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**Management of Events Over Time:
The Paradox of Brand Continuity
and Change**

By:

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Management of Events Over Time: The Paradox of Brand Continuity and Change

Johanna Eckerbom, Julija Jadzeviciute, Annie Chingyen Yang

Abstract

Aim: The purpose of this paper is to understand how events manage change over time and the paradox of managing brand continuity while staying relevant.

Method: Qualitative research based on secondary data. A multiple case study is conducted where three events are analyzed over two time periods by applying a core value framework and a corporate brand identity matrix.

Findings: Each of the analyzed cases have implemented changes to their brands over different lengths of time. It could be concluded after analyzing each case that the length of time coupled with the level of change had an effect on the outcome for each event.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications: A new model is developed to illustrate the relationship between the level of change and the length of time and the effect that this has on the outcome of the change for a brand. Managers can use the knowledge derived from these real-life cases to increase their understanding of what potential outcomes changes to their brand can have and how they can manage these changes.

Originality/Value: The research on events and how these manage brand continuity and change over time has been lacking. A multiple case study that uses a core value framework and the corporate brand identity matrix to analyze this paradox of continuity and change therefore provides more knowledge in this field of research.

Keywords: Events, Change Management, Core Value Framework, Corporate Brand Identity Matrix, Brand Continuity

Paper type: Research Paper

Introduction

Managing change and the paradox of staying consistent while also staying relevant is a challenge that all organizations will eventually have to face (Kapferer, 2012). Although successfully managing change can be seen as an important strategic skill for companies to master, researchers state that change management often ends up being too complex for a lot of companies (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Bruch, Gerber & Maier, 2005; Kapferer, 2012; Todnem, 2005; Urde, 2016).

While there exists a substantial amount of research on the challenge of change management and what companies can do to improve these processes (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Bruch, Gerber & Maier, 2005; Kapferer, 2012; Todnem, 2005; Urde, 2016), less research exists on how events as brands can manage this challenge. It would not be uncommon when discussing brands to think about a company, product, or service, in which events are only a minor part of everything else that the company does. However, what

about when the event is the brand? How do events as brands manage the paradox of continuity and change, and could an understanding of their approach be useful for other types of brands?

The aim of this study is therefore to analyze events in order to understand how these have managed change and staying consistent while also remaining relevant over time. Three different cases have been analyzed in this study, of which all can be defined as events. The events in question are World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), Oktoberfest, and Miss Universe. These cases were chosen based on their uniqueness since, as mentioned, there is a lack of research on events and their brand management. In order to study the change management of these events, the following research questions were used:

- What were the main reasons for certain branding changes in each case?
- In what ways did the events try to stay relevant over time and to what extent did they maintain brand continuity?
- What outcome did these changes have for each case?

Theoretical Framework

Events

Events can be defined in a number of ways, one of which is that it is an occurrence made to deliver specific messages to target audiences (Wood, 2009). When brand values are harmonized with individual needs and wants, it accelerates brands to become emotional instead of functional (Melin, 2002; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). Meanwhile, the emotional added value will lead to stronger loyalty in the value creating process (Melin, 2002). During this process, events become a vital point in encouraging the target audience to participate in the marketing communication of the brand (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013).

Keller (2006) elaborated on the brand value chain as being a part of brand equity, stating that, for the consumer-based brand equity approach, what audiences think and feel is one of the vital factors in measuring brand equity. Brand attitude is considered to be one of the key factors contributing to the effectiveness of events (Close, Finney, Lacey & Sneath, 2006; Sneath, Finney & Close, 2005). In addition to brand attitude as the mediating factor, brand experience is crucial in affecting brand equity with cognitive views, sensation and feeling (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). Therefore, in conclusion, for an event to contribute to the growth or stability of brand equity, organizers should be aware of the importance of brand attitude (Keller 2006; Silvers, 2009).

Change Management

A lot of researchers agree that change is an unavoidable reality for every company and brand (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Bruch, Gerber & Maier, 2005; Kapferer, 2012; Todnem, 2005; Urde, 2016). Therefore, it can be understood that successfully managing change is an important strategic ability for brands to conquer. However, research also testifies that change management, due to its high level of complexity and demand of effort and time, pose too big a challenge for most organizations (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Bruch, Gerber & Maier, 2005; Kapferer, 2012; Todnem, 2005; Urde, 2016). The main reasons behind change management failures seem to be a reactive approach to change, poorly planned implementations, and a disconnect between the selected changes and the brand's past and present (Bruch, Gerber & Maier, 2005; Todnem, 2005).

According to Kapferer (2012) a strong brand identity with a unique set of associations and core values is essential for brand continuity. He further describes how certain parts of the brand can guide what can be changed and what should not be changed; these are called kernel facets and peripheral facets. Kernels are the attributes

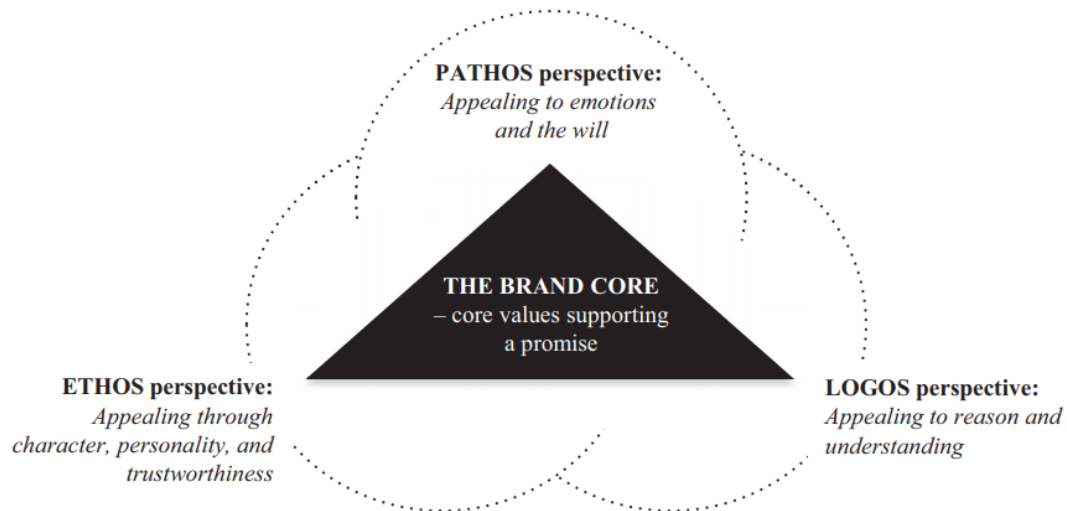
of the brand that are essential to its identity and changes to these therefore often results in the brand losing its meaning (Kapferer, 2012). Peripheral attributes on the other hand are those traits that are not essential to the brand and therefore are more flexible and open to change, providing a necessary opportunity for the brand to adapt and stay relevant over time (Kapferer, 2012). It is further suggested by Urde (2016), that an adjustment of external facets surrounding the core, such as, positioning, communication, and value propositions, could also enable the brand to remain relevant and up to date without losing sight of its core values (Urde, 2016).

