Abstract. Brand image is supposed to influence consumers’ product evaluations. The goal of this study was to enlighten this phenomenon. A total of 220 participants rated fictitious but realistic articles from newspapers that have different images: Blick, a popular tabloid newspaper and NZZ, a traditional quality newspaper. Articles were created that appeared as if they were copied from Blick or NZZ but, in fact, both contained the same text. The main hypothesis that product ratings would differ as a result of the manipulation of image was confirmed. Participants evaluated the fictitious articles completely differently. As expected, product ratings were in line with the related brand images. Also, more salient stimuli elicited stronger image effects. The effect persisted at general as well as detailed product-rating levels. Next to product ratings, image effects also influenced participants’ consumption experiences. Involvement, knowledge, and usage did not moderate the image effect.

Keywords: brand image, product evaluation, consumer judgment, heuristic decision making, image effects

“Fine feathers make fine birds” – this saying holds true for brand image, too. In recent years, image has been regarded as an ever more important factor in human reasoning and is especially evident in buying decisions. Concerning consumer psychology, it is known that many products differ less in what they are but more in what they seem to be (e.g., Ballantyne, Warren, & Nobbs, 2006) and what they seem to be is largely determined by the products’ brand images. In other words, brand image is what makes the consumer buy – or not buy (e.g., Aaker, 1991). This is true not only for fast moving consumer goods (FMCG), such as candy bars or toothpaste (e.g., Martenson, 2007) but also for intangibles in the service, media, and telecommunication sectors. The importance of brand image is also known in political marketing (e.g., Cwalina, Falkowski, & Kaid, 2005; Yannas, 2002) and tourism (e.g., Hankinson, 2005; Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006). Following this research line, the present study explored image effects on consumer behavior in the previously unexplored domain of newspaper media. This domain allows for a highly valid operationalization of the “same message, different sender” scenario, which is well established in studies on persuasion (e.g., Hovland & Weiss, 1951) and stereotypes (e.g., Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). Our goal was to find evidence for effects that are caused solely by isolated manipulations of image, which has rarely been done before. Moderating factors were also investigated.

Images as Stereotypes

Image has manifold effects on consumers. Even professional buyers obviously cannot always resist images: Although purchasing agents are generally thought to be better informed than average consumers (Webster & Wind, 1972), their evaluations of product quality, nevertheless, depend on the image of the manufacturing country (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). While the importance of brand images for consumer judgment is ubiquitously described in the literatures on marketing and consumer behavior (e.g., Essig, Souls de Russel, & Semanakova, 2003; Glogger, 1999; Trommsdorff, 2004), specific attempts to provide experimental evidence for the direct effects of image on consumer behavior have been relatively rare. Consequently, the main goal of this study was to elicit and quantify the main effects of brand images on consumers’ product ratings.

We understand image as the stereotype held toward a brand and propose that image effects in consumer behavior are analogous to stereotypes in social cognition. This conception facilitates the understanding of image effects, because images have a lot in common with stereotypes, as both represent schematically simplified, socially shared cognitions toward objects (e.g., Maheswaran, 1994). Stereotypes occur when individuals think categorically about others (e.g., Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). In this way, information is drawn from cognitive schemata that contain simplified information about objects. Thus, when cognitive resources are limited information is processed more automatically and with less effort. Transferred to consumer psychology, this means that image effects occur when consumers think categorically about products. Accordingly, we assume that images contain schematically simplified information about brands. Because products are associated with their manufacturers’ brand images, we expect that consumers draw information about products from brand images.
As stereotype research shows, stereotypes may prevail even when individuals try to control automaticity (e.g., Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994), possibly because of ironic monitoring processes (Wegner, 1994). Analogously, image effects might also prevail even when consumers think thoroughly about products. Considering the similarity of image effects and stereotypes, research on image effects may be investigated using similar scenarios. An illustrative study that exemplifies this similarity was conducted by Maheswaran (1994), who found that the image associated with a product’s country-of-origin may be used as a schematic cue for product evaluations.

