International Media Branding

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Abstract

International sales and operations are becoming increasingly important to many media companies. Being able to utilize an internationally well-known brand facilitates entry into foreign markets. When operating internationally, the question of whether to localize or to standardize brand communication and content across markets is crucial. After discussing the benefits of an approach of standardization and a possible audience for globally standardized brands, this chapter introduces reasons why companies may, however, choose to localize. Furthermore, it discusses possible areas of localization as well as strategic options for foreign market entry through media brands. This chapter concludes with a call for further research on international branding that takes into account the special characteristics of media products and markets.

Keywords

International strategies • International brand expansion • Foreign entry modes • Concept licensing • Global TV formats • Global magazine brands • Media export • International brand architecture • Local adaptation • Global standardization • Media culture

1 Introduction

Although most media are strongly oriented towards certain national or local markets, many media companies have increasingly become dependent on international sales and operations. Where companies suffer from stagnating or decreasing demand in their home markets, they are enticed into so-called emerging markets,

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G. Siegert et al. (eds.), *Handbook of Media Branding*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-18236-0_6

for example, in Asia or Latin America. Furthermore, in a dynamic media environment characterized by a high level of uncertainty, a diversification of the competitive landscape may not only improve growth prospects but may also enhance the possibilities of survival by sharing risk across markets.

When entering new markets, being able to utilize an internationally well-known brand may be critical to the success of the entry. In her study of the entry strategies of some of the world's largest media conglomerates into Asian markets, Rohn (2010) found that all of the companies examined chose to enter those markets primarily through their main brands. In particular, media brands that have already been successful in other countries seem to facilitate entry into further markets. Internationally recognized brand names indicate financial strength and experience, which help to attract local producers and distributors as well as multinational advertisers.

The most well-known international content-producing media brand is *Disney*, which was ranked 13 among the top 100 most valuable global brands by *Interbrand* in 2014. Other well-known media brands include TV networks such as *MTV, HBO* or *CNN*; TV formats such as *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* or *Idols*; or magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* or *Vogue*. For a brand to be perceived as global, some of its communication, such as brand name or logo, needs to be standardized across countries. Furthermore, audiences should perceive its 'globalness' (Akaka & Alden, 2010; Oszomer & Altaras, 2008).

The following provides an overview of key issues and previous research on international branding in general, and media branding in particular. The chapter begins with the dilemma between an international standardization approach and one of local adaptation. Firstly, it summarizes the benefits of a standardized approach to international branding and summarizes some of the research that has argued for a demand for globally standardized brands. Further, this chapter will consider possible reasons why companies may, however, choose to localize in markets as well as introduce areas for local adaptation, and list different strategic options between standardization and localization. Subsequently, this chapter will introduce frameworks for understanding a company's choice of market entry. Finally, this chapter will call for further research in order to better understand international media branding in contemporary society.

2 The Benefits of Global Standardization

When companies expand internationally it raises the question of whether to adapt their brands to local markets and to what degree. In fact, much of the research on international strategies concerns the dilemma between local adaptation and global standardization (e.g., Calantone, Kim, Schmidt, & Cavusgil, 2006; Dow, 2005; Rohn, 2004, 2010; Wong & Merrilees, 2007). Adapting a media brand's communication and content may be effective with local audiences, but it may not represent an efficient international approach.

Thus, a *standardized approach* may make use of economies of scope through synergies. Developing an exclusive brand communication for every single market in which a company is active, for instance, is likely to be costly and difficult to coordinate. A standardized brand communication, on the other hand, is easier to implement and to handle (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2010; Mueller & Taylor, 2013). Furthermore, a standardized strategy also helps to make use of economies of scale. Where the marginal costs associated with reaching additional audiences is low, the average costs for reaching one viewer or reader is increased because costs are shared across different markets (Doyle, 2009).

