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Innovation in Trust Measurement: Introduction of the Short and Medium Media Brand Trust Scale

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1. Introduction

Research on media and media trust has gained increasing attention in the recent decade (e.g. Strömbäck et al., 2020; Schranz et al., 2018; Williams, 2012). While in the past research on consumers' perception of media largely focused on media credibility (e.g. Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Kioussis, 2001), this was expanded by a larger and specific focus on trust in the media resulting in multiple publications on this topic each year (e.g. Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2016; Chen & Cheng, 2019; Shehata & Strömbäck, 2022; Turcotte et al., 2015).

With the emergence of online services and digital communication, media companies started to face an ongoing disruption of the media landscape. This resulted in growing competition between new forms of media distribution and funding (Syvertsen et al., 2019). Consumers started to change their behaviour and shifted from traditional to modern channels (Dutta-Bergman, 2004; Stempel et al., 2000). New and unexpected challenges followed, represented by decreasing levels of trust in the media and the establishment of media (filter) bubbles consisting of consumers creating their very own perception of reality online (Spohr, 2017). While current publications don't support the existence of negative effects of filter bubbles on consumer trust in the media (Flew, 2019; Stegmann et al., 2022), researchers nevertheless repeatedly highlighted the general impact of consumers' trust on core performance indicators such as brand equity (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2005), consumers' brand loyalty (Atulkar, 2020; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) and purchase intention (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Dam, 2020). Additionally, this positive impact was not only shown for media (brands) themselves, but also for advertisers present in such environments (Enehasse & Sağlam, 2020) and even democratic societies as a whole (Ariely, 2015; Chan-Olmsted & Kim, 2022).

This change in media consumption and the media system, connected to the demonstrated importance of media brand trust (MBT) for a media brand's success, created a need for a comprehensive measurement of media trust providing a valid and broadly-applicable tool to evaluate this area (Brosius et al., 2021; Fisher, 2016). While research in the past already focused on trust in brands in general (e.g. Erdem et al., 2006; Mal et al., 2018) and even presented valid scales to measure consumer trust in brands (e.g. Li et al., 2008; Munuera-Aleman et al., 2003), research on trust in media brands in specific has largely been neglected as of yet. Given significant differences between

brands and media brands (e.g. different business models (Malthouse & Calder, 2018), directions of communication (Anderson & Jullien, 2015) and business processes (Ots & Hartmann, 2015)), a specific scale focused solely on media brands is necessary.

Addressing this gap, Heim et al. (2024b) presented research on the measurement of trust in media brands specifically, developing the 'Media Brand Trust Scale' (MBTS) applicable in an international environment. However, while the presented scale (Appendix A1) showed significant relevance from a scientific perspective, it consists of 25 items, which complicates its application in practice. The extensive number of items required to measure trust in media brands with the extended version of the MBTS leaves a gap for a short version of the scale providing researchers and media managers with the means of a concise application or integration into broader surveys conducted for other and connected purposes (Credé et al., 2012).

In this paper I will address this gap by conducting additional research in the same markets observed for the establishment of the extended MBTS (Germany, US, South Korea) and analysing the resulting data in line with established short scale development procedures (Stanton et al., 2002). From this approach, a short and medium version of the scale will be presented, providing two distinct versions of the scale aimed at providing different levels of insights into MBT to researchers and media managers interested in consumers' trust in a media brand.

2. Theoretical Background and Research Questions

Analysing the available literature on the area of media (brand) trust and possible measurements presented from a scientific perspective highlights the broad extent of the topic. Over time, researchers have published a wide range of possible elements (e.g. Transparency, Integrity, Credibility, Competence) relevant to establish trust in media (brands) (e.g. Erdem et al., 2006; Kang & Hustvedt, 2013; Kervyn et al., 2012; Morhart et al., 2015), but also provided first approaches on the definition of what 'media' is in today's digitalized world (e.g. Hess, 2014; Malmelin & Moisander, 2014; Voci et al., 2019). However, while those publications focused on certain areas of the topic and mostly on brands in general, no comprehensive set of elements fully capturing the complex construct of trust in media brands in specific was presented. Given the significant differences between brands and media brands for example presented by Malthouse & Calder (2018), a valid measure of trust in media brands requires an extended set of elements underlying consumer trust (Chan-Olmsted & Kim, 2022).

As a result trust in media brands is of major importance for the brands themselves, but also for advertisers featured in media environments. While trust in media brands for example drives relevant factors such as the willingness to pay (Schranz et al., 2018), (news) media attention (Williams, 2012) and (news) media selectivity (Strömbäck et al., 2020), advertisers benefit from being present in trusted environments due to the halo effect (Liu-Thompkins, 2019), transferring a positive perception of a media environment on the advertised brand or product (Enehasse & Sağlam, 2020). Finally, trust in media can even influence the perception of reality provided by media and thus shape prior beliefs and attitudes (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003), significantly influencing democratic societies as a whole (Ariely, 2015).

Building on the available foundation and conducting additional international research, Heim et al. (2024a, 2024b) conducted a scale development process by first determining the required underlying definition of 'media brands' and all elements of MBT and then establishing the MBTS. Accordingly, media brands are defined as *"[...] a differentiated product/service that provides the means for the creation and distribution of self- and externally-produced audio and visual content as well as for the communication through various channels with the objective to connect, inform or entertain the receiver"* (Heim et al., 2024a). Approaching this specific area of media brands accordingly, they presented a scale consisting of ten elements of MBT aggregated into four seminal factors relevant to measure trust in media brands. The resulting scale aims for the measurement of consumers' global perceptions of a media brand's traits which are established over time. While this scale represented the first valid tool to measure this complex construct, it consists of 25 items and thus is hardly viable for an integration into more practical surveys and applications.

