THE HEART AND MIND OF A RADIO STATION: AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS OF RADIO STATION BRAND PERSONALITY

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Abstract

The focus of this research was to explore consumer brand responses to the brand personality of a South African classical music radio station. This paper investigated how key brand responses are influenced by brand personality. A structured electronic survey was used to collect data from a qualified online panel that reflected the demographic characteristics of typical Classic 1027 listeners. Attitudes and behavioural intentions of listeners were examined, and findings show positive attitudes and intentions. The Enthusiasm brand personality dimension was shown to have a significant effect on the behavioural responses. This research contributes by measuring brand personality during an actual repositioning campaign, rather than just as an isolated academic study. By considering radio station brand personality from a listeners' perspective it also contributes to theory development and offers some guidelines for media practitioners.

Keywords

Brand meaning, brand personality, communication media, radio, anthropomorphism, music, attitudes, behavioural intentions.

INTRODUCTION

Radio often serves as a constant companion to listeners and can fulfil a unique and important role in their hearts and minds (McMahon 2021). This study focused purposely on the brand personality of Classic 1027 radio station as a technique to create sufficiently strong, favourable, and unique brand imagery by linking intangible aspects to the brand meaning. Classic 1027 is a South African music radio station devoted to a wide variety of classical music from romantic, musicals, and contemporary genres such as movie soundtracks and even video game music (Classic1027 2021b). This paper explores how specific brand responses on the affective level (i.e. attitudes) and cognitive level (i.e. behavioural intentions) are influenced by brand meaning through imagery (brand personality). Brand responses refer to the way customers respond to a brand on a cognitive or affective level (Keller 2001).

The recent Radio Audience Measurements (RAM) report published by the Broadcast Research Council of South Africa (BRC) in the first quarter of 2021, reports an increase in the average weekly radio listenership to 3 hours 51 minutes, with most South Africans listening to news and music at their own homes (BRC 2021). This is in part likely due to remote working during the time of the pandemic. This trend is predicted to continue in the future and presents a continuous opportunity for radio station brands (McKinsey 2021). Some contemporary radio stations are starting to realise the importance of creating a bond with their listeners by offering them companionship, sources for information and music discovery. They also enable integration with other media and technologies such as website visits, out live events hosted by the radio stations, HD radio, podcasts and live streaming (Rab 2021).

Unfortunately, smaller and niche radio stations face the predicament of market share (BRC 2021). Subsequently, niche radio stations constantly strive to differentiate themselves from the larger network competitors, by focusing on functional attributes such as broadcast schedules or content (Rab 2021). Strong brands have a duality and appeal both on cognitive and affective levels (Keller 2001). In other words, these smaller radio station brands might often not be able to compete directly via functional performance, but could consider capitalising on non-product-related imagery associations and resulting feelings. This article explores brand personality as a potential way for a niche station to connect with their listeners to create an emotional connection via the personality of the station.

Advertising and media researchers have produced large quantities of scholarship with rigorous methodologies and statistical tests over the past few decades (Avant, Kim and Hayes 2017; Khang et al. 2016), however there remains limited studies on the brand personality of media brands (Sung and Park 2011; Valette-Florence and De Barnier 2013). The limited brand personality research on media brands focused predominantly on broadcast and print media outlets in the United States (Chan-Olmsted and Cha 2007, 2008; Kim, Baek and Martin 2010) and France (Valette-Florence and De Barnier 2013).

There has been a relative recent broadening of the scope to explore the role of brand personality for digital media to facilitate relationships with consumers in an online media landscape. This is evident from studies on the relationship between Korean websites' visual attributes and their e-brand personalities (Park, Choi and Kim 2005); the role of similarity in personality characteristics between social media users, and that of the media brands for developing trust on Twitter (Pentina, Zhang and Basmanova 2013), Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn social media platforms (Mutsikiwa and Maree 2019). None of these considered the application of brand personality to a radio station as medium.

Furthermore, the analyses of hundreds of articles in leading marketing and communication journals over several decades showed that radio continues to be the least frequent media type to receive attention (Avant, Kim and Hayes 2017; Khang et al. 2016). The handful of exceptions found in scholarly literature that examined contemporary radio content and features includes the value of digital radio from the perspective of radio station managers (Greer and Ferguson 2008), and promotion of radio stations by presenters posting via social media (Ferguson and Greer 2018), reading live advertising messages on air (Perelló-Oliver and Muela-Molina 2017), or act as advertising endorsers (Muela-Molina, Martín-Santana and Reinares-Lara 2020).

A comprehensive examination via scholarly search engines revealed no journal articles that considered radio station brand personality from a listeners' perspective. Little attempt has been made to understand the brand perceptions or behaviour of radio or music listeners, with only two recent exceptions: exploring experience driven lyrical musical genres in Australia (Dann and Jensen 2007) and the role of radio presenters (Spangardt, Ruth and Schramm 2016). This evidently indicates a gap for research to be closed by the current study. This paper provides new insights into radio media research by investigating the brand personality of a radio station

and examining how the brand personality influences important brand responses, i.e. attitudes and behavioural intentions.

