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The Effects of Characters in the EDM Industry in the Digital Age

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Abstract:

Because of the increasing downloading possibilities, Electronic Dance Music (EDM) artists are trying new initiatives to increase sales, one of these creative initiatives is the addition of a character to a musical artist in order to increase attention, which is part of long-term strategy. The goal of this article is to analyze the effects of characters in the EDM industry by providing a theoretical framework supported with a quantitative research with elements from an experiment (n=180). Three video clips were developed and tested. The videos clips are identical to each other, only the character is the variable. The results indicated that closed and abstract characters have multiple effects in the EDM industry and can bring both positive as negative results for musical artists.

Keywords: *Character, electronic dance music industry, consumer behavior, transmedia storytelling*

1. Introduction

Electronic Dance Music (EDM), often referred to as Electronica, is an overarching collection of genres that focus predominately on rhythmic motifs and repeating loops. DJs are always looking for ways to expand the interactivity of their performances through the use of new tools and initiatives. These initiatives could be technical, but also initiatives in terms of marketing (McLeod, 2011). One of these marketing initiatives is the creation of a mystery by the formation of a character. This means the performer of the musical piece steps away from its original identity and trades it for a fictive identity. As a result, the audience does not know all the information from the artist. In order to get more information about the musical artist the audience is able to enter the story world of a fictive character. Characters can easily be translated in a transmedia story world where multiple media are used to broaden the fictive world around a character. Well-known examples of characters in the EDM industry are Daft Punk, Deadmau5, SBRTKRT and Bloody Beetroots. For over a decade now, innovations in the realm of digital media technologies have been commonly perceived as threatening the medium/long-term viability of the music industry. Digital file-sharing, duplication and storage technologies are widely regarded as producing a 'crisis' for an industry that had grown exponentially on the back of the CD-boom throughout the latter decades of the twentieth century. Therefore, creativity is necessary to survive in this dynamic industry. The results for EDM artists of emerging digital media technologies are two-sided, on one side it is easier for artists to enter the industry to distribute their product and get attention, but on the other side, because of the simplicity to enter the industry the number of artists on the market grows and therefore it becomes more complex to stand out. A second problem is that once an artist has created the attention, interest and desire from the audience in their music, the audience is still able to consume the product without any payment via P2P(peer-to-peer) file sharing programs. The music industry is suffering from P2P file-sharing programs. So far, the music industry is still very dynamic with new trends and developments on the market every day, but a decrease in choice of music might be realistic in the near future, if the P2P keep developing as they do today. This can be considered as a very serious problem since music helps us with self-regulation and helps us with supporting our emotions (Saarikallio, 2011). It is for this reason, that every possible initiative to boost the music industry must be researched. The goal of this article is to analyze the effects of characters in the EDM industry. The theoretical framework starts with an introduction to the electronic dance music industry and the trends and developments related to this industry, then the addition of characters to artists will be explained and how this could help the electronic dance music industry. Secondly, communications theories are applied on characters and is explained how characters can be translated in a transmedia story world. The theoretical framework leads to 9 hypotheses which are presented in the text and have been tested with quantitative research.

2. Theoretical Framework

The electronic dance music industry is a developing industry, in which new innovation and trends are constantly emerging. The performance of electronica by DJs presents a unique opportunity to develop interactions between performance and music. Also the marketing initiatives, live experiences and online social interactions are experimented. A task of the electronica DJ is to compile a set-list of music for performance. Additionally, DJs are always looking for ways to expand the interactivity of their performances through the use of new tools and initiatives (Diakopoulos, Vallis, Jordan, Hochenbaum, Murphy & Kapur, 2009). Currently the EDM industry is facing difficult times; the digitization of media and the evolution of online channels for its circulation and distribution came