To provide researchers with a tool to measure this established construct in a cheaper and more efficient way, the development of a short version of the scale is required (Credé et al., 2012). While this reduction of a scale offers the potential risk of omitting important information or even increasing the probability for measurement errors (Credé et al., 2012), approaching the development through established methods and thoroughly performing the required validity checks allows for the development of short scales reliably measuring the defined construct (Robins et al., 2001). In line with established short scale development procedure (Stanton et al., 2002), this paper will

therefore focus on the development of a reliable and valid reduced form of the extended MBTS. While the extended version will remain the most reliable, consistent and comprehensive measurement of trust in media brands and all underlying elements, the shortened versions aim at providing theory and practice with more applicable measures (Widaman et al., 2011). Consequently, researchers diving deep into the area of MBT specifically should continue working with the original scale. In contrast, studies focused on media in general and interested in expanding results through additional insights into MBT as a global construct can rely on the medium or short version.

Based on two separate development procedures building on varying objectives for the selection of items, a medium and short version of the scale will be presented. Theory and practice will thus be provided with employable versions of the scale consisting of fewer items but aiming for a similar level of validity as provided by the extended version. The research questions addressed in paper therefore are:

RQ1: How can a reliable and valid medium version retaining the original structure of the MBTS be established?

RQ2: How can a reliable and valid short version of the MBTS with only the most essential items be established?

3. Method and Data

Based on a three-step approach I conducted surveys in Germany, the US and South Korea. Those three markets were selected out of three reasons. First, to gather data on consumers' perception of media brands from different media systems. While consumers in the US are largely confronted with a private and Korean consumer face an almost solely public media sector, the German media economy consists of a mixed media system of private and public players. Second, the culture in the three markets differs significantly when observing the cultural traits defined by Hofstede (2011). While South Korean and US citizens largely score on the opposite ends of the underlying dimensions, Germans are located in the middle and represent the common ground on all six dimensions in terms of cultural characteristics. Most relevant in this area is a culture's positioning on the collectivism-individualism-spectrum which significantly influences a culture's approach on trust (i.e. trust propensity) (Westjohn et al., 2021; Zeffane, 2017). Given collectivism scores of 18 (US), 67 (DE), and 91 (KOR), this dimension represents the relevance of approaching the development from this sample

of countries (Hofstede Insights, 2024). Third, as this study builds on the MBTS presented by Heim et al. (2024b), the data was collected in the same markets to allow a comparison between the original scale and the reduced version.

In the first phase of surveys, I collected 200 responses per country to establish the main dataset underlying the development of the short versions of the MBTS. To sample all three markets I relied on the English survey items presented by Heim et al. (2024b; Appendix A1). To be able to conduct surveys in Germany and Korea I had native speakers from both countries translate the items to the respective language and double checked the resulting items with additional contacts from both countries (Appendix A2 & A3). After ensuring all items' consistency in all three languages I launched the full surveys after completing initial quality checks.

In line with the short scale development validation presented by Richins et al. (2004) I generated data on the readability of all items asking participants in each country to rate each item on a scale from 1 - "Not very easy to understand" to 7 - "Very easy to understand". This survey provided a dataset consisting of 178 responses ($n_{DE} = 60$, $n_{US} = 60$, $n_{KOR} = 58$). Third, I contacted media researchers in all three markets to rate all items according to their representativeness for trust in media brands and the respective element of MBT (e.g. Competence, Transparency, Credibility) (Richins et al., 2004). This approach resulted in 16 ratings of representativeness ($n_{DE} = 6$, $n_{US} = 6$, $n_{KOR} = 4$). The resulting data of phases 2 and 3 was later applied in the item selection process, supporting decisions between items of comparable internal criteria.

For the main survey (Step 1), a nationally representative quota sample was generated. The dataset consisted of an equal share of male and female participants (50% each) with a mean age of 41 years. The surveys included all elements and items of the previously determined MBTS and additional items to validate the resulting short scales. In line with previous publications, the items representing MBT and measuring consumers' perception of a media brand's traits were chosen from the dimensions of (1) Transparency, describing a media brand's openness about production processes and its response to possible mistakes (e.g. Busser & Shulga, 2019; Mal et al., 2018; Yuana & Sutarso, 2021); (2) Integrity, referring to the consistent production and distribution of unbiased information and facts (e.g. Gurviez & Korchia, 2003; Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Mal et al., 2018); (3) Benevolence, determined by the sense of justification and a media brand's awareness for its own responsibility for society (e.g.

Delgado-Ballester, 2004; Gurviez & Korchia, 2003; Li et al., 2015; Munuera-Aleman et al., 2003); (4) Credibility, representing the believability of content produced or distributed by a media brand (e.g. Erdem et al., 2006; Fisher, 2016; Gurviez & Korchia, 2003; Palmatier et al., 2006); (5) Competence, describing the expertise of a media brand and its employees in its respective area (e.g. Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester, 2004; Hegner & Jevons, 2016; Li et al., 2015; Mal et al., 2018; Xie & Peng, 2009); (6) Relevancy, determined by the importance of a media brand's content to its consumers (Chan-Olmsted & Kim, 2022); and (7) Commercialism, referring to the way a media brand earns money, especially in terms of the way advertisements are integrated in its products (Chan-Olmsted & Kim, 2022). This set of fundamental elements was further expanded by the elements specifically underlying trust in media brands, namely (8) Consistency, defined as the continuous quality of a media brand's product over time, (9) Likeness, describing the similarity between a media brand and its audience, and (10) Halo, representing the mutual influence between media environment and content (Heim et al., 2024a).

Additional items to evaluate external criteria were further added to this comprehensive set of MBT items. In line with the brand trust scale validation presented by Munuera-Aleman et al. (2003), these items were chosen to measure participants' loyalty and satisfaction with each respective media brand included in the survey. I decided to integrate those elements due to their connection with trust presented in available publications and the nomological network established by connecting all three measurements (i.e. satisfaction, trust, loyalty) (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Ganesan, 1994; Johnson & Grayson, 2005; Rauyruen & Miller, 2007). To measure both external elements I included established measures of satisfaction (Munuera-Aleman et al., 2003) and loyalty (Yoo et al., 2000) from available publications. Table 1 shows all items included in the survey.

