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Strategic Storytelling in Performance Marketing: An Exploratory Case Study of Narrative Variation in Video Advertising on Meta Platforms

Catharina Frey

Dissertation written under the supervision of professor Catarina Pestana, with the collaboration of industry expert BREKKY.

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Abstract

Title: Strategic Storytelling in Performance Marketing: An Exploratory Case Study of Narrative Variation in Video Advertising on Meta Platforms

Author: Catharina Frey

Keywords: Performance Marketing, Storytelling, Video Advertising, Social Media Marketing, Narrative Hooks, Meta Ads

In social media marketing, advertisers are limited to a few seconds in which to capture the attention of users in fast-scrolling feed environments. Therefore, the first seconds of a video advertisement are crucial factors in establishing whether content will be viewed further, interactions will be triggered, or advertisements will be skipped. Thus, the design of the introduction phase of a video advertisement is a key success factor in performance marketing. This thesis investigates the impact of different narrative openings (“hooks”) in short video advertisements on advertising performance. The objective of this study is to assess which hook are particularly effective in capturing attention and stimulating interactions. To examine this topic in a practical context, this thesis follows an exploratory mixed-methods approach in the form of a case study with the German e-commerce start-up BREKKY. Semi-structured expert interviews with BREKKY team members were conducted to gain insights into brand communication, target group relevance, and practical requirements. On this basis, a controlled A/B/n experiment was implemented in Meta Ads Manager where four self-created video advertisements with identical structures were displayed, with only the narrative introduction varying between emotional problem triggers, rational benefit focus, social proof, and transformation. The evaluation of key performance indicators demonstrates that emotional hooks perform best overall, followed by rational openings, while transformational hooks mainly generate early attention and social proof has the weakest impact. This study contributes to a better understanding of narrative introductions in short video advertisements and supports data-driven decisions in the field of performance marketing.

Sumário

Título: Narrativa estratégica no marketing de desempenho: um estudo de caso exploratório sobre variações narrativas em anúncios de vídeo em meta-plataformas

Autora: Catharina Frey

Palavras-chave: marketing de desempenho, narrativa, anúncios de vídeo, marketing nas redes sociais, ganchos narrativos, meta-anúncios

No marketing nas redes sociais, os anunciantes dispõem apenas de alguns segundos para captar a atenção dos utilizadores em feeds de navegação rápida. Os primeiros segundos de um anúncio em vídeo são decisivos para determinar se o conteúdo será visualizado, se ocorrerão interações ou se o anúncio será ignorado. Assim, a concepção da fase inicial de um anúncio em vídeo constitui um fator-chave de sucesso no marketing de performance. Esta dissertação analisa o impacto de diferentes aberturas narrativas (“hooks”) em anúncios de vídeo de curta duração no desempenho publicitário. O objetivo do estudo é identificar quais os tipos de hook mais eficazes na captação da atenção e no estímulo à interação. Para analisar esta temática num contexto prático, a investigação segue uma abordagem exploratória de métodos mistos, sob a forma de um estudo de caso com a start-up alemã de comércio eletrónico BREKKY. Com base em entrevistas semiestruturadas e numa experiência controlada A/B/n realizada no Meta Ads Manager, foram testados quatro anúncios em vídeo com estrutura semelhante, variando apenas a introdução narrativa. A avaliação dos principais indicadores de desempenho demonstra que os hooks emocionais apresentam o melhor desempenho global, seguidos pelas abordagens racionais, enquanto os hooks transformacionais geram sobretudo atenção inicial e a prova social apresenta o impacto mais reduzido. O estudo contribui para decisões informadas no âmbito do marketing de performance.

Preface

At this point, I would like to thank everyone who supported and motivated me during the preparation of this master's thesis.

First, I would like to thank Catarina Pestana, who supervised my master's thesis. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for her helpful suggestions, constructive criticism, and trust in the practical orientation of my work, as well as for the useful ideas and tips she provided during group and individual meetings.

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List of Abbreviations

A/B/n	A/B/n experiment (test with more than two variants)
Ads	Advertisements
BM	Benchmark
CLV	Customer Lifetime Value
CPC	Cost Per Click
CPM	Cost Per Mille (cost per 1,000 ad impressions)
CTA	Call to Action
CTR	Click-Through Rate
DTC	Direct-to-Consumer
ELM	Elaboration Likelihood Model
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
RACE	Reach, Act, Convert, Engage
SKUs	Stock Keeping Units
WKPI	Weighted KPI Performance Index
YTD	Year-to-Date

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1. Introduction

Due to the increasing difficulty of capturing users' attention in the digital environment, businesses are faced with the challenge of presenting advertising messages in a clear and appealing way. The quote "Stories are the secret language of humanity" by Joseph Campbell (1949/2008) underscores the relevance of narrative elements, which are also crucial in social media advertisements in determining whether users continue to pay attention.

Especially in the online sales sector, which is characterized by competition and sensory overload, storytelling is therefore an important success factor for companies in dynamic markets since consumers becoming more and more used to the convenience and speed of online retail deliveries. A continued increase in consumption can be observed, with Germany alone accounting for an e-commerce sales volume of 88,8 billion euros in 2024 (Handelsverband Germany, 2025). Social media is contributing in this way because products and services are now available online in form of social commerce¹ with just a few clicks. A global survey on the most widely used social media platforms of 2025 for marketing purposes shows that 83% of marketers use Facebook and 78% use Instagram for their marketing purposes. Both platforms belong to Meta², which is one of the most widely used platforms in terms of digital advertising. This recognizable shift of advertising to social media illustrates how relevant the design of digital ads³ is in these environments, especially since users are confronted with a multitude of visual stimuli there every day.

Given this context, digital companies in this evolving sector face the challenge of improving their marketing strategy with the right advertising communication in a highly dynamic and competitive environment, which is characterized by rapid market changes and a high speed of innovation in digital communication formats. Since there is no general answer to the question of how to best design this strategy, and since it depends on contextual factors, this work can make a valuable contribution to clarifying this question through its exploratory approach.

¹ Social commerce is a subset of e-commerce that incorporates social interaction and user participation into digital buying and selling processes. (*Onlinemarketing-Praxis*, 2024).

² Meta is a technology company that owns and operates social media and communication platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp (*Meta Platforms*, 2025).

³ "Ads" is short for "advertisements" and refers to paid advertising content. This abbreviation is used throughout this thesis.

1.1 Problem Statement

Social media is a key area for direct-to-consumer (DTC) companies in e-commerce, but platforms like Instagram and Facebook are highly competitive, as the market is becoming increasingly saturated due to high advertising density, limited user attention, and algorithmically controlled playouts. This highlights that the design of the first few seconds of an ad is crucial for success and standing out in the digital market.

After a comprehensive analysis of the current state of research on digital advertising in e-commerce, it can be suggested that storytelling, as a narrative communication approach that transmits brand messages in a structured way and promotes emotional attachment, is an important component of digital advertising and helps to increase its effectiveness in performance marketing. At the same time, however, further research is needed on the design of these advertisements and the narrative structure that goes with them. To date, there has been only limited research on practical recommendations for narrative design tailored to the first few seconds of digital advertisements. As these topics have not yet been sufficiently investigated, there is a research gap in this area that requires further investigation.

1.2 Research Objective

The present master thesis aims to contribute to the existing state of research by conducting an empirical case study in the form of a controlled meta-ad test based on real performance data from a German DTC food start-up. In this way, the thesis not only contributes to the theoretical expansion of knowledge in the field of narrative advertising design, but also provides practical guidance that can help improve the marketing effectiveness of DTC companies in e-commerce.

In this context, the central research question is: *How do different narrative hooks in meta video ads influence the advertising performance?*

The hook refers to the introductory phase of an advertisement, which generates attention in the first few seconds and thus acts as a key driver of performance-related metrics. In this study, performance is understood as the extent to which narrative video ads generate measurable attention and interaction among users, as reflected in common performance marketing metrics. To answer this question, it is first necessary to examine the fundamental mechanisms of performance marketing and the role of narrative design elements in digital marketing. The literature indicates that the narrative structure and, in concrete terms, the introduction of a digital advertisement are decisive in determining whether users pay attention, continue watching, or interact. The main insight gained from this study is to empirically test, based on

the research results, whether and to what extent different narrative elements in the introduction of a digital video ad influence performance in the meta-ads context. The results should show which narrative design is particularly effective in performance-oriented social media environments and thus form a basis for the further development of creative best practices in DTC marketing.

