

The awareness of social causes and its impact on the perception of brand image. The Spanish case of Televisió de Catalunya

La difusión de las causas sociales y su impacto en la percepción de la imagen de marca. El caso español de Televisió de Catalunya

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine if the broadcasting of social causes impacts the perception of a media company brand image. The theoretical framework is based on concepts such as social advertising, brand image, corporate identity and reputation as a starting point to understand how solidarity initiatives affect the brand image. The empirical work consisted on the application of a qualitative open question survey to 266 citizens of the autonomous community of Catalonia (Spain). The main results determine that the broadcasting of social causes has a positive impact on brand image, according to the perception of citizens. In addition, they perceive the efforts being made in such initiatives as positive. Thus, the linking with stakeholders becomes stronger thanks to these campaigns.

Keywords: Brand image, identity, social advertising, social causes, stakeholders, media companies.

RESUMEN

Esta investigación pretende determinar si la difusión de las causas sociales impacta en la percepción de la imagen de marca de una empresa de comunicación. Se sitúa en un marco teórico basado en la publicidad social, imagen de marca, identidad y reputación corporativa, como punto de partida para entender cómo las iniciativas solidarias inciden en la imagen de marca. El trabajo empírico supone la aplicación de 266 encuestas presenciales mediante una pregunta abierta de índole cualitativa, a ciudadanos de la comunidad autónoma de Cataluña (España), respecto a la difusión de una causa social en su televisión pública. Los resultados determinan que la difusión de las causas sociales genera un impacto positivo en la imagen de marca, siempre según la percepción ciudadana. Los televidentes califican como benéficos los esfuerzos que se realizan en esta clase de iniciativas. De esta forma, el vínculo con los stakeholders se afianza a través de este tipo de campañas.

Palabras clave: Imagen de marca, identidad, publicidad social, causas sociales, stakeholders, empresas de comunicación.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of theories and research associated with advertising and brands has been a minority when compared with their professional practice. While in recent years there have been major advances in research related to these two aspects, there are still significant deficiencies in the formulation of theoretical basis, and also in the understanding of the way in which advertising impacts various aspects of the brand. One of the causes of the deficit is that advertising professionals have devoted their efforts mainly to the communication of goods and services, as the best way to accelerate the circulation of products and thus boost production.

On the other hand, investigations have been directed especially to demonstrate the effects of advertising on sales, on the basis of studying of consumers. In addition, there is not only a low development of theories associated to commercial and social advertising, but there is also a significant deficiency in the analysis of the impact of advertising in areas like corporate reputation (CR), brand image (BI) or brand value. Even more, the problems not only lie in the neglect of theories about advertising and the BI, but that important contradictions remain in terms of concepts related to advertising, propaganda, or social advertising, on the one hand, and on the other, with the defining aspects of the BI, identity, positioning, the goodwill or the CR.

Given the difficulties mentioned above, this article aims to clarify the concepts related to the BI, the identity and the CR, and give insight into the way in which communication of social causes impacts on the perception of the BI for a communication company.

The results of this analysis on the diffusion of social causes are part of a more extensive research, which delves on the impact of the communication of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the CR and the BI in the value chain of Televisió de Catalunya - TV3, autonomous channel of Catalonia (Spain). To this end, it was studied the communication done for a solidarity initiative known as *La Marató de TV3*, the first telethon of the Spanish State.

La Marató, which has been broadcasted since 1992, consists of a series of solidarity events that converge in the broadcast of a television program lasting approximately fifteen hours, where sensibility, scientific communication and entertainment coincide. In each

edition funds are collected mainly from the citizenship, which are used for research of diseases such as cancer, diabetes, AIDS, and other difficult diseases to cure. *La Marató* each year also is the leader in ratings, according to media share records, which makes it a program of great recognition.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theories associated with the dissemination of social causes, led by social advertising, have generated tools and forms of communication, thus differentiating from those employed by commercial advertising. In this sense, advertising for commercial purposes applies to the dissemination of the offer of a company to its objective public (Tellis, 2002). For Arens (2000), advertising is a persuasive, non-personal communication used by a sponsor through the media. Both perspectives give an account of a communication in which the substantial aim is disclosure of an organization's products or services to their potential buyers.