Code	Item	Mean	SD
TRN1	The media brand addresses mistakes openly	4.78	1.39
TRN2	The media brand is open in its business practices	5.08	1.29
INT1	The media brand is honest with its consumers	4.99	1.36
INT2	The media brand is unbiased	4.91	1.40
INT4	The media brand has moral principles	4.99	1.36
BEN1	The media brand consistently acts with the public's best interests in mind	5.00	1.37
BEN2	The media brand has a sense of responsibility	5.16	1.30
BEN3	The media brand considers consumer interests when problems arise	4.91	1.38
CRE1	The media brand's product/service claims are believable	5.14	1.24
CRE2	The media brand's content is verifiable	5.12	1.29
CRE3	The media brand is accurate	5.15	1.29
CMP2	The content produced by the media brand is intelligent and well thought through	5.17	1.26

CMP3	The content distributed by the media brand is developed by experts	5.11	1.28
CMP4	I can rely on the media brand to meet my expectations	5.18	1.30
CON1	The media brand has consistent quality	5.33	1.26
CON2	Over time, my experiences with this brand have led me to expect it to keep its promises	5.26	1.21
REL1	The media brand plays an important role compared to other decision criteria	4.81	1.46
LIK1	My personality and the personality of the media brand are very similar	4.97	1.38
LIK2	I have a lot in common with other people using this media brand	4.54	1.57
COM1	I understand that the media brand needs ads to earn money	5.46	1.28
COM2	I appreciate that the media brand is transparent about their ad placement	5.02	1.34
COM4	It's ok to have commercials so I can consume the content of this brand for free	5.23	1.47
HAL1	Using the media brand has an impact on the trust I feel towards the media content	5.13	1.28
HAL2	The content I consume has an impact on the trust I feel toward the media brand	5.24	1.22
HAL4	The media brand provides me with content from brands and individuals simultaneously	5.17	1.25
LOY1	I consider myself to be loyal to the media brand	4.94	1.48
LOY2	The media brand would be my first choice	4.96	1.48
LOY3	I would not consume other brands, if this media brand was available	4.45	1.68
SAT	Overall, how satisfied are you with all your consumption experience with BRAND X?	3.87	.82

Table 1: Overview of Items underlying the Media Brand Trust Scale Development

To generate a reliable dataset providing measurements of consumers' trust in media brands in specific I selected six brands per country (18 in total), each representing a different area of media brands as defined in the previous study (Heim et al., 2024a). This selection, aimed at the provision of a broad range of traditional and modern media brands, resulted in a set consisting of brands from the areas of "Social Media", "Music Streaming", "Video Streaming", "TV Channels", "Film Studios", and "Online News". Each participant was then provided with the full set of options and asked to select all brands they use "on a regular basis". From this selection, one brand was randomly chosen and connected to all items measured in the survey. I developed this approach to make sure that participants were familiar with the rated brand while simultaneously reducing the level of possible bias e.g. induced through high involvement with a brand. The surveys were controlled for quality through speedrun recognition, control questions, identification of behavioural patterns, inconsistency in responses and manual checks. With the chosen approach I collected ~33 responses per brand and 200 in total per country. With the resulting data I then conducted the short development process to generate a medium and short version of the MBTS, each consisting of a reduced set of items but establishing a different structure of the scale.

4. Results

To provide theory and practice with a comprehensive tool allowing for the measurement of trust in media brands in all different kinds of scenarios, I developed a medium and short form of the MBTS in this paper. The two versions of the scale differ in terms of the number of items selected and the conceptual reason underlying the selection. Additionally, while the medium MBTS (mMBTS) retains the factor structure of the extended version, the short form removes the second-order structure overall and only retains the most relevant items required to measure MBT in a practical environment.

To approach the development of both versions, I conducted extensive analysis of the items underlying the extended MBTS in line with the suggestions for the establishment of short scales (Stanton et al., 2002, Richins et al., 2004). This process demands for the analysis of the corrected item-to-total (ITC) and item-to-subscale (ISC) correlations of all items included in the long scale, as well as the calculation of structural equation models (SEM) given the reflective-formative structure of the second-order MBTS. To establish this short and medium version of the scale in line with the previously presented extended version, I aimed at the establishment of two separate models consisting of ten (mMBTS) and four (sMBTS) items. This number of items was determined by selecting one item per originally defined element of trust for the mMBTS (i.e. ten) and one item per previously established factor of trust for the sMBTS (i.e. four). This development was conducted by calculating SEM including the newly created short forms of the MBTS as independent and a measure of MBT calculated by applying the full MBTS as dependent variable. This way, I created the closest possible representation of MBTS as developed in previous research with a reduced set of items. Visualizations of both models can be found in Appendix A4.

This process provides an understanding of the importance of each respective item for the measurement of the desired construct - in this case trust in media brands. To allow for the selection of items in cases where unambiguous results are found regarding those essential measures, additional analysis of item readability rated by consumers and item representativeness for each respective element of MBT and MBT in general rated by experts is recommended. Table 2 contains the results of all six analyses. From those results I generated two reduced versions of the MBTS, each with its specific objective in mind.