The present study also ties in with prior research on sender effects (e.g., Hovland & Weiss, 1951), which increased our understanding of the determinants of persuasive communication (e.g., Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Petty & Briñol, 2008). Hovland and Weiss (1951) presented the same news message, but apparently originating from a source with either high or low credibility. They then assessed participants’ degree of information retention and opinion change, which was higher for credible sources. The present study adopts this scenario for the field of consumer psychology by extending the independent variable from source credibility to brand image and the dependent variable from retention and opinion to general product ratings.

**Prior Research on the Importance of Image**

Some previous studies have underlined the importance of brand image. Allison and Uhl (1964) set up a taste test in which participants had to rate labeled or unlabeled beers. Ratings were higher when there were labels on the bottles than when the labels had been removed. Furthermore, the rating of the worst-rated labeled beer was higher than the rating of the best-rated unlabeled beer. Nevid (1981) replicated this with soda water and pointed out that products may be rated by their intrinsic or their extrinsic cues. Image belongs to the latter. Intrinsic cues for soda water are taste or carbonation, while extrinsic cues are brand label or bottle shape. Wansink, Park, Sonka, and Morganosky (2000) set up another taste test. They found that soy labels and health claims on the packaging of a nutrition bar negatively biased taste perception. A different aspect of image has been demonstrated by Sirgy (e.g., 1985, 1986), who found that consumers strive to bring their self-identity into congruence with the images of the brands that they prefer. More recently, Escalas and Bettman (2003, 2005) confirmed this and stated that consumers choose the same brands as their peer groups. The effectiveness of images was also shown by Shiv, Carmon, and Ariely (2005) in a study on price image. Participants had to solve puzzles just after consuming an energy drink and that was either regular or discount priced. In the discounted condition, fewer puzzles were solved. Irmak, Block, and Fitzsimons (2005) confirmed these remarkable findings.

A study by Carpusor and Loges (2006) illustrates how ethnic subgroups are affected by their images. This phenomenon is well-known from the literature on stereotypes and underlines the close relationship between images and stereotypes. The authors sent rental inquiries to landlords. The fictitious sender had a name that sounded White, African American, or Arab. White-sounding names received more positive answers than names that implied either Arab or African American ethnicity. Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) used the same scenario in their meaningfully titled study, “Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal?” They sent out resumes to help-wanted ads. In fact, despite identical resumes, White-sounding names received more invitations to a job interview. These findings of social cognition research are similar to the country-of-origin effect in consumer psychology (e.g., Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999): Product evaluations vary depending on the manufacturing country. For instance, a majority of consumers favor German cars over French cars but prefer French wine to German wine.

The literature reviewed so far makes clear how strongly images influence consumer judgments. In the present study, we wanted to extend this research line by adapting the scenario of same message, different sender from prior research on stereotypes (e.g., Carpusor & Loges, 2006) and persuasive communication (e.g., Hovland & Weiss, 1951) to consumers’ quality judgments in the media domain. Our goal was to manipulate only brand image and show its isolated main effect on consumers’ product ratings. Since the effects of media brand images have not been explored in experimental research, we chose newspaper articles as the product domain. Newspaper articles allow the creation of highly plausible stimuli, and the newspaper market in Switzerland, where this study was conducted, offers newspaper brands with salient images: Blick, Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ), 20 Minuten, and Tages-Anzeiger.

**Hypotheses**

Following the previous line of argument, we hypothesized that participants’ evaluations of the newspaper articles would be affected by the sheer manipulation of the images and that the ratings would be in line with the images of the two newspaper brands:

- H1: Product quality ratings vary in line with manipulated brand images.

Considering the ratings of Blick and NZZ in the pilot studies (see the Method section), H1 implies that the article from Blick will be rated inferior as compared to the article from NZZ.