Core Value Framework and Rhetoric

According to Urde (2016), the brand core is “what it can be reduced to without losing its fundamental meaning or its utility as a point of reference in long-term management” (Urde, 2016, p.26). Research on brand core values, further states that it is important that these values should be firmly rooted internally in the organization, guiding its actions, and at the same time be perceived and appreciated as core values by the brand’s stakeholders (Lencioni, 2002; Urde, 2003; Urde, 2009; Urde, 2016). If this is not the case, it might be necessary to change the core of the brand for this purpose (Urde, 2016). Other times a change of the brand core becomes appropriate, might also be due to societal changes or whenever there is a change in a competitive field (Urde, 2016).

A way to make the audience believe and appreciate a brand’s core values and the meaning behind these values is by applying rhetorical theory, using language as a form of persuasion (Braet, 1992; Flory & Iglesias, 2010; Higgins & Walker, 2012; Urde, 2016). According to rhetorical theory, applying different perspectives of arguments (called logos, ethos, and pathos) to communicate a brand’s core values to its audience makes it possible for the brand to stay relevant while also staying true to its essential core values (Urde, 2016). The first perspective (logos) appeals to the audience’s reasoning by choosing arguments based primarily on facts, the second perspective (ethos) involves the brand communicating its personality and character in order to build trust with its audience, and finally, the third perspective (pathos) involves choosing arguments that appeal to the audience’s emotions (Braet, 1992; Higgins & Walker, 2012; Urde, 2016). Each of these three perspectives should be present, although not necessarily to equal levels, in a brand’s communication of its core values and promises over time since “adding, emphasising and shifting perspectives of a brand’s core can ensure its authenticity, relevance and differentiation over time” (Urde, 2016). The ‘Core Value Framework’ (Figure 1) presented by Urde (2016) will be used in this case study in order to identify the development of the chosen event’s brand core values over time (Urde, 2016).

Figure 1: Core Value Framework (Urde, 2016)



Corporate Brand Identity Matrix

The framework ‘Corporate Brand Identity Matrix’ proposed by Urde (2013) “provides a template for management in the analysis, definition, coordination and building of corporate brand identity for improved performance” (Urde, 2013, p.744). According to Urde (2013), the purpose of the framework is threefold: to describe and define corporate brand identity and align its components in order to create a coherent entity.

The ‘Corporate Brand Identity Matrix’ (CBIM) consists of nine elements illustrated in Figure 2 (Urde, 2013). As indicated by Urde (2013), CBIM is unlike other frameworks due to a ‘brand core’ as its center point connected to all the surrounding elements (Greyser & Urde, 2016). The brand core is defined as the brand’s promise and its core values that illustrate what the brand stands for (Urde, 2013). Brand’s coherence can be evaluated by analyzing to what extent the core reflects the other elements and vice versa (Greyser & Urde, 2016). All nine elements of CBIM are classified into three categories. Internal components, namely ‘mission and vision’, ‘culture’ and ‘competences’, describe the

reason for existence, internal values and competitive advantage of the organization (Urde, 2013). The external perception and image that the organization is aiming to achieve is specified by the following external components: ‘value proposition’, ‘relationships’ and ‘position’ (Urde, 2013). The components at the sides of ‘brand core’ in the middle row of the matrix, namely ‘expression’ and ‘personality’, cover both internal and external categories, explaining corporate character and the brand’s visual and verbal communication (Urde, 2013). Urde (2013) provides a list of indicative questions as illustrated in Figure 2, that help to apply the matrix and identify each of the components.

According to Greyser and Urde (2019), the components have to strengthen each other, follow the same logic and reflect the brand core. They suggest analyzing the alignment of components by using four axes, that divide the matrix according to different capabilities of organization: competition, communications, strategy, and interaction as illustrated in Figure 3. A strong connection along each axis indicates a clear and stable brand identity (Greyser & Urde, 2019).

Figure 2: The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (Urde, 2013)

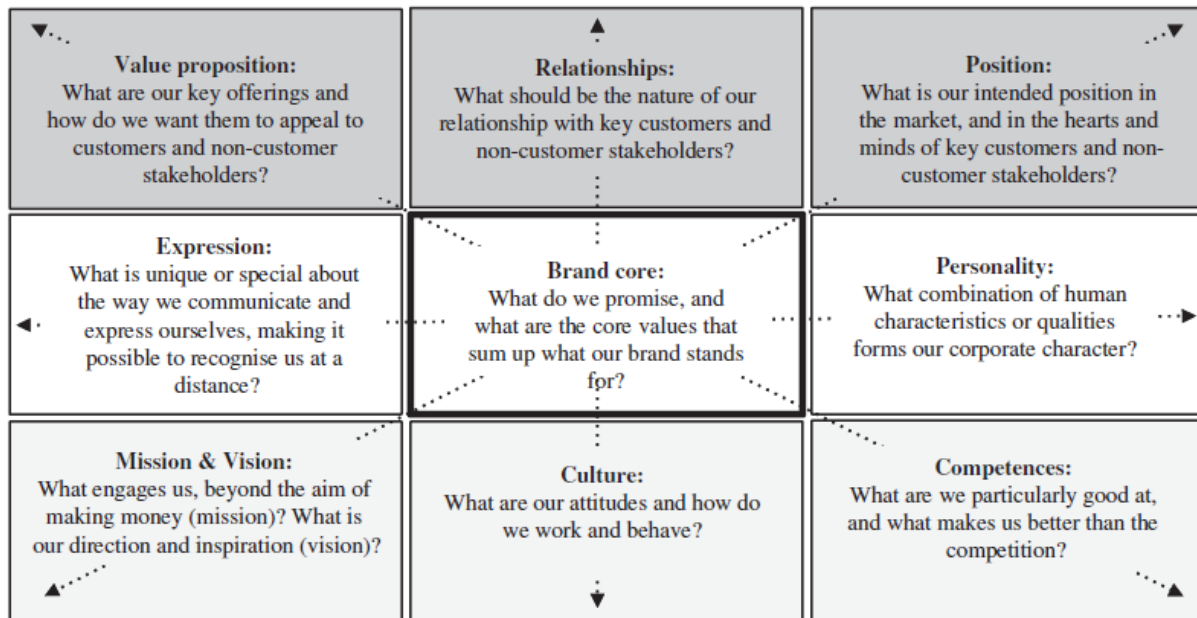
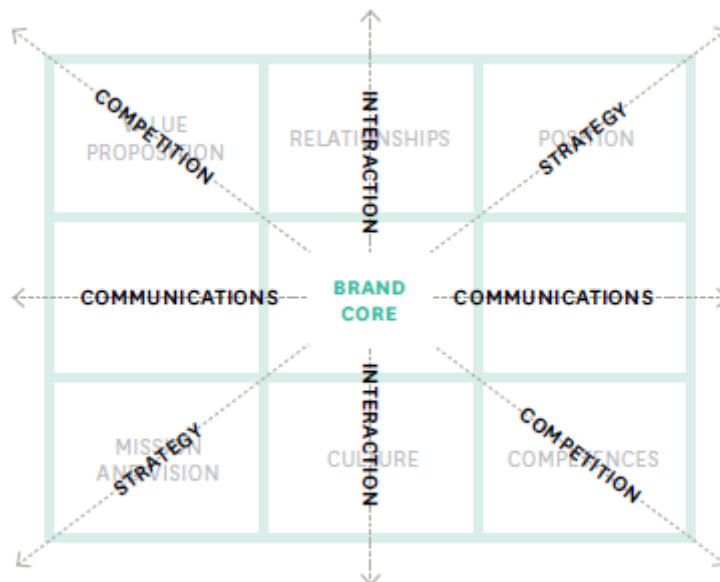


Figure 3: Does Your Matrix Measure Up? (Greyser & Urde, 2019)



Methodology

A theoretical framework was developed in order to understand concepts surrounding events, change management, and the analytical models that would be used in this study. This theoretical framework would then facilitate the analysis of the chosen cases in order to make sense of the approaches these have used in how they

have managed the paradox between change and continuity in their brand management.