The reflections on the role of brand personality and lack of research on radio station brand personality from a listener's perspective led to the research purpose of this study namely: to explore the brand personality of a South African classical music station.

Secondary to the main aim the following objectives have been set:

RO 1: To explore the structure of the brand personality of a South African classical music station.

RO 2: To examine the relationships between brand personality and the attitudes and behavioural intentions of classical music station listeners.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: a literature review is presented, followed by the theoretical framework and the development of the hypotheses. Then the methodology, data analyses, and results are reported. A discussion of results is followed by implications, limitations, and directions for future research, and concluding remarks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand personality

Anthropomorphism entails assigning real or imagined humanlike qualities, motivations, intentions, or emotions to that of non-humans or objects (Epley et al. 2008). Brand anthropomorphism investigations applied in marketing entail two different forms, with the one being analogical in nature, where schematic indicators are utilised to generate associations with human characteristics, and the other where consumers almost believe that the brand is an actual human (Portal, Abratt and Bendixen 2018; Kim and McGill 2011). The current study is part of the first form of brand anthropomorphism by applying Aaker's (1997) theory of brand personality to a radio station brand.

Brand personality is defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with the brand" (Aaker 1997, 347). Brand personality was originally presented to the field of marketing communication by Aaker (1997) and academic investigations into brand anthropomorphism

has since become widespread (Portal et al. 2018; Kim and McGill, 2011). The five-factor model (FFM) of human personality is the foundation upon which Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale (BPS) was established. The FFM contains five major human personality characteristics: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness, and has been developed and refined by prominent researchers throughout the decades (e.g., Norman 1967; McCrae and Costa 1987). The well-known BPS of Aaker (1997) has been applied in past studies to different broadcast, print, online, and social media types (e.g. Chan-Olmsted and Cha 2007, 2008; Kim, Baek and Martin 2010; Mutsikiwa and Maree 2019; Sung and Park, 2011), but not yet to radio. This current study therefore contributes by testing the applicability of the BPS model to a radio station brand.

Designing a personality for a brand is a vital component of designing a strategy aimed at obtaining brand loyalty, as it is associated with the brands' perceived usefulness and equity in consumers' minds (Keller 1993). Marketing communication practitioners therefore design marketing communication and positioning strategies to assign specific anthropological qualities to brands (Klabi and Debabi 2014). The marketing mix, including the symbols featured in consumer brand communication, can be utilised to develop brand personality traits (Keller 2001). Prominent scholars who investigated the role brand personality plays in consumer behaviour established significant relationships between the personalities of brands and consumers (Aaker, Fournier and Brasel 2004; Maehle and Shneor 2010); brand preferences (Swaminathan, Sweeney and Brandon 2009); brand trust, quality (Ha and Janda 2014); consumer loyalty (Mulyanegara, Tsarenko and Anderson 2009); and usage of different product and service categories (Klabi and Debabi 2014). However, the scholarly body of work on the role that brand personality can play for media brands (Kim 2017) - in particular radio brand personality - remains limited.

Media brands and strategies

Until recently, media have basically been regarded as passive vehicles used by advertisers to place commercial messages to promote their brands. The main purpose of media has thus been to provide content attracting a wide or lucrative audience for advertisers aimed at delivering reach and frequency (Siegert 2015). Prominent scholars warn that this approach of treating media as mere content vehicles might have been suitable for when advertising was simply single-channel, brand-initiated, one-way persuasive communication efforts, however it is no longer appropriate in the contemporary media landscape offering consumers omni-channel,

two-way, user-generated interactions (e.g. Araujo, Copulsky, Hayes, Kim and Srivastava 2020; Calder and Malthouse 2005). Calder and Malthouse (2005) therefore advise that media platforms could in themselves be valuable brands in their own right. Media could thus itself be viewed as an opportunity to provide experiences for the viewer, reader, or listener. This view guided this paper in exploring radio listeners' brand responses and brand meanings with regards to Classic 1027.

Media brands are market signals conveying the quality and credibility of media products and inform consumers about what to expect from a programme, title or product on offer (Siegert 2015). There are however different interpretations of the actual meaning of the media brand concept, due to the fact this field has been studied in and developed from a wide range of disciplinary understandings (McDowell 2006). To overcome these discrepancies, one should differentiate between three levels of media brand meaning in this complex media "brandscape": i) distributor brands that provide access to content (e.g., Netflix, YouTube, Showmax, Facebook); ii) wholesale brands that facilitate licensing agreements and rights for their distributors (e.g., Ster-Kinekor); and iii) content brands involving specific pieces of media content, such as in the case of a show, series, movie, or programme (Siegert 2015). For the current study, the local radio brand Classic 1027 can be regarded as the distributor brand and the programmes and presenters on the station the content brands.