Factor	Item	Corrected Item-to-Total Correlation	Corrected Item-to-Subscale Correlation	Factor Loadings	Item Representativeness		Item Readability
					Dimension	Total	
Transparent Goodness	TRN1	0.766	0.731	.793	5.81	5	5.45
	TRN2	0.754	0.777	.831	5.63	4.63	5.26
	INT1	0.826	0.831	.876	5.44	5.81	5.56
	INT2	0.751	0.782	.835	4.75	4.75	5.04
	INT4	0.796	0.819	.866	5.88	5.44	5.3
	BEN1	0.783	0.821	.866	5.63	5.56	5.07
	BEN2	0.783	0.792	.844	4.94	5.25	5.57
Credible Competency	BEN3	0.814	0.804	.856	5.13	5	5.39
	CON1	0.770	0.767	.825	5.75	4.69	5.7
	CON2	0.771	0.757	.817	6.06	5.81	5.43
	CRE1	0.821	0.792	.846	5.38	5.19	5.57
	CRE2	0.757	0.776	.833	6.13	6.06	5.39
	CRE3	0.734	0.826	.874	5.06	4.94	5.07
	CMP2	0.721	0.769	.827	5.75	4.94	5.38
Market Orientation	CMP3	0.790	0.750	.81	6	5.19	5.39
	CMP4	0.734	0.744	.805	4.44	4.5	5.37
	COM1	0.495	0.522	.645	5.81	3.81	6.17
	COM2	0.685	0.690	.811	4.81	5.25	5.26
	COM4	0.491	0.538	.657	4.69	3.13	5.49
	HAL1	0.638	0.678	.802	5.5	4.78	4.88
Life Relevancy	HAL2	0.626	0.635	.771	5.88	5.5	5.16
	HAL4	0.685	0.681	.808	4.06	3.38	4.76
	REL1	0.750	0.768	.901	5.25	4.31	4.52
Life Relevancy	LIK1	0.730	0.699	.865	5.25	4.25	4.89
	LIK2	0.726	0.743	.886	5	4.12	5.42

Table 2: Internal & External Selection Criteria

4.1. Medium Media Brand Trust Scale

For the development of the mMBTS I decided for the retention of the original factor structure by only reducing the number of items per factor. This approach aimed for the development of a shorter version of the scale, while still maintaining the measurement

of all elements and factors previously shown to underlie trust in media brands (Heim et al., 2024b).

In the extended version of the MBTS, the items underlying the ten elements of MBT were aggregated into the four seminal factors (1) Transparent Goodness, merging Transparency, Integrity and Benevolence and thus representing the intentionality and transparency of a media brand's business operations; (2) Credible Competency, combining Consistency, Competency and Credibility and describing the media brand's ability to consistently produce and/or distribute content that is believable for its audience; (3) Market Orientation, combining Commercialism and Halo and thus focusing on the impact the integration of external (advertising) content has on a media environment on consumers' perception of a media brand; and (4) Life Relevancy, aggregating Relevancy and Likeness, hence referring to the similarity between a media brand's and its audience's perception of the world and the relevance of produced and/or distributed content connected to it (Heim et al., 2024b). The following reduction was conducted with the factors and elements of MBT presented above in mind and aimed for the determination of the most relevant item per element to establish a scale consisting of ten items, each representing one of the ten initially presented elements of trust.

From the empirical analysis (Table 2) I extracted ten items to establish this medium form of the MBTS. This process consisted of a three step approach. First, I generated a broad list of items with the highest ITC and ISC, as well as factor loadings of each element underlying the MBTS generated through SEM. Second, for elements that showed similar results for several items, I compared the items' readability and representativeness to generate results consisting of the conceptually most sound items while retaining model validity and reliability. Third, in the rare cases all comparisons led to ambiguous results, I conducted a final comparison between the two possible versions of the mMBTS to ensure the best possible selection in line with the three step model validation approach presented by Hair et al. (2019). This examination consisted of (1) a test of convergent validity by correlating the established measure and a second measurement of the construct (i.e. a single-item measurement of MBT sufficient according to Cheah et al. (2018)), (2) inspection and comparison of possible collinearities by analysing variance inflation factors (VIF), and (3) the verification of loading significance via bootstrap analysis. Table 3 contains the resulting items and the reasoning behind each selection.

Factor	Item	Reasoning
Transparent Goodness	TRN2	Highest ISC; Highest factor loading; Similar item readability and model representativeness; Great item readability
	INT1	Highest ITC and ISC; Highest factor loading; Highest total representativeness; Best item readability
	BEN1	Highest ISC; Highest factor loading; Highest total and dimensional representativeness; Great item readability
Credible Competency	CON2	Similar ITC; Highest ISC; Similar factor loading; Highest total and dimensional representativeness; Great item readability
	CRE1	Highest ITC; Strong factor loading; Great total and dimensional representativeness; Best item readability
	CMP3	Highest ITC; Strongest factor loading; Highest total and dimensional representativeness; Best item readability
Market Orientation	COM2	Highest ITC and ISC; Highest factor loading; Highest total representativeness; Great item readability
	HAL1	High ITC, ISC; Similar factor loading; Great dimensional representativeness; Good item readability
Life Relevancy	REL1	Highest ITC and ISC; Highest factor loading; Best representativeness of MBT; Very good item readability
	LIK2	Highest ISC; Highest factor loading; Great dimensional representativeness; Best item readability

Table 3: Items of the Medium Media Brand Trust Scale

Most items in the table show clear statistical evidence for their selection due to the highest ITC and ISC. Additionally, several of those items were found to also obtain the highest factor loadings in the SEM consisting of the original 25 item MBTS. Addressing each element of trust, the reasons for the selection of each retained item will be asserted in the following.