Due to the explorative nature of this study, a qualitative research method was chosen as it “involves purposeful use for describing, explaining, and interpreting collected data” (Williams, 2007, p.67). This study also chose a case study approach as described by Flyvbjerg (2006), Gummesson (2005), and

Zucker (2009). According to Gummesson (2005), a case study involves highly interpretive analysis of single or multiple cases in order to “arrive at specific or general conclusions about certain phenomena” (Gummesson, 2005, p.322). In this study, three different cases, of which all can be defined as events, have been analyzed based on secondary data. The events in question are World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), Oktoberfest, and Miss Universe, and these specific cases were chosen due to a lack of previous research.

The ‘Core Value Framework’ by Urde (2016) was chosen due to its applicability to anything that could be defined as being a brand, which in this study would mean the chosen events (Urde, 2016). The ‘Corporate Brand Identity Matrix’ (CBIM) (Greyser & Urde, 2019; Urde, 2013) was also chosen to analyze the events due to its holistic view of the brand core, its external components and how these interact and relate to each other.

The events are first analyzed using these tools to identify brand identity and core values at two points in time, in the past and before any significant change, and then once again after that change has taken place. The purpose of this is to identify the reasons behind the change, what effect the change had on the events’ brand core identity and its surrounding facets, and what the outcome was for the brands.

Presentation of Cases

World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE)

WWE has had a long history, reaching as far back as the 1950s, and within this timeline eight different eras can be identified (Saini, 2018; WWE, 2012). These are the ‘80s Boom’ (1982-1985), ‘The Dawn of WrestleMania’ (1985-1990), ‘The New Generation’ (1990-1996), ‘The Attitude Era’ (1996-2001), ‘The Postwar Era’ (2001-2005), also called ‘The Ruthless Aggression Era’ (2002-2008) by fans, ‘The

PG Era’ (2008-2011), ‘The Reality Era’ (2011-2016), and finally, ‘The New Era’ (2016-Present) (Saini, 2018; WWE, 2012).

The specific eras that will be the focus of this specific case study will be ‘The Attitude Era’ and ‘The PG Era’ as these have been noted to be almost complete opposites and are often compared by fans of WWE in terms of which was better and more indicative of the core identity of WWE (Hayner, 2019; Maglio, 2019; Oestriecher, 2019a; Soucek, 2016).

The fourth era in WWE’s history, ‘The Attitude Era’ (1996-2001), resulted from a combination of two important factors; the fanbase growing older and more mature, and the growing competition in the form of the rival company, World Championship Wrestling (WCW) (Rangarajan, 2015). These factors lead to WWE moving from more family-friendly content into edgier, sexier, and more controversial storylines with a focus on shock value and violence (Rangarajan, 2015). During this era, the superheroes of old were replaced by more realistic and unconventional anti-heroes like Mick Foley, The Undertaker, Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson, and ‘Stone Cold’ Steve Austin (Jenkins, 2012).

It was ‘The Attitude Era’ that set the stage for future developments of increasingly edgier entertainment, and the CEO himself, Vincent K. McMahon, introduced it in a promotion video (Mr. McMahon ushers in the Attitude Era, 2014). In the video, McMahon speaks directly to the viewers, promising more innovative, contemporary, and mature content which would cater to a more mature and intelligent audience, pointing to the increased violence and content of a sexual nature that was about to become the new norm (Mr. McMahon ushers in the Attitude Era, 2014). In the same video, McMahon also mentions how the company’s longevity has been possible due to its willingness to adapt to the times, implying there was now a call for this new era of wrestling entertainment, which WWE would gladly provide (Mr.

McMahon ushers in the Attitude Era, 2014). These changes to the WWE brand proved a major success, with ratings skyrocketing, and even today, most hardcore fans fondly look back on 'The Attitude Era' as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, time period in WWE history (Jenkins, 2012).

This era certainly became a success, but nevertheless it was a product of its time, which meant that as times change, so did WWE. The following era that perhaps contrasts 'The Attitude Era' the most would be 'The PG Era', which set off some major changes resulting in what WWE has eventually become today (Podgorski, 2017). With 'The PG Era' WWE made a complete turn in 2008 towards a PG-rating by swapping out the ultraviolence and the sexual content for a much more family-friendly tone (Podgorski, 2017).

According to Podgorski (2017), the drastic changes put in place were caused by four different factors. First, he mentions that WWE wanted to attract more sponsors who demanded stable investments. Second, he states that an attitudinal change in society from celebrating edginess to expecting political correctness, and young fans being the largest consumers of merchandise, lead to WWE broadening its customer base and how it catered to its audience. Third, he further explains how the violence and lack of safety that was the norm during 'The Attitude Era' had led to numerous wrestler injuries and even deaths, resulting in WWE removing many of the more violent wrestling moves in order to increase safety both inside and outside the ring to avoid legal consequences. Finally, it is speculated by Podgorski (2017) that WWE went PG in order to facilitate Vincent K. McMahon's wife Linda McMahon's run for the Senate, which eventually proved a failure anyway. While it can be argued that 'The PG Era' meant more inclusivity and diversity in terms of WWE's audience and performers, a safer environment for its wrestlers, and continuing success on a wider scale for the

company itself, this era is also heavily criticized for ignoring the hardcore fans of old and for not being innovative enough in the content it puts out (Podgorski, 2017).

Oktoberfest

Oktoberfest, which has its origins in the 19th century, has become one of the best-known festivals in the world, held annually in Munich, Germany (Bayerischer Rundfunk, 2010). The event has experienced certain changes over the last two centuries. In 1810, around 40 000 citizens of Munich were invited to celebrate a royal wedding of Bavarian crown prince Ludwig I and Saxon princess Therese (Hatic, 2018). The celebration turned into a rich feast, provided by the royal family, which lasted several days (Bayerischer Rundfunk, 2010). It included procession of children wearing the traditional attire from various regions in Bavaria and horse racing as a closing ceremony (Bayerischer Rundfunk, 2010; oktoberfest.net, n.d.b). The celebration was held one year after Tyrolean Rebellion in order to strengthen solidarity in the region (Hatic, 2018; Bayerischer Rundfunk, 2010). In 1811 the horse races were supplemented by an agricultural fair that promoted agriculture and Bavarian economy and since then Oktoberfest became a recurring event (muenchen.de, 2019; oktoberfest.net, n.d.b). Due to rebellions and the Napoleonic wars at that time the event meant a symbol of unity, stability, independence, and prosperity (Dawson, 2019; oktoberfest-besuch.de, n.d.).