Furthermore, the more consistent a brand is across different markets the more valuable it is, especially to international advertisers. A localized brand, on the other hand, which does not fit the original brand philosophy, may risk damaging the value of the original brand. Finally, some media brands, such as *CNN International*, follow a strategy of standardization because this is how they reach their international niche audience.

Globally standardized media brands are part of what has been termed a *global consumer culture*, which refers to a collection of signs and symbols understood by a significant number of consumers around the world (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999; Cleveland & Laroche, 2007). In order to better understand consumer perceptions associated with global consumer brands, Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden (2003) introduced a construct phrased *Perceived Brand Globalness* (PBG). According to the authors, the perception of a brand is improved where PBG exists, i.e., where consumers believe that the brand is marketed in various countries. Other research has found that global brands attract consumers by delivering a feeling of being part of a global culture (e.g., Wasko, Phillips, & Meehan, 2001). Applied to media markets, viewers may enjoy their membership in a global youth culture when watching *MTV*, or their feeling of being cosmopolitan and knowledgeable when reading the Asian edition of *Time* magazine (Hannerz, 1990; Rohn, 2010, 2011a).

In her *Universal and Lacuna Model*, Rohn (2010, 2011a) introduces three types of so-called Universals in explaining why audiences may be drawn towards internationally standardized media content: Content Universals, Audience-Created Universals, and Company-Created Universals. *Content Universals* refer to content attributes that help to make the content attractive across cultures. This includes content that is of a high production quality or that represents something new and exciting compared to the usual media supply in a country; content that lacks an obvious cultural origin or that avoids political, religious or other value-loaded statements; content that arouses emotions in a fundamental and immediate way; or content that targets an international niche audience. *Audience-Created Universals* refer to the phenomenon where audiences enjoy foreign-produced media content because of the particular way in which they read it. *Random House*'s motivational book on change *Who Moved My Cheese*, for instance, was internationally successful because it allowed readers from different cultures to project their own experiences, hopes, or fears connected with change onto the text. *Company-Created Universals* refer to the phenomenon where internationally standardized media content is successful because companies manage to create a competitive advantage for it. Large international media conglomerates usually have the means to devote substantial resources to promoting their media, something that many of the smaller domestic media companies may not have. Furthermore, internationally recognized brands may find it relatively easy to find crucial distributors in a local market.

Although a standardized approach to international media brand expansion may present an efficient strategy option that avoids the risk of inconsistency in how the brand appears in different markets, and although it may be well-received by local audiences, there are many reasons that explain why a company may choose a more localized approach.

3 Reasons to Localize Media Brands

Although a *strategy of local adaptation* may result in higher costs compared to a *strategy of standardization*, it may be more successful with local audiences. In some cases this may even be the only way a company is allowed access to a market. Much research has been devoted to the internal and external forces that may influence a media company's choice of foreign market between a standardization and localization approach. Chan-Olmsted (2006, pp. 182–186), for instance, lists *country-specific forces* such as political, regulatory, societal, economic, technological, and cultural factors. Furthermore, she points out that the *competitive environment*, the *corporate objective*, the *core competencies* of the company as well as its *strategic networks* influence international decision-making. Likewise, Douglas, Craig, and Nijssen (2001) note that a company's decisions are influenced by *underlying market dynamics*, which include political and economic factors as well as market infrastructure and consumer mobility, by *firm-based characteristics*, which includes the importance of corporate identity and the overall expansion strategy, as well as by *product market characteristics*, which include the culture and the competitive market structure in the target market.

Rohn (2010) introduced the *Vertical Barrier Chain* (VBC), which provides an analytical framework to organize all internal and external forces that may influence international media strategies according to how much they dictate a particular strategy, if a company wants to successfully enter a foreign market. In the VBC, forces in the regulatory, political, economic and cultural environment are labelled as 'barriers' to the extent to which they may represent filters to the successful entry of foreign and undifferentiated media content and brands (see Fig. 1).