Kim (2017) acknowledges that media brands are embodied within the larger classification of brands and branding, however they are characterised by six unique traits that distinguish them from other brands: i) low price sensitivity, since price is not a differentiation point between media brands as their audiences typically only invest some time and effort; ii) lower risk, since the viewer who did not like a programme or show does not lose money; iii) the unimportance of functional characteristics to the consumer; iv) easy access to rival media brands, as consumers no longer only rely on familiar media brands but switching to other brands is free by just clicking online or on the remote control; v) benefits are intangible; and vi) utility of self-brand communication (Kim 2017).

Siegert (2015) distinguishes between three unique features of media branding and communication strategies:
i) Media branding strategies are designed to address different markets including the media company, their advertisers, and audiences. The current study examined the ability of a

repositioned radio station brand (the media company) to provide a new recognisable face via humanisation to their listeners (their audience).

ii) Differentiation through media brand communications is prone to shape audiences' perceptions of rival brands' communication, due to the diverse interpretation approaches to media content. For example, before new media content (e.g. shows, TV series, magazines) is published, trailers and media exposure are created and positioned to deliver messages, creating expectations. Such brand messages determine how the content will be perceived. Well-differentiated media brand communication messages will likely lead to favourable brand responses, such as favourable attitudes to the focal brand.

iii) Media brand communication is usually centred on key competence areas, generating audience contacts for attracting attention, promoting own products, services, and interests via their own brands as communication channels. These self-promotional activities such as teasers, trailers, station promos, consumer invitations such "visit our website", and event advertising for organised events can then be used as branding tactics.

Radio media and Classic 1027 in South Africa

In South Africa, commercial radio stations are privately owned, whereas ownership of community stations are obtained from community members. A community radio station can either serve a geographic local community or a community defined by their interest (e.g. social religious, ethnic, cultural) (Mavhungu 2009). The "community" of a radio station could thus be the people that fall within the reach of its transmitted power or "communities of shared interests that might not share a 'common locale'" (Zeeman 2006, 27).

Some past studies offer valuable guidance to radio stations to serve and connect with communities. McMahon's (2021) case study of prominent stations concluded that local radio stations can create a competitive edge by: i) providing relevant community content; ii) developing and retaining audience intimacy, knowledge, and presence; and iii) building communities amongst the audience members on the station and online via streaming and social media in order to foster a sense of belonging and kinship to the radio station. Creating online communities via social network sites can be used to support and enhance regular radio distribution and offer the chance to contribute to programmes, while strengthening the sense of community. Beham's (2020) qualitative exploration of the development of radio media in South Africa confirmed the need to specialise in niche markets and to produce bespoke local content such as news, information, and cultural subject matter.

South African radio stations customarily depended on self-promotions, channels, trailers, and teasers as communication methods, though lately they capitalise on organised or co-organised events, interactions on social media, and streaming their programmes online to expand their listening audiences (Mpofu 2018). Streaming and podcasts provide radio stations wider audience reach from all over the world by offering access to programmes via computers, smartphones, or tablets at diverse locations from their homes, offices, and when travelling (Rab 2021). The performance of a radio station is not only about the numbers reached, but also about creating a relationship with and attaining loyalty from their listeners (Spangardt, Ruth and Schramm 2016). To encourage this bond, radio stations (including Classic 1027) do not only rely on their real live radio broadcasts, but offer various additional platforms such as:

- their website with multi-media components e.g. videos, playlists, and podcasts);
- live streaming features available on its website and DSTv channel 857, and
- their Facebook page and live events e.g. annual music festivals, acrobatic art films and national children's theatre (Classic102 2021a).

This article focuses specifically on the brand personality of Classic 1027 during a repositioning campaign. Classic 1027 was placed under business rescue at the end of 2019, but emerged from business rescue in 2020 with the help of media specialists. The station consequently implemented repositioning strategies to attract a larger, more diverse audience, and extended their broadcast content (e.g. business and financial focused programmes) to maximise their reach on FM and digital platforms and to gain advertiser confidence (Marklives 2020). The station was repositioned to expand from mainly serving older listeners and serious classical musical connoisseurs to a more mainstream audience. This entailed introducing a new brand name, whereby ClassicFM became Classic 1027, shifting from traditional marketing communication to digital and mass media channels such as self-promotion on their own station, on social media, and outdoor advertising and expanding programme variety and content delivery modes such as a wider variety of music, co-organised events, and online streaming (Classic1027 2021b; Mpofu 2018). This repositioning offered the researchers a unique opportunity to examine listeners' perceptions of the brand during this repositioning exercise.

Previous research on media brand personality and radio media

Radio media researchers have examined contemporary radio content and features. Those in developed countries analysed the adoption of digital radio (Ferguson and Greer 2008), radio presenters online and broadcast behaviour (Greer and Ferguson 2018; Muela-Molina, Martín-Santana and Reinares-Lara 2020; Perelló-Oliver and Muela-Molina 2017). Studies in developing countries like South Africa are scarce, with only a few exceptions found. In an effort to understand the influence of the interesting multi-cultural and political landscape on radio media in South Africa, Van Rooyen and Naudé (2009) explored the translation practices in radio newsrooms and Jansen van Vuuren (2017) examined the influence of journalism ideology on the production of radio current affairs.