This leads to the following hypotheses, which need to be tested:

***H1:** Ads that use an emotional hook generate more click interactions than the other narrative variant, resulting a higher click-through rate (CTR).*

***H2:** Ads framed around rational product benefits generate stronger view-through rates due to the clear communication of functional advantages.*

***H3:** Ads that emphasize social proof achieve lower cost values and stronger trust-related signals compared to the other variants.*

***H4:** Transformation-based ads create higher attention because the visualization of an aspirational goal captures viewers' immediate interest.*

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

Methodologically, this work follows an exploratory mixed-methods approach and is designed as a case study in collaboration with the e-commerce food company BREKKY. The cooperation with the company allows access to real marketing infrastructures and BREKKY's Meta Ads account, allowing the study to be conducted under authentic performance marketing conditions. To identify the current brand communication of the company under investigation, a qualitative preliminary study in the form of expert interviews was conducted prior to the quantitative test. This study is based on the qualitative content analysis according to Kuckartz (2024), which is oriented toward the procedure developed by Mayring (2010) for conducting such a study (Kuckartz, 2024). The responses of the BREKKY team experts were collected in semi-structured interviews and formed the basis for the development of the scripts in the quantitative part of the study, which is the central focus of this thesis. The quantitative part was conducted as a controlled A/B/n experiment in Meta Ads Manager to analyze the effect of different narrative hooks under real performance marketing conditions. To this end, four video ads with identical structure but different narratives openings were developed, played to a uniform target group, and evaluated using relevant performance indicators.

The thesis begins by first introducing the case study company named BREKKY and continues with an introduction to key areas that repeatedly arise in the context of the present study. The theoretical part defines the central concepts of this work. It covers the basics of social media and performance marketing, explains narrative and dramaturgical principles in a digital context, and describes the relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) used to evaluate the experimental meta-ads. The fourth chapter outlines the methodological approach of the study, including the research design, data collection procedures, and analysis strategy, while the fifth chapter presents the research results and derives practical implementations. After a critical evaluation and presentation of the limitations of the work, the central research results are discussed and summarized in a conclusion, which also answers the above-mentioned research question. The outlook section presents the implications of the research results for the design of digital advertisements in e-commerce, which are to provide inspiration for practical application.

2. The Company Behind the Research

The case company is a German e-commerce start-up in the direct-to-consumer (DTC) segment called BREKKY. It was founded in 2020 by Leon Jürgens and Jonas Bernhard Mader with the mission of bringing healthy breakfast into everyday life and make it convenient. Therefore, the company offers different food products that are easy to prepare, 100% natural, vegan, and free from additives. Following a direct-to-consumer model, these products are primarily sold through the companies own online shop www.brekky.com.

In 2020, the company started with their first two products of smoothie bowls made from freeze-dried fruit. After five years, today the product portfolio includes a wide selection of vegan breakfast and snack products, comprising a total of 31 different SKUs. In addition to several different flavors of the smoothie bowls, the product range got extended by vegan protein powder, matcha powder, granola, and functional bars. The company is experiencing growth not only in its product portfolio but also in its rising revenues. In 2024, the company achieved annual sales of around 4.5 million euros, and in 2025 it successfully reached its target of 8 million euros. The brand communication of BREKKY is strongly visual and uses social media as the primary channel to increase reach, brand awareness and sales. BREKKY positions itself as a lifestyle brand for health-conscious consumers with high standards of convenience and naturalness. The main target group consists of nutrition-conscious women aged 20 to 40 who want to integrate simple and healthy nutrition into their everyday lives, for different reasons like losing weight, gain more energy or save time in food preparation. Storytelling already takes

on a significant role in brand communication at BREKKY and is used in diverse ways, including personal insights from the founders, user-generated content, recipes, and behind-the-scenes formats. The combination of a visual communicative focus, an existing digital marketing infrastructure, but still allowing creative freedom, makes BREKKY a suitable case study for this work.

3. Theoretical Discussion

The following chapter reviews the theoretical foundations and key literature relevant to performance marketing and storytelling in marketing communication. It describes the application of narrative principles in brand communication, presents important communication models and frameworks, identifies the fundamental storytelling components utilized in this study, and specifies the key performance indicators (KPIs) to evaluating the experimental Meta video advertisements, placing them theoretically and contextualizing them with suitable benchmarks to enable a reliable interpretation of the findings.

3.1 Performance Marketing and the RACE-Model

Performance marketing includes digital marketing activities that achieve measurable results such as clicks, conversions, or purchases in real-time (Wirtz, 2024). In the context of online retail, Heinemann (2023) describes performance marketing as an approach consistently oriented toward measurable responses and transactions, characterized by a high modularity, optimizability, and the close interconnection of individual marketing measures, thus enabling precise control along the customer journey. Unlike traditional marketing activities, which pursue more on long-term brand perception and image effects, performance marketing focuses primarily on short-term, directly observable impulses for action, which are continuously optimized using clearly defined key performance indicators (KPIs) (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). Digital market environments are increasingly defined by mobile usage, social networks, and algorithmically controlled interaction logic, causing consumer decisions. Digital platforms like Facebook and Instagram offer suitable conditions for these performance driven actions, as they provide precise targeting, algorithmic optimization, real-time measurement, and detailed user tracking (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). The high transparency of digital markets, the ability to compare prices more easily, and the resulting parallel search for information mean that users switch quickly between channels during the customer journey and act in a highly reaction-driven way (Kollmann, 2019). to shift more toward fast-paced, visually driven, and impulsive processes (Heinemann, 2023). Performance marketing has become increasingly

important, particularly in the direct-to-consumer (DTC) sector, where brands sell their products directly to end customers without intermediaries. Brands use the DTC model to internalize the retail margin, have more control over the customer experience, and gain access to real-time consumer data that is crucial for improvements (Rangan et al., 2021; Wirtz, 2024). In addition, studies on e-commerce show that data-driven optimization and continuous monitoring are key success factors for digital business models because digital systems achieve optimal performance through continuous feedback (Große-Holtforth et al., 2020). This strategy enables brands to create more direct contact with customers, thus increasing customer loyalty and satisfaction and allowing them to manage marketing activities more efficiently in customer interests. In digital marketing, a large portion of the advertising budget is invested in performance marketing, as confirmed by a study which shows that 79% of European DTC brands invest at least one-third of their advertising budget in performance-based social media advertising, indicating high relevance of the topic (Statista, 2024). In Germany, Meta platforms continue to account for around 62% of social media advertising spending, with formats such as Instagram Reels and Feeds generating high interaction rates (Statista, 2025)

To strategically structure performance marketing measures, Chaffey's (2010) RACE model is often used in practice for mapping the digital customer journey and is divided into four phases. The name RACE is an acronym that refers to four key phases of the digital user journey: Reach, Act, Convert, and Engage. Each of these phases describes a specific stage of user interaction in the customer journey, from their first contact to best case long-term customer loyalty. This phase logic of the model offers a structured, KPI-oriented approach that helps companies to precisely plan, control, and evaluate digital marketing activities. In this way RACE creates a clear basis for guiding users along the entire decision-making process in a targeted manner and making the success of individual metrics measurable, especially in performance marketing.

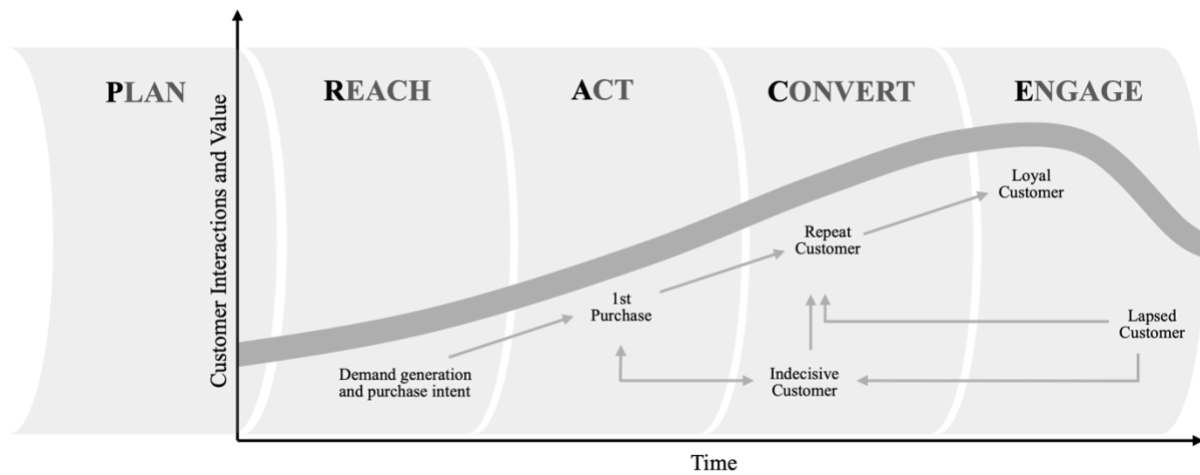


Figure 1 The RACE Framework Across the Digital Customer Lifecycle
 Source: Own illustration adapted from SmartInsights' RACE Framework (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022).

The Illustration shows that the actual RACE process is preceded by an upstream step that is nonetheless essential and named the planning phase. This phase forms the strategic basis for the entire framework, in which goals are defined and the overarching digital marketing strategy is developed. In addition, suitable KPIs for measuring success are defined and the subsequent evaluation criteria are established. By coordinating communication and marketing goals, the planning phase creates the necessary conditions for consistent implementation of the subsequent RACE steps and is thus an essential component of successful customer lifecycle management (Chaffey, 2022).