A possible reason for localized entry may lie in the *local media law* of the target country. In some cases, local media law does not permit an undifferentiated market entry. In contrast to regulatory forces, *political forces* rarely present reasons for a localized approach. Instead, political issues in a market usually suggest that companies stay away from investing into localization efforts for that market. The following will further examine *economic* and *cultural reasons* that explain why companies may choose to adapt their brand communication and content to local markets.

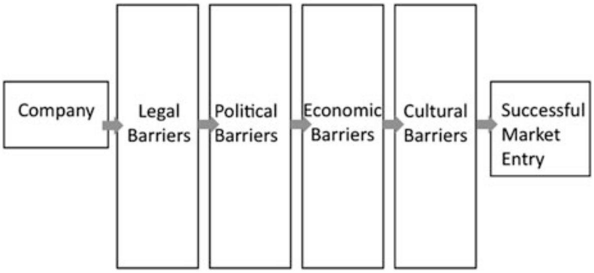

Fig. 1 Vertical barrier chain to successful foreign market entry

3.1 Economic Reasons

Economic reasons to adapt may lie both in the target market and in the company. Concerning *economic market forces*, the larger a market is the more it justifies a costly strategy of localization. Furthermore, large markets usually have the personnel and financial resources available that are needed for local productions. Rohn (2014), however, found that under certain circumstances a small market may, in fact, suggest content adaptation. The Estonian adaptation of the TV format *Idols*, for instance, is designed to attract a wider audience than the young audience at which the original production aims. The Estonian TV market with 0.5 million TV households (Mavise, 2012) is too small to allow for a large fragmentation.

Furthermore, a body of research (e.g., Alden et al., 1999) has found that in markets with lower levels of economic development, consumers are drawn towards global brands through which they express their admiration towards the 'economic centers' and their membership of consumer society (Roth, 1995). With increasing income in these markets and with the improving quality of local products, local consumers are found to increasingly turn to local brands. Research (e.g., Rohn, 2010) has also found that where local competition is high, international brands tend to localize in order to better meet the demands of the local audience.

With regard to the *economic forces operating within companies*, companies with large financial resources will find it easier to localize, as will companies that are experienced in international business. Media companies that own and operate internationally recognized brands often find it relatively easy to transfer the strong and unique associations of their brands to localized versions. Furthermore, good relationships with international advertisers may facilitate a strong head start when launching a localized venture. Also, companies with decentralized organizational structures are more likely to pursue a localized approach than companies with a more centralized structure (Douglas et al., 2001).

3.2 Cultural Reasons

Cultural reasons to adapt to local markets are manifold. After all, the media are not only a business but also a cultural matter. Although Levitt (1983) suggested that the world was becoming increasingly homogenized and differences in cultural tastes and standards were becoming features of the past, the fact that many international media conglomerates had to learn the hard way that their undifferentiated media was not successful with local audiences suggests differently. *Twenty-first Century*'s STAR TV network, for instance, was not successful with audiences across Asia until it started to localize heavily. Likewise, the previously standardized *MTV* channel in many countries was the leading music channel only until local competitors were launched that better catered to local musical tastes (Rohn, 2010).

Though there are many examples of successful international brand expansions, a closer examination of these brands suggests that most of their content is in fact adapted (Rohn, 2010) in order to provide what Straubhaar (1991) called *cultural proximity*. As Tunstall (2008, p. xiv) wrote: "Most people around the world prefer to be entertained by people who look the same, talk the same, joke the same... and have the same beliefs (and worldview) as themselves. They also over-whelmingly prefer their own national news, politics, weather, and football and other sports". Accordingly, media companies that do not adapt to local audiences risk offering what Hoskins and Mirus (1988) have labelled a *cultural discount*.