The main elements of Oktoberfest as it is known today were introduced in the 19th century, including carnival and food booths, swings and a carousel (oktoberfest-besuch.de, n.d.; oktoberfest.net, n.d.b). Along with electricity, the festival experience was further enriched by new rides, attractions and magic shows (Bayerischer Rundfunk, 2010; oktoberfest.net, n.d.b). The parade, which was in the first edition of Oktoberfest, was resumed from 1887 and became a

traditional opening of the festival (oktoberfest.net, n.d.b). Beer tents, considered an essential part of today's festival, appeared at the end of the century (oktoberfest.net, n.d.b.).

Although Oktoberfest was not considered a beer festival at that time and certain drinking songs were forbidden, the consumption of beer was growing and reached 120,000 liters on the 100th anniversary in 1910 (Bayerischer Rundfunk, 2010; oktoberfest.net, n.d.b). Due to adverse circumstances and wars, the Oktoberfest was cancelled, but flourished again in 1950-1960 (oktoberfest.net, n.d.b). Lederhosen and dirndl were named the official costumes of the Oktoberfest as an attempt to promote Bavarian culture (Hatic, 2018). At the end of the century the event was prolonged in response to German reunification (Dawson, 2019; oktoberfest.net, n.d.a).

Oktoberfest has developed into a worldwide phenomenon and according to Alcacer (cited in Harvard Business School, 2016) can be seen as a global brand with many copycats all around the world (Harvard Business School, 2016). There are two main reasons, why Oktoberfest copycats are present: they are either a way to preserve the heritage for German expatriates or an occasion to have a traditional German experience for foreigners in different countries (Harvard Business School, 2016). The modern Oktoberfest has kept the tradition of the colorful parade, demonstrating carriages and a variety of Bavarian costumes (Bridge, 2018). Among the attractions there is a great selection of rides, booths and game stands, 14 big beer and food tents, live concerts, and dances (oktoberfest.de, 2019a). Visitors are surrounded by traditional Bavarian music and folk dances in different tents (Bridge, 2018). The main attribute of the festival is beer with around seven million liters consumed each year and the mayor of Munich traditionally taps the first barrel on the first day (Bridge,

2018; oktoberfest.de, 2019c). In order to keep the event attractive to families and elderly, a 'Quiet Oktoberfest' was introduced in 2005 which limited the noise level before 6pm (oktoberfest.de, 2019c; oktoberfest.net, n.d.b). Oktoberfest is also seen as gay-friendly, dedicating the first Sunday for the LGBT community (oktoberfest.net, n.d.c). The 200th anniversary of Oktoberfest was celebrated by reviving the atmosphere of the 19th century, including horse races and agricultural shows (oktoberfest.de, 2019c; oktoberfest.net, n.d.b). The historic Oktoberfest named 'Oide Wiesn' reached such popularity that it has been held every four years since then (oktoberfest.de, 2019c). In response to the changing food preferences, Oktoberfest offered vegan alternatives for participants in 2013 (Heine, 2013; oktoberfest.de, 2019d). In the review of the latest Oktoberfest, Clemens Baumgärtner (cited in oktoberfest.de, 2019b) stresses the relaxed, peaceful and feel-good mood of the festival with the motto 'loved and lived' and adds that "it was a peaceful Wiesn with a relaxed audience that accepted our offers very well ... the Wiesn was rediscovered as a complete work of art ... the interplay between Oide Wiesn and Wiesn was excellent" (Clemens Baumgärtner cited in oktoberfest.de, 2019b). The growing number of children and families, multicultural visitors as well as the quality of the event is highlighted in the official review (oktoberfest.de, 2019b).

Miss Universe

Miss Universe is one of the events that belong to the Miss Universe Organization (Miss Universe, 2019). The first beauty pageant was held in 1952 in California, US, where the event was originally organized by swimsuit manufacturers and gradually developed into an international competition event (Miss Universe, 2019). One of the main characteristics of the event is the swimsuit session (Zimmerman, 2018). After the winner of Miss America in 1952 refused to wear a swimsuit, the company

decided to separate the pageant and named the one which included the swimsuit section Miss Universe (Stoeltje, 2007; Shaw & Willett, 2018). Although feminism advocates brought up their concern with the swimsuit session in Miss Universe, Miss Universe has insisted on claiming that the bikini catwalk is a necessary part to evaluate the confidence of contestants (Miss Universe, 2019). Some argue that confidence can be evaluated in various ways as wearing a swimsuit is more showing of physical feminine characteristics (Zimmerman, 2018). In 2018, there was a dramatic change in the Miss America event, which is a part of the Miss Universe Organization, where they decided to remove the requirement of wearing swimsuits from the competition (Haag & Buckley, 2018). Although the Miss Universe pageant has not changed its swimsuit wearing rules, it has tried to adapt to different perspectives, for example, in 2017 Miss UK refused to wear a swimsuit since it went against her religious identity (Whimn, 2017). Although Miss Universe did not remove their swimsuit requirement, they did allow the contestant to wear a caftan instead of a bikini (Whimn, 2017).

Facial beauty evaluation is another main point of the Miss Universe competition. According to Burusapat and Lekdaeng (2019), beauty standards are based on facial proportions, and the modern facial proportion standards are different from the past. (Burusapat & Lekdaeng, 2019). There are different face proportion standards for different ethnicities, however it is stated that a neoclassical style face has been preferred since the time of artists such as Bergmuller and Leonardo da Vinci (Burusapat & Lekdaeng, 2019). This neoclassical canon evolved into the style we prefer today, and it is also seen as the golden ratios of the face (Alam, Noor, Basri, Yew & Wen, 2015). Importantly, neoclassical facial proportions are mostly characterized on Caucasian people (Alam et. al, 2015). This can be reflected when research compared Miss Thailand

representatives' facial characteristics with past winners of Miss Universe, the majority of Miss Universe winners have neoclassical styled face (Burusapat & Lekdaeng, 2019; Jang, Bayome, Park, Park, Moon & Kook, 2017). Miss Thailand has characteristics of smaller oral width, a longer face and a lower facial height (Burusapat & Lekdaeng, 2019; Jang et.al, 2017).

When comparing the past Miss Universe winners, we can however also see a change of beauty standard throughout the decades (Burusapat & Lekdaeng, 2019). This is influenced by the black beauty campaign that took place in American universities, and migrants from other countries, such as Asian and South American people have moved into the US where these and Native American groups are formulating local beauty contests (Craig, 2002; Wu, 1997). This has assisted in evolving societies' beauty standards along with other factors, such as black pride throughout the 1960s and up to the 1990s with black Americans getting active in politics, and the music and dance industry (Craig, 2002). In relation to the Miss Universe contest, the number of non-Caucasian winners has increased in recent decades with Miss Philippines, Miss Venezuela, and Miss United States being the top three countries to become winners (Miss Universe, 2019).