(1) Besides strong empirical evidence, especially represented through the highest factor loading of all transparency items, TRN2 was selected due to its focus not only on the way a media brand handles mistakes, but especially because of how it addresses the way a media brand operates overall. While item readability and representativeness slightly fall short to TRN1 results, the delta is marginal and positive levels (i.e. positive ratings of readability and representativeness) of both observations have been achieved. (2) Regarding a media brand's integrity, all internal criteria, strong item readability and representativeness indicated a clear advantage of INT1, resulting in the retention of this item. (3) In line with the previous reasoning, BEN1 was chosen over BEN3 showing similar correlations and factor loading. Nevertheless, based on stronger item representativeness of BEN1 and comparable readability of both items, BEN1 was included in the mMBTS model. (4) Regarding the measurement of consistency, internal correlations as well as factor loadings showed similar results. While CON2 was found to be a better representation of MBT and consistency in general, CON1 was found to

be slightly easier to understand. Due to these ambiguous results, I decided to calculate two separate SEM to examine both in line with the validation approach presented above. From the first step of validation I found similar correlations ($\Delta = .003$) with a single-item trust measure included in the dataset. The first step also showed comparable VIF results for both models ($\Delta_{\text{VIF_TG}} = .075$; $\Delta_{\text{VIF_CC}} = .007$; $\Delta_{\text{VIF_LR}} = .002$; $\Delta_{\text{VIF_MO}} = 0.025$). Third, the analysis of item and factor significance resulted in significant loadings and effects across the board. The external validity analysis however revealed that an mMBTS model including CON1 would render the connection to consumers' loyalty insignificant. A model containing CON2 however resulted in strongly significant results across all connections in the established nomological network. I thus decided to retain CON2 in the model. (5) Analysing the items representing credibility, similar results on internal correlations and factor loadings were found for CRE1 and CRE3. While the ITC was higher for CRE1, ISC as well as factor loading was stronger for CRE3. Additionally, item representativeness and readability measures indicated the advantage of CRE1. Due to these ambiguities in the underlying indicators, I decided to also conduct the three step model validation and comparison of external validity with two separate models. First, correlating MBT scores of models containing CRE1 or CRE3 showed similar correlations to the single-item trust measure ($\Delta = .007$). Second, analysis of the VIF results showed similar low levels of collinearity in both models ($\Delta_{\text{VIF_TG}} = .061$; $\Delta_{\text{VIF_CC}} = .339$; $\Delta_{\text{VIF_LR}} = .023$; $\Delta_{\text{VIF_MO}} = 0.042$). However, lower VIF for all factors was found for the model including CRE1. Third, all loadings and effects were found to be significant across the board for both models. The external validity analysis again showed similar and significant connections between MBT, Loyalty and Satisfaction. Given these highly ambiguous results, I decided for the retention of CRE1 as the item with stronger representativeness and higher item readability. (6) Measuring a media brand's competence, similar results were found for CMP2 and CMP3. Due to the strong ISC, similar factor loadings, and higher item representativeness and readability, CMP3 was finally selected to represent this element of MBT. (7) Relevance already consisted of only one item in the original extended scale which thus remained in the mMBTS accordingly. Nevertheless, all internal and external validations empirically supported this decision. (8) Similar results on ITC and representativeness of MBT and the likeness in general were found regarding items measuring this element. However, due to the stronger ISC, factor loading and item readability, LIK2 was selected to remain in the mMBTS. (9) Observing a media brand's commercialism, all statistical results clearly

highlighted the superiority of COM2 to measure this element. (10) Finally, regarding the halo element of MBT, similar results were found for HAL1 and HAL4 when observing internal correlations and factor loadings. However, item representativeness and readability measures indicate the superiority of HAL1. In line with previous unambiguous items I again calculated all three steps of validation and the nomological network. Given the similar correlation ($\Delta = .002$), VIF results ($\Delta_{VIF_TG} = .017$; $\Delta_{VIF_CC} = .02$; $\Delta_{VIF_LR} = .013$; $\Delta_{VIF_MO} = 0.046$), significance across the board and similar external results, I decided for the retention of HAL1 as the item with better readability and representativeness.

Since this medium version of the MBTS retained the original factor structure, I conducted a second-order SEM to establish the final model. In this model I included MBT established through the 25-item approach as the dependent variable (see Appendix A4). This way I ensured the shorter version to measure the same construct while reducing the number of items. Table 4 shows the resulting structure as well as the relevant model fit indicators.

Factor Loadings		Path Coefficients	
<i>Transparent Goodness</i> ($\alpha = .87$)			
TRN2 → TG	.880***		
INT1 → TG	.898***		
BEN1 → TG	.886***		
<i>Credible Competency</i> ($\alpha = .84$)			
CON2 → CC	.868***	TG → MBTS	.389***
CRE1 → CC	.89***	CC → MBTS	.32***
CMP3 → CC	.846***	MO → MBTS	.221***
<i>Market Orientation</i> ($\alpha = .72$)		LR → MBTS	.18***
COM2 → MO	.892***		
HAL1 → MO	.876***		
<i>Life Relevancy</i> ($\alpha = .84$)			
LIK2 → LR	.925***		
REL1 → LR	.93***		

Table 4: Results of the second-order mMBTS SEM

Comparing the results of the mMBTS SEM with the original model presented by Heim et al. (2024b), a clear indication of retained model validity can be observed as required for short forms of established scales (Stanton et al., 2002, Richins et al., 2004). Evaluating the three step validation approach for formative models I found a strong correlation between MBT and the single-item trust measure (.75), VIF values <5 ($VIF_{TG} = 3.781$; $VIF_{CC} = 3.054$; $VIF_{LR} = 2.521$; $VIF_{MO} = 1.893$), and finally (3) bootstrap analysis results providing significant t-values > 1.96 ($t_{TG} = 21.722$; $t_{CC} = 18.303$; $t_{MO} = 16.262$;

$t_{LR} = 12.233$) across the board supporting the validity of the developed medium scale. Comparing Cronbach's α between mMBTS and the full MBTS consisting of 25 items showed a slightly reduced α which however remained in a high range supporting the reliability of the scale (Extended MBTS: $\alpha = .97$; Medium MBTS: $\alpha = .93$). To ensure the accuracy of a reduced set of items I finally compared the trust value calculated through mMBTS and full MBTS. This comparison showed very high correlation (.98), further supporting the applicability of the medium scale to measure trust in media brands.