In her Lacuna and Universal Model, Rohn (2010, 2011a) introduces three types of reason why audiences may not select or enjoy media content that has been produced outside of their own culture: Content Lacuna, Capital Lacuna, and Production Lacuna. Where *Content Lacunae* exist, audiences find media content from outside their culture inappropriate or irrelevant. *Capital Lacunae* exist where audiences lack the necessary knowledge to understand and enjoy foreign content. The most obvious Capital Lacunae are language barriers. However, satirical or humorous shows also often call for background knowledge of people, places and events in order to enjoy them. *Production Lacunae* refer to when audiences do not enjoy foreign content because they do not like the style of production. Many western TV format brands, such as *The Weakest Link*, for example, have a storyline that is too simplistic for Japanese audiences (Rohn, 2010).

When expanding media brands internationally, understanding cultural similarities and differences not only in content preferences but also in communication patterns is crucial. Literature provides for several categorizations of cultures that help to explain differences in consumers' receptiveness to various types of brand communication.

Probably the most well-known and applied categorization is provided by Hofstede (2001), who distinguishes cultures along five dimensions: *power distance*, *individualism/collectivism*, *masculinity/femininity*, *uncertainty avoidance* and *long/short-term orientation*. Research has found that successful brand communication in any given culture mirrors the respective level of these dimensions in that culture. DeMooji and Hofstede (2010), for instance, suggest that the need for prestigious brands as status symbols is lower in low power distance cultures. Hence, in countries with low power distance certain brands, such as upscale fashion magazines, cannot entice readers with their prestigious reputation alone but need to further adapt both brand communication and magazine content.

Another well-known differentiation of cultures is Hall's (1976) distinction between *low-context* and *high-context cultures*. In low-context cultures, communication is straightforward, explicit and direct. Conversely, in high-context cultures, communicators rely much more heavily on contextual cues, and consumers derive more meaning from non-verbal or non-written cues in communication. For brand communication to be successful, it needs to mirror the respective communication style in that market.

In general, it has been found that cultural distance between a company's home country and its target country has a negative effect on the propensity of its brands to be introduced in that country (Townsend, 2009).

4 Areas of Local Adaptation

When media companies expand their brands into new countries, three aspects need to be evaluated in terms of market compatibility and a possible need for local adaptation: *strategic issues of brand building*, *communication and promotion* of the brand, and the *media content* the brand carries.

4.1 Strategic Issues of Brand Building: Brand Identity and Brand Positioning

One of the most crucial tasks when expanding a brand into a new country is to help the emergence of the desired *brand image* in that country. Companies usually aim at retaining the same brand image across countries, especially if they want to attract multinational advertisers. Due to cultural differences, internationally standardized statements about a brand, i.e., the *brand identity* that is being communicated, may however result in different brand images in different markets. In order to arouse the same brand image across markets, companies may need to adapt the brand identity accordingly in some markets.

Likewise, every new market entry requires an evaluation of the *positioning of the brand* in that market. Förster (2011a, 2011b) suggests that brand positioning should consider the characteristics of the target audience as well as the similarities and distinctions to competitors within the market. As such, a proper brand positioning needs to be conducted for every single entry market separately and be adapted where needed. Only very few brands, such as Coca-Cola, can afford a global brand positioning. Most international media brands need to compete against local brands, and companies need to formulate their brand promises based on the conditions in the respective markets.

As Förster (2011b) noted, the strategic aspects of brand building need to be translated into the communication and promotion of the brand as well as into the content of the respective media product – both of which are also areas for a possible adaptation to local markets.

4.2 Communication and Promotion

A common strategy for attracting audiences across markets is to differentiate the brand's communication instruments and how the brand is promoted. Although companies are usually reluctant to change a brand's most visible communication instruments, its name and logo, because these keep the brand recognizable, there are circumstances under which a modification makes sense. Although the Chinese editions of internationally recognized magazine brands, such as *Fortune* or *Parents*, carry their original brand names on their covers – mainly in order to attract multinational advertisers – they also carry translated versions of their titles in order to attract local readers and to ensure that Chinese readers understand the title as it is meant to be understood (Rohn, 2010). Another example is the TV format *Idols*. In countries in which the word 'Idol' has a somewhat different connotation compared to what it has in the format's country of origin, the UK, the local productions follow the example of the German title for the show, *Deutschland sucht den Superstar*, which means that Germany is searching for a superstar (Rohn, 2014).