According to statistics, participants' height has increased every year and the body shape is also getting thinner (Willett, 2016). However, the advocacy of the body neutrality movement has also affected the values of the Miss Universe contest (Kessel, 2018; Miss Universe, 2019). The body neutrality movement is mainly characterized by the importance of loving yourself no matter what the color of your skin is, what size your body is, or what gender you identify as (Kessel, 2018). This movement has garnered further strength from several actresses such as Stephanie Yeboah, who advocate that "fat people don't have eating disorders; if they did, they wouldn't be fat" (Stephanie Yeboah cited in

Kessel, 2018). Reflecting on the Miss Universe pageant today, we can see that the event has had to make some changes to stay up to date with society's changing values and standards (Kapferer, 2012; Oswald, 2017). It can be seen from the employment of co-host Ashley Graham who advocates for the beauty of curvy girls and with the first ever transgender participant Miss Spain who appeared on the Miss Universe stage in 2018 (Burusapat & Lekdaeng, 2019; Zimmerman, 2018; Oswald, 2017).

Analysis and Discussion of Cases

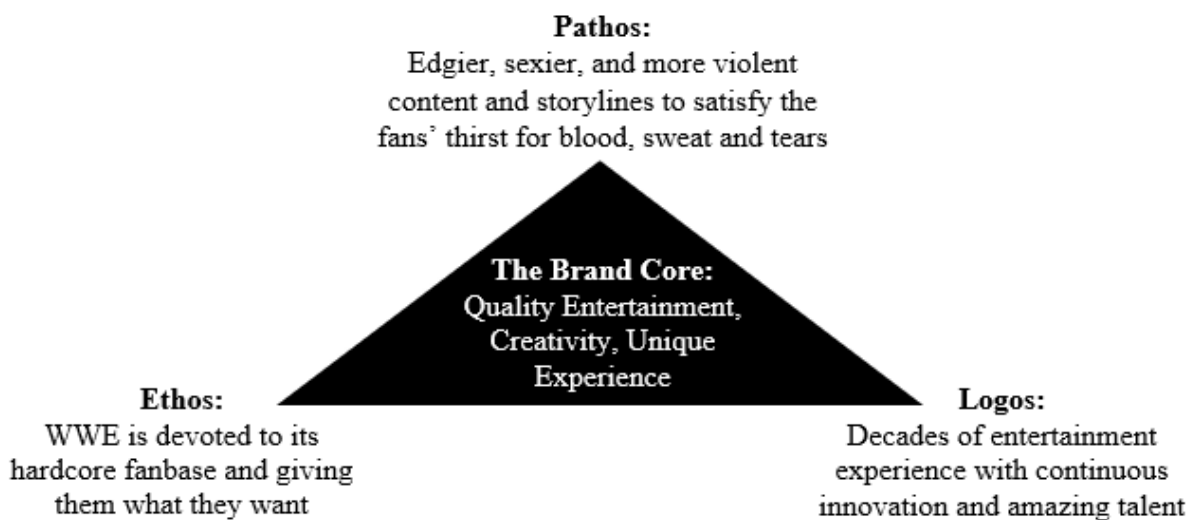
World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE)

Based on the information presented on 'The Attitude Era' and 'The PG Era' in the previous section, WWE has not been afraid to implement drastic change in order to stay relevant, which is in line with research

stating that change is an unavoidable reality for any company (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Bruch, Gerber & Maier, 2005; Kapferer, 2012; Todnem, 2005; Urde, 2016).

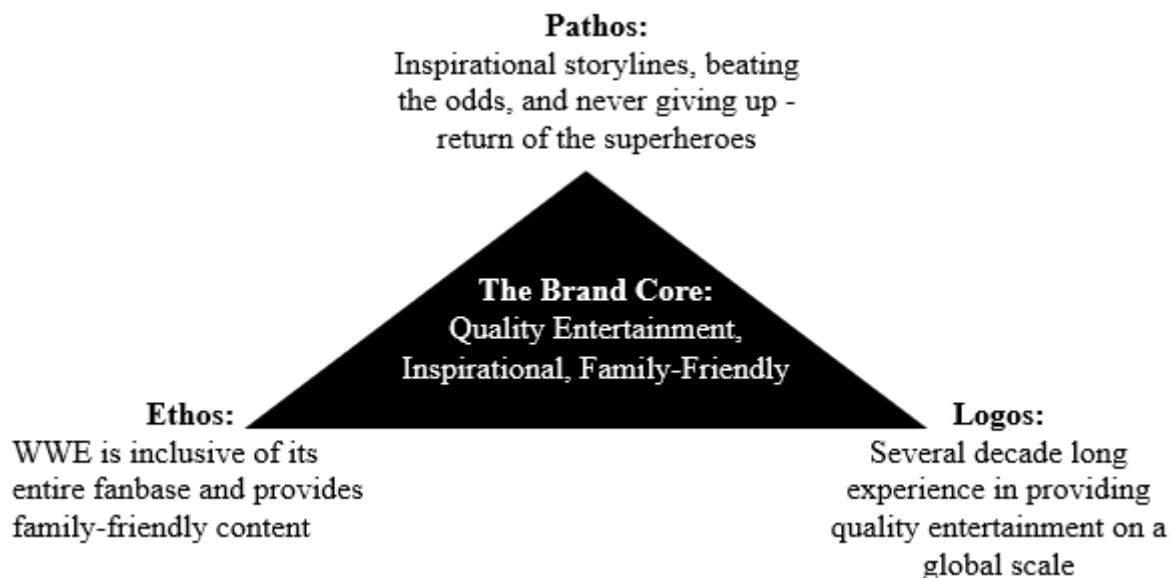
However, could it be that WWE's changes have been too drastic? The following core value frameworks and corporate brand identity matrices (CBIM) (Figure 4; Figure 5) can be established based on an interpretation of the previous presentation of WWE and the communication approaches of the eras in question (Epic WWE PG Era Promos (2010 – 2013), 2018; Deeter-Schmelz & Sojka, 2004; Mr. McMahon ushers in the Attitude Era, 2014; WWE '13 Attitude Era - Video Archive Part 1, 2012; WWE: Charity Outside the Ring, 2009; WWE SummerSlam 2008, 2008; WWF Attitude era promo, 2008; WWF Intro | (1997), 2018; WWF War Zone! | Intro (1997-1998), 2017):

Figure 4: 'The Attitude Era' (1996-2001)



<p>Value Proposition: With several decades of experience, WWE offers its devoted fans explosive and revolutionary entertainment</p>	<p>Relationships: Engaging, Loyal, and Committed to its hardcore fans</p>	<p>Position: To be a groundbreaking force in sports entertainment</p>
<p>Expression: Edgy, Sexy, Violent, and Reckless</p>	<p>Brand Core: Quality Entertainment, Creativity, Unique Experience</p>	<p>Personality: Contemporary, Innovative, and Provocative</p>
<p>Mission and Vision: To create quality entertainment that is unlike anything fans have ever experienced before</p>	<p>Culture: American, Rock 'n' Roll, Anti-Authoritarian, and Unapologetic</p>	<p>Competences: Long industry experience, Exciting storylines, Talented wrestlers</p>

Figure 5: 'The PG Era' (2008-2011)



<p>Value Proposition: With several decades of experience, WWE offers its diverse fanbase inspiring and family-friendly entertainment</p>	<p>Relationships: Engaging, Encouraging, and Welcoming to a wider audience</p>	<p>Position: To be a world leader in the entertainment industry</p>
<p>Expression: Safe, Colorful, Professional, Wrestlers as Role-Models</p>	<p>Brand Core: Quality Entertainment, Inspirational, Family-Friendly</p>	<p>Personality: Inclusive, Kid-Friendly, Sophisticated</p>
<p>Mission and Vision: To create high quality entertainment for an expanded fanbase</p>	<p>Culture: Global, Epic, Diverse, and Safety First</p>	<p>Competences: Long industry experience, Motivating storylines, Talented wrestlers</p>