The limited research found on media brand personality can be classified into three categories based on subjects researched (see Table 1).

Table 1: Prior research on media brand personality

Source	Research aim	Methods/design	Key findings
1. Brand personality of broadcast and Print media			
Chan-Olmsted and Cha (2007); United States	Applicability of BP for news brands; differences between broadcast and cable news BPS	Data were collected through a national mail survey with 113 USA adults and 165 students Macro: Aaker's BPS	Three major dimensions of News BP • Competence • Timeliness • Dynamism Six news outlets have distinct brand personalities.
Chan-Olmsted and Cha (2008); United States	The antecedents and effects of brand images for television news	Survey with 113 USA adults and 165 students Macro: Aaker's BPS	Three major dimensions of News BP • Competence • Timeliness • Dynamism Antecedents (attitudes, importance of anchors, television as a news source) shape the BP. News outlet BP (especially competence) contributes to audience attitudes, usage, and loyalty.
Kim, Baek and Martin (2010); United States	BP dimensions across multiple news media outlets (such as television and print)	Survey with 444 journalism and mass communication students Macro: Aaker's BPS	Five news media BP dimensions • Trustworthiness • Dynamism • Sincerity • Sophistication • Toughness

Source	Research aim	Methods/design	Key findings
			Differences in the nature of BP characteristics between different news media types.
Sung and Park, (2011); United States	Dimensions of cable television network BP	Survey administered via an online consumer panel Two phases: (189 +191) = 380 Macro: Aaker's BPS	Five dimensions of network cable network BP - Excitement - Warmness - Intelligence - Controversy - Ruggedness Five dimensions are aligned with those identified by Aaker's. Controversy is unique to cable network brands. Sophistication not observed.
Valette-Florence and De Barnier (2013); France	Create and validate a BP scale for print media	Survey with an online panel of 780 male and 59% female loyal readers of 24 different print publications Micro: conception	Five major dimensions of e-print media BP - Respectability - Disingenuousness - Conviviality - Assertiveness - Charm BP predicts consumers' self-identification to brands.
2. E-BPS of online / social media platforms			
Mutsikiwa and Maree (2019); South Africa	BP of Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn	Survey via a Qualtrics online panel of 1068 Macro: Aaker's BPS	Two-factor solutions: - Facebook: Excitement and Sincerity - YouTube: Excitement and Sincerity - LinkedIn: Competence and Excitement Social media brand personalities do not adhere to the original BPS structure.
Park, Choi and Kim (2005); Korea	Feasibility of constructing E-BP for online services by using visual attributes of websites	Three stages - Literature review of personality adjectives - Survey with 470 to identify e-BP - Evaluation of appropriateness of adjectives by experts Micro: conception	Major dimensions of e-BP on diverse websites: - Balance - Cohesion - Contrast - Density - Regularity Can create different BP via website attributes: - Analytical BP via contrast, density, and regularity. - Friendly BP via contrast, cohesion, density and regularity. - Sophisticated BP via regularity and balance.
Pentina, Zhang Basmanova and (2013);	Exploring the role of perceived self-BPS match in	Online survey with 184 users from the US and 125 users from Ukraine	Trust in Twitter is positively associated with patronage intentions towards the hosted brands followed by Ukrainian Twitter users.

Source	Research aim	Methods/design	Key findings
Ukraine	strengthening brand trust		Relationship between prior engagements with hosted brands with behavioural intentions towards those brands for both countries.
3. Brand personality of radio content (music, presenters)			
Dann and Jensen (2007); America and Ukraine	BPS of contemporary Australian roots music (music genre)	Qualitative interviews conducted with musicians and music industry professionals Data analysis through identifying themes and patterns Macro: Aaker's BPS and Okazakis' scale	• Competence • Excitement • Sophistication • Affection • Sincerity • Ruggedness Aaker's BPS and Okazakis' online BPS six dimensions of network cable networks.
Spangardt, Ruth and Schramm (2016); Germany	Influence of Radio Presenter BPS on radio listener behaviour	Laboratory Experimentation 236 participants completed a survey after listening to a radio program Micro: conception	Two-factors: • Likeability • Aplomb (Coolness) Only likeability significantly influenced presenter-related behavioural intention.

Category one involves studies on the brand personality of broadcast and print media in the USA (Chan-Olmsted and Cha 2007, Chan-Olmsted and Cha 2008; Kim Baek and Martin 2010) and France (Valette-Florence and De Barnier 2013). Category two relates to studies on the electronic brand personality of online and social media platforms, such as some recent extensions of the brand personality concept to digital media, for example websites in a Korean context (Park, Choi and Kim 2005), social media brands with the comparison of Twitter users from Ukraine and the USA (Pentina, Zhang and Basmanova 2013), and social media platforms users of Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn in South Africa (Mutsikiwa and Maree 2019).