Now, some of the theorists of the advertising and social marketing (Barranco, 2005; Benet & Nos Aldás, 2003; Kotler, 1982; Kotler & Roberto, 1992; Leal, 2000; Moliner, 1998) have introduced new elements that generate a clear difference with commercial advertising. Thus, social advertising has a more informative and educational function, a more participatory communication, with a greater focus on intangible values, among other features.

In these terms, the diffusion of a social cause through the advertising can be assumed as a specialized communication, in the way that Kotler and Robert (1992) interpreted it when pointing out that "a social change campaign is an organized effort, led by a group (the agent of change), who tries to persuade others (the target adopters) to accept, modify or abandon certain ideas, attitudes, practices and behavior" (p. 7).

One of the biggest problems facing the dissemination of social causes is the way to assess the results of these communication efforts:

Commercial advertising has made a large number of studies on the perception of campaigns and tries to understand how their advertisements act in the consumer's mind, but they have an approach so markedly pragmatic that they only deal with the change of behavior at very superficial levels

and result in little use to find out how conversion occurs in social issues which necessarily requires, as said before, the transformation of beliefs, convictions and ideologies deeply rooted in the mind of the viewer. (Benet & Nos Aldás, 2003, p. 138)

The impact of a campaign with social purposes not only should be measured by the number of people who have donated blood, by the amount of money raised for a charity or the decrease in accident rate, to give only three examples, but also delving through surveys and studies of perception to the different stakeholders (interest groups).

Academic investigations that try to assess the impact social marketing campaigns or CSR actions have on BI have remained in a partial neglect. However, interest has grown in recent years, given the vital importance that is given today to the intangible values of brands, usually through investigations that relate, for example, CSR as a strategy to build an image and CR (García & Llorente, 2009), the link between the CR and identity (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012), the effects of image and reputation in the Internet (Piazza; 2012), or the influence of the advertising of CSR in the value of a brand (Saeedniaa & Sohanib, 2013).

One of the major difficulties encountered in the analysis of the BI are the theoretical and epistemological problems to differentiate it from concepts such as branding, positioning, goodwill and even CR.

Some of the theorists who have formulated definitions of corporate identity (Aaker, 2002; Argenti & Forman, 2002; Fernandez, 2011; Hatch & Schultz, 2000; Kapferer, 1992; Sanz de la Tajada, 1994; Van Riel, 1997; Vella & Melewar, 2008) agree that this represents the value of corporate thinking, originated from within the organization as a concept of emission.

For Hatch & Schultz (2000), identity “refers to how an organization expresses and differentiates itself in relation to its stakeholders” p. 13¹, and for Fernández (2011) “are the essential attributes that characterize a particular organization and serve to distinguish it from another “ (p. 99). From these two definitions one can understand that the basic goal of corporate identity is to differentiate a company from the competition, so that their materialization through business communications and advertising allows the creation of a proper BI in the minds of stakeholders.

Another concept that generates confusion when associating BI is *positioning*. This term, coined by Ries & Trout (2002), applies to brands or products that an individual has in mind, in such a way that it is closely linked with the BI, but in this case, the positioning “applies to the process of emphasizing the distinctive and motivating attributes of the brand in relation to its competitors” (Cerviño, 2002, p. 67).

For its part, *goodwill* has also been linked to the concept of BI and CR. This term represents the assessment that is made of the intangibles of the brand:

In all these cases the purchase prices of companies with strong brands were consistently higher than the net value of their intangible assets. This difference between market value and book value is what is known as “*goodwill* “ and includes different types of intangible assets, among which the brand stands out as one of the most important. (Salinas, 2007, p. 60)².

Thus, for Salinas (2007), the goodwill is an adjacent concept to the CR and image, but it has its roots in accounting, so consequently it can only be used when a countable transaction is performed, when a company is acquired by another (Jackson, 2004). In this line, Fombrun (1996) assumes that goodwill “typically incorporates the value of all intangible, including brands names and reputation” (p. 86)³. Thus understood, this concept cannot be replaced or equated to BI or CR, but be present as an additional variable in business transactions.

However, the term more that holds more relation with BI is CR, since both possess as defining elements overlapping aspects: perceptions, values, attributes, behavior, intangibles, among others. Some of the most important authors related to CR (Alsop, 2004; Argenti & Forman, 2002; Doorley & García, 2011; Dowling, 2001; Earl & Waddington, 2012; Firestein, 2009; Fombrun, 1996; Griffin, 2009; Hannington, 2006; Komisarjevsky, 2012; Quevedo, 2003; Sanz de la Tajada, 1994; Schultz, Hatch, & Larsen, 2000; Van Riel, 1997; Villafañe, 2004) coincide in that CR is reached long term, when the stakeholders have a relatively deep knowledge of the company or brand, surpassing the first dimensions of the BI.