The planning phase is followed by the reach phase, which forms the entry point into the digital customer journey. The aim of this phase is to generate brand awareness and reach potential customers who are not yet familiar with the product or company for the first time. This phase is therefore characterized above all by a high reach orientation. It comprises all activities aimed at creating visibility such as paid advertising, organic social media posts, SEO measures, and influencer collaborations are used for this purpose (Chaffey, 2022). The primary goal is to generate as many relevant touchpoints as possible to guide users into the so-called marketing funnel, the multi-stage process in which unknown users progress to prospects and ultimately become customers. A successful reach phase creates the necessary starting point for the subsequent stages, as neither interaction nor conversion can take place without sufficient visual contact. The high importance of fast, visually dominant stimuli in the early stages of user contact can also be explained by current developments in online retail, where social media content increasingly dominates the preparation for purchase and involves users in decision-making processes in real time (Heinemann, 2023).

In the following act phase, the user should become active and engage more intensively with the brand for the first time. This includes all actions that go beyond simple perception but do not represent a complete conversion yet, like clicks on ads, visits to product pages, video views, social media interactions, or scrolling stops in the feed (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). This phase is considered an important transition point in the funnel, as here the relevance and appeal of the communicated content is tested to see whether it is sufficient to motivate users to engage further (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). An efficient act phase filters out interested potential customers and leads them to the next stage, where a specific target action is triggered.

This action goal is to be implemented in the next step in the convert phase. This phase represents the central value creation moment in the RACE model, as it is where the economically relevant user action for the company takes place. A conversion can be defined in various ways in the planning phase and depends on the strategic objective of the company, such as a purchase, an add-to-cart, lead generation, or newsletter registration (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). This phase is quite sensitive, as users are faced with a final decision and there can be numerous reasons for abandonment like price, trust, loading times, creative quality, or relevance. Studies show that, especially in the mobile context, attention, and relevance in the first few seconds are ascensional for conversion behavior (Teixeira, 2012).

The last phase, named engage phase, focuses on strengthening existing customer relationships and increasing customer lifetime value (CLV) by turning first-time customers into repeat buyers, brand advocates, or active community members (Chaffey, 2010). Marketing actions taken during this phase can include e-mail automation through the creation of e-mail marketing flows, retargeting campaigns, loyalty programs, and social media interactions. It is essential that customers regularly experience positive touchpoints with the brand, thus ensuring their long-term loyalty. A strong engage phase not only increases the profitability of digital marketing measures, but also reduces the cost of customer acquisition, as loyal customers buy more frequently and often act as multipliers.

In this thesis, the RACE model is used as a structural framework for classifying the tested meta video ads in the digital customer journey. Since the campaign is focused on engagement and conversion, the ads examined can be assigned primarily to the reach and convert phase, in which users are to be motivated to take a specific action. The creation of the hook plays a central role here, as users in social feed environments have a very short attention span. Based on viewing data measured in seconds, Teixeira (2012) proves that the first few seconds of a video are

decisive in determining whether an advertisement is watched further or immediately skipped. This finding is based on the analysis of view-through curves and drop-off rates, which were used to measure at what point users stop watching video ads, with view-through curves and drop-off rates being used as indicators of attention and drop-off decisions (Teixeira, 2012). The RACE model thus not only supports the theoretical positioning of ads, but also helps to understand their function and impact as part of a holistic digital marketing process rather than viewing them as isolated creatives.

3.2 Message Framing and Strategic Storytelling in Digital Marketing

Storytelling is no longer limited to entertainment-driven content created by social media users, but has become increasingly important element in business and brand communication. Today, consumers not only expect product related information, but also seek emotional engagement, entertainment, and authentic insights into the brand. As purchasing decisions are influenced less by only rational factors and more by emotional drivers, brand and business storytelling has established itself as an important instrument in modern marketing (De Oliveira et al., 2022). Building on this, digital marketing is not primarily about what is communicated, but rather how a message is presented. This design process is known as message framing and involves the targeted framing of information to trigger certain perceptions or impulses to act (Entman, 1993; Tversky & Kahneman, 1984). Digital environments are characterized by fast, intuitive processing where users respond less to complex arguments and more to emotional, visual, or social stimuli (Stephen, 2016). This stimulus orientation is supported by findings from retail and e-business research, which state that digital interaction environments promote heuristic decision-making processes, as information overload and shortened attention favor intuitive evaluation criteria (Kollmann, 2019). This brings into focus the question of how a message is presented, especially in the first few seconds of a video. From a brand management perspective, narrative framing strategies are effective because symbolic meanings, cultural associations, and visual stimuli are processed particularly quickly in the digital environment and generate immediate relevance effects (Heinemann, 2023).

At the same time, storytelling is becoming increasingly important in the digital context and can be defined as the strategic use of narrative structures with the aim of conveying brand messages in a meaningful way and building relationships between brands and consumers (Fog, Budtz & Yakaboylu, 2005). Escalas (2004) shows that consumers often process brand messages narratively, in the form of short stories, which creates identification and allows consumers to recognize themselves in a situation, which strengthens emotional attachment. According to

Aaker (2012), brands are more than just products or names, they embrace a network of symbolic meanings created by cultural and emotional aspects, which shape the brand perception and influence how consumers categorize them. Aaker emphasizes that brands function as symbolic systems that create identity, enable differentiation, and forge emotional bonds. A central task of brand management is therefore to strategically create and consistently maintain these symbolic elements to create a strong, relevant and long-term successful brand identity (Aaker, 2012).

Based on the theoretical link between framing and storytelling, four messaging strategies can be identified that are relevant in digital communication and form the basis of the experimental ad variants in this study. These narrative messaging approaches based on an emotional trigger, a rational focus of product benefits, social proof, and a transformation-oriented presentation. Emotional framing highlights a conflict or an initial problem, appeals to emotions such as stress, frustration, or relief, and thereby attracts attention. In this context, emotional stimuli are generally considered to be particularly attention-grabbing, as they are decisive in determining whether users continue watching or stop within the first few seconds of video ads (Teixeira, 2012). Rational framing emphasizes instead concrete product benefits such as naturalness or functionality. These are factors that support quick decision-making processes (Tellis, 2004). To reduce uncertainty, users orient themselves towards visible behavior from others, which are mechanisms of social validations and describes social proof. Social proof is a particularly important element in the world of social media, as content creators have a significant influence on users' purchasing behavior. In digital commerce, such socially generated references act as trust-building heuristics and significantly influence both the perceived relevance and the display efficiency of advertisements (Kollmann, 2019; Große-Holtforth et al., 2020). The fourth approach, transformation, shows a possible future self. A state that consumers can imagine themselves in, such as more energy, routine, or well-being. Visualizing a desired future state generates strong attention, as transformation is a central element of narrative logic and evokes immediate emotional resonance (Miller, 2017). These four framing types each represent different narrative logics and appeal to different psychological motives.

While the four framing strategies differ in terms of their narrative focus and psychological appeal, their effectiveness depends on how users process information. To explain why such narrative stimuli have an impact in social media feeds, it is necessary to consider the underlying mechanisms of information processing. One established theoretical explanatory model for this is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The route through which information is processed depends on the individual's motivation and ability to elaborate on a message, as well as on

situational factors such as time pressure and information density. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) distinguish between two routes of information processing, the central and peripheral route. In social media feeds, information processing takes place primarily via the peripheral route, which is fast, intuitive and requires little attention. Users therefore orient themselves towards easily comprehensible stimuli like emotions, visual contrasts, or social signals. Teixeira (2012) shows that emotional and visual stimuli increase the likelihood that users will not immediately scroll away from a video. In an environment characterized by speed and sensory overload, the hook of a video is therefore highly important.

3.3 Narrative Logic and Structural Principles of Storytelling

While storytelling in digital marketing is primarily understood as a strategic tool for emotional brand management, its communicative effectiveness is affected by the underlying narrative structure. Short digital advertising formats typically rely on shortened narrative patterns that follow the sequence of problem, solution and resulting transformation. McKee and Gerace (2018) argue that stories fulfil a fundamental human need for meaning and that brands thus not only provide information, but also communicate values, attitudes, and orientation. Miller (2017) applies this logic to brand communication by positioning consumers as heroes and the brand as a supportive guide. This principle is relevant for short-form social media formats, in which brands communicate problem solving and value propositions through a simple narrative structure. This perspective illustrates that storytelling is effective not only through the choice of message type, but also through its dramatic structure. Duarte (2010) emphasizes this structure by explaining that effective communicative introductions must generate tension arising from a clear contrast between the initial situation and the possible target state.

In digital communication systems, narrative micro-impulses have a particular effect, as users often perceive information only in a limited time as snippets and therefore react strongly to structured, emotionally engaging narrative elements (Große-Holtforth et al., 2020). Narrative structures form a central theoretical basis for understanding storytelling in marketing. Research in consumer psychology shows that people process, remember, and emotionally categorize information better when it is embedded in narrative forms (Escalas, 2004). As described before, stories reduce complexity, generate meaning, and create identification. These mechanisms work not only in long narrative formats, but also in highly compacted digital advertising formats such as meta video ads. Even within a few seconds, narrative micro-impulses, such as a conflict, a goal, or a visual transformation, can be activated to generate attention and create emotional

relevance, which Duarte (2010) describes as the transformational shift from „What is“ to „What could be“.