Scholarly work on radio media also focused on brand personality of radio content (category three). More than a decade ago, Dann and Jensen (2007) explored how the brand personality concept can be applied to specific genres of music. Different genres of music are characterised by different levels of authenticity, with manufactured pop music, for example, being rather unoriginal and experience-led lyrical genres like blues, country and western being more distinctive. This qualitative exploration found that these genres have a stronger brand personality. It was concluded that the conceptual framework of Aaker's BPS can be applied to music branding behaviour, but there exists an opportunity for further investigation of using intentional BP in music and media playing music. More recently, Spangardt, Ruth and

Schramm (2016) implemented an experimental design to determine the influence of radio presenters' brand personality on radio listener behaviour. In this study, the positive and negative aspects of presenters' brand personality were measured, rather than testing the applicability of the conceptual framework of Aaker's BPS to radio stations as brands.

The examination of media brand personality can follow either a micro approach customised for specific media types or a macro approach by applying a general brand personality inventory. Certain researchers constructed brand personality scales for particular media such as print media (Valette-Florence and De Barnier 2013), websites (Park, Choi, and Kim 2005), and radio presenters (Spangardt, Ruth and Schramm 2016). Most applied the general BPS of Aaker (1997) consisting of warmness, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness dimensions across different media types such as broadcast and print media (Chan-Olmsted and Cha 2007, Chan-Olmsted and Cha 2008; Kim, Baek and Martin 2010; Sung and Park 2011); online; or social media platforms (Mutsikiwa and Maree 2019; Park, Choi and Kim 2005). Sung and Park (2011) report that the dimensions of cable television network brand personality are aligned to that of the original Aaker (1997) BPS. Several other studies, however, have found that the media brand personality of broadcast and print media types (e.g., Chan-Olmsted and Cha 2007, Chan-Olmsted and Cha 2008; Valette-Florence and De Barnier 2013), as well as those of online and social media platforms (Mutsikiwa and Maree 2019), does not support the structure of the original BPS. Notably, an extensive literature review did not reveal any study focusing on the structure of radio brand personality in the extant body of knowledge.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

In this paper, brand personality is explored through the theoretical lens of anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is defined as the inclination to consider the behaviour (actual or imagined) of non-human objects, as if it were influenced by human-like traits, motives, intentions, or sentiments (Epley et al. 2007). Brand anthropomorphism plays a role in the establishment of brand image, as it enables consumers to view the brand as a "person" and link such intangible personality aspects to the meaning of the brand feeds into the brand equity process.

Guido and Peluso (2015) mention that research on how consumers anthropomorphise brands has only gained traction relatively recently. Belk and Kniazeva (2018) indicate that brand anthropomorphism research is informed by brand personality work, citing several authors

across a range of contexts. Accordingly, it is proposed that radio listeners view the focal radio station brand to be imbued by human characteristics and will thus perceive it to have a particular brand personality.

Brand personality has been shown in empirical research to influence a variety of outcomes. Eisend and Stokburger-Sauer (2013) performed a meta-analytic study to determine antecedents, outcomes, and moderators of brand personality. Among others, attitudes and behavioural intentions (focal brand responses in this study) were shown to be consequences of brand personality – with differing effects for the dimensions (Eisend and Stokburger-Sauer 2013).

Attitudes refer to positive or negative learned predispositions towards a focal object (Maree 2017). In this paper, the respondents' attitudes toward the radio station brand as well as towards the classical music genre are examined. Examining attitudes towards the brand as well as the focal music genre of this niche radio station serves to inform a broader view of the target audience's predispositions. Ajzen (1991) indicates that behavioural intentions are indicative of individuals' anticipated effort to perform a behaviour. For the purpose of this research, the respondents' intentions to continue listening to Classic 1027 represent behavioural intentions.

Empirical work supports associations between brand personality dimensions and attitudes, as well as behavioural intentions. Mutsikiwa (2018) found that certain brand personality dimensions of social media platforms influenced attitudes. Similarly, Sharifsamet, Jin and Martin (2020) found positive relationships for destination brands. In a study among Indian consumers, Rup, Gochhayat and Samanta (2021) report positive relationships between brand personality dimensions and attitudes as well as behavioural intentions. The latter construct was also shown to be influenced by brand personality for cell phone brands (Akin 2011), tourist destinations (Usakli and Baloglu 2011), and e-retailers (Das and Khatwani 2018).

Considering the evidence in the cited literature, it is likely that there will be positive associations between brand personality and attitudes as well as behavioural intentions in the context of a radio station brand. Therefore, the following hypotheses were set for this study:

- H_1: There is a significant positive relationship between radio station brand personality and radio listener attitudes towards the classical radio station brand.

- H2: There is a significant positive relationship between radio station brand personality and radio listener attitudes towards classical music.
- H3: There is a significant positive relationship between radio station brand personality and the behavioural intentions of radio listeners.

METHODOLOGY

Population, sample, and data collection

The target research population consisted of adult South African radio listeners who listen to classical music. The sampling was done using a non-probability quota technique from a qualified online panel to reflect the demographic characteristics of typical Classic 1027 listeners. With non-probability quota sampling researchers create a sample by selecting individuals to represent specific traits or qualities of a population (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009). The total realised sample was 150 Classic 1027 listeners.