Definitions CR show its intimate relationship with BI. For Quevedo (2003), for example, it is “an asset of social construction, which is created and maintained

through a process of legitimation, and involves a continuous succession of one-off assessments” (p. 2). To Larkin (2003), CR implies a continuous evaluation of the attributes of the company over a period of time, and even Watson and Kitchen (2008) ensure that it is a collective representation of perceptions that link the company with their stakeholders. Finally, Earl and Waddington (2012) believe that CR is the result of what is done, what is said and what people think of the company. For this reason, the connection between BI and CR undoubtedly appears, hence the difficulties to delimit their conceptual basis.

As shown, there are many concepts that have been equated or related to the BI. However, theoreticians who have reviewed definitions of BI (Ávalos, 2010; Etkin, 2008; Ind, 1992; Jackson, 2004; Keller, 2008; Ostberg, 2007; Sanz de la Tajada, 1996; Van Riel, 1997) agree in that it is about perceptions of the stakeholders that take shape in mental constructions that are not generated inside the company but are reflected in the minds of interest groups, as concept of reception (Kapferer, 1992) or, more specifically, assuming that “the brand image is perception, while the identity is corporate reality” (Orozco & Ferré Pavia, 2012, p. 61).

To reaffirm this condition, in which the image acts as intangible reception in subjects, one goes to the definition which Ostberg (2007) proposes when noting that the image must be “understood as the result of a process of accumulation, evaluation and partnership that develops in the minds of individuals” (p. 45). Thus, image is a cumulative process, in which there is no spontaneous construction but is the result of a historical construction from multiple causes (Etkin, 2008), which are generated from a myriad of circumstances: direct relation of the stakeholders with the products or services, what subjects notice in the advertising, reviews or comments of a friend or family member, public relation actions, among others. The proliferation of products, brands, media, etc., has generated an immeasurable glut of messages that prevent the company from transmitting a unified communication that narrows the differences between identity and BI that the stakeholders have.

In addition, the advertising saturation and the proliferation of corporate communication preclude knowing for sure if its effects have been positive or not in its interest groups. Under these circumstances,

companies have begun to be interested in knowing the incidence their communications have on BI.

Although there can be found some private companies that conduct research related to the brand (Brandchannel, Harris Interactive, Interbrand, Millward Brown, Nielsen, Wunderman, Young & Rubicam), so far there is no consensus on what are the best methods of evaluating the BI, because evaluating a brand has many nuances of subjectivity, increased by the intangible values that surround it.

To this dispute about the subjectivity of the models and the rates of assessment of brand, Torres (2002) presents:

There is a belief that by improving the techniques to define and determine the value of the brand sufficiently objective and valid evaluation techniques will be found to persuade finance and accounting professionals. But a brand assessment will never be neither valid nor objective, since it does not seek an only value. (p. 35)

Theorists who have issued judgments on methods of brand evaluation (Etkin, 2008; Garrido, 2004; Gibbons, 2010; Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Martínez, Montaner & Piña 2005; Toro, 2009; Torres, 2002; Van Riel, 1997; Villarejo, 2001) concluded, in the majority of cases, that there are no infallible methods of evaluation. For example, Healey (2009) assumes that the valuation of brand is something controversial: “Assign a certain value to something so intangible is impossible” (p. 56).

The valuation of the BI of a company will always be a wasteful and somehow subjective task. That is why it is necessary to continue the search for methods that allow to correctly assessing BI. And if it is about determining the perceptions of stakeholders, one of the most recommended ways continues to be the application of qualitative tools that, through open-ended questions, inquire directly to the stakeholders on the BI they have of a product or determined service (Orozco & Ferré Pavia, 2011).

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The development of this research is part of a larger study on the impact of the communication of CSR in the CR and the BI of TV3, autonomous channel of Catalonia (Spain), using the case of a solidarity-based initiative known as *La Marató de TV3*.