Digital touchpoints lead to frequent but less in-depth information processing, which is why narrative patterns are effective in communicating complex content (Kollmann, 2019). The literature describes different universal patterns according to which stories are structured. Campbell (1949/2008) identifies archetypal roles and steps in the Hero's Journey that are deeply rooted in human cognition. Modern brand communication builds on this by positioning consumers as central figures in their everyday journey. Duarte (2010) describes the brand as a mentor-like leader who guides the audience from the current reality to new possibilities, and Miller (2017) operationalizing this in the StoryBrand Framework by positioning the brand as a “guide” that helps consumers solve problems and achieve desired outcomes. Building on brand identity theory and narrative consistency, Signorelli (2012) argues that effective brand storytelling emerges when a brand’s values align with those of its audience, thereby creating narrative authenticity. This alignment is relevant in performance-oriented digital contexts, as narrative messages lacking authenticity are unlikely to attract attention or generate engagement.

In addition to archetypal narrative models, McKee and Gerace (2018) emphasize the importance of conflict as the central point of every story. They highlight those conflicts, together with their subsequent resolution, create tension and determine the emotional logic of the narrative, thereby creating a strong connection with the audience. The view of conflict as a driving force for meaning aligns with Miller's (2017) StoryBrand framework, where the consumer experiences a conflict and the brand acts as a guide to help resolve it. McKee and Gerace add to this approach that conflict is the central element that changes lives and thus allows stories to emerge in the first place. This dramatic structure corresponds classically to the three-act structure (setup – confrontation – resolution), which also incorporates essential elements of suspense logic in digital short formats, despite limited time. The targeted use of conflict and its emotional resolution creates brand relevance for consumers. This reduced dramaturgy is compatible with findings from online retail research, as digital decision-making processes rarely follow a linear path but instead consist of sequential impulses that generate situational attention and trigger behavior (Heinemann, 2023).

Short formats on social media can be understood as highly concentrated narrative structures that are based on classic dramaturgical principles but adapted to the reduced attention spans and usage contexts of digital feeds. In this study, the terms ‘narrative hook’ and ‘narrative stimulus’

are used interchangeably to describe the short narrative introduction of a video ad designed to capture initial attention. At their core, such formats focus on three functional elements, an attention-grabbing introduction, a condensed presentation of the solution or value proposition, and a clear call to action. This reduced dramaturgy does not represent a complete narrative, but rather a functional derivation of basic narrative logic designed to generate attention within a few seconds and trigger targeted user reactions in mobile usage contexts. While traditional storytelling frameworks integrate these elements into a coherent dramaturgy, they are deliberately isolated in this work. This fragmentation corresponds to the logic of mobile short formats, in which often only a single narrative stimulus can be conveyed before the user's attention is lost. The isolated variation of the four narrative stimuli namely emotional, rational, social proof, and transformational, enables a systematic analysis of their individual impact on ad performance and thus forms the theoretical basis of the experimental design of this thesis.

3.4 Key Performance Indicator and Benchmarks in Digital Marketing

To evaluate digital marketing measures effectively, it is necessary to define relevant metrics clearly. The planning phase of the RACE model forms the strategic basis for this, as objectives, KPIs, and success criteria are defined before the actual customer journey begins (Chaffey, 2010). KPIs are predefined key performance indicators that are closely linked to a company's strategic goals and enable an objective evaluation of advertising effectiveness. In data-driven digital business systems, KPIs function not only as retrospective control instruments, but through their integration into operational feedback loops KPIs shift to active control variables that make continuous optimization possible in the first place (Große-Holtforth et al., 2020).

The need for accurate KPI definitions arises especially from the highly dynamic nature of digital markets, in which user behavior, competition, and advertising mechanisms are constantly changing (Heinemann, 2023). Benchmarks are also necessary to ensure that results can not only be measured but also interpreted meaningfully and get used as reference values to classify the performance of a campaign and identify areas for improvement. This chapter delineates the importance of measuring success in the context of digital marketing and presents the key performance indicators that are relevant for analyzing the meta video ads examined in this paper and classifies BREKKY's current KPI values based on relevant benchmarks.

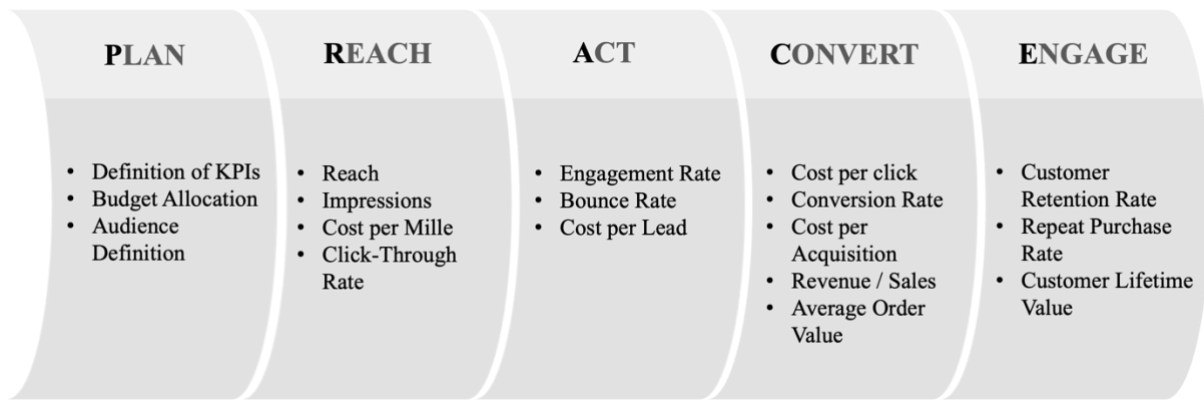


Figure 2 Performance Metrics Across the RACE Framework
Source: Own illustration

Since the experimental campaign in this study is interaction- and conversion-oriented, key metrics like click-through rate (CTR), cost per click (CPC), cost per mille (CPM), and view rate are the focus of the research. In addition to click-based metrics, the view rate plays an important role in the context of video ads and measures how many users watch a video up to a certain point or in its entirety (Cometly, 2025). The view rate is therefore a direct indicator of the attractiveness of the opening scene and the ability of a video to hold attention beyond the first few seconds. Since the experimentally tested ads in this study differ only in their narrative introduction, the view rate provides important information about which hook variant achieves the strongest retention of attention and thus has potentially higher interaction and conversion probabilities.

The click-through rate measures the proportion of impressions that lead to a click and is calculated as follows (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). Impressions refer to the number of times an advertisement is viewed, regardless of whether there is any interaction.

$$CTR = \frac{\text{Clicks}}{\text{Impression}} \times 100$$

A high CTR indicates that the creative is relevant and motivates users to take action. Current industry reports show that CTR values on meta platforms across all industries are generally between 1.0% and 1.5% (Databox, 2024). In the food and beverage sector, the values are slightly lower (0.9 to 1.1%). For Germany, a value of 1.17% is reported (AdCostly, 2024). Performance-optimized campaigns in the food sector can achieve CTR values of around 2%, which is considered very strong (MegaDigital, 2025). Values below 0.5%, on the other hand, are considered well below average. With a CTR of 1.0% (all clicks) and a link click CTR of

0.65%, from the benchmark for BREKKY meta-ad campaigns in 2025, BREKKY is within the expected range for DTC food brands.

To evaluate how efficiently the meta-system reaches users who respond to the ad, cost-per-click (CPC) is used as a key metric. The CPC indicates how much an average click costs and is calculated as follows (Asdemir et al., 2012).

$$CPC = \frac{\text{Spend}}{\text{Clicks}}$$

The current European benchmarks average shows around 0.95 to 1.10 € per click (SuperAds, 2025). Campaigns with purchase or lead objectives often have higher CPC values and reaching global values of around 1.70 to 2.00 € (WordStream, 2024). Lower CPCs in the range of 0.30 to 0.70 € are mainly reported for less competitive traffic or awareness campaigns (Hunch Ads, 2025). In this case, BREKKY's benchmark CPC of 1.51 € is slightly above the market average, indicating potential for optimization in the creative, especially at the hook design level.

Another important cost metric is cost-per-mille (CPM), which measures the cost per 1,000 impressions and thus reflects both the competition in the advertising market and the attractiveness of the creative in the meta system (Asdemir et al., 2012).

$$CPM = \frac{\text{Spend}}{\text{Impression}} \times 1000$$

In the German market, CPM values typically range between 7 € and 10 €, depending on placement and season (AdCostly, 2024). Instagram usually has lower CPMs (5 to 7 €), while Facebook feed placements reach around 9 €. With a CPM benchmark of 9.80 €, BREKKY is in line with the German average. Furthermore, it should be considered that CPM in performance marketing is not static but develops dynamically over the duration of a campaign. Especially in short test campaigns CPM can be higher because the meta-algorithm initially has only limited learning and optimization data available. With increasing duration and positive algorithmic evaluation, for example through higher interaction rates, the CPM can be reduced as the ad is played more efficiently.