We further assumed an influence of product originality and salience on participants’ perception of brands and the size of the image effect, since prototype theory (Rosch, 1973, 1978) predicts that an object is seen as more central in its category if more characteristic cues are available. Ac-
Accordingly, we predicted a larger image effect if not only the brand name but also the layout of the articles was manipulated:

- H2: The image effect is larger if both brand name and layout are manipulated.

We further expected that image effects would show up on both a holistic level, consisting of only one single, general product rating, and on a detailed, multidimensional level, consisting of different image attributes:

- H3: Image effects occur both on a holistic, unidimensional product rating level and on a detailed, multidimensional level.

Against the background of dual-process theories of information processing (e.g., Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly, 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), we assumed that at higher levels of involvement, knowledge, or product usage, individuals would be less subject to the influence of brand images. We hypothesized accordingly that involvement, knowledge, and usage would moderate the effect of image:

- H4a: Involvement decreases the effect of image on product rating.
- H4b: Knowledge decreases the effect of image on product rating.
- H4c: Usage decreases the effect of image on product rating.

To explore whether the image manipulation would also have effects on other attributes than image attributes, some additional items that relate to the consumer experience were included. We asked participants if while reading the article they had the experience of being challenged, informed, displeased, or fooled.

- H5: Different brand images elicit respective consumption experiences.

**Method**

In order to find the best suited newspaper brands for our experiment, pretests were conducted, two with laypeople and one with experts. In order to ensure the validity of our study, we wanted to identify two newspapers that had distinct images. We initially considered the four most widely read Swiss newspapers for the study: 20 Minuten, Blick, NZZ, and Tages-Anzeiger. From these, we selected Blick and NZZ, because at the time of the study, the image of 20 Minuten was not well enough established, and it was evident that Tages-Anzeiger was anchored too regionally. Blick reaches 717,000 readers; NZZ 331,000.

**Image Pretests**

In a first pretest involving 25 undergraduate psychology students, NZZ was consistently rated as serious and classy, as well as reliable and well-researched; Blick as sloppy and sexist, cheap and superficial. The results confirmed that the newspapers have clearly different images. We conducted a second pretest (N = 65; undergraduate psychology students) with an extended set of image attributes and found analogous ratings. Both pretests exhibited significant differences between the two chosen brands on all but 2 of 29 image items.

Experts have different representations of knowledge than laypeople (e.g., Reumann, 1998), which implies that experts also hold different images. To test this, eight professional journalists and newspaper editors, respectively, were asked to rate Blick and NZZ on the same image attributes as in the second pretest. The image ratings obtained from the experts did not differ from the ratings by the laypeople. Participants from all pretests were also asked a question that would allow the detection of self-image congruity (e.g., Sitzgy, 1985) regarding the newspaper brands: “Do you see yourself as a reader of Blick or NZZ?” The majority of pretest participants clearly assigned themselves to NZZ.

**Participants**

A total of 220 participants (155 women and 65 men, average age M = 26.4, SD = 7.8) took part. Of these, 196 were recruited on a mailing list for psychology students and completed an online survey. The remaining 24 participants were passers-by, recruited on campus to complete a printed version of the same survey.

**Materials and Manipulation**

The stimuli were key elements for the intended experimental manipulation of image and were created especially carefully. The experimental idea was to have participants evaluate a newspaper article ostensibly from either Blick or NZZ – but in fact, the same text was presented. This allowed us to manipulate only the image, while the article itself remained unchanged. Similar manipulations have been used successfully in stereotype research, for example by Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) and Carpusor and Loges (2006).

The specific “look and feel” of the respective newspapers was applied to the stimuli. Styled with the characteristic, original typeface and layout, and embedded within the typical header and page design, authentically looking articles could be created, as Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate. Because the two newspapers differ also in terms of writing style, an effort was made to create content that would be credible for appearance in both newspapers. The digital
production of the stimuli was carried out by the two newspaper publishers, which supported this research by assigning their original desktop publishers.