In terms of adapted brand promotion, program or movie trailers for the same TV program or movie very often differ across markets. The promotion of the animation movie *Bee Movies*, for instance, was marketed as a Jerry Seinfeld movie in the US, while the focus of the communication strategy in overseas markets, where Jerry Seinfeld is not as well-known, was the storyline.

4.3 Content

There are plenty of options concerning how media content can be adapted to local audiences. Localization options range from simple language translations of pre-produced content to creating content uniquely for the local audience. Common adaptations are the inclusion of local pictures or cast, the adaptation of the studio design, or the differentiation of storylines. In general, content adaption does not only mean inserting culturally proximate content, but also deleting content elements that are likely to be not appreciated by local audiences (Rohn, 2004, 2010).

5 Finding the Right Strategy

If and how a brand is expanded internationally is usually the result of a complex decision-making process by the company. A popular model that companies employ for such decision-making is the *SWOT model* (Learned, Christiansen, Andrews, & Guth, 1965; Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998). This helps companies to analyze their international conditions – such as their brand architecture, their financial resources as well as their experience – and put them into contrast to their external environment, such as the regulatory, political, economic, and cultural environment in the target market. The aim of the SWOT analysis is to identify a strategy through which a company can attain or maintain a match between its internal and external environments.

The chances that a company internationalizes its brands are higher the more experienced it is (Townsend, 2009). Usually, media companies start out by exporting and only when they gain more experience in the international marketplace do they develop an overall international approach and get involved in more advanced market entry modes, such as concept licensing or taking the production abroad (Gershon, 2006). The following will introduce the main modes of entry into a foreign market, with a special focus on concept licensing. Furthermore, it will examine how a company's international brand architecture may influence its decision-making, and it introduces some of the key international strategy variants.

5.1 Concept Licensing and Other Modes of Foreign Market Entry

When expanding into foreign markets, two main groups of market entry can be distinguished: *content entry* and *ownership* or *investment entry* (Rohn, 2004, 2010). Content entry modes include *export*, *concept licensing*, or *producing uniquely for the target market*. Ownership entry may be classified as either the establishment of *joint ventures*, with ownership and control shared between companies, or as *sole ventures*, with full ownership and control maintained by the investing company. Sole venture operations include the acquisition and establishment of wholly owned subsidiaries, a so-called 'greenfield' entry (Root, 1994).

Each entry mode offers distinct benefits and costs to the company, and allows for different levels of localization (Rohn, 2004, 2010). When entering through content, exporting pre-produced content is the most distinct strategy of standardization. Producing content uniquely for the local market, on the other hand, is the most distinct strategy of localization. When entering through investment, the more the local entity provides locally produced content and the more local partners and local personnel enjoy creative autonomy, the higher the degree of localization (Rohn, 2004, 2010).

When companies enter foreign markets through their media brands, export and concept licensing are the most common entry modes. Investment entries are not as common, although many TV station brands, for instance, set up local stations in international markets. Yet, the focus of international brand expansion usually lies with product expansion rather than company expansion (Doyle, 2009).

Through *international concept licensing*, a company sells the concept or idea, also referred to as the format, of a media product to a foreign producer. With the increasing strength of local production companies around the world, the need for the importing of ready produced media is decreasing. At the same time, the demand for creative content ideas that have been proven successful in markets around the world is growing as a way to minimize risk in increasingly competitive markets. The licensees of concepts usually profit from the international reputation of a brand, whereas the licensors benefit from the increased value of the brand, if successfully adapted in different markets. Due to the high costs of development and production, many TV programs, for instance, are consciously created with the intention of achieving international adaptations (Moran, 2005).