Since the objective of this research is to determine what impact the dissemination of campaigns carried out by *La Marató* has generated in the perception of the BI of TV3 by the citizenship, the following methodological process has been conducted:

- a) Exploratory study. There has been an analysis of the concepts associated with social advertising and the BI, materialized through the state of the matter.
- b) Analysis of the corpus. Carried out through the description and filtering of communication companies that carry out actions of communication or diffusion of social causes in Spain.
- c) Analysis of the object of study. By the description of the communication actions implemented by the solidarity initiative *La Marató* of TV3.
- d) Development of the empirical phase. In the fieldwork a total of 266 random face-to-face surveys was carried out to citizens in nine areas of the four provinces that make up the community of Catalonia (Spain).

The media companies examined in the process of selection of the object of study are referenced below. The analysis was based on the study of clusters of media and business groups. The conditions of each of these companies were viewed separately and within its business groups, aiming to cover many companies and do a full scan of the whole sector.

Once the communication companies that perform actions for the dissemination of social causes (less than a third of the total) were evaluated, the analysis of *La Marató* of TV3 as case study analysis was conducted, since it brings together optimum conditions to be evaluated as a social cause. *La Marató* of TV3 was the first television marathon in Spain, which took place in 1992. Antenna 3 (private state network) made its first telethon in 1993 and donated the funds to diverse Spanish NGOs.

It coincides that Spanish Television celebrated the so-called “first tele-marathon for the research of rare diseases” the month of March 2014. TV3, on the other hand, had devoted its *Marató* to rare diseases in the 1996, 1999, 2009 and 2013 editions. This seniority in

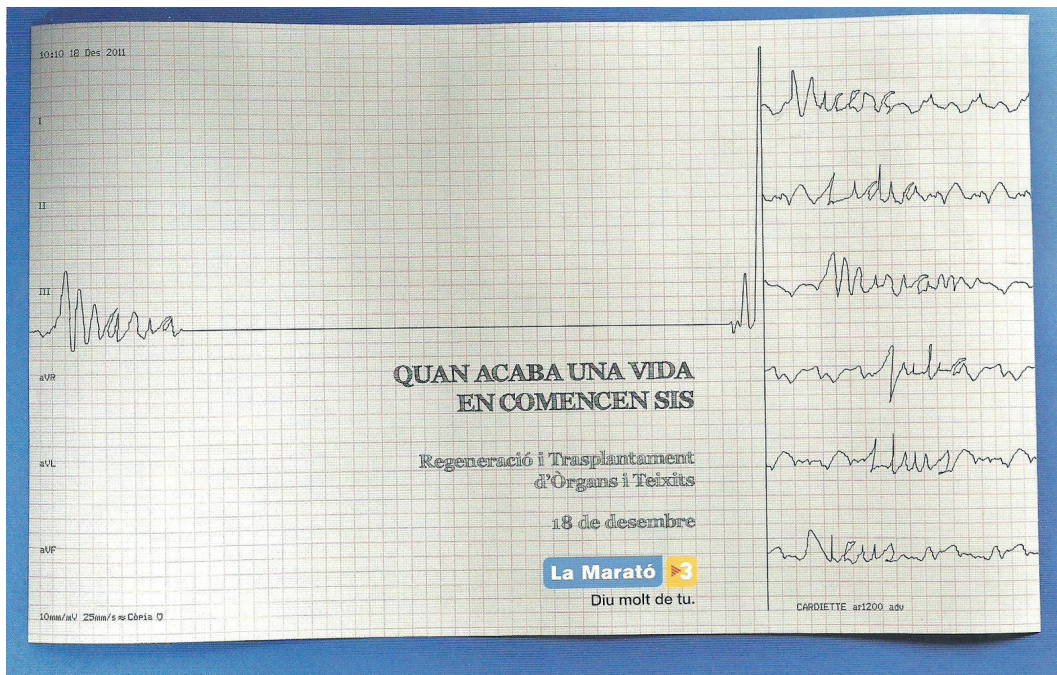
Table 1. Sectorial analysis of media companies

No.	Company	Business sector	Communication with stakeholders
1	Televisió de Catalunya	Media	Yes
2	Prisa group	Media	Yes
3	Vocento group	Media	Yes
4	CRS Media Group	Media	Yes
5	Mediaset	Media	Yes
6	Einsa group	Publishing	Yes
7	Servimedia	News Agency	Yes
8	SANCA	Audiovisual production	Yes
9	Antenna 3	Media	Yes
10	Godó Group	Media	No
11	BTV	Media	No
12	Appec	Media	No
13	Planeta Group	Publishing and media	No
14	Editorial Prensa Ibérica	Publishing and media	No
15	Zeta Group	Publishing and media	No
16	Intereconomía Group	Media	No