As can be seen in the above figures, a lot changed between ‘The Attitude Era’ and ‘The PG Era’. It can be argued, based on these drastic changes, that some of WWE’s core values that it had in ‘The Attitude Era’ no longer existed in the ‘The PG Era’. WWE’s goal to provide quality entertainment for its audience seem to remain the same, but other core values, such as ‘Creativity’ and ‘Unique Experience’, have been replaced by ‘Inspirational’ and ‘Family-Friendly’. Despite Kapferer (2012) stating the importance of brand continuity over time in core values, WWE’s drastic change of its core values could possibly be explained by the inevitable PR scandal looming over the company due to its increasing number of injured wrestlers, coupled with a societal change in attitude towards political correctness (Podgorski, 2017). As mentioned by Urde (2016), factors such as changes in society and changes affecting a brand’s competitive edge may justify replacing current core values with new ones in order for the brand to stay in the game.

However, WWE’s sudden turn from gritty violence and catering primarily to a young

adult male audience, into producing family-friendly content to inspire children and attract a wider audience seem to have alienated a great part of the brand’s hardcore fanbase that preferred the former angle (Oz, 2012). Many have also criticized WWE’s PG turn for resulting in repetitive and uneventful storylines due to that the company no longer dares to be unpredictable and test its boundaries like it did in the past (Oz, 2012). It has further been noted that ever since WWE made the strategic choice to go PG, their viewer ratings began declining and have never fully recovered (Oestriecher, 2019a; Oestriecher, 2019b).

By providing increased safety measures for professional wrestlers through the removal of dangerous props and moves, ‘The PG Era’ paved the way for a more inclusive roster and diverse audience (Podgorski, 2017). However, the alienation of the brand’s hardcore, and arguably most loyal, fanbase along with a drop in unique content (Honorato, 2018; Oz, 2012) have no doubt had a negative effect on WWE’s brand equity (Close, Finney, Lacey & Sneath, 2006; Keller, 2006; Sneath, Finney &

Close, 2005). This negative attitude towards the brand has made itself known both in WWE's declining viewer ratings and online, and despite its best efforts to stay contemporary, WWE seems to have caused a disconnect between what it wants to be and what the fans expect it to be (Urde, 2016).

WWE is however fully aware of this and seems to have set plans in motion to once again turn itself around, with the company hinting at adopting some edgier content to win back its lost hardcore audience before they become seduced by WWE's up and coming new rival All Elite Wrestling (AEW) (Maglio, 2019). However, CEO Vincent K. McMahon swiftly rebuffed rumors suggesting the company would completely abandon its PG programming to fully go back to 'The Attitude Era', and went as far as stating that "We're not gonna go back to that gory crap that we graduated from," (McMahon cited in Maglio, 2019). Only time will tell if WWE succeeds in its mission to strike a balance between its family-friendly image and its former groundbreaking, edgier content in order to win back its once loyal hardcore fans and improve its ratings. It is however clear that the dilemma faced by many brands concerning the management of simultaneous change and continuity is true even for an event-based company like WWE (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Bruch, Gerber & Maier, 2005; Kapferer, 2012; Todnem, 2005; Urde, 2016).

Oktoberfest

In this section the change and its outcome of the Oktoberfest will be illustrated and explained by applying the 'Core Value Framework' (Urde, 2016) and the 'Corporate Brand Identity Matrix' (CBIM) (Greyser & Urde, 2019; Urde 2013) based on the event description over time. As is clear from the applied frameworks (Figure 6; Figure 7), the unity has been kept as a core value over the long history of Oktoberfest. However, the need of unity seemed to have been more related to the

threat of war and pursuit of independence in the 19th century, while the unification of the nation is manifested and felt by celebrating the cultural heritage in the 21st century. The change is reflected in the axis of strategy of the CBIM, where possibility for cultural expression, peaceful gathering and strength of economy are the key elements in the 19th century, while heritage, quality and feeling-good aspect are stressed more nowadays. The change could be seen as a natural consequence of the country's development in terms of absent military conflicts and well-being, which encouraged the perception of independence as a matter of course and therefore quality as well as a feeling-good atmosphere increased in value (oktoberfest.de, 2019b). However, national culture as a unifying phenomenon remains relevant and important (Harvard Business School, 2016).

The axis of competition shows that a sense of belonging, freedom and richness are not among the competitive propositions in the 21st century which can also be explained by increased standard of living and tendency of individualism (Hofstede Insights, 2019). Quality beer, an international and social atmosphere create the competitive advantage in the modern Oktoberfest instead. The change is also visible when comparing the centuries from the logos perspective. On the other hand, the entertainment and traditional aspect has been preserved over time.

Interaction in the past in terms of relationship and culture can be described as open and sharing because it was a way for nobility to show solidarity with the citizens by celebrating together and providing goods (Bayerischer Rundfunk, 2010). Oktoberfest has remained welcoming and open but in a broader sense. It is no longer meant to satisfy exclusively locals, but also international visitors. Furthermore, the event shows understanding to families, elderly and gays and in this way reinforces openness. The change was influenced by

democratic government as well as technical progress, which led to a higher degree of equality and internationalization nowadays (Kos-Łabędowicz, 2013; European Commission, 2012).

Communication and ethos of the event was also affected by these factors. The meaning of national pride and wealth demonstration was stronger in the past which was replaced by expressing the relaxed attitude and friendliness to different groups of people today. However, social and fun features of the event as part of pathos have remained relevant throughout time, because they are appealing to people as social beings regardless of circumstances.

In conclusion, despite certain changes in amusement options and associations,

Oktoberfest has remained open, social and kept the elements of unity, entertainment and tradition as part of its identity over time. By reviving the original atmosphere of the event every four years, Oktoberfest maintains a connection between past and present, which is considered important for successful change management (Bruch, Gerber & Maier, 2005; Todnem, 2005). The adjustments of the event were unavoidable and necessary in response to societal and historical development (Kapferer, 2012). However, the change results in a positive outcome and the number of visitors from Germany and all over the world keeps growing (The German Way & More, 2019; oktoberfest.de, 2019b).