The original digital articles were printed on paper, crumpled slightly, cut out with scissors, and then scanned on a flat bed scanner with moderate quality settings. This resulted in two digital image files that looked as if real articles from Blick and NZZ had been scanned. The stimuli were successfully pretested for credibility by sending them out via e-mail to 15 undergraduate psychology students, of whom no one doubted the authenticity and originality of the fictitious articles. Two additional stimuli were created in a neutral layout. They appeared to participants as if they had been transcribed from an original source, using a standard default typeface and layout. One was titled “Blick;” one “NZZ.” These were the without-layout conditions.

Design

The experiment involved a one-factorial between-subjects design: Two groups received the stimulus with both the brand name and the layout cues, two other groups with only the brand name cue. The dependent variable was product quality. Planned contrasts were used to test the hypotheses.

Measures

Product quality as the dependent variable was measured in two ways: First, as a holistic single-item preference rating (“How did you like the article read?”), following the procedure proposed by Sirgy et al. (1997) and second, as a multidimensional product rating scale. The advantage of the one-item preference rating as dependent measure is that it may be regarded as the result of an intentionally diffuse, all-embracing summation of attitudes toward an object, requiring only low involvement and little time. This is adequate for a general product rating. Bergkvist and Rossiter (2007) argue that the predictive validity of such a single-item measure is comparable to scales using multiple items – as long as the concept investigated is “doubly concrete” (Rossiter, 2002), that is, of a general nature, simple, and unambiguous – like brand image, for example.

Still, the disadvantage remains that such a measure does not allow for an analysis of which of the product attributes were more or less prone to image effects. Hence, a multidimensional product rating scale (e.g., “thrilling,” “sincere”; see also Table 1) was administered as a second, more multifaceted measure. Further, to explore whether the manipulation would also have effects on other attributes than
image attributes, a set of items concerning participants’ consumption experiences was included (e.g., “I feel unchallenged,” “I feel displeased”). Also, we expected that image effects could be moderated by involvement, knowledge, and product usage, each of which we assessed on a three-item scale. Participants’ age, education, and profession were surveyed as control variables.

**Procedure**

Participants were asked to take part in a survey on media research. The invitation stated that a newspaper article was to be evaluated. Participants were randomly assigned to the conditions. Participants in the four conditions read the article with either (1) the Blick brand name and layout, (2) only the Blick brand name without layout, (3) the NZZ brand name with layout, or (4) the NZZ brand name without layout.

An invitation text and cover story appeared on the first page of the questionnaire. After that, demographic data were surveyed. The stimulus was then presented as a graphic file embedded into the Web page (with-layout conditions) or as plain text (without-layout conditions). The instruction was: “Please read this newspaper article. Read just as you normally would. On the next page, you will be asked to rate the article.”

No participant doubted that the articles were authentic. Instead, some participants made comments like “I dislike reading articles from Blick” or “this was a very good article, typical of NZZ.”

**Results**

The main hypothesis of this study was that product ratings vary in line with their brand images, if these are manipulated (H1). On the holistic scale, ranging from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), participants in the groups receiving both the brand name and the layout cues rated the article from Blick as inferior (M = 3.06, SD = .92) to the article from NZZ (M = 3.75, SD = .91), t(103) = 4.02, p < .001, d = .77. This indicates a strong effect of the image manipulation (Cohen, 1988) and therefore H1 can be accepted.

Based on the assumption that a product stimulus conveys its associated brand image more convincingly if it appears to be original and realistic, we predicted that the image effect would be larger if both the brand name and the layout cue were given, which supports our prediction.