17	Cope	Media	No
18	El Periódico de Catalunya [The Newspaper of Catalonia]	Media	No
19	Study of communication	Consultancy and public relations	No
20	Europa Press	News Agency	No
21	Delta Group	Publishing	No
22	Agència Catalana de Notícies	News Agency	No
23	Dimension	Logistics of communication	No
24	Telecyl	Communication and marketing	No
25	Corporación RTVE	Media	No
26	MCI Group	Events and public relations	No
27	SVQ	Communication consulting	No
28	Media Planning Group	Advertising agency	No
29	RBA group	Publishing	No
30	UNITRONICS	Communications and events management	No

Source: Own elaboration.

Image 1. Advertising Campaign Year 2011



Source: Image provided by Televisió de Catalunya, TV3.

uninterrupted celebration gives it credibility. The tele-marathons are sometimes questioned as sensational charity, but TV3's has 25 years involving the whole Catalan society. For example, in the the edition held in December, 2013, during the day of the event more than 220,000 visits to the website were registered, more than 80,000 calls were received, it gained 8.554 new followers on Facebook, and the program had an average of 396.000 viewers, equivalent to an overall share of 18.9% of the rating, with a cumulative audience of more than 3 million people (Fundació *La Marató* of TV3).

This article does not take the tele-marathons as an object of study, but it analyzes this initiative in the context of the CSR actions of the company Televisió de Catalunya (TV3) CSR.

The questionnaire consisted of a part with a question with closed answer and a part with a question of open response in text-type.

Do you think that *La Marató* improves the brand image of TV3 to its audience?

Yes ___ No ___ NS/NR ___

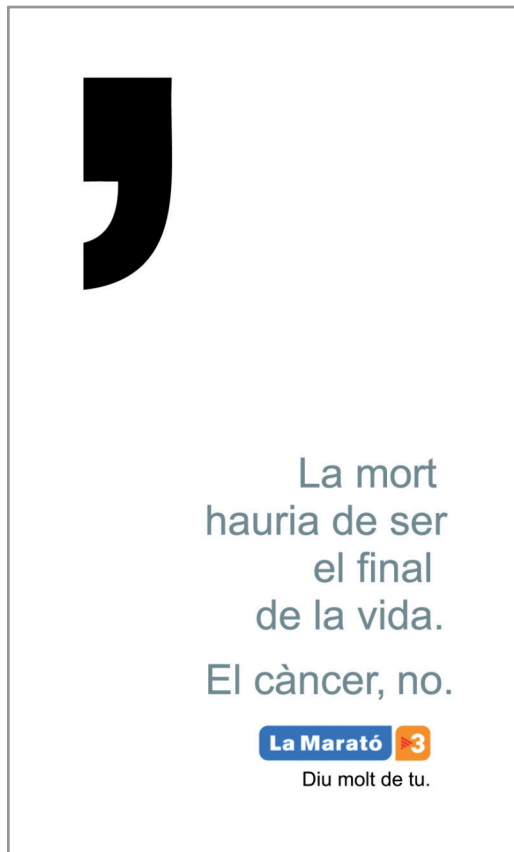
Justify _____

For the part of free response a system of categories was created, that would allow an interpretation of qualitative results. First the researcher conducted a pilot study of the responses and developed a series of sub-categories (prestige, quality, closeness, trust, altruism, responsibility, transparency, ethics, performance, solidarity), which were grouped in a more compact and small category system (trust, solidarity, quality, transparency).

The second researcher, independently, re-coded cases of the pilot study and revised the definitions of categories and subcategories. Throughout this pilot process of duplicate coding and adjustment, the reliability of the inter-coders was an average of 95%, considering that in the subcategories 9 out of 10 coincided and in the categories the coincidence was 100%.

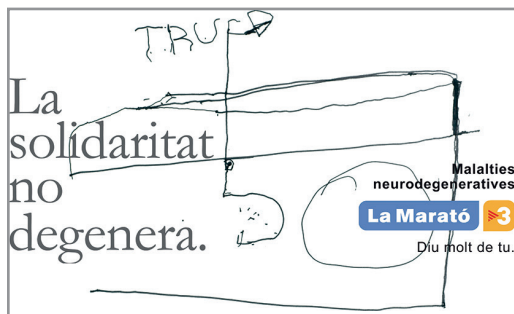
The choice between positive, negative, or neutral effects on the BI has been interpreted in a comprehensive manner just with percentages, not for the purpose of performing a part of statistical study, but to have a second encoding which allows a generic look at the analysis of the responses. Those provided do not act as an example, but as a sample of the type of response

Image 2. Advertising Campaign Year 2012



Source: Image provided by Televisió de Catalunya, TV3.