The combination of view rate, CTR, CPC, and CPM enables a precise evaluation of the four ad variants tested. While the view rate provides insights into attention retention and the psychological effectiveness of the narrative hook, the CTR reflects users' willingness to interact with the ad, the CPC shows the efficiency of the system in generating relevant clicks and the CPM is used to interpret differences in the playout logic and competition. Since the campaign

is focused on the user’s behavior, these metrics represent key performance indicators of the reach and convert phase in the RACE model (Chaffey, 2010). These metrics form the empirical basis of the study and enable a systematic comparison of the effects of different narrative introductions.

4. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach of the study, which attempts to systematically examine the effect of different narrative elements in digital video ads. The research strategy of this study is split into three phases (Fig. 3).

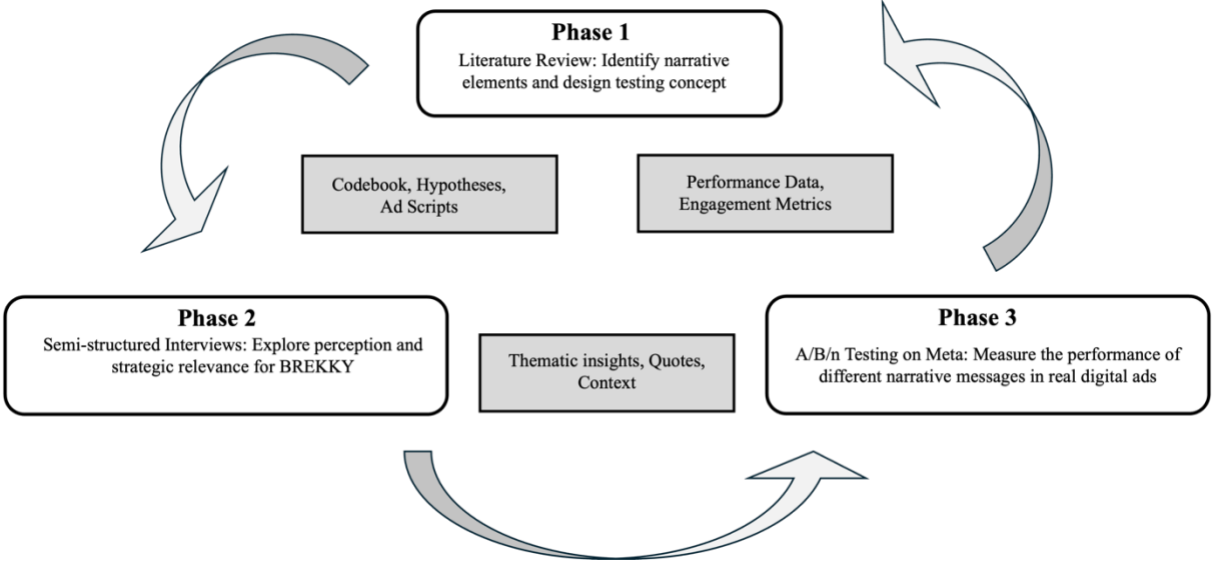


Figure 3 Methodological Framework of the Study
Source: Own illustration.

Phase 1 involves the theoretical development of the study design based on the literature. Phase 2 includes qualitative, guided expert interviews with the BREKKY team to gain an in-depth understanding of brand communication and target group relevance. Finally, Phase 3 consists of the main quantitative study in form of testing meta video ads. The overall campaign goal is to compare the performance of different storytelling hooks in terms of relevant marketing KPIs.

4.1 Research Design

The research design follows a sequential mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively answer the research question and is especially suitable when theoretical assumptions are to be explored initially and then tested empirically (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The qualitative phase (expert interviews) helps to establish the content basis for the experiment and provides context-related insights into brand values, communication strategies, and relevant user needs. These insights were used to inform the development of the experimental stimuli, while the actual effects of the narrative elements were examined empirically in the subsequent quantitative phase. The quantitative phase was implemented as a single-factor, between-subjects A/B/n experiment that builds on this enables a measurable evaluation of the effect of different narrative hooks under real conditions of digital performance marketing (Kohavi et al., 2020).

4.1.1 Qualitative Part: Semi-Structured Expert Interviews

Before conducting the quantitative A/B/n test, a qualitative preliminary study was carried out, which included three guided expert interviews with members of the BREKKY team. The interviews, each lasting around 30 to 35 minutes and were conducted based on a semi-standardized interview guide. This approach provided a consistent thematic structure but allowed for flexibility in how questions were sequenced and phrased (Lamnek & Krell, 2016). As mentioned before, this qualitative phase aimed to explore the existing brand communication strategy, the internal marketing processes, and how storytelling is already used within the company. The interviews therefore aimed not only as a supplement to the quantitative analysis, but primarily as a preparatory basis for the design of the experimental test campaign. It is important to emphasize that the qualitative expert interviews were not intended to anticipate or predict the outcomes of the quantitative investigation. The insights gained helped the selection of narrative hooks, the development of scripts and the design of video ads without implying any expected performance outcomes and were used to ensure alignment with BREKKY's actual communication practices and brand identity. The semi-structured format of the interviews is used to address specific relevant topics without overly restricting the dynamics of the conversation (Mayring and Fenzl, 2019). The questions focused on topics such as brand strategy, target group communication, previous experience with meta-ads and performance marketing, and the general role of storytelling within corporate communications. This exploratory approach provided comparability between the interviews and sufficient openness to capture individual perspectives and practical experiences (Flick, 2018; Kuckartz, 2024).

The interviewees were selected using a purposive sampling method (Flick, 2018) to include individuals with different but complementary responsibilities, including management, strategic marketing, and operational implementation. This deliberate selection made it possible to bring

together strategic, creative, and data-driven perspectives on storytelling and digital brand management at BREKKY.

4.1.2 Selection and Profile of the Interviewees

For the structured content analysis according to Kuckartz, experts from the company were interviewed, selected based on their professional expertise and their relevance to the research question (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2024; Misoch, 2019). Due to their work and specialist knowledge in the areas of marketing, e-commerce, and/or business development, the experts provide a direct practical connection to the subject matter. Prior to the interviews, all participants signed a consent form allowing their full names to be used in the master's thesis.

The first interview was conducted with one of the BREKKY founders and Head of Operations, Leon Jürgens. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and co-founded the start-up BREKKY in 2020 while studying at the University of Münster. In his current role, he is responsible for finance, procurement, and operations. In addition, he and his co-founder are responsible for product development and strategic planning for the company. Leon was selected as an interview partner because he offers an entrepreneurial and strategic perspective on how marketing communications can be aligned with overall corporate goals and brand positioning. Since he is not directly involved in BREKKY's marketing operations, he takes a more neutral, marketing-independent perspective and approaches strategy and performance metrics with greater rational distance. His focus on the financial and operational structures of the business shapes his perspective on how marketing narratives result in quantifiable business outcomes. As a founder he deeply understands the company's vision, mission, and entrepreneurial motivations, allowing him to critically assess the authenticity of the brand's communications.

The second interview was conducted with Elaine Laigner. Elaine started at BREKKY as an intern in 2022, during her studies and was hired as a full-time employee at BREKKY after successfully completing her studies. Her responsibilities are wide-ranging and fall within the marketing department. In addition to managing influencer campaigns, Elaine is also responsible for the strategic management of advertisements and the associated administration of ads via Meta Ads Manager. She is also involved in the creation of advertisements, which ranges from scripting and video material collection to further processing using editing programs. A large part of her work involves evaluating these meta campaigns, reporting on them, and optimizing them. As she embodies the operational and data-driven aspects of the company's marketing activities, Elaine was selected as the interview partner. Her first-hand knowledge of daily campaign management, including ad creation, testing, and optimization, is highly relevant to

the experimental part of this study. Her dual focus on performance evaluation and creativity allows for a deeper understanding of how storytelling translates into quantifiable advertising results.

The third and final interview was conducted with Jonas Bernhard Mader, the other co-founder of BREKKY, whose main area of responsibility lies in marketing for BREKKY. Jonas also holds a bachelor's degree in administration and founded BREKKY in 2020 together with Leon. He reflects the creative side of the founding duo and is responsible for the creative and marketing-related activities of the company. This includes responsibility for brand design, the visual identity of all marketing materials, and communication on social media platforms. Jonas' perspective is very important for this study because he plays a key role in the creating process of how the brand tells stories and expresses itself creatively and he was selected as an interview partner because of his expertise in creative implementation and marketing communication, which is in line with the studies focus on the practical use of storytelling elements. Jonas has experience creating campaign stories and brand visuals, which gives him a qualitative understanding of how people come up with, develop, and understand brand advertising.