accompanied by much techno-centric hysteria proclaiming the commercial demise of all that could be digitized. Such perspectives pointed to social and economic structures undergoing fundamental transformation; digitalization would ensure the death of copyright; the media corporation would collapse in an environment where it no longer held a stranglehold over channels of distribution; concomitantly, the 'individual' would be empowered in ways previously inconceivable in terms of producing and delivering content to a mass audience. In short, the 'new economy' deemed to arise from digital technologies means the demise of the 'old' economic laws that have characterized the modern capitalist era (Kelly, 1999). As a result, creativity to distinguish from the competition becomes more important in the EDM industry; a more long-term strategy is therefore required. This process is increasingly linked to blogs and social networking sites; these sites have evolved as crucial word-of-mouth (WOM) mechanisms. While word-of-mouth once meant those peers in your immediate geographic environment, the internet means those that are potentially much more widely dispersed and significantly larger in number (Preston & Rogers, 2011). Those social networks and other digital platforms (along with an increasing range of more traditional platforms) enable major copyright holders to draw revenues from an increasing variety of streams across diverse sub-sectors (Preston & Rogers, 2011). The online interactions become important to deal with the crisis. Adding characters to an EDM artist may raise the social interaction and create word-of-mouth mechanisms, as a result of the mystery which is created by the addition of an unidentified character. Several theories will be applied to explain the influence of the addition of a character to an EDM act.

2.1. Use and Gratification

The Use and Gratification (U&G) theory is an approach that explains what people do with media, instead of what media does to people. U&G is largely intended to identify the psychological needs that motivate the use of a particular medium to gratify those needs (Ko, Cho & Roberts, 2005). It is a user centered approach and explains that there are several needs and gratification for people; they are categorized into two categories. 'Cognitive needs' – when individuals have a need for facts and information, 'affective needs' – when individuals use media to fulfil a need for emotions. A study by Saarikallio and Erkkilä (2007) showed that music proved to be a versatile means for mood regulation. It offers people resources for increasing and restoring well-being, and made their emotional life more varied and colorful. The study succeeded in demonstrating the impressive capability of music for promoting emotional self-regulation. This suggests that music is mostly used for affective needs from the users' perspective. However, when a mystery is added to the musical artists, not only users high in need for affect may be attracted. Listeners of music including characters might listen to the music in order to solve the problem of a mystery, finding clues, facts or information to identify the personality. This means that when a mystery is added to a mysterious character is added listeners may have other reasons to listen to the music than emotional self-regulation. Music including characters may also attract people high in need for cognition; some individuals have a high need for cognition, where they enjoy the effortful engagement of arguments, the evaluation of ideas, and the analysis of problems and their solutions. These individuals by their very nature are more likely to engage in high elaboration (Chaiken, 1987). In conclusion – musicians can target a bigger group than only those in need for affect, by initiatives such as, the addition of a mystery. The mystery is mainly formed by the abstractness of the character, since people like to relate to things which are not possible if it is too abstract to them (Heider, 2013), this theory will be explained further in the next paragraph.

2.2. Construal Level Theory

The Construal Level Theory (CLT) describes the relation between psychological distance and the extent to which people's thinking. When an object, person, choice or concept (OPCC) is far, there is a high construal level, which means that the OPCC is abstract to the individual. On the other hand, when an OPCC is close, there is a low construal level and means that the OPCC is concrete (Trope & Liberman, 2010). The CLT divides the psychological distances in four categories; temporal, spatial, social and hypothetically. Looking at CLT and the relationship between musical artists and its listeners, the focus will be on the category 'social'. Listeners of music and producers of music are socially concrete from each other, this because the interpersonal similarity is high. Interpersonal similarity is a form of social distance, with similar others being perceived as socially closer to one self than dissimilar ones (Liviatan, Trope & Liberman, 2008). Fans want to relate themselves socially with those musicians they listen to, because they feel a sense of 'belonginess' (Heider, 2013). However, when a musician has hidden characteristics and has a closed attitude towards its listeners it is much harder to feel the same sense of 'belonginess' as with open identities. Therefore, the social psychological distance is more abstract when musical artists hide characteristics and identities. In the next section will be explained why this abstractness is useful for the creation of a transmedia story.

2.3. Transmedia Storytelling

The Construal Level Theory showed that musicians with a hidden identity creates social psychological distance from the audience, and that therefore the characters are abstract for the audience, however by creating this abstractness the artist have created starting points for a broader transmedia story world. This is recognized in the multiple media platforms electronic dance musicians use today, in which characters are used. Therefore the 'reader' has multiple entry points to access their 'story-world' (Jenkins, 2003) and to begin the process of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP), a term introduced by Lave and Wenger (1999) and describes how newcomers in a story world become experienced members and eventually old timers of the community around the story world of an abstract character. The first step is to draw attention in such a way that the 'enterer' of the story world inevitably participates in a community around the story world and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move towards full participation in the sociocultural practices of the community around the story world (Lave & Wenger, 1999). The creation of attention is realized by

the fictive character as Solomon (2011) explains; Characters do boost viewers' recall of claims and also yield higher attitude towards the personality. It concerns the process of how a newcomer becomes a part of the community of practice.