Image 3. Advertising campaign Year 2013



Source: Image provided by Televisió de Catalunya, TV3.

that the questionnaires have offered.

The coding of the answers of the respondents was materialized in Excel, where a division was made between positive, negative, or neutral responses (code B), and concordance with the proposed categories for answers in relation to the perception of the BI (code A).

Table 2. The empirical study data sheet

Methodological procedure	Random face-to-face survey
Type of question raised	Open
Geographical scope	Autonomous community of Catalonia
Number of surveys done	266
Demographic description of the sample	Men - 42% Women - 58%
Age range of the sample	18-34 years - 28.3% 35-49 years - 42.9% 50 to 64 years - 22.8% + 65 - 6.0%
Average age	41 years old
Occupational profile of the sample	Employees - 75.5% Students - 11.5% Unemployed - 7.0% Retired - 6.0%

Source: Own Elaboration.

RESULTS

The opportunity of interviewing a total of 266 people has yielded a significant amount of information from their testimonies, taken as personal perceptions. Without statistical value, the sample has been balanced in territorial terms, gender, age, social background and occupation.

An important part of respondents expressed that TV3 does *La Marató* and receives benefits, which result in an improvement of the BI, but TV3 does not do it with that objective in mind. This approach of the citizens is supremely interesting, because the image they have of TV3 leads them to consider that the objective of the actions carried out by that channel in favor of social causes is not to improve the BI, and they even mention that, even if TV3 used *La Marató* for “this and that”, they would not mind it. These responses have exceeded the expectation about the BI generated by this initiative and raise the value of qualitative tools for detailed and less predictable results.

From the point of view of the established categories, in the first place, the fact that *La Marató* is used a part

of a tool to improve the BI and not perceived by citizens as a bad practice is ratified in the following comments about the *trust* that the company generates:

- I don't think they use campaigns like *La Marató* to improve their image; I don't think that this is the purpose, although certain actions like this improve their image. (Student, 24 years)
- They don't need to. TV3 has on its own a good reputation in Catalonia. (Housewife, 44 years)
- I suppose it does it as a side effect. I don't think that in principle this is the goal; they don't do *La Marató* to look good, but obviously it benefits the image of TV3. (Secretariat, 40 years)
- Is a successful initiative that has been done for years, why not use it? It would be foolish to do otherwise. (Professor, 34 years)
- I don't think they do it to improve their image. I suppose it is profitable, but I don't believe they do it with that objective. (Independent, 40 years)

These are evidence of how *La Marató* is valued by citizens, even assuming that a part of their development is directed to the benefit of the own BI of TV3. Although there are many more answers that are on the same line, the excerpted show the most reliably the opinions of respondents.

Another aspect, which most citizens have appreciated, is the solidarity approach to *La Marató*. In this point, the *solidarity* becomes an important intangible value that builds BI. The answers in this field have also been a majority, which is why some of the most significant are presented:

- When it is solidarity, it always improves self-image. (Entrepreneur, 41 years)
- It's evident; the fact that they help people in need is something viewers like. (Telephone operator, 31 years)
- Solidarity is very well valued by all people. (Librarian, 43 years)
- Naturally initiatives like this help to reinforce an image that is committed to social conscience, to refer to the more human side. (Designer, 32 years)
- The success of a solidarity campaign of this size is a first class presentation card. (Lawyer, 48 years)
- In TV3 they are interested in having this role of solidarity and responsibility before the public. This improves its image and it can benefit then later in audience numbers. (Journalist, 22 years)

Social causes are, mostly, solidarity projects that generate benefits to different communities or even to the same stakeholders of the organization, and interest groups see with good eyes to put up these initiatives.