Finally, to evaluate external validity of the established mMBTS, the nomological network connecting the established trust measurement with related constructs was established. This analysis observed the MBT in combination with other measures of media brand perception (i.e. Loyalty, Satisfaction). In this analysis I observed satisfaction as determinant of trust (e.g. Ganesan, 1994; Johnson & Grayson, 2005; Zboja & Voorhees, 2006) and loyalty as result of consumers trusting a brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Rauyruen & Miller, 2007). To validate those connections in a comprehensive analysis, a SEM was developed to observe the relations of interest (Figure 1). Trust included in the model was established by applying the developed mMBT and calculating the construct accordingly.

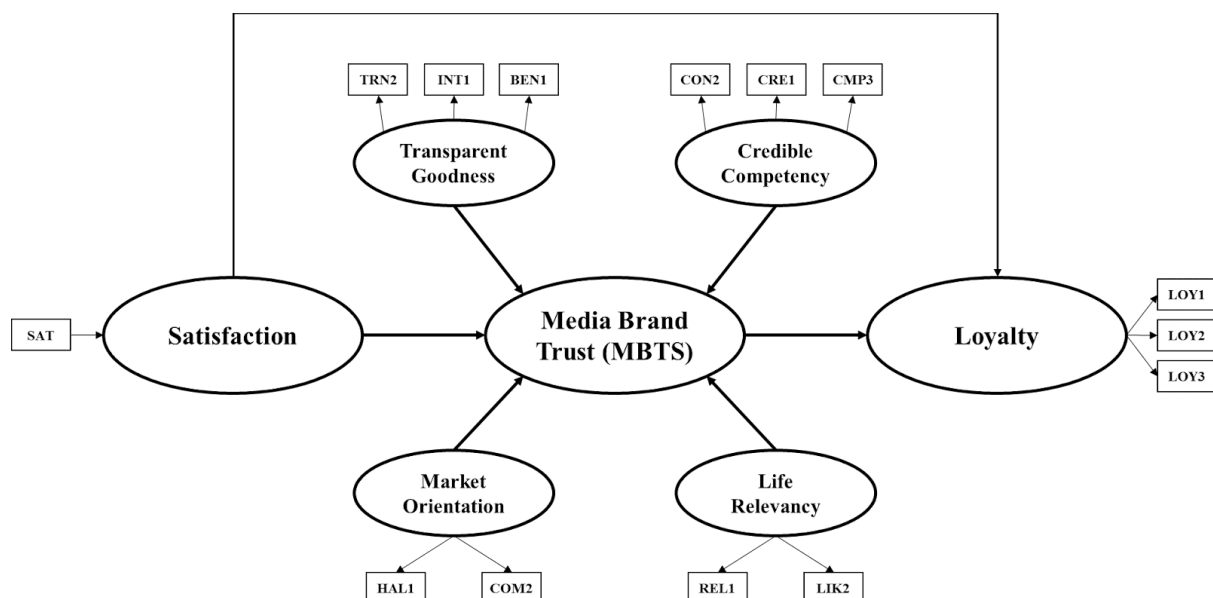


Figure 1: Nomological Network of the Medium Media Brand Trust Scale (mMBTS)

This external validation additionally provides evidence for the reliability and validity of the mMBTS in line with the suggested short scale development procedures (Stanton et al., 2002, Richins et al., 2004) and the general scale development and validation

approach presented by Munuera-Aleman et al. (2003). Results of the SEM analysis can be found in Table 5.

Factor Loadings		Path Coefficients	
TRN2 → TG	.880***		
INT1 → TG	.898***		
BEN1 → TG	.886***		
CRE1 → CC	.868***	TG → MBT	.389***
CMP3 → CC	.89***	CC → MBT	.32***
CON2 → CC	.846***	MO → MBT	.221***
COM2 → MO	.892***	LR → MBT	.18***
HAL1 → MO	.876***	Satisfaction → MBT	.352***
REL1 → LR	.925***	Satisfaction → LOY	.665***
LIK2 → LR	.93***	MBT → Loyalty	.146***
SAT → Satisfaction	1***		
LOY1 → Loyalty	.901***		
LOY2 → Loyalty	.921***		
LOY3 → Loyalty	.848***		

Notes: * p <= .1, ** p <= .05, *** p <= .01; Standardised coefficients are reported

Table 5: Nomological Network Results of the mMBTS

Significant path coefficients from satisfaction on MBT and from MBT on the loyalty measure indicate the desirable embedment of the mMBTS measure in the nomological network. The established medium version of the scale can thus be perceived as a valid tool to measure trust in media brands with only ten items while retaining the factor structure developed in the original scale development process.

4.2. Short Media Brand Trust Scale

Reducing the number of items even further, the sMBTS was developed following the same short scale development procedures described above (Stanton et al., 2002, Richins et al., 2004). In contrast to the mMBTS, this approach aimed for the removal of the original factor structure to only retain one item representing each factor. This process was conducted in line with other short scale developments available in the literature (e.g. Bagozzi et al., 2016; Pokhrel et al., 2018). As described in the previous chapter, ITC, ISC, factor loadings, item representative and readability measures presented in Table 3 were analysed to determine the four items representing the initial factor the strongest. The items resulting and the respective reasoning can be found in Table 6.

Factor	Item	Reasoning
Transparent Goodness	INT1	Highest ITC and ISC; Highest factor loading; Highest total representativeness; Best item readability
Credible Competency	CRE1	Highest ITC; Strong factor loading; Great total and dimensional representativeness; Best item readability
Market Orientation	COM2	Highest ITC and ISC; Highest factor loading; Highest total representativeness; Great item readability
Life Relevancy	REL1	Highest ITC and ISC; Highest factor loading; Best representativeness of MBT; Very good item readability

Table 6: Items of the Short Media Brand Trust Scale

(1) INT1 was chosen to represent the factor “Transparent Goodness” as it clearly showed the highest ITC and ISC as well as the highest factor loading of all items included in the factor. Additionally, the item was found to be the best representation of MBT in the factor and showed great readability. (2) CRE1 was selected as the one item representing the factor “Credible Competency”. The decision for this item was conducted in line with the thorough comparison of models containing CRE1 and CRE3 presented in the previous chapter. While the internal analysis showed highly ambiguous results, I again decided for the retention of CRE1 given the stronger representativeness and better readability of this item. (3) COM2 was chosen to represent “Market Orientation” due to the highest ITC, ISC as well as the second-highest factor loading of all items in this factor. Additionally, experts and consumers reported high representativeness of MBT and great readability, supporting this selection. (4) Finally, regarding “Life Relevancy” the item REL1 was selected based on the highest ITC, ISC and factor loading of the items underlying this factor.