The text presented related to the Construal Level Theory and transmedia storytelling leads to the following hypotheses:

- H1: Closed and abstract characters are more likely to succeed in a transmedia story world than open and concrete characters in the EDM industry.
- H2: Closed and abstract characters in the EDM industry increase the attention in the EDM artist.

Creation of word-of-mouth (WOMM) marketing by characters and narratives

Once a character is formed, it is easier to create a narrative around that character, which will lead to WOMM. Other influencers of WOMM are communications forum, communal norms, and the nature of the marketing promotion (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki & Wilner, 2010). In order to create WOMM, consistency in the character is essential, if the appearance of the character is positive or negative is less important in WOMM. Communicators establish particular types of narrative styles that can be interpreted as enacting particular character types. Each character type requires a specific performance of the practice (Reckwitz, 2002) that consists of certain behaviors, understandings, and emotions that are socially constructed and communally understood (Schau, Muñiz, & Arnould, 2009). These established character types are likely to yield particular responses to WOMM promotions because the communicator seeks a consistent representation that conforms to the practices he or she has established with the audience.

The text presented related to word-of-mouth marketing leads to the following hypothesis:

- H3: Closed and abstract characters translated in a transmedia story world, increase word-of-mouth communications.

Attitude towards a character

How the character is perceived does determine the success of a character. If a character is perceived positively, the chance that the audience enters the story world and get interested in purchasing product or services from an EDM artist is higher than when a character is perceived negatively. In other words, the identity of the artists influences the action. The degree to which identities are malleable, involve a readiness to act (Aaker & Akutsu, 2009).

Oyserman (2009) introduces the Identity-Behavior Motivation (IBM) theory. Choices are often identity-based but the linkage to identity is not necessarily explicit or obvious for a number of reasons, Identity-based motivation is the readiness to engage in identity-congruent action (Oyserman, 2007; Oyserman, Brickman, Bybee, & Celious, 2006; Oyserman, Fryberg, & Yoder, 2007) and to use identity-congruent mindsets in making sense of the world. Once an identity is formed, action and procedural-readiness can be cued without conscious awareness or systematic processing, resulting in beneficial or iatrogenic outcomes. Identity-based motivation results in readiness to take action even when the action is not beneficial to the participant or is unlikely to have been chosen outside of the specific context. This shows that it is very important to create a suitable character, so that the identity towards the character is perceived positively and therefore increases the chance the audience will go into positive identity-linked action. On the other hand, when a character is perceived negatively the chance of getting the audience into positive identity-linked action decreases. This explains that the way the character is perceived has influence on how musical pieces linked to the character are being perceived by individuals. Looking at the attention and WOMM – both negative and positive identities may be useful as long as the character shows consistency (Reckwitz, 2002), but to create interest, desire and action it is necessary that the identity is perceived positive (Oyserman, 2009).

The text presented related to 'attitude towards the character' leads to the following hypotheses:

- H4: If the identity of a character is perceived positively it has a positive effect on how a musical piece is perceived.
- H5: If the identity of a character is perceived negatively it has a negative effect on how a musical piece is perceived.
- H6: Closed and abstract characters translated in a transmedia story world, in the music industry increase the interest in the EDM artist if the identity of the character is perceived positive.
- H7: Closed and abstract characters translated in a transmedia story world, in the music industry decrease the interest in the EDM artist if the identity of the character is perceived negative.
- H8: Closed and abstract characters translated in a transmedia story world, in the music industry increase the desire to purchase music if the identity of the character is perceived positive.
- H9: Closed and abstract characters translated in a transmedia story world, in the music industry decrease the desire to purchase music if the identity of the character is perceived negative.