4.1.3 Quantitative Part: Meta Ads Experiment

The aim of the quantitative part of this thesis is to analyze how different types of storytelling hooks, especially narrative introductions at the beginning of a video, influence the performance of digital advertisements. To evaluate the hypothesizes, four different message framings were tested in an identical ad structure.

Emotional trigger: Start with an emotionally charged, relatable problem like morning stress and lack of time for a healthy breakfast.

Rational benefit focus: More informal and fact-based presentation of clear product advantages (“ready in 60 seconds,” “100% natural,” “no added sugar”).

Social proof: Reference social validation (“Already over XY bowls sold and XY users eat BREKKY for breakfast”).

Transformation: Show a positive state that can be achieved through using the product like feeling energized in the morning, fitter, more time for activities like reading.

The concept for the advertisements used for this purpose is based on theoretical principles on the one hand and on the findings from the previous qualitative interview section on the other, which provided an in-depth understanding of the brand, its target group, and its existing

communication strategy. Based on these insights, the advertising scripts were first developed, then produced in video form, and then finalized using the CapCut editing and processing tool. The finished ads were then prepared and uploaded for the experiment in Meta Ads Manager.

The study itself takes the form of a controlled single-factor, between-subjects A/B/n experiment via the Meta platform (Facebook & Instagram). Such designs rely on the isolated manipulation of one treatment variable while all other conditions are held constant, enabling causal interpretation of observed performance differences (Kohavi et al., 2020). All four ads were designed with a uniform campaign goal, which is to trigger a conversion, for example through a click, a website interaction, or a purchase. Methodologically, the experiment is located in the “Reach” and “Convert” phase of the RACE model, which helps as a strategic orientation framework for performance-oriented digital marketing. The experimental design is based on the underlying principle that the introduction of a video, the so-called “hook,” influences the attention of users and determines their subsequent interaction.

4.2 Campaign and Meta Setup

To ensure the comparability of the variants and minimize external influencing factors, all ads were played out under a uniform Meta Ads setup. The target group was created using a lookalike audience based on previous Meta campaign data of BREKKY and geographically limited to Germany. The display period was strategically chosen based on the company’s previous campaign history where Sundays and Mondays proved to be high-conversion periods, which is why these days were defined for the test campaign. The total budget was 100 €, which was distributed evenly across the four variants (25 € per ad). This was intended to achieve a comparable minimum reach of approximately 1,000 impressions per variant. The campaign ran from November 23 to 26, 2025, and already achieved the defined reach targets during this period, thus covering the entire campaign period.

The video length was limited to approximately 20 to 30 seconds, as short formats in the social media context are characterized by a higher completion rate and better performance (Dehghani et al., 2016). All four video ads are identical in terms of format (portrait, mobile-optimized), dramatic structure, and are of comparable length. They oriented a three-act structure consisting of a hook, a middle section (product use and brand elements), and a concluding call-to-action (CTA). The production followed a uniform visual framework with same tone of voice as same narrator, set, color scheme, and music style to minimize distractions. The only systematic difference lies in the narrative focus of the hook (first 10 seconds), while the middle and end sequences were kept constant to ensure valid comparability of the variants. After consultation

with the BREKKY team, icons and text modules were specifically integrated into the image material for individual ads to visually support the respective introductory situation. Since many users use social media without sound, the trigger should remain clearly understandable even without a voiceover. An overview of the final ad variants and scripts can be found in Appendix 5 to 10.

4.3 Analysis Strategy

The analysis of the campaign results is based on performance data provided by Meta after the experiment was completed. Key performance indicators are taken into account, including click-through rate (CTR), cost-per-click (CPC), cost-per-mille (CPM), and video view metrics at 25% and 100%, which indicate how much of the ad was actually watched. In addition, link clicks and impressions are included as basic metrics, as they form the basis for calculating other key figures. The raw data is first reviewed, tabulated in Excel, checked, and then categorized by ad variant.

The first step is a descriptive data review, in which all KPIs for each ad variant are presented numerically and visualized using tables and diagrams. This includes the calculation of means and relative proportions to provide an initial overview of performance differences between the narrative hooks. Retention metrics are also considered, as they allow conclusions to be drawn about the impact of the storytelling hook (Retention25) and the overall narrative effect (Retention100), given that only the opening seconds of the ads differ while the remaining content is identical. As Meta provides various KPIs in different formats (percentages, absolute numbers, monetary values), the metrics relevant for the analysis are first converted into a uniform numerical format. This ensures a consistent basis for calculation and enables a comparable and mathematically robust evaluation of the results. The calculation bases of the calculated KPIs correspond to the formulas of the key figures defined in the theoretical KPI section and is directed as the basis for the comparative overall evaluation of the ad variants.

As the KPIs still differ in scale and unit after this step (CTR in decimal numbers, CPC in euros, retention in percentages, impressions as absolute counts), they are converted to a common scale from 0 to 1 in the third step using min-max normalization (Figueira, Greco & Ehrgott, 2016). This prevents individual metrics from having a disproportionate influence on the overall result due to their numerical size. For the metrics CTR, retention25, retention100, link clicks, and impressions, higher values represent better performance ('more is better'). For the metrics cost-per-click and cost-per-mille, the opposite is true, because the less money you have to spend for

a click or to reach 1,000 people, lower values indicate better performance ('less is better') (Figueira, Greco & Ehrgott, 2016). The corresponding normalization formulas are as follows:

More-is-better KPIs

$$Norm_{KPI} = \frac{Value - Min}{Max - Min}$$

Less-is-better KPIs

$$Norm_{KPI} = \frac{Max - Value}{Max - Min}$$

To make the overall performance of the four ad variants comparable, a composite performance index is created. The Weighted KPI Performance Index (WKPI) aggregates all normalized KPIs into a single performance value per ad variant. In terms of multi-attribute decision theory, equal weighting is appropriate if there is no theoretically or empirically justifiable preference structure that would assign greater or lesser importance to individual criteria (Keeney & Raiffa, 1993). Since this applies in the context of this exploratory study, all KPIs are weighted equally.

The formula is as follows:

$$WKPI_i = \frac{\sum Norm_KPI_i}{n}$$

where i stands for the respective ad variant (A, B, C, D) and n denotes the number of normalized KPIs (in this case, 7).

The approach is based on the established method of multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA), in which several heterogeneous performance indicators are first normalized and then combined into an aggregated total value (Keeney & Raiffa, 1993; Figueira, Greco & Ehrgott, 2016). The WKPI represents a simplified additive application of a multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) model and enables a fair, scaled, and comparable overall evaluation of narrative hooks, as all metrics are brought to the same scale and then aggregated with equal weighting.

5. Results

The following chapter first presents the descriptive results of the four ad variants before testing the hypotheses using individual KPIs and evaluating the overall performance of the ads. Finally, the findings are compared with the theoretical principles and qualitative assessments of the experts and discussed regarding their practical implications and methodological limitations.

5.1 Descriptive Performance Results

The descriptive evaluation of the campaign first presents a quantitative overview of the reach and playback of the four tested ad variants. In total, the test campaign generated 4499 impressions, which were nearly even distributed across the four narrative hooks (between 944 and 1361 impressions per ad). The total reach was 3785 individual users, with variations in reach primarily explained by the different CPM and CPC values of the ads. A total of 111.48 € was invested over the entire duration, meaning that each ad variant received an almost identical budget. A total of 67 link clicks were achieved, but only 3 purchases, indicating a generally low conversion tendency compared to regular BREKKY campaigns. At the aggregate level, the average CPC for the entire test campaign was 1.62 €, while the median CPM was 25.50 €, which is above the brand's usual average level. The campaign wide CTR averaged 1.53%, with the test ads clearly exceeding the internal BREKKY benchmark level (1.00%). The average view rates also show significant differences between the variants. On average, 79 people watched at least 25% of each video and 19 people watched the ad in its entirety, indicating a solid but highly divergent viewing time depending on the variant.

A comparison of the test campaign with the internal benchmarks shows that the ads significantly outperformed the usual annual average (BREKKY BM YTD: 1.00% CTR) in terms of CTR. All tested variants exceeded this benchmark, with the emotional ad notably performing more than twice as well at 2.101%. The CPC of the campaign was consistently above the internal average of 1.51 €, at values between 1.39 € and 1.93 €, which indicates a slightly higher click cost structure compared to main BREKKY campaigns. The CPM among the test variants varied between 20.37 € (social proof) and 30.54 € (rational), which was significantly higher than the usual BREKKY average (9.80 €) in some cases. This is typical for smaller test campaigns with limited optimization time, but also reflects different hook effects. At the KPI level, there are clear initial differences in the performance structure of the narrative approaches. The transformation ad achieved the highest absolute impressions (1242) due to its comparatively low CPM of 21.77 € and algorithm optimization, but this was not accompanied by above-average click or conversion rates. In fact, its CPC of 1.93 € is the highest in the ad comparison. Despite similar reach, the emotional ad achieved the best interaction metrics by generating the highest number of clicks (20) and the most efficient cost structure per click (1.39 €). The social proof ad achieved the most cost-effective placement due to its low CPM value (20.37 €), but at the same time showed the weakest conversion metrics (only 8 complete views). Interesting patterns are especially evident in the video sector. The transformation ad has the highest early

attention value with 284 3-second views, followed by social proof (232). However, transformation also shows the strongest drop-off between the early and later phases of viewing (from 284 to 141 25% views and only 15 complete views). The result of the social proof variant shows the second highest 3-second attention metric but loses a large number of viewers in the first few seconds later on. The emotional ad, on the other hand, achieves the highest final full viewing rate ($n = 26$), suggesting stronger narrative coherence and later engagement.