Figure 6: Oktoberfest in the 19th century



Value Proposition: Best amusement options available, sense of belonging and freedom	Relationships giving, sharing	Position Cultural expression, peaceful and enriching gathering
Expression: Rich, festive	Brand Core: Unity, Independence, Prosperity	Personality proud, showing off, social
Mission and Vision: To promote agriculture, Bavarian economy and unite people in the background of war	Culture: open, inclusive	Competences Traditional attributes, richness

Figure 7: Oktoberfest in the 21st century



<p>Value Proposition: Entertainment based on German tradition, friendly atmosphere by socializing and drinking</p>	<p>Relationships Positive, caring, understanding welcoming and international</p>	<p>Position Traditional German experience, feel-good mood</p>
<p>Expression: Fun, relaxed and traditional, elderly- and family-friendly</p>	<p>Brand Core: Unity, Quality enjoyment, German experience</p>	<p>Personality Inclusive, open and social</p>
<p>Mission and Vision: To promote German culture and heritage in the world's largest folk festival</p>	<p>Culture Responsible, safe, fun and friendly and open</p>	<p>Competences Combination of historic and modern, quality beer, international visitors</p>

Miss Universe

Based on the core value framework and matrix analysis of the past (Figure 8) and present (Figure 9) Miss Universe pageant, it was found that changes in global society has created different expectations from the general public toward the Miss Universe event. Although the event possesses continuity, it has also experienced some changes (Miss Universe, 2019). It has been argued that, while continuity is important in the paradox of corporate branding change management, factors such as culture and politics are changing constantly, and if the brand does not adapt to these changes, it will only repeat the past and will most likely lose its value and support from its audiences due to its lack of relevance (Kapferer, 2012).

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, brand attitude is one of the most important mediators in event management along with brand experience, which is composed of different sensations such as behavior, and intellectual and affective bonding (Nayeem, Murshed & Dwivedi, 2019). It is stated that brand experience is constantly changing as everyone might hold different perceptions toward the same events (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2013). However, if the brand experience is not managed properly, the credibility of the brand and audience's brand attitude could be severely affected (Nayeem, Murshed & Dwivedi, 2019; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). Reflecting on the core value framework presented by Urde (2016), Miss Universe strengthens their core message of

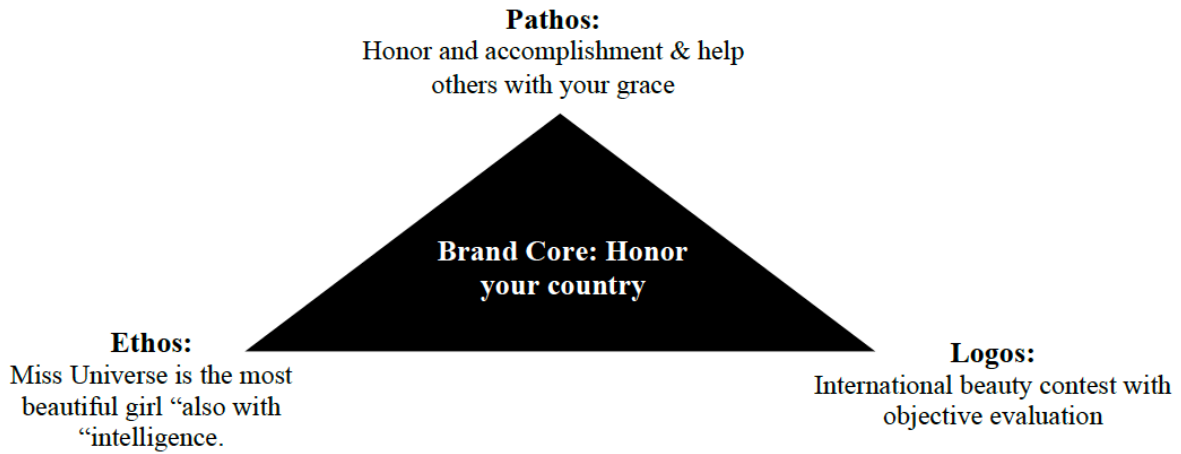
'honoring your country' by extending it to 'honoring your country and empowering women all around the world together' (Miss Universe, 2019; Urde, 2016). However, to avoid controversial and complex political issues that could affect the brand's vision of creating friendships, they regulate contestants from certain countries, such as Miss Lebanon and Israel to avoid these from taking pictures together and posting online in order to avoid possible negative reaction from the public (Chaar, 2019; Nayeem, Murshed & Dwivedi, 2019).

It is difficult to imagine almost 60 years ago in a time when gender equality and feminism were not widely initiated and accepted as today, that the simple rejection of wearing a swimsuit caused the dramatic change of an event's name (Shaw & Willett, 2018). In recent years, the growth of globalization such as the development of technology, public becomes able to absorb new concepts or knowledge easily, where Miss Universe needs to cope with diversity and empowering women, how to balance the old swimsuit culture of the event and maintain its relationship with fans and the public becomes important issues to be managed (Fang, 2010; Miss Universe, 2019). Miss Universe's fans now come from different countries all over the globe and are mainly supporting the contestant that represents their country and culture (Shaw & Willett, 2018). Therefore, the choice to show tolerance by respecting Miss UK's Muslim background by allowing her to not wear a bikini but instead wear a caftan swimsuit helps to build the

successful vertical interaction line according to the corporate brand identity matrix (Urde, 2013; Whimn, 2017).

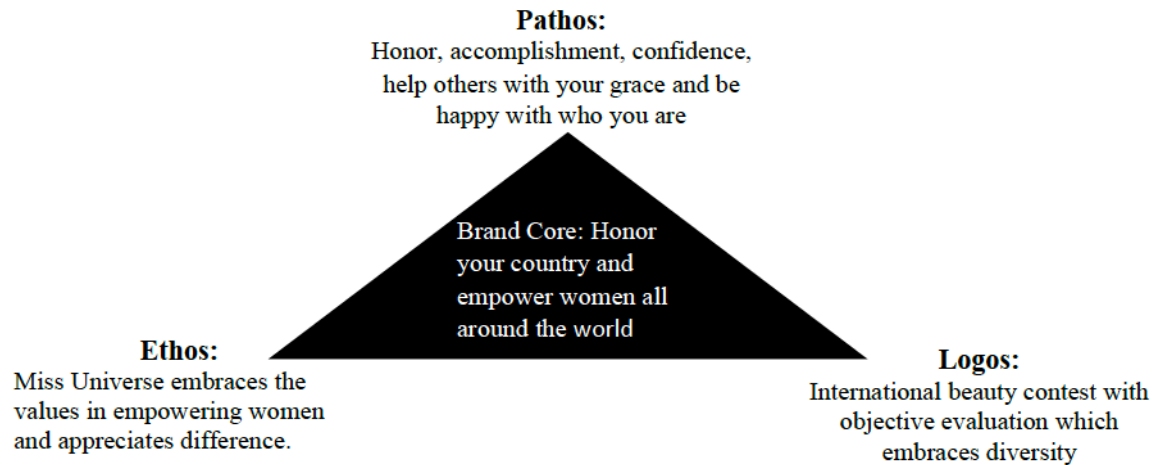
Furthermore, 2012 was the year that trans women were announced to be acceptable participants in the Miss Universe pageant (Duke, 2012; Zimmerman, 2018). This decision was a revolutionary breakthrough since past events enforced traditional medical and legal definitions of women (Burusapat and Lekdaeng, 2019). It can be argued here that Miss Universe does keep its kernel trait of beautiful women honoring their country by extending the peripheral traits of what defines a woman further to include different types of women (Kapferer, 2012; Miss Universe, 2019). Miss Universe has shown that it is willing to release some of its older peripheral values in order to fit with the changes in the world as some values such as neoclassical face style, definition of women, women's body shape, and their ethnicity are no longer based on only one standard in today's society (Kapferer, 2012; Miss Universe, 2019). These changes can also relate to the focus on emotional added value that Miss universe tries to develop by listening to their audiences' expectations (Melin, 2002). Related to statistics, the viewers of Miss Universe from 2017 to 2018 has increased from 2.9 million to 4.4 million (Bundel, 2018). Therefore, it is assumed that Miss Universe pageant showcases an ability to reflect on global values by implementing these changes to stay competitive and relevant (Kapferer, 2012).