3. Methods

Research has been conducted to test the influence of abstract and closed characters on the behavior of the consumer in the EDM industry compared to open and concrete characters. The hypotheses development showed that characters can be used to create narratives and translate that further in a transmedia story world, this has positive influence on the word-of-mouth marketing and therefore it increases the desire towards the musical piece. The literature review resulted in nine hypotheses which will be tested by quantitative research in form of an online survey. This type of research is chosen because it is a structured way of collecting data in form of numbers, which enables to accept or not accept the hypotheses. The research was cross-sectional, which means that more than one case is presented at a single point of time, resulting in quantitative data which will be analyzed to find patterns and associations (Bryman, 2008).

Other research in the EDM industry used participants with a minimum age of 18 years old and a maximum of 40 years old (Kavanaugh & Anderson, 2008), these age ranges were decided after observing EDM conferences by the researchers. For this reason, this research used the same age groups. Prior work also has noted that early raves attracted racially diverse groups from primarily

working-class backgrounds (Reynolds, 1999). Acceptance of all forms of diversity was considered a core value in the past rave era and one that those in this study continued to endorse, this also meant for genders; both male and female participants were selected. Three video clips were developed to this research. The scenarios were created at specialized studio in a University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, with an expert of Media and Innovation area jointly with a PhD researcher about Media. The script was elaborated taking into consideration the literature about the topic and the goals of the study. They were recorded using professional camera (Canon 18-135mm).



Figure 1: Oskar Baeten



Figure 2: Prince Pete



Figure 3: Daddy Demon

One video showed DJ Oskar Baeten as shown in Figure 1, performing a dance song called ‘Vicious’. Another video presented exactly the same song, but now the musical author was transformed into a positive character in form of a happy frog, called ‘Prince Pete’ as presented in Figure 2 and the last video showed a negative character, a grey monster called ‘Daddy Demon’ as presented in Figure 3. By this way, it was tested if the character influences the audience’s attitude towards the musical piece.

It was used previous used scales to construct the instrument of data collection, like the scale from Mittal (1989), with adaptation for the character, classical scale previous tested by other researchers of the field, with satisfactory validity (Bearden, Netemeyer & Haws, 2011). The independent variables tested in this study was age, gender and the open/closed character. The dependent variables were the interest, attention, perception, (use of) world of mouth, intention (of purchase) social interaction. Considering the criteria for inclusion in the sample, the link of the videos was sent electronically, using social media platforms, with an invitation to participate in the research. The data was collected from 3rd June until 1st of July of 2014, total of 4 weeks. The number of 180 (valid) participants was possible to achieve during this period of data collection.

Concerning the threats to external validity, especially about the reactive effects (Bryman 2008), it was analyzed first by the face validity. The videos were evaluated by 3 Ph.D. experts invited to a presentation about the research in Breda University of Applied Sciences, in 2014, where they were asked to read the report and also evaluate the content of the videos. The criteria for choosing those experts were: all should be in the field of media and innovation for more than 5 years, considering a richer suggestion by this expertise and all should also be researchers, for not only knowledge about the field but also skilled concerning research methodology and the adequacy of the videos for the goal of the research. It was also used the construct validity, where the hypotheses that were used for constructing the videos were deduced from the theory, relevant to the concept (Trochim, 2006).

After the musical piece a small interview took place with the character, these interviews are the start of a further transmedia story world. In the interview is asked about the background of the artist, what their purpose is and how the audience can help them. The videos have a total length of approximately 2 minutes – 1-minute music and 1-minute interview.

4. Results

The sample consisted of 180 participants of which 105 males and 75 females. The age ranged from 18 to 40, with a mean of 23,2 and a standard deviation (s.d.) of 3,49.

To measure the attitude towards the characters, 21 items were designed with a 5-point scale. Afterwards, all items were composed and divided by 21, the results revealed the information as presented in Table 1.

	Oskar Baeten		Prince Pete		Daddy Demon	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Attitude	3,31	0,60	3,47	0,69	2,86	0,69
Significance of Data						
Oskar Baeten	Prince Pete		0,00			
	Daddy Demon		0,176			
Prince Pete	Oskar Baeten		0,00			
	Daddy Demon		0,00			
Daddy Demon	Oskar Baeten		0,176			
	Prince Pete		0,00			

Table 1: Attitude towards character

The respondents had a more positive attitude towards Prince Pete than towards Daddy Demon ($p < .001$), besides it showed that the respondents have a more positive attitude towards Prince Pete than towards Oskar Baeten ($p < .001$). This finding corroborates with authors from the field, like Diakopoulos et al. (2009), in the sense that there is room for innovation, considering new tools and initiatives for the music industry, especially considering the use of characters for the music industry. Finally, the data showed that on

average that the respondents have a more positive attitude towards Oskar Baeten than towards Daddy Demon, but the difference is not significant ($p=.176$).