In another sense, surveyed citizens relate directly the *quality* and the BI of TV3 with the social cause that it communicates through advertising:

- I think *La Marató* helps a lot to improve the image of TV3, but TV3 does not need to improve its image with the marathon. TV3 is quality television and shows it every day. The marathon is important, yes, but TV3 is quality TV for a lot more thing, from my point of view. (Administrative, 50 years)
- I consider it a work that helps improve the image itself, but it is not the only, since it already has a quality image. (Doctor, 25 years)
- I think that TV3 has always been considered as a very supportive network. It is clear that viewers always appreciate these aspects, but TV3 also has earned for itself the number of spectators who follow them because it has very good programming and knows what the Catalan viewer likes. (Employee, 28 years)

It is clear that being a company that is related to high levels of quality, advertising campaigns or efforts to improve their BI will be easier to achieve. Of course, this factor is not an objection to the implementation of these initiatives; however, the executives of the companies should recognize that the path towards the construction of BI has already been paid with a quality product or service.

An additional factor that has emanated from the answers of the respondents is directly related to the fact that TV3 is a public television, circumstance that affects the consideration of *transparency* in the chain:

- It's public television, so far, and an initiative that has the disinterested participation of many people; I think is a good initiative. The growing skepticism to initiatives like this can muddy this image. I want to emphasize the fact that it is a public television and the citizens deserve a television as transparent as possible. (Social worker, 50 years)
- It delivers a rigorous management of the raised funds, and has a direct and transparent communication with society. (Administrative, 36 years)

- It is transparent from the moment in which there is behind a Foundation, which are those who control the donations and recipients of the money. (Administrative, 48 years)

- I think that year after year, *La Marató* shows that it is a good initiative and that the method works; that is why the management is transparent. (Communicator, 26 years)

The fact of being a public television also influences in the bond generated with the citizens, breaking through the simple notion of BI. Meaning, the relationship that TV3 has with the community through initiatives such as *La Marató* has strengthened ties with citizens, allowing it to become an icon of the Catalan identity.

The benefits of the diffusion of social causes not only generate a positive BI. Citizens also notice the existence of other aspects on which *La Marató* influences, although they were not included in the main categories:

- Behind every campaign and/or action there always is a marketing plan with a goal of attracting spectators (customers), with the desire to identify the channel with the action which promotes, and the actions of *La Marató* surely, in a big part, achieved this goal. (Psychologist, 44 years)

- It helps itself from the advertising to be able to reach more people. (Administrative, 36 years)

- The groups involved as well as the donors may feel that it is a useful tool, of which they participate directly. (Merchant, 49 years)

La Marató, being a television event, generates other benefits that citizens can appreciate as very positive, in addition to bringing in BI: increase in audience, attracting new customers, more advertising and stronger bonds with all stakeholders in the value chain.

Although within 266 surveys some negative responses have been found, they have been minority (less than 8%):

- It takes advantage of the good gestures to look good to the spectators. (Manager, 40 years)

- TV3 should give more opportunity to their viewers in their expressions and ideas. (Merchant, 49 years)

- I don't think that it is done selflessly from TV3's part. (Employee, 38 years)

- What's important is *La Marató* and not TV3. If you are looking to win image, because the main objective of *The Marató* is to help, in this case TV3 should not be the protagonist. (Social worker, 38 years)
- A small part, as in everything, has an economic purpose, but I think you have to believe in this initiative. (Student, 21 years)

From the perspective of the B coding, citizens consider that the preparation and dissemination of a social cause like *La Marató* does generate benefits to TV3: 71% of the respondents believe that it improves its BI, compared with 18% who consider that it does not, while the remaining 11% does not know or does not respond.

Taking in just the figures, it can be concluded that, in general terms, the diffusion of a social cause like *La Marató* generates a significant benefit in terms of BI. The fact that more than 70% of the citizens clearly state that this initiative has a good image, is worthy of consideration. However, the perception that this numerical value incites changes significantly when contrasting it with the comments of the citizens registered in the responses of textual and free order, richer and full of nuances.

It is significant to observe the way in which the citizenship values the efforts of TV3 in the dissemination of social causes and the impact generated in the BI, which does not only allow it to enjoy community recognition, but it also creates a remnant of positive reputation and image which will be important when dealing with present and future crises.

CONCLUSIONS

The possibility to evaluate the perceptions of citizenship in terms of the image it has of TV3 from the diffusion of social causes through this medium has allowed relevant conclusions on the influence of said diffusion in the BI.