The product ratings show a linear trend, F(1, 155) = 16.35, p < .01, η² = .105: from Blick with layout (M = 3.06, SD = .92) to Blick without layout (M = 3.35, SD = 1.09), NZZ without layout (M = 3.64, SD = .85), and NZZ with layout (M = 3.75, SD = .91), as Figure 3 shows. This pattern is evidence for hypothesis H1, stating that products are rated in line with their brands’ images. It further illustrates that an image is triggered more saliently when the stimulus is in the original layout (H2). An ANOVA found significant differences among the four groups, F(3, 155) = 5.56, p < .01, η² = .097. Planned contrasts further revealed that the two conditions with both the brand name and the layout cues differed significantly, t(155) = 3.92, p < .001, d = .63, while the two conditions without the layout cue did not differ significantly.

**Multidimensional Product Ratings**

The findings reported so far indicate that image effects occur on a holistic product-rating level. However, we expected that image effects would also occur on a more fine-grained, detailed rating level, where consumers are asked to rate a product on the multiple dimensions of its associated brand image (H3). We found analogous image effects on the multidimensional scale,1 as can be seen in

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1 An exploratory principal component analysis of the scale revealed three factors of quality (42.84% of variance explained), complexity (22.31%), and thrill (11.21%).
Table 1. Overall, the article was rated significantly worse in the *Blick* condition than in the *NZZ* condition. A MANOVA with the scale items as dependent variables and the two conditions with the brand name and the layout cues as independent variable confirmed the previous, univariate findings on the aggregate level, Wilks’s $\lambda = .62$, $F(8, 87) = 6.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .38$, also with a large effect size. Correlating the holistic measure with the average across the items, $r = .61$, $p < .01$.

Table 1. Multiple image dimensions comparison. Mean ratings for “*Blick* with layout” and “*NZZ* with layout”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th><em>Blick</em></th>
<th></th>
<th><em>NZZ</em></th>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thrilling</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincere</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthful</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensible</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>-2.75</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloppy(^1)</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicated(^1)</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>-3.28</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superficial(^1)</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Two-sided; $46 \leq n \leq 54$. \(^1\)Reverse coded, so that higher values mean better ratings.

Figure 4. Image profiles of *Blick* and *NZZ*. Items with an asterisk (*) are reverse coded. *Note.* Scale ranges from 1 (“I do not agree at all”) to 5 (“I fully agree”). All comparisons are significant ($p = .01$), except “meaningful” ($p = .08$); see Table 1.
verage of the multidimensional measure showed that the two measures had high convergent validity ($r = .72$). The results of the multidimensional product-rating measure are visualized as image profiles in Figure 4.

**Moderators**

Our second question examined what factors moderate the image effect. We expected participants’ levels of involvement, knowledge, and product usage to be influential. To test this, a MANCOVA was calculated to compare the two conditions with both the brand name and the layout cues. The items of the multidimensional product-rating measure served as dependent variables. While the condition was still found to strongly influence product ratings, Wilk’s $\lambda = .65, F(8, 79) = 5.36, p < .001, \eta^2 = .35$, none of the hypothesized interactions between brand image and involvement (H4a), knowledge (H4b), and usage (H4c) were significant.

**Consumption Experience Items**

Four items concerning the consumption experience served to investigate whether images also affect other attributes than product-rating attributes. We predicted that different brand images would elicit respective consumption experiences in the conditions with both the brand name and the layout cues (H5). The mean of participants’ answers to “I feel unchallenged by the article” was indeed higher for the condition with Blick ($M = 3.53, SD = 1.1$) than for NZZ ($M = 2.82, SD = 1.15$), $t(107) = 3.28, p < .001, d = .63$. Participants also reported feeling better informed by NZZ ($M = 3.46, SD = .97$) than by Blick ($M = 2.61, SD = .94$), $t(109) = 4.8, p < .001, d = .92$. The mean for “I feel displeased by the article” was slightly higher in the Blick condition ($M = 2.31, SD = 1.29$) than in the NZZ condition ($M = 2.16, SD = 1.23$). This difference points in the expected direction, but it is not significant. The same is the case for “I feel as being taken for a fool by the article,” where Blick ($M = 1.9, SD = .93$) scored slightly higher than NZZ ($M = 1.8, SD = .93$). Although the differences for these two items are not significant, they point in the hypothesized direction. Taken together, these results support our predictions and we therefore accept H5.