An independent research company distributed a structured electronic questionnaire among a panel of listeners of the focal radio station. The target sample was expected to complete the survey within two weeks of release. Respondents were requested to complete the survey via a mobile survey platform. The survey instrument included an introduction and consent letter to ensure adherence to ethical requirements.

Measures

The focal constructs of brand personality, attitudes towards Classic 1027, general attitudes towards classical music, and behavioural intentions were measured using 5-point Likert-style scales (1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree). Perceptions of brand personality of Classic 1027 were measured using Aaker's (1997) BPS, adapted to the context of the study and informed by media-related research (Chan-Olmsted and Cha 2008; Kim, Baek and Martin; 2010; Mutsikiwa and Maree 2019; Sung and Park 2011). The dimensions measured in the survey included warmness, excitement (four items each), competence (three items) and sophistication (two items).

One-item scales were used to measure attitudes towards Classic 1027, attitudes towards classical music, and future intention to listen to Classic 1027. The choice was made in consideration of the requirements of the client for a concise survey, the electronic format of the survey, and as the analyses for this study would allow for the use of single-item scales. Utilising single-item scales is acceptable in exploratory research with smaller samples where the constructs being measured is concrete (Diamantopoulos, Sarstedt, Fuchs, Wilczynski, and Kaiser 2012). The constructs of attitudes and behavioural intentions in the case of this study may be considered as sufficiently concrete to allow single-item measures. Furthermore, the items typically used in such scales often show high semantic redundancy (Diamantopoulos et al. 2012), which supports the use of single-item rather than multiple-items scales. All three these constructs generally feature items that have redundancy. For example, for behavioural intention multiple items would be "I plan to listen to Classic 1027 in future", "I intend to listen to Classic 1027 in future", and "I will try to listen to Classic 1027" when following the guidelines for a multi-item scale as recommended by Ajzen (2002). At face value, the semantic redundancy is clear.

Listening behaviour was measured by frequency of radio listening on both weekdays and weekends (0 minutes to 60+ minutes), as well as general classical music listening behaviour (hardly ever to daily). The questionnaire concluded with demographics questions (age and gender).

Applying measurements based on past media-related research in the questionnaire helped to enhance validity. The questionnaire was also reviewed by experts, such as the CEO of the station and media strategist, to enhance face validity before the final data collection. This resulted in some minor changes, such as the use of synonyms for selected items (the word "intelligent" was replaced by "informative"; up-to-date was replaced by "modern"), to describe the perceived brand personality of the radio station more accurately.

DATA ANALYSES

The data were analysed using SPSS Version 27. Descriptive analyses were done to examine the data and to develop the sample profile. To meet the RO 1, an EFA was conducted to explore the structure of the brand personality of Classic 1027. Reliability was assessed using

Cronbach's Alpha at level, with 0.7 or more considered acceptable (Hair et al. 2019). The EFA was run using principal axis factoring (PAF) with a Promax rotation, considering Eigenvalues exceeding 1 and factor loadings above 0.3. The choice was based on Osborne's (2014) recommendations as social science data commonly result in correlated factors, supporting the use of oblique rotations. To determine the factorability of the data, Bartlett's test of sphericity (significant) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (exceeding 0.6) were utilised as recommended by Pallant (2013:199). Correlation analyses (Pearson's product moment correlations) and a standard multiple regression analysis were conducted to test the proposed hypotheses related to RO 2.

RESULTS

Sample profile and behavioural patterns

The sample comprised of 56% female and 44% male respondents, with a mean age of 49.7 (SD=16.374), thereby also reflecting the gender and age demographic characteristics of Classic 1027 listeners (Classic1027:2021b). The respondents were frequent listeners of classical music, as the majority (55.3%) reported listening to classical music daily. Similarly, the majority (58%) reported that they listen to the radio more than an hour on weekdays and 46% engaged in radio listening for more than an hour on weekends.

Attitudes and behavioural intentions

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics for the respondents' attitudes and behavioural intentions.

Table 2 Means and standard deviations for attitudes and behavioural intentions

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attitude towards radio station	4.01	1.198
Attitude towards classical music	4.52	0.792
Behavioural intentions (future listening to radio station)	4.43	0.847

The respondents showed highly positive attitudes towards Classic 1027 as well as classical music in general. They had high intentions of listening to Classic 1027 in future.

Brand personality

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

In order to meet RO 1, the structure of Classic 1027 brand personality was explored using an EFA. The data from the brand personality measure was factorable as the KMO was 0.922 (Bartlett's = 0.000). Only two factors were extracted, rather than the expected four, representing 53.4% and 5.9% of the variance, respectively. The reliability (internal consistency) of the two subscales was high as the Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded 0.7 (Factor 1=0.903; Factor 2=0.902).

Upon closer inspection of the items that loaded on the two factors, it was seen that all the items from the original "excitement" dimension loaded on Factor 1, along with two items from "warmness" (cheerful; lively), and one from "sophistication" (romantic). Factor 1 was subsequently labelled as "enthusiasm". Factor 2 retained all the items from the original "competence" dimension, as well as two from "warmness" (sincere; unique) and two from "sophistication" (classy; charming). It was labelled "inventiveness".