The amount of adaptation a local production of an international concept undergoes varies across markets and products. Indeed, much research on international media focuses on how local productions of global magazine or TV formats differ from their original versions (Aslama & Pantti, 2007; Beeden & de Bruin, 2010; Rohn, 2014; Turner, 2005). Local editions of international magazines usually start with only a little adaptation but then steadily increase the amount of local content they include (Doyle, 2009; Rohn, 2010). Usually, in established local editions, one third of the content is taken directly from the parent magazine, mainly pictorial and graphics, one third is adapted to local readers, and one third is created uniquely by the local team (Doyle, 2009).

The risk of too many modifications to the original concept is that it moves too far away from its original version. International brand building, however, is only possible when crucial elements of the original brand version are incorporated into its local productions. An inconsistency of the brand image across different markets may actually harm the international reputation of the brand. In order to avoid damage to the brand, brand owners usually provide detailed manuals or so-called workshop notes to local producers which include clear guidelines on what the program or the magazine should look like. Additionally, many brand owners offer initial training support. When TV formats are produced, format holders usually send out *flying producers*, who assist in the local production process (Rohn, 2014). A good working relationship between the licensor and the licensee is essential and common platforms for communication include conferences, editorial get-togethers or regular newsletters. This way, companies ensure that experience is shared and best practice is promoted (Doyle, 2009).

5.2 International Brand Architecture

One crucial factor that influences a company's international entry mode choices is its *international brand architecture*, which includes all its existing brands. Designing an international brand architecture helps companies to analyze their brands in all their diversity and with their respective states of internationalization and levels of localization. International brand architecture is the basis for harmonizing branding decisions across countries, and it allows companies to formulate basic principles to guide the effective use of their brands in the global market place (Douglas et al., 2001, Townsend, 2009). It is through the analysis of their international brand architectures that a company may detect that certain local adaptations of their brands may dilute or harm the original brand.

Townsend (2009) presents a *hierarchical conceptualization of an international brand architecture* in which each brand's position is based on a continuum of geographic scope and degree of consistency. Within this framework, Townsend (2009) identifies four different types of brand, with *domestic brands* and *global* *brands* at the extremes of the continuum and *multi-regional brands* and r*egional brands* in between. The premise behind this categorization is that brands advance from one level of internationalization to the next. Whereas regional brands are relatively early in the process of internationalization, global brands present the mature stage of internationalization. Townsend's (2009) conceptualization may be used as a normative framework for managers to develop their international brand portfolio.

5.3 Variants of International Brand Strategies

A company's preferred choice of entry mode and its international brand architecture shed light on its overall international approach. The following introduces two main categorizations of different variants of international brand strategies.

Within the framework of global standardization versus local adaptation, three types of international strategies can be distinguished: multinational, global, and transnational strategy (Rohn, 2004; Yip, 2000). A *multinational strategy* is characterized by low global standardization and high local adaptation. Companies that follow a multinational strategy usually do not expand their brands abroad, but instead enter foreign markets through investment in local brands. In a multinational strategy, there is little coordination between the company's international activities, and business entities in different countries are viewed as stand-alone operations (Root, 1994). An example would be *News Corp*, which owns and operates seemingly unconnected newspaper brands in different countries. A *global strategy*, on the other hand, is characterized by high global standardization and low local adaptation. A company that follows a global strategy seeks to maximize the worldwide performance of its brands, which are not or only very little adapted to local markets. In a global strategy, content is usually produced with a global audience in mind and then exported across markets, as is the case for Hollywood movies.