Resulting from this selection a first-order model was developed by conducting SEM. To adapt the model according to the new structure without factors I directly connected the four selected items with the MBT measurement established by the 25-item MBTS (see Appendix A4). This way I again aimed for the calculation of a reduced model measuring the same construct as presented in the full scale development process. This approach aimed at the reduction of the previously established second-order model of MBT into a first-order comprehensive MBT consisting of the four selected items only. Table 7 shows the results of this sMBTS model.

Path Coefficients	
INT1 → MBT	.347***
CRE1 → MBT	.261***
COM2 → MBT	.261***
REL1 → MBT	.283***

Table 7: Results of the second-order sMBTS SEM

From this analysis I concluded that at scale consisting of only four items represents a stable model with robust model fit indicators. To test the model for validity I checked the three step validation and found (1) strong correlation to the single-item trust measure (.72), (2) low VIF <5 for all items (VIF_{INT} = 2.382; VIF_{CRE} = 2.115; VIF_{COM} = 1.518; VIF_{REL} = 1.793), and (3) significant loadings across the board (t_{INT} = 14.545; t_{CRE} = 11.145; t_{COM} = 12.019; t_{REL} = 14.436). In line with the mMBTS establishment, Cronbach’s alpha for the remaining items was calculated. While this showed a reduced level, it remained above the threshold for very good reliability of >.8 (Extended MBTS: $\alpha = .97$; Short MBTS: $\alpha = .84$) (Cortina, 1993). All validation results thus provide evidence for the applicability of the short version to measure MBT in case no specific insights into the reasons for a measured level of trust are required. To compare the sMBTS results to the original scale I also correlated trust calculated through both versions. This resulted in a very high correlation (.95), supporting the notion about the sMBTS to provide a valid measure of trust in media brands.

Finally, the sMBTS was also checked for external validity through the nomological network established in connection to consumers’ satisfaction and loyalty with the media brands (Figure 2). In line with the external validation of the mMBTS, I again calculated trust by applying the developed scale - in this case the sMBTS.

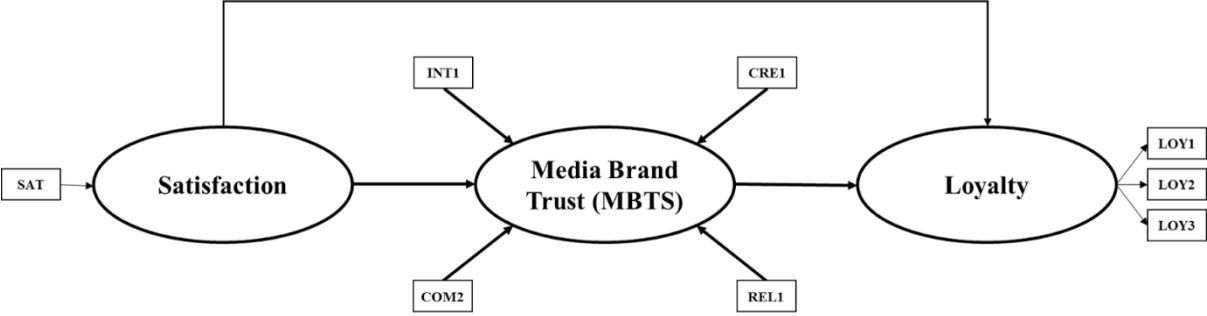


Figure 2: Nomological Network of the Short Media Brand Trust Scale (sMBTS)

From this analysis I found significant loadings from satisfaction on MBT and from MBT to loyalty (Table 8).

Factor Loadings		Path Coefficients	
INT1 → MBT	.347***		
CRE1 → MBT	.261***		
COM2 → MBT	.261***		
REL1 → MBT	.283***		
SAT → Satisfaction	1***	Satisfaction → MBT	.352***
		Satisfaction → LOY	.665***
LOY1 → Loyalty	.902***	MBT → Loyalty	.146***
LOY2 → Loyalty	.921***		
LOY3 → Loyalty	.848***		

Notes: * p <= .1, ** p <= .05, *** p <= .01; Standardised coefficients are reported

Table 8: Nomological Network Results of the sMBTS

Those findings support the notation of the sMBTS to be a valid measurement for trust in media brands, highlighted by the robust embedment into the nomological network (Stanton et al., 2002, Richins et al., 2004). While all results indicate a slightly better measurement of trust in media brands by applying the mMBTS, this sMBTS consists of only four items that still represent a valid tool for the integration of the scale into surveys with limited extent.

5. Discussion & Conclusion

This paper presents the medium and short version of the previously established MBTS. The development of those reduced forms was aiming for the provision of tools to measure the construct in a comparably reliable and valid way while achieving a more practical and manageable extent. Since both scales provide their own contribution to the measurement of MBT and allow for the integration of the MBTS in different scenarios, I decided to present both in this publication.

First and in line with RQ1, the mMBTS was established by retaining the original factor structure and selecting the ten items most significantly representing each respective element of MBT. Second and connected to RQ2, the sMBTS maintained only the most basic structure of the scale by selecting the four items best representing the seminal factors of trust in media brands. This dual approach on the establishment of a shorter version of the MBTS thus provides research and practice with two separate tools with different properties that can be applied in all different kinds of scenarios.