In consideration of the meaning of the items that loaded on the two factors (Hair et al. 2019), and how strongly they loaded, the factors were defined as follows: Enthusiasm refers to the brand as lively, contemporary, and creative and, for the purpose of this paper, can be viewed as the heart of the Classic 1027 brand. This paper presents "inventiveness" as the brand's mind, as it represents the sincerity, informativeness, and novelty of the brand. These two facets capture the Classic 1027 brand holistically.

Descriptively, the respondents perceived Classic 1027 brand as more enthusiastic (*M*=4.0, *SD*=0.774) than inventive (*M*=3.3, *SD*=0.836).

Hypotheses testing

In order to meet RO 2, Pearson's product moment correlations were performed to test the relationships between the two brand personality dimensions and attitudes. A standard multiple regression was used to examine how the brand personality dimensions predicted respondents' behavioural intentions.

Brand personality and attitudes

The results showed that there were significant positive relationships between both of the brand personality dimensions and attitudes towards Classic 1027 as well as toward classical music – supporting H$_1$ and H$_2$. The "enthusiasm" dimension showed a large positive relationship with attitudes towards Classic 1027 (p=0.000; r=0.521), while the "inventiveness" dimension's association was small (p=0.001; r=0.278). The correlation between the "enthusiasm" dimension and attitude towards classical music (p=0.002; r=0.250) was small. Similarly, the "inventiveness" dimension's correlation with attitude towards classical music was small (p=0.039; r=0.169).

Brand personality and behavioural intentions

In order to explore how the brand personality dimensions influenced behavioural intentions, a standard multiple regression was run. The required assumptions (e.g. sample size, normality, outliers, linearity, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity) were checked as recommended by Pallant (2013). The total of 150 respondents exceeded the minimum required sample size of 66. The normality assumption was met upon inspection of the Normal P-P Plot and scatterplot. Multicollinearity was not present as the tolerance values (enthusiasm=0.413; inventiveness=0.413) exceeded 0.10 and the VIF values (both 2.424) were below 10. Outliers in the dataset were detected as the Mahlalanobis distance (13.83) was slightly more than 13.82. However, Cook's distance (0.427) was below 1, indicating that the cases would not present a problem. As the assumptions have been met satisfactorily, the regression was run. The results showed that the model is significant and the Adjusted R Square indicated that 31% ($F_{(2, 147)}$=34.481, p=0.000) of the variance in behavioural intentions was explained by the model. Table 3 presents the results of the testing of the hypothesis.

Table 3 Results for testing of H$_3$

Constructs	*Beta* (*t*-value)	*p*	Hypothesis result
Enthusiasm	0. 570 (5,380)	0.000	Supported
Inventiveness	-0.006 (-0,060)	0,953	Not supported

Of the two brand personality dimensions, only "enthusiasm" was shown to be a statistically significant (*Beta*=0.570, *t*-value=5.380, *p*=0.000) predictor of behavioural intentions. This provides partial support for H$_3$.

DISCUSSION

Informed by anthropomorphism theory and past studies on media brand personality (refer to Table 1), this paper aimed to generate new insights for the body of radio media research. This aim was achieved by exploring the brand personality of a niche classical music radio station. Further, it investigated how the station's brand personality related to two important brand responses: attitudes and behavioural intentions. This was done as the brand was in process of repositioning and the results thus give preliminary evidence of the success of the repositioning exercise.

The behavioural patterns of the respondents suggest heavy use of both classical music and radio listening. In this regard, the respondents may be considered as highly representative of the target listener base for Classic 1027. The results revealed positive brand attitudes, music genre attitudes, and high behavioural intentions, suggesting that Classic 1027 achieved strong brand responses, which bodes well for the brand's future brand resonance.

The structure of this radio media brand personality did not follow Aaker's proposed structure, as was also the case in other literature on media brand personality. Similar to the results of this research, Chan-Olmsted and Cha (2007, 2008) and Valette-Florence and De Barnier (2013) report that the brand personality of broadcast and print media types did not adhere to Aaker's BP structure. This was also found by Mutsikiwas and Maree (2019) for social media platforms. The results of this study suggest that niche station radio stations (such as Classic 1027) might have different characteristics, as was the case for these other media types. This may be due to the African context of this research, as Ahmad and Thyagaraj (2014) suggest that differences in the structure of the Aaker BPS across cultures may be due to its origin - the United States of America - and that its dimensions are not stable in non-Western countries. The results of this research indicated that the Classic 1027 brand personality is seen as two-dimensional: predominantly "enthusiastic" and to a lesser extent "inventive". This is in line with one of the aims of the repositioning, which was to present a more modern image.

When considering the brand response, Classic 1027 seems to have been successful in achieving brand meaning, as the means for the brand personality dimensions support a favourable view on the brand's personality imagery. Furthermore, the results showed positive brand responses

on the affective and cognitive levels, as evident from the high means for attitudes and behavioural intentions.