Hypothesis 1 suggests that closed and abstract characters in the electronic dance music industry have a positive effect on the interest in a further transmedia story world. The results of closed characters (Prince Pete and Daddy Demon) are compared with the results from the open character (Oskar Baeten), see Table 2.

Hypothesis 1	Open Character (n=60)		Closed Character (n=120)		Significance	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.		
Documentary	2,33	1,46	3,30	1,94	0,01	

Table 2: Interest in documentary

The data showed that hypothesis 1 can be accepted. On average the respondents state that they are more interested in additional information in form of a documentary if the character is closed than when a character is open. The question about the documentary showed a significant difference ($p=0.01$). As stated by Saarikallio and Erkkilä (2007), music can be a mean for mood regulation. In this sense, could be enriched this theory with the subject if how is presented the character (open x closed) could also then influence the mood considering the music. Further studies using neuro marketing could be developed to try to deepener this knowledge.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that closed and abstract characters in the electronic dance music industry have a positive effect on the attention towards the character. The results of closed characters are compared with the results from the open characters, as presented in Table 3.

	Open Character (n=60)		Closed Character (n=120)		Significance	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.		
Attention	3,75	1,77	4,43	2,07	0,019	
Recognize	3,58	1,77	4,94	2,07	0,0	

Table 3: Attention

The data indicated that hypothesis 2 can be accepted. On average the respondents state that they keep closer attention when the artist is a closed character than when it is an open character with a significant difference ($p<0.05$), besides the respondents stated that they think they would easier recognize the closed character than the open character with a significant difference ($p<0.001$). As stated by specialized literature, characters can enhance viewers' recall Solomon (2011), as results indicated in this investigation.

Hypothesis 3 proposes that closed and abstract characters in the electronic dance music industry have a positive effect on word-of-mouth communications. The results of closed characters were compared with the results from the open characters, as shown in table 4.

Hypothesis 2	Open Character (n=60)		Closed Character (n=120)		Significance	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.		
WOM communications	2,70	1,68	3,21	1,75	0,066	
Social interaction	2,57	1,89	3,01	1,71	0,129	

Table 4: Word-of-mouth communication

The data showed that hypothesis 3 cannot be accepted. On average more respondents state that they would tell about the artist when it is closed than when the artist is an open character. The difference is close to significance, but not close enough to accept the hypotheses ($p=0.066$). Besides, the respondents also mentioned on average that they would earlier follow a closed character on social platforms, but also this difference was not significant, compared with the closed character ($p=0,129$). As theory indicate, several factors influence the WOMM performance, as communications forum, communal norms, among others (Kozinets et al., 2010). So, although the results indicated that the hypothesis could not be accepted, other variables, not included in this study, could influence this fact. This could be interesting to understand in further qualitative studies.

Hypotheses 4 states that when a character is perceived positively, it has a positive effect on the reception of the music and on the other hand hypothesis 5 suggests that when a character is perceived negatively it has a negative effect on the perception of the music. The attitude test showed that the participants have in general much more positive attitude towards Prince Pete ($n=60$) than towards Daddy Demon ($n=60$), but there are also participants who perceived Prince Pete as negative and Daddy Demon as positive. The attitude test has led to a number between 1 and 5. For analyzing the results, participants who had an attitude towards the character between 1 and 3 will be categorized as 'perceiving the character negative' – which were in total 43 participants and participants who had an attitude towards the character between 3 and 5 will be categorized as 'perceiving the character positive' – which were in total 77 participants. These two categories are analyzed compared to the standard, which is decided by the participants who watched the video of Oskar Baeten ($n=60$), since this character can be seen as 'neutral', because this video clip has a minimum of factors which could influence how the music is perceived.