The development of the mMBTS was focused on the establishment of a 10-item scale to maintain the core structure of MBT but reduce the number of original items. This process was conducted in line with established short scale development procedures and resulted in the empirical and conceptual selection of the ten most relevant items of MBT and the retention of the four seminal factors. From this approach resulted a medium version of the scale with stable model fit, as well as excellent internal validity and

reliability. Additionally, by analysing the nomological network and connecting the mMBTS measurement of trust to consumers' loyalty and satisfaction with media brands confirmed the external validity through a robust nomological network. Finally, correlating MBT measures calculated with all items of the extended MBTS and mMBTS further supported the applicability of the reduced version through very high correlation. This medium version of the MBTS thus provides research and practice with a tool to measure trust in media brands in cases where information on all ten elements are required but the extent of a survey needs to be limited. Additionally, by retaining the original factor structure, insights into the contribution and characteristics of a media brand regarding each of those traits essential for the establishment of trust can be observed. The mMBTS thus represents a shorter option to gain extensive insights into consumers' trust in a media brand.

Second, I additionally developed the sMBTS to establish the shortest possible version of the scale by only retaining one item of each originally defined factor. Following the same approach as conducted in the development of the mMBTS, this process required the selection of the most important item of each of the four seminal factors and the removal of the factor structure overall. In line with the results achieved for the mMBTS, the sMBTS also showed stable model fit and strong reliability and internal validity. Additionally, also the nomological network containing the sMBTS measurement of trust, loyalty and satisfaction confirmed strong external validity of the scale. Finally, the correlation of MBTS and sMBTS measures also highlighted the validity of the short version through very high correlation. This version of the scale provides research and practice with a tool to measure trust in media brands, while some of the specific information on the reasons for this result are relinquished. Nevertheless, due to the very short form of this version, this sMBTS still provides a relevant contribution as it allows for the measurement of trust in media brands in cases where surveys need to be short and the number of items is limited.

To provide researchers with the necessary info regarding the applicability of both scales, a clear distinction between the measurements and the positioning of my results in the context of available trust measurements is required. First, in line with available publications on trust research, the presented measurements of MBT show significant overlaps regarding measured dimensions (e.g. Competence, Transparency, Integrity) and the approach of measuring consumers' perception of those traits. However, by adding dimensions relevant to media brands in specific (e.g. Halo, Commercialism,

Likeness) and thus distinguishing the measurement from previous research focused on brands in general, the scales add significant value to the area of media research and provide a valid tool to comprehensively approach the topic. Furthermore, by expanding the fundamental scale development presented by Heim et al. (2024b), this publication provides theory and practice with shorter and thus more applicable tools to measure MBT. With the mMBTS retaining all relevant dimensions and the overall structure and the sMBTS focusing on the core essence of MBT measurements, researchers can now choose the depth of analysis required for specific projects and include the respective version of the MBTS accordingly. Second, the original (extended) MBTS nevertheless still provides the most thorough measurement of trust in media brands and thus is of significant value especially to scientific approaches on the examination of MBT and its impact on consumer behaviour. The mMBTS was established as an addition to provide researchers and practitioners with comparable insights into the elements underlying trust in media brands and a valid tool to measure MBT. While applying the mMBTS thus provides comprehensive insights into the nature and structure of consumer trust in media brands, researchers need to be aware of the deliberate marginal reduction of information underlying the final measure. Finally, the sMBTS was developed to especially provide practitioners with a tool to include the MBT measurement into broader surveys without diving deeper into the reasons underlying consumers' level of trust. This scale is specifically focused on measuring MBT as an overarching construct but provides limited insights into the specific elements underlying the concept. All three versions of the scale thus represent worthwhile measurements of the same construct and allow researchers and practitioners to better understand MBT when applying the right scale suitable for the desired application.

5.1. Limitations & Future Research

While the two versions of the MBTS presented in this paper provide research and practice with a relevant contribution on the measurement of trust in media brands, there are some limitations that need to be addressed.

First, in line with the process conducted in the establishment of the original scale, surveys underlying the development of the mMBTS and sMBTS were conducted in Germany, the US, and South Korea. These countries were selected to represent different cultural contexts and media systems, offering valuable insights into the perception of

media brands among consumers with varying levels of exposure to distinct media landscapes. However, the focus on only these three markets poses a limitation, as it may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives and media consumption habits present in other regions. While these countries provide a strong starting point, the findings may not be generalizable to all cultural or media environments. Future research should therefore extend the application of the scales to additional countries, particularly those from different continents and with varying levels of media development, in order to ensure the broader applicability and robustness of the scales across a wide range of global contexts

Second, even though the presented mMBTS and sMBTS provide theory and practice with more applicable versions of the original extended MBTS, this reduction comes with a price. While the mMBTS still retains all comprehensive elements of MBT, the reduction of items underlying each element likely reduces the level of nuanced insights into each of those elements. Additionally, the sMBTS even removes six out of the original ten elements of MBT overall. While this scale was shown to be able to measure trust in media brands with a massively reduced set of items, the information on reasons for consumers' trust in a media brand is largely removed from the measurement. Researchers thus need to make sure to pick the right version of the MBTS in line with the desired level and depth of information gathered in a survey.

Third, while the scales have been developed by analysing a broad set of media categories, no specific differentiation between trust in those areas has been presented so far. Future research thus is required regarding the actual trust levels in different media segments and also regarding the overall relevance of trust in different areas. Building on the presented scales, this research will provide theory and practice with a better understanding on the importance of media brand trust for brands operating in different areas and the best ways to achieve high consumer trust overall.

Finally, while the empirical evidence presented in this paper clearly indicates the validity and reliability of both scales, practical applications of both versions are required to provide final proof of the value of the scales in the field. In that regard, more insights into the applicability and merit of the scales will be generated from future integrations in practical surveys and the results generated in this process.

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