analogy between brand and consumer, an emotion based relationship can develop, leading to brand loyalty.

- **Symbolic meaning**: If the brand is capable of creating a symbolic meaning for the consumer, he or she will want to be associated with the product. Brand personality is able to create such symbolization.

- **Self-congruence**: The consumer's desires, expectations, ideals, values and opinions have to be considered when tailoring a brand's personality suiting the target group. The consumer needs to be able to self-actualize when interacting with the brand. This is only possible if the brand's traits reflect the ideal-self construct consumers have of themselves. Consuming the brand will then lead to self-actualization.

- **TV advertising as part of the marketing mix**: TV commercials can be used to communicate brand personality, but only as part of a consistent marketing strategy including several mediums. A cross medial strategy guarantees that the communication is integrated. Yet TV advertising used as the leading medium can achieve a wide distribution of the branded message. Further marketing tools can then be applied to build a connection within the cross medial campaign.

- **Communication process**: The communication process has to be taken into consideration through the whole run of a campaign. Encoding and decoding the branded message are the key elements in the procedure and need most attention. Brand identity - containing brand personality - can only be reflected fully in brand image if the message is decoded in the same way as it has been encoded.

The results show how consumer behaviour can be influenced by communicating brand personality. Retrospectively the results can help marketers to create a personality for their own brand: it becomes obvious which requirements have to be fulfilled so that the brand's personality is able to create a strong relationship with the consumer.

Fortunately we can choose our friends and our partners, based on their character and how they suit our own personality. Choosing a friend is like choosing a brand. Marketers can use this information and create a brand with benefits of a friend. Someone who people want to have around, someone they can connect with and someone they will stay with – maybe forever.

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