	Neutral (n=60)		Perceived positive (n=77)		Perceived negative (n=43)	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Song Rating	6,10	1,88	6,87	1,57	4,98	1,64
Significance of Data						
Neutral	Perceived positive				0,008	
	Perceived negative				0,001	
Perceived positive	Neutral				0,008	
	Perceived negative				0,000	
Perceived negative	Neutral				0,001	
	Perceived positive				0,000	

Table 5: Song rating

The data as presented in Table 5 leads to the conclusion that hypotheses 4 and 5 can be accepted. Participants who perceived a character as positive rated the music significantly higher than the standard ($p < 0.01$) and participants who perceived a character as negative rated the music significantly lower than the standard ($p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis 6 suggests that the interest in products from the musical artist increases if the character is perceived positive and hypothesis 8 states that the desire in products increases if the character is perceived positive. On the other side hypothesis 7 suggest that the interest in products decreases if the character is perceived negative and hypothesis 9 states that the desire in products decreases if the character is perceived negative. The results of the 3 questions based on the 7-point scale by Mittal (1989) are presented in Table 6.

	Neutral (n=60)		Perceived positive (n=77)		Perceived negative (n=43)	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Song Rating	3,32	1,07	3,91	1,21	3,03	0,98
Significance of Data						
Neutral	Perceived positive				0,002	
	Perceived negative				0,201	
Perceived positive	Neutral				0,002	
	Perceived negative				0,000	
Perceived negative	Neutral				0,201	
	Perceived positive				0,000	

Table 6: Scale Mittal (1989)

The data in Table 6 leads to the conclusion that hypotheses 6 and 8 can be accepted. Participants who perceived a character as positive stated that the interest and desire towards the music was significantly higher than the standard ($p < 0.005$). The data also showed also showed that the Participants who perceived a character as negative stated that the interest and desire towards the music was lower than the standard, but hypotheses 7 and 9 cannot be accepted since the difference is not significant ($p = 0.201$). This results can be confronted with the theory of the identity-based motivation and the readiness to engage in an identity-congruent action (Oyserman, 2007; Oyserman, Brickman, Bybee, & Celious, 2006; Oyserman, Fryberg, & Yoder, 2007), as the relation with the character and, in this sense, the motivation to engage, would have an impact (positive or negative) in the desire and interest in the music.

5. Discussion

The results indicated that closed and abstract characters have a positive effect on the creation of a transmedia story world. The survey showed that the respondents are more interested in a documentary of a character to get a better understanding of an EDM artist if it is abstract and closed than when it is concrete and open. This is in line with the Construal Level Theory and the statements of Edwards (2012), who mentioned that characters are needed in a transmedia story world; because transmedia story worlds contain fictional universes with enough gaps in the open-ended narrative for different texts to fill in the spaces. The results of the survey also showed that closed and abstract characters increase the attention of the audience. Respondents of the survey stated that the chance that they would recognize the artist are bigger when it is an abstract and closed character compared to an open and concrete character, besides they confirmed that their attention is higher when they watch a video clip of an abstract and closed character compared to an open and concrete character. This confirms what Solomon (2011) stated that characters boost viewers recall of claims. The results also showed that the attention of the audience is not influenced by how the character is perceived. According to Chaiken (1987), this could also be the result of the idea that some people are in high need for affect and some people are in high need for cognition. The music itself attracts people high in need for affect, but the addition of a mystery also results that people high in need for cognition keep close attention to the video, since this group of people wants to solve the problem of a mystery. As a result, a video with an abstract and closed character keeps more people attended than a video with an open and concrete character. Analyzing the interest and desire for purchasing products from musical artists, for example musical albums, this research showed that in the EDM industry this increases when the character is perceived positively. The reason for the increasing interest and desire could be linked to the Construal Level Theory. When a musician has hidden characteristics and has closed attitude towards its listeners it is much harder to feel the same