Finally, we asked whether participants thought that “This article is an example of good journalism.” Agreement was much higher for participants that read the NZZ article ($M = 2.89, SD = 1.06$) than for those that read the Blick article ($M = 2, SD = .95$), $t(104) = 4.55, p < .001, d = .89$.

None of the sociodemographical variables of gender, income, and education showed significant main effects or interactions for the foregoing analyses.

**Discussion**

The results of this study demonstrate large effects of brand images on consumers’ product evaluations. The main hypothesis that readers rate newspaper articles differently depending on brand image received strong support. The product ratings were in line with the respective brand images: Although the same article was presented to all participants, they rated it inferior if they believed it was taken from Blick rather than from NZZ.

Image effects were detected by both unidimensional and multidimensional product-rating measures. Their high convergent validity suggests that brand images influence consumers’ product ratings on a holistic, general judgment level but also on a more detailed level with several rating attributes. Multidimensional measures allow for detailed analyses of the direction and strength by which product-rating dimensions are affected by brand images. However, using simple-to-apply, unidimensional product-rating measures seems viable for uncovering holistic image effects.

The expectation that image effects are larger, if both the brand names and the characteristic newspaper layouts are manipulated, was also confirmed, as participants’ product ratings tended more toward the respective brand images, if both cues were available. This supports the prediction that brand perception depends, to a large extent, on the salience and prototypicality of the stimuli.

In the present study, image effects were unaffected by involvement, knowledge, and product usage. Considering the background of dual-process theories of information processing (e.g., Chaiken et al., 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), we assumed that these factors might have explained some of the conditions in which image effects occur. However, no moderating effects were found. The finding that these factors, which are traditionally believed to be essential for consumer judgment, did not moderate the influence of image carries a most relevant implication: Image effects might be more influential for economic decision-making processes than previously assumed. At this time, however, we consider this as a preliminary notion that needs to be investigated further.

The aim of finding image effects on consumer judgments in the media domain using the scenario of “same message, different sender” is novel, and therefore, exploratory research questions concerning consumption experiences were also investigated. Our hypothesis that image effects can also be found on other attributes than image attributes was confirmed, because participants’ consumption experiences differed, depending on whether they read the article from Blick or NZZ. This shows that images change not only consumers’ conscious expressions of product ratings but also consumers’ consumption experiences.

In light of this discussion, the finding that involvement, knowledge, and usage do not moderate the effect...
of brand image appears interesting. It relates image effects to the domain of heuristic decision-making and the concept of the “adaptive toolbox.” In this rationale, images could be considered as energy-saving devices for consumer decision-making, just as stereotypes are for social cognition (Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994).

**Directions for Further Research**

Some interesting questions for future research emerge from the present study. Above all, it should be investigated whether involvement, knowledge, and usage really do not moderate image effects. Ironically, the success in detecting image effects in the present study could have caused failure in detecting moderating effects, as very salient images may have overruled the other factors. Therefore, this issue needs to be addressed. Also, future studies might select brands with less distinct images, in order to weight the effects of image, involvement, knowledge, and product usage more equally.

During the course of this study, we became increasingly aware of a strong propensity among the students to give socially desirable responses of despising *Blick* and praising NZZ. Consequently, a reasonable argument is that consumers’ product ratings depend more or less on image, if the respective brand is under normative control. In the present study’s sample, reading a populist newspaper is clearly ill regarded. Subsequent research should consider the normative influence of social groups as a moderator for image effects.

To summarize, the present findings underline the potential of image effects and highlight the influence of brand images on consumers’ product ratings in the media domain. Our preliminary finding that image effects may be unaffected by moderating variables like involvement, knowledge, and usage promises to be most worthwhile for further confirmation in subsequent research.

**References**


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