Overall, the descriptive results illustrate a diversified performance profile, where the emotional ad performs well in terms of click and engagement metrics, the transformation ad maximizes early attention, and social proof offers the most cost-effective reach distribution, but without corresponding interaction strength.

5.2 Comparative Analysis of Narrative Triggers and Hypothesis Testing

In the second step of the analysis, the four narrative hooks are systematically compared with each other by testing the previously formulated hypotheses against the empirical results and summarizing the overall performance differences using the Weighted KPI Performance Index (WKPI). The comparative analysis enables a differentiated assessment of the effectiveness of the individual narrative strategies and reveals the extent to which the theoretical assumptions derived from the literature are supported or challenged by the experimental data.

***H1 Emotional Trigger Hypothesis:** Ads that use an emotional hook generate more click interactions than the other narrative variant, resulting a higher click-through rate (CTR).*

The Emotional Trigger Hypothesis H1 is clearly confirmed by the available data. The emotionally designed ad has the highest CTR at 2.101% and achieves the most link clicks ($n = 20$). The lowest CPC value (1.39 €) also underscores the strong interaction performance of this variant. In addition, the emotional ad also leads the ranking in terms of complete video views ($n = 26$), suggesting an overall coherent and attention gaining narrative structure. The data thus clearly supports the effectiveness of emotional, problem-oriented introductions in the context of performance video ads. This strong performance corresponds to the mechanisms of emotional problem frames described in the theoretical section. As McKee and Gerace emphasize, a clearly formulated problem or conflict is the central attention trigger in narrative communication. Duarte also points out that an emotionally relevant introduction creates immediate tension. In addition, Teixeira shows that, especially in the first few seconds of a video, emotional stimuli determine whether users continue watching or leave. These findings support the assumptions of the Elaboration Likelihood Model, according to which emotional stimuli are particularly effective in social media feeds, as users predominantly process

information peripherally here. The empirical results are thus consistent with the theoretically expected mechanisms of influence and fully confirm H1.

H2 Rational Benefit Hypothesis: *Ads framed around rational product benefits generate stronger view-through rates due to the clear communication of functional advantages.*

The rational benefit hypothesis is not supported by the empirical results. The rationally designed ad does not rank at the top of the variants in terms of either Retention25 values (91 views) or complete video views (n = 25). Looking at the results in the context of emotional and transformational framing, it becomes clear that the rational elements generate solid but by no means outstanding attention. This confirms that purely functional messages generate less attention retention than emotional or visually aspirational narratives in the highly competitive environment of short-form video ads. At the same time, the theoretical section emphasized that social media environments are characterized by rapid, intuitive reception, with users primarily responding to stimuli that are easily grasped emotionally or visually (Stephen, 2016). In this context, rational messages seem less suitable for stabilizing attention beyond the initial phase. Hypothesis H2 must therefore be rejected.

H3 Social Proof Hypothesis: *Ads that emphasize social proof achieve lower cost values and stronger trust-related signals compared to the other variants.*

The social proof hypothesis can only be partially confirmed. The social proof variant indeed achieves the lowest CPM value at 20.37 €, thus demonstrating cost-efficient reach distribution. However, the anticipated behavioral indicators in terms of higher interaction or stronger narrative engagement are not evident, which is why the CPC is quite low compared to the other narratives. Both the CTR (1.102%) and the complete video views (n = 8) are significantly lower than those of the emotional and rational variants. Although the cost structure is efficient in terms of delivery, social proof does not have an increased motivational or behavioral effect in context of this test setup. In the theoretical part, social proof was described as a mechanism of social validation in which users orient themselves toward visible behavioral signals from others to reduce uncertainty. In digital commerce, such socially generated cues act as trust-building heuristics and can positively influence both the perceived relevance and the display efficiency of advertisements (Kollmann, 2019; Große-Holtforth et al., 2020). The empirical results therefore suggest that social proof in a performance-oriented short video functions more as a complementary trust element and less as an immediately activating narrative trigger. H3 is thus only confirmed in terms of the CPM cost efficiency, but not in terms of behavioral impact.

H4 Transformation Hypothesis: Transformation-based ads create higher attention because the visualization of an aspirational goal captures viewers immediate interest.

The transformation hypothesis is only confirmed by the data in terms of the initial attention. With 284 3-second views and 141 25% views, the transformation ad recorded the strongest initial attention values of the entire test campaign. These findings are consistent with the theoretical foundations of narrative research, particularly Campbell's hero's journey logic and Miller's StoryBrand framework, in which transformation or the desired state of success plays a central role. This underscores that aspirational future scenarios are particularly effective in activating users visually and emotionally at an early stage. At the same time, the data shows that this attention is not sustained throughout the entire video, as the number of complete views (n = 15) clearly falls behind the emotional and rational variants. Overall, the hypothesis is supported for the early phase of the user journey demonstrated by the highest 3-second and 25% view rates but not for later retention stages where the ad performs comparatively weakly. H4 is therefore partially confirmed.

To consolidate the individual results, the Weighted KPI Performance Index (WKPI) was used, which combines all normalized performance indicators into an integrative overall value. The following chart illustrates a normalized comparison of the key performance KPIs (0 to 1 scale) for the four narrative ad variants and highlights their relative strengths and weaknesses in terms of attention, interaction, and cost efficiency.

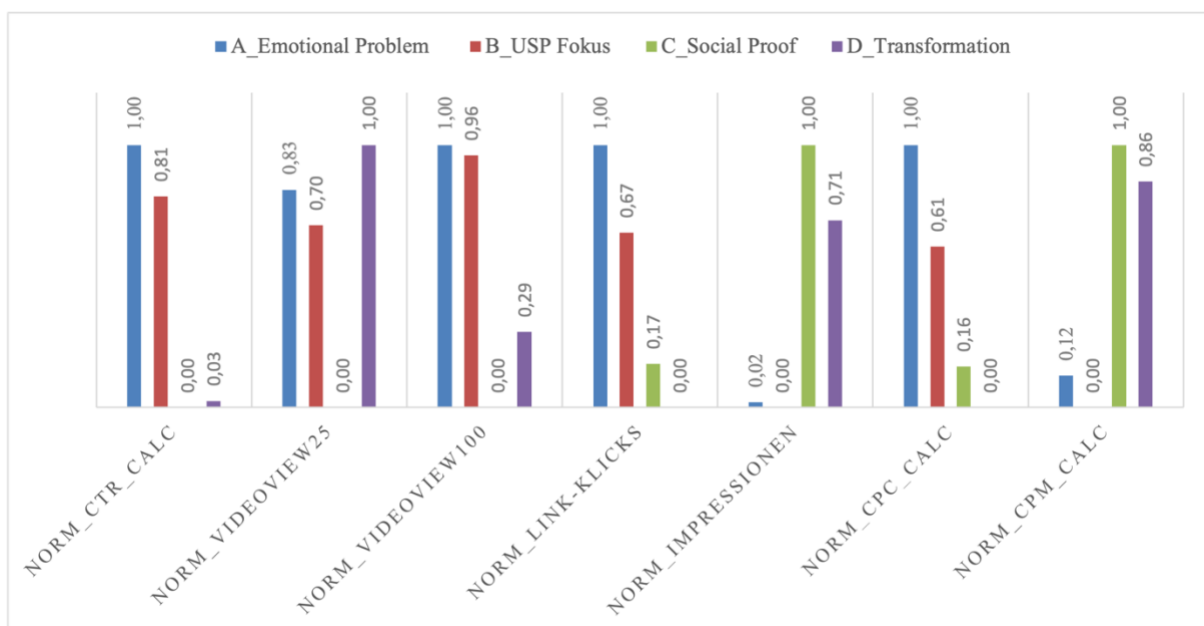


Figure 4 Normalized Key-Performance-Indicator
Source: Own illustration with excel.

The WKPI confirms the pattern identified earlier that the emotional ad has the highest overall value and is therefore the best-performing variant in the test. This is followed by the rationally and transformationally designed ads, while the social proof variant has the weakest overall performance despite its efficient CPM. The WKPI thus is used as a consistent, multidimensional representation of the relative performance of the narrative hooks tested.