sense of 'belonginess' as with open identities. Therefore, the social psychological distance is more abstract when musical artists hide characteristics and identities. The respondents of the survey get interested and desired in the musical artist, because they want the same sense of 'belonginess' as with open identities (Heider, 2013). For this reason, it could also be that the data did not show a significant difference, when analyzing the interest and desire for purchasing product from musical artist, when a character is perceived negatively. Although the respondents had a negative attitude towards a character, they still want to know who is behind the character and therefore did not significantly decrease the interest and desire to purchase products from the musical artist. The data showed that a musical piece is perceived better when the respondents have a positive attitude towards a character. On the other hand, the respondents perceived the musical piece worse if they have a negative attitude towards a character. This is in line with the identity-behavior motivation theory from Oyserman (2009), who states that once an identity towards a subject is formed, it has consequences on the reception of actions from the subject. The data also indicated that closed and abstract characters in the EDM industry have a positive effect on word-of-mouth communication; Kozinets et al. (2010) believed that this is the result of a mystery. But this statement missed significance to draw it as a conclusion. Also the question, if the respondent would follow the musical artist on social platforms missed significance, comparing closed and abstract characters with open and concrete characters. According to Preston and Rogers (2011), online interactions become important to deal with the financial crisis – which is a result of P2P-file sharing. It is fair to say that only characters are not enough for online interactions, it could be a motivator, but it should go along with other factors which could lead to social interaction. Reckwitz (2009) suggested that to create WOMM it is less important if the character is perceived positive or negative by the audience. However, the data received in this research suggests the opposite. The participants who perceived the presented character as positive mentioned that they would earlier follow the musical artist on social platforms than participants who perceived the character as negative with a significant difference ($p < 0,01$), see table 7.

	Perceived positive		Perceived negative		Significance
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.	
Social interaction	3,35	1,80	2,36	1,89	0,006

Table 7: Social interaction

6. Conclusions

The goal of this research was to analyze the effects of characters in the EDM industry. Overall, it is definite that closed and abstract characters have multiple effects in the EDM industry and can bring both positive as negative results for musical artists. 6 out of 9 hypotheses were accepted. The results showed that closed and abstract characters in the electronic dance music industry have a positive effect on transmedia storytelling and attention of the receiver. Besides it shows that if the receiver perceives the closed and abstract character as positive it has a positive effect on the reception of music by the musical artist and a positive effect on the interest and desire in the musical artist. On the other side if the receiver perceives the closed and abstract character as negative it has a negative effect on the reception of music by the musical artist, but not on the interest and desire in the musical artist. This could be due to the Construal Level Theory. When a musician has hidden characteristics and has a closed attitude towards its listeners it is much harder to feel the same sense of 'belonginess' as with open identities. Therefore, the social psychological distance is more abstract when musical artists hide characteristics and identities. The audience get interested and desired in the musical artist, because they want the same sense of 'belonginess' as with open identities (Heider, 2013). Although the respondents had a negative attitude towards a character, they still want to know who is behind the character and therefore did not significantly decrease the interest and desire to purchase products from the musical artist.

Is important to highlight that this research topic is relatively new and, in this sense, although with several limitations, propose and test hypothesis using the creation of videos, being unique considering the characters chosen and the investigation of their impact in the perception and attitude from the consumers. Those insights could enrich the developments of new products and service from the industry and suggesting ideas for further studies, as presented in the next items.

6.1. Recommendation to Industry

According to the conclusions, some recommendation to the EDM industry can be made. Upcoming artists should seriously consider using a closed and abstract character linked to their musical act, since it gives them the possibility to create a broad transmedia story world and increase the attention of the audience. However, a character must be chosen very carefully; it should be in line with the music they create and leave a positive perception in the eye of the receiver, so that the audience will go into positive identity-linked action.

For mobile application developers who focus on the music industry, apps can be developed which stimulates the formation of characters and transmedia storytelling. An example could be an application in which alternate video clips can be created by fans of an artist, this stimulates the formation of a character, because the audience could easily intimate a closed and abstract character, but imitating an open and concrete personality is much harder. Besides it stimulates transmedia storytelling and interactivity, because the audience creates a further story world around an artist by creating a video clip.

6.2. Suggestion for Further Studies

Further research could explain what the effect is of an established transmedia story world in the EDM industry (e.g. Daft Punk or Deadmau5) in relation to the transmedia storytelling, word-of-mouth communication, perception of music, attention, interest and desire towards the artists.

Another suggestion for further research is to test the hypotheses on different music genres, examples of other characters in the music industry are Slipknot in the metal genre and the Gorillaz in the Indie rock scene. It could be tested what the influence of the characters in these music genres are on transmedia storytelling, word-of-mouth communication, perception of music, attention, interest and desire towards the artists.

Besides, one of the 2014-2016 top priority for research (Marketing Science Institute, 2015) is understanding the consumer and the consumer experience. In this sense, this research could be used as insights for further investigation of the topic with different methods, like the neuro marketing could enrich the understanding by using bio-measurements. Also, qualitative studies could enrich the analysis of how and why of the results presented.

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