Citizenship widely considered that the dissemination of social causes generates a direct and positive impact in the BI. However, comparing the B coding responses marked by *Yes* or *No*, the answers disagree in part in the justifications of the respondents. This is a contradictory condition that could be elucidated after analyzing the valuations of the open questions. It is an interesting case, because citizens already have a good image of *La Marató* of TV3, and their responses to the open part

of A coding are more focused on describing that they do not consider TV3 to implement such actions for a mercantilist or interested objective.

Surveyed citizens receive with pleasure the development of campaigns for the dissemination of social causes, especially because they consider that it is a way TV3 shows institutional sensitivity to social problems. The sensitivity of an organization can be a transcendental and differentiating factor in moments in which the stakeholders perceive companies as entities without values and only respond to their economic interests.

The idea of using initiatives such as *La Marató* for benefits related to marketing, referred to as "make-up", is not an aspect to which citizens have given much importance. Although few considered that the initiatives developed by TV3 are focused on the search of being an advertising trend or to improve their BI, most assumed *La Marató* as an integral part of the brand TV3. This position takes away the doubts of the collective imaginary about the use of this program for economic purposes.

The continuity with which TV3 has been doing *La Marató* (more than twenty years) is a differentiating factor when evaluating the perceptions that citizens have about their BI. Meaning, since they assume *La Marató* as an action that endures over time and has a solid foundation, they do not they perceive it as a palliative or temporary work, a situation more linked with social initiatives that have a marketing purpose.

The citizens value social campaigns being done, but they are also interested in the quality and that it seeks to improve the conditions of the stakeholders' conditions. Regarding this, it is reiterated that although respondents express that TV3 receives benefits in terms of its image by *La Marató*, they consider that it is not done for that sole purpose, and that their expectations and priorities are more directed to philanthropy.

The dissemination of social causes generates decisive impacts on the BI of organizations, whether it is positive or negative. The brand, as a fundamental part of the business assets, is perhaps the element on which more influence is exerted. TV3 as a brand not only has taken advantage of the benefits of this communication, but it also has incorporated it into its corporate DNA. This approach has led it to obtain an important recognition and valuation from the citizenship.

In the opinion of citizens, TV3 as a public medium has strengthened its BI through the organization and transmission of *La Marató*, because they assume their initiatives as intrinsic to their responsibilities as a medium, deployed through a communication valued as credible and reliable. Meaning, the condition of being a public medium removes any suspicion that the brand uses these campaigns as a “facelift” or marketing action, with a target focused specifically on improving its BI.

The image that the citizens have of TV3 is very positive. The best way to corroborate this fact is the way that it has transcended this feeling, because they have internalized the message of *La Marató* of TV3 as a part of the Catalan identity. In this regard, the program generates a feeling of pride, causing the same sensations as those companies that create “brand communities” from a great rapport with their stakeholders.

Although this is a somewhat unexpected result, one of the limitations of the research would be foreseeing in advance a certain positive evaluation of *La Marató*, taking into account the numerous successful editions of this initiative. Other constraints, in this case of the methodological design, is the difficulty of statistically cater to an audience that would be infinite, considering that the latest edition of *La Marató* was followed by more than 38% of the Catalan population, which is currently around 7.5 million inhabitants. To this we must add that, generically, some areas of the Academy is wary of all the methodological tools that are based

on human testimony, claiming that the real perception does not have to be imagined or narrated.

Save the prior positivism and suspicion against the interviews and surveys, the extension to at least 400 surveyed citizens, which would require a broader survey team, would lead to even more refined results, at the time that would allow to devise some triangulation with an experimental methodology and an ethnographic type. One could try, for example, to create focus groups to delve into specific issues, discussing them, or comparing the survey data.

After analyzing the way in which the dissemination of social causes impacts the BI for a company such as TV3, the future lines of research in this field can be directed to the following:

- The impact of the diffusion of social causes in other business sectors, such as banks, energy companies, airlines, department stores by areas, etc., as a way to compare the incidence in the BI with communication companies.
- The impact of social advertising on companies damaged BI and CR, either by a crisis or its own brand circumstances.
- The way in which campaigns for the dissemination of social causes impact on the BI throughout the value chain, so that the perceptions of each of the stakeholders could be compared.

FOOTNOTES

1. Own translation. Original: “se refiere a cómo una organización se expresa a sí misma, y se diferencia de otras, frente a sus stakeholders”.
2. Referring to accounting books and balances.
3. Own translation. Original: “típicamente incorpora el valor de los intangibles, incluyendo marcas y reputación”.

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