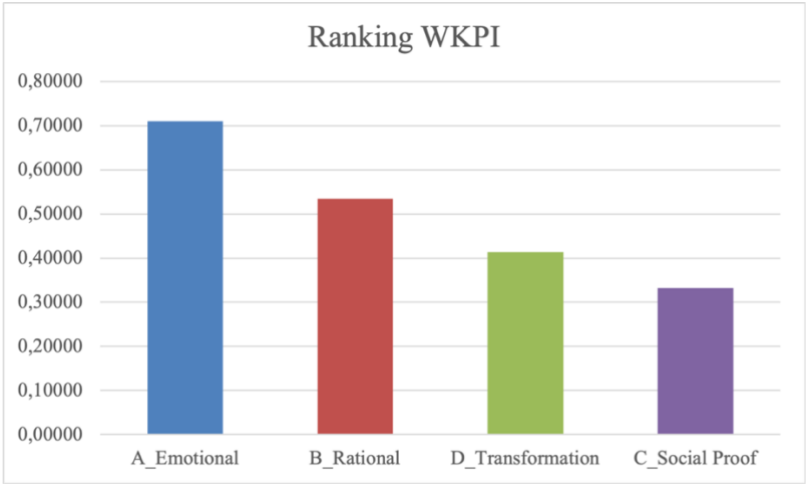


Figure 5 Ranking Weighted-Key-Performance-Indicator
 Source: Own illustration with excel.

Overall, the comparative analysis shows that emotional framing is the most effective approach for performance-oriented short video ads, while transformation primarily attracts initial attention, rationality has a solid but not above-average effect, and social proof is primarily convincing in economic playback metrics, but not in behavior-oriented metrics.

5.3 Interpretation of the Results

The results of the quantitative analysis will subsequently be linked to the qualitative findings from the expert interviews to identify similarities and potential discrepancies between internal assumptions and actual platform behavior. It can be concluded that, overall, there is a clear congruence regarding the role of emotional entry points. All interviewees emphasized that users respond to everyday problems and negative initial situations. This assessment is entirely consistent with the quantitative results, according to which the emotionally designed ad has the highest CTR, the most clicks, and the strongest narrative connection. This suggests that emotional problem framing is particularly effective in capturing attention and motivating initial interaction in performance-oriented video ads. The teams’ expectations regarding the effectiveness of emotional hooks are thus empirically confirmed.

There is also evidence of partial agreement regarding transformation-oriented content. The interviews of the BREKKY team assumed that aspirational images of the future would generate

attention but not necessarily lead to interactions. This dynamic is precisely reflected in the data. The transformation ad shows the strongest early attention effects (3-second views, retention²⁵), but loses significant engagement as it progresses. This can be explained theoretically by the micro dramaturgy, according to which the hook has an initial effect, but the narrative continuation is essential for deep engagement. The results are also consistent with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which predicts primarily peripheral, visual, and emotional stimulus processing in the context of a situation where people are not paying fully attention, similar to the situation giving in the study with fast-scrolling social feed situations. In contrast, there are clear discrepancies between theory and practice when it comes to social proof content. While storytelling and framing theories suggest that social proof can build trust and encourage interaction, this is not reflected in the present experiment. Although the ad is cost-effective, neither CTR nor retention rates indicate increased trust or interest. One possible reason for this is that social proof acts less as a primary narrative structure and more as a reinforcing element in the context of very short performance videos. This finding is consistent with the interview statements, according to which social proof is used at BREKKY more as a secondary trust anchor than as a central hook. The rationally formulated ad also shows an interesting deviation from theory. While message framing approaches suggest that functional benefits increase processing depth and information clarity, empirical analysis shows that rational hooks do not generate peak values in early and middle retention phases. This confirms the interviewees assessment that pure information transfer in the social media context is often too weak to capture initial attention, especially when compared to emotional or visually aspirational stimuli. Regarding the theoretical foundations, it can be noted that the results of the emotional and transformational variants strongly correspond with the literature on narrative relevance, the role of conflict and resolution (McKee), and the concept of the “relatable problem” from StoryBrand. Emotionality acts as a central trigger in terms of problem definition (setup), while transformation primarily affects the visualization of the desired future (outcome). Both elements correspond to the structure described in the theory “Hook → Problem → Solution,” but show different effects along the RACE funnel logic. Emotionality primarily strengthens the Convert phase, while transformation positively influences the Reach and Act phases.

5.4 Teaching Notes and Limitation

The analysis of the four narrative hooks provides several practical implications for the design of advertisements in performance marketing. The results first illustrate that emotional framing

contributes most strongly to increasing user interaction in the setting examined. This confirms the theoretical assumption that problem-oriented and emotionally charged introductory situations increase the perception of relevance and thus provide more effective stimuli for initial and further processing. For the practical design of similar campaigns, this means that emotional hooks should play a central role if the goal is to generate clicks or deeper interaction.

The high initial attention values of the transformation ad also show that aspirational images of the future are suitable for initially activating attention. However, the effect is limited to the early viewing phases, which indicates that transformational visuals do attract attention, but cannot ensure sustained viewing on their own. For operational decisions, this means that transformation can be used effectively as an introductory element, but that subsequent dramatic intensification is necessary to maintain attention beyond the middle section. Social proof, on the other hand, proves to be primarily an economically efficient form of presentation, but in the present setting it does not elicit increased willingness to interact or narratively stable attention. Rational framing shows solid but not above-average performance, supporting the observation that functional messages have only a limited effect in the dynamic social media environment without underlying emotional or visual impulses.

However, the interpretation of the results must be made in the context of limitations. A key limitation in this study is the campaign's time window of the quantitative meta testing. The test phase happens during *Black Week*, which is known as one of the most competitive and advertising intensive periods of the year in e-commerce. The increased advertising spending and aggressive discount campaigns characteristics of this phase typically influence both CPC and CPM values, which rise significantly during such sale events. The comparatively high-cost structures observed in this experiment are therefore not exclusively explained by the ad variants tested, but also by the high level of competitive pressure during this period. In addition, the test ads were created under clear time constraints and the production, including recording, editing, and export, was carried out by only one person. This process differs from professional creative production environments, where specialized teams work, repeated iterations are possible, and different versions can be tested. Despite efforts to keep all ads as consistent as possible in terms of length, setting, narrator, and visual structure, creative differences (such as in image composition, editing speed, or tonal nuances) cannot be completely controlled. In addition, the rational ad variant has a quite shorter display duration. As the focus here was placed on the product benefits, which is a scene also followed the hooks in shortened form in the other variants and were not duplicated in this case of the rational trigger. External factors such as

whether users had activated the sound cannot be standardized either, but they have a significant influence on the reception of video ads.

Furthermore, the generalizability of the results is limited by the short campaign duration and the restricted scope of the sample, both in terms of the number of ad variants per trigger and the user groups and industry context reached. The meta-platform usually needs several days to successfully complete algorithmic optimization processes (learning phase). Short test periods often lead to higher costs and volatile KPIs. The study is also based on a specific target group (BREKKY lookalike audience, Germany) and a single brand case, which does not rule out possible distortions due to target group-specific interests, platform habits, or brand fit. Finally, due to the low number of purchases made, the significance of conversion-related KPIs is limited, so that the study can primarily rely on attention- and interaction-related indicators which allocated more to the reach phase and the conversion phase could not really been tested in this experiment.

Overall, the interpretation of the results should therefore always be made in consideration of these conditions. Due to methodological limitations, including a small sample size, a short campaign duration, and algorithmic effects, the results indicate tendencies rather than statistically generalizable effects. Nevertheless, the findings provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different narrative approaches in short video formats and contribute to a better classification of theoretical models in practical application contexts.

6. Conclusion and Future Research

This research aimed to identify the effects of using different narrative hooks in social media video ads and their effectiveness in the context of digital performance. Based on theoretical concepts of narrative communication, messaging framing, and the RACE model of the digital customer journey, a research design was developed as a case study approach that combined qualitative findings from expert interviews with team members of the company and quantitative performance data from testing on Meta in cooperation with the company BREKKY.

With regard to the research question, the results show that different narrative hooks differ significantly in their effectiveness in short video ads on social media platforms. The results show that emotionally designed hooks that address a recognizable problem or conflict are most effective in the context of short video ads. In a direct comparison, the emotional variant achieved the best performance in terms of CTR, link clicks, CPC, and view-through completion,

confirming the theoretical assumptions of McKee, Duarte, and Teixeira, who emphasize problem-oriented conflict as the strongest narrative attention trigger. Although functional rationality performed solidly in individual metrics, it did not achieve the depth of attention of the emotional variant. This is attributed to the fact that social media environments are characterized by rapid, intuitive reception and users primarily respond to easily understandable, affective stimuli. The social proof variant was particularly effective in terms of reach, but as a primary entry point, it only elicited limited behavioral impulses. The transformational trigger, which promises positive change or future aspirations, appeals to users very quickly in the first seconds, but cannot maintain this early attention throughout the entire length of the ad. This suggests that while transformational elements in advertisements initiate attention, they require more narrative development time to unfold their full persuasive effect.

Even though, the study provides evidence of the effectiveness of emotional hooks, there is potential for further research. First, it would be useful to extend the study to include additional purchase behavior metrics and to create a follow up fourth phase of research.