The *transnational strategy* is a combination of the multinational strategy and the global strategy. Although media content is tailored to local audiences, operations in various countries are not seen as stand-alone operations. Instead, transnational strategies take into consideration the synergetic effects of central goals and skills and countries are selected for their potential contribution to all business activities. Hence, companies that follow a transnational strategy think globally, but act locally. Any internationally well-known brand that is adapted to local markets, such as *MTV* or TV formats such as *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* or *Big Brother* follows the logic of a transnational strategy. Applying the framework of multinational, global and transnational strategies, Rohn (2004, 2010) found that the world's largest media conglomerates increasingly move away from pursuing a global strategy in favour of a transnational or even multinational strategy.

A further differentiation of international strategies is provided by Alden et al. (1999), who distinguish three variants of international brand positioning strategies: *global consumer culture positioning* (GCCP), *foreign consumer culture* *positioning* (FCCP), and *local consumer culture positioning* (LCCP). When applying a *GCCP* strategy, companies promote a brand in such a way that consumers should associate it with the global consumer culture. A GCCP strategy, however, must not be confused with a strategy of global standardization. Thus, a brand may also be positioned through a GCCP strategy through differentiated communication in each market. Furthermore, although a GCCP strategy may mean providing the same or similar content across countries, so may a FCCP strategy. In contrast to a GCCP strategy, however, a *FCCP* strategy positions a brand as a brand from a specific foreign culture. The promotion of Bollywood movies as an exotic alternative to Hollywood movies may serve as an example. A *LCCP* strategy positions a brand as a member of a local culture. An example is the Indian children's TV station *Hungama*, which was bought by *Disney* and which is promoted by emphasizing its localness.

5.4 General Strategic Challenges

Often, managers make decisions regarding their international brand expansions on a country-by-country basis, without defining an overall strategic approach or considering the coherence of their brands across countries. As international markets are increasingly becoming interlinked, however, branding decisions should be seen in the broader context of a brand's international appearance (Douglas et al., 2001).

Most media companies walk a fine line between adapting their brands to local conditions and adhering to the international philosophy of their brands. Maintaining a complex network of international business partners may be challenging but a good relationship with international partners may help improve a brand's attractiveness in a market as well as retain brand consistency. Another challenge lies in sustaining a close relationship with the audiences in different countries. Companies that operate internationally need to constantly monitor the markets they operate in or wish to operate in. Where market conditions and audience preferences change, brand strategies need to be adapted (Doyle, 2009). This is particularly the case in markets with a fast growing economy where foreign brands and content may lose their attractiveness over time (Rohn, 2010, 2011b).

6 Conclusion: Need for Further Research

This chapter provided an overview of key issues and previous writing on international branding that is relevant to international branding in the media industry. It becomes obvious that research on international media branding lags far behind the amount of writing that has been published on the international branding of other kinds of brands, particularly consumer product brands. Although much of the knowledge of international consumer branding can be readily transferred to the media industry, there are crucial differences between media brands and other types of brands.

As an example, media products are typically low price products and the risks associated with a poor purchase choice are marginal. Whereas buyers of automotive or expensive consumer products often rely for their purchasing decisions on the international reputation of the respective brand, this is much less the case for media brands. What is more, since media brands convey cultural content, they are much less likely to transcend cultural boundaries than most other kinds of brands. And as media companies target two different markets, the audience and the advertising market, the decision between global standardization and local adaptation is much more complex. While local or localized brands may be more attractive to local audiences, globally standardized brands are usually more attractive to multinational advertisers.

Hence, there is a need for more theoretical and applied work on international branding that takes into account the specific conditions of media products and markets. This includes the study of how seemingly contradictory forces, such as local media tastes and global advertising demand, influence international brand decision-making. Furthermore, there is a need for theoretical conceptualizations that regard the translations of brand identities, brand positioning and brand promise to cultures outside the culture of the brand's country of origin.

Countering the lack of research on international media branding is especially important in light of the dynamic and ever-changing business environment for media companies, where the opportunities and challenges associated with exploiting media brands across countries will be of increasing relevance for companies around the world.

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