Figure 8: Miss Universe in the past



<p>Value Proposition: Miss Universe winners are considered as the most beautiful women in the world</p>	<p>Relationships: Friendly competition</p>	<p>Position: Targeting women who are beautiful</p>
<p>Expression: Who is the most beautiful (and intelligent) woman?</p>	<p>Brand Core: Honor your country</p>	<p>Personality: Beautiful and confident of how you appear in front of others.</p>
<p>Mission and Vision: Award the most elegant and intelligent young women in the world</p>	<p>Culture: Political and exclusive in terms of beauty standards</p>	<p>Competences: Objective evaluation based on the neo-classical style of face</p>

Figure 9: Miss Universe nowadays



<p>Value Proposition: Miss Universe winners are considered as the most beautiful and intelligent women in the world</p>	<p>Relationships: Integration & Connection</p>	<p>Position: Targeting women who are confident but also beautiful.</p>
<p>Expression: Who is the most beautiful, intelligent, and confident young woman?</p>	<p>Brand Core: Honor your country and empower women all around the world</p>	<p>Personality: Confident and inspiring women from different backgrounds that are happy with who they are.</p>
<p>Mission and Vision: Award the most elegant and intelligent young woman in the world</p>	<p>Culture: “We are Friends!”</p>	<p>Competences: Objective evaluation based on different styles of beauty standards</p>

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to use the ‘Core Value Framework’ (Urde, 2016) and the ‘Corporate Brand Identity Matrix’ (CBIM) (Greyser & Urde, 2019; Urde 2013) to analyze how events as brands have managed change through time in order to stay relevant. The research questions concerning what changes took place, why these changes happened and how they affected the events have been answered in

this study through the chosen case analysis method.

As the case analysis show, each of the events had to change in response to the global trends in terms of internationalization and increased value of friendly competition by embracing diversity and equality. This supports the claim by Urde (2016), that factors such as societal changes and changes affecting a brand’s competitive edge may justify replacing current core values with new ones

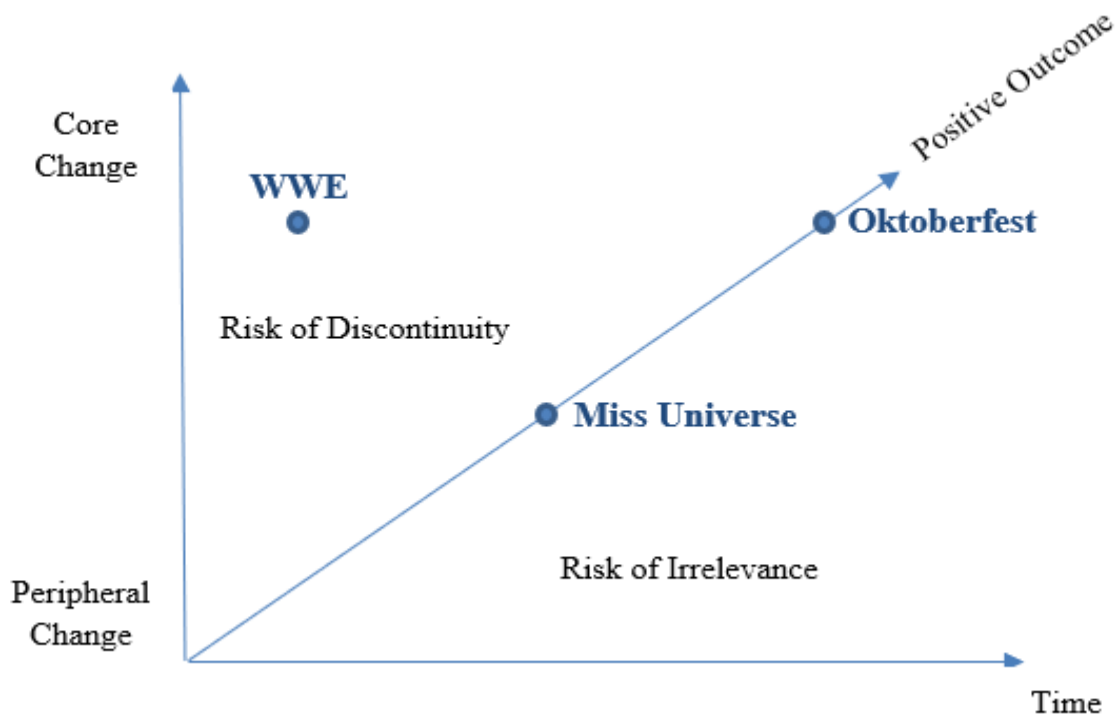
in order for the brand to stay relevant. However, each event incorporated their changes over different lengths of time, with the Oktoberfest introducing changes over two centuries, the Miss Universe pageant over several decades, and WWE over only 10 years. These different approaches to change have substantially affected the outcome in each of the cases, with the Oktoberfest and the Miss Universe having experienced a more positive outcome than WWE. The reason behind WWE's declining viewer ratings could be attributed to the drastic changes they implemented over a short time period which neglected fans' expectations. In contrast, the Oktoberfest and the Miss Universe have maintained a connection between their past and present by introducing incremental changes that followed overall changes in society. However, WWE seem to have understood their mistake since they are preparing to reconnect with their lost audience by reintroducing some aspects from their successful past and reshape these to fit their current modern identity.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

It can be concluded that this study contributes to the existing research as it provides a unique way of analyzing specific events and their management over time, namely WWE, Oktoberfest, and Miss Universe, by using the 'Core Value Framework' (Urde, 2016) and the 'Corporate Brand Identity Matrix' (CBIM) (Greyser & Urde, 2019). The main contribution is that the study shows that customers' acceptance of changes to a brand's core is affected by time and the level of change in terms of core and peripheral values. If a change of the core values of the brand has occurred over a shorter period of time, the chance that this change will be accepted by the brand's customers is very low due to the risk of inconsistency and loss of continuity as is shown with the case of WWE. If a change of the brand's core values instead happens over a longer period of time, the analysis shows that the change has a more positive

outcome for the brand as it is considered a more natural development. Furthermore, if a brand is reluctant to changing its core despite changing circumstances and changes in customers' preferences over time, it may face a risk of losing relevance. The following model (Figure 10) have been developed to illustrate these findings:

Figure 10: Relationship between Brand Continuity and Change over Time



Despite the focus on events in this study, the conclusions that have been reached can contribute to the understanding of change management by managers of any brand. Managers can use this knowledge from these real-life examples and the presented new model as a guide for how they should implement changes to their brand identity in order to successfully keep the balance between continuity and relevance.

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of this study is that the analysis and conclusions are solely based on secondary data, which could affect the validity of these findings. Future studies could include other forms of research methods, such as interviews and surveys, in order to increase the credibility of the study since the current method relies heavily on the authors' interpretations of the secondary data. The amount of cases for this study might also be a limitation as further research into other events might be needed to confirm the conclusions and to further develop the new model presented in this study.

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