Both brand personality dimensions had positive relationships with brand attitude. In particular, the "enthusiasm" dimension emerged with a strong relationship. These results are in line with literature that examined destination (Sharifsamet et al. 2020) and social media (Mutsikiwa 2018) brands. Similar to the findings of this paper, Mutsikiwa (2018) reports that one of the two brand personality dimensions found in their study, "excitement" was significantly positively related to brand attitude for both Facebook and LinkedIn. Sharifsamet et al.'s (2020) findings showed a positive relationship between their "competence" dimension and attitudes towards destination brands. The findings of this research therefore add support to the body of extant knowledge on how brand personality influences favourable brand attitudes, suggesting that this association is also applicable to radio stations as media brands.

Furthermore, the "enthusiasm" dimension was shown to be a significant predictor of behavioural intention, sharing some similarities with existing literature (Das and Khatwani 2018; Rup et al. 2021). The former found that all e-retailer brand personality dimensions showed a positive influence on intentions. In this research, only one dimension was a significant predictor, suggesting that for radio media brands a particular aspect of the brand's personality may have a stronger influence and may thus warrant more focused strategic marketing attention. The findings by Rup et al. (2021) similarly found that not all brand personality dimensions predict intention strongly for various brands of cell phones.

IMPLICATIONS

The brand manager of the station needs to consider that the "enthusiasm" aspect of the brand's personality is worth promoting in order to retain listeners as it also aligns with the repositioning of the brand to be more modern, relevant, and accessible.

As the brand personality was shown to influence positively the desired brand responses, the brand should capitalise on this in their marketing communication, highlighting the enthusiasm" aspects of the brand. The station can benefit from awareness campaigns demonstrating their contemporary technology services, broadcasting via digital audio broadcasting or satellite, and integrating with other media and technologies such as website visits, live events hosted by the

radio stations, HD Radio, podcasts, and live streaming. The station should consider joining forces with quality musical instruments brands (e.g. Yamaha, Gibson), educational institutions (Red Bull Music Academy, music departments of universities) or young contemporary musicians, bands, and even DJs of diverse genres such as Amira Willighagen, Soweto String Quartet, Freshlyground, and Black Coffee to co-host innovative music festivals and events. Another opportunity is to host online and live outdoor events where various activities such as yoga, workshops, dancing, celebrations, artwork, poetry, crafts, storytelling, and meditating are combined with different classical music performances (e.g. romantic, musicals, movie soundtracks, video game music). Expanding to new digital platforms and offering innovative experiences as suggested would help to reach younger audiences and bringing classical into the mainstream.

The study results suggest that Classic 1027 has been successful in attaining brand meaning through the imagery of their brand personality in the repositioning process. Niche station radio stations (such as Classic 1027) with limited sources do not have to compete directly with larger popular radio stations in South Africa such as Metro; Jacaranda, and RSG, but can capitalise on their brand personality to form an emotional bond with their listeners.

Further, favourable affective and cognitive brand responses resulted from the brand meaning (brand personality). The study findings provide strong evidence of loyal listeners when considering their radio listening behavioural patterns. The existing relationships may be strengthened by involving listeners in the programming, for example, allowing listeners the opportunity to express preferences and provide suggestions for music content. This may be done using interactive features on the radio website, social media pages, and even a smartphone application. Further, engagement with presenters may be encouraged via these complementary channels.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research utilised a cross-sectional sample of radio listeners selected via non-probability sampling, which limits generalisability. It was focused on a specific, niche radio station brand, selected due to its repositioning. For future radio medium studies, researchers can examine a variety of radio brands across diverse categories. This will also enable comparisons of brand

personality for brands that serve diverse markets. Another avenue of research is to move beyond the consumer market to the business-to-business market, by exploring advertisers' and their agencies' readiness to evaluate advertising media based on audiences' brand responses, rather than vehicles delivering reach and frequency.

The current study examined BPS dimensions of and responses to a media distributor radio station brand (Classic 1027) during a repositioning campaign. Researchers are therefore encouraged to examine changes in media BPS dimensions and responses, by comparing pre-, during and post-positioning timeframes. Future studies could also consider how the BPS applies to digital distributor brands offering access to content such as Netflix, Showmax, and TikTok; wholesale media brands facilitating rights and licensing agreements for distributors (e.g., Ster-Kinekor; Nu Metro); and content media brands such as shows, series, movies, programmes, presenters, and podcasts. In terms of brand salience (position in the consumers consideration set under various situations or circumstances) it could be worthwhile to compare different media types such as offline media, online media, and social online during and after Covid-19 lockdown periods. In terms of brand responses, consumers' affective and cognitive responses to different content (e.g., entertainment or informational) offline and online media could be compared.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper investigated a niche South African radio station in the process of repositioning. New insights were offered by exploring the brand personality of the Classic 1027 radio station and the brand personality was proven to influence key brand responses. The evidence of this research suggests that the Classic 1027 brand created a strong brand personality through its repositioning and that the personality facets represent the essence of the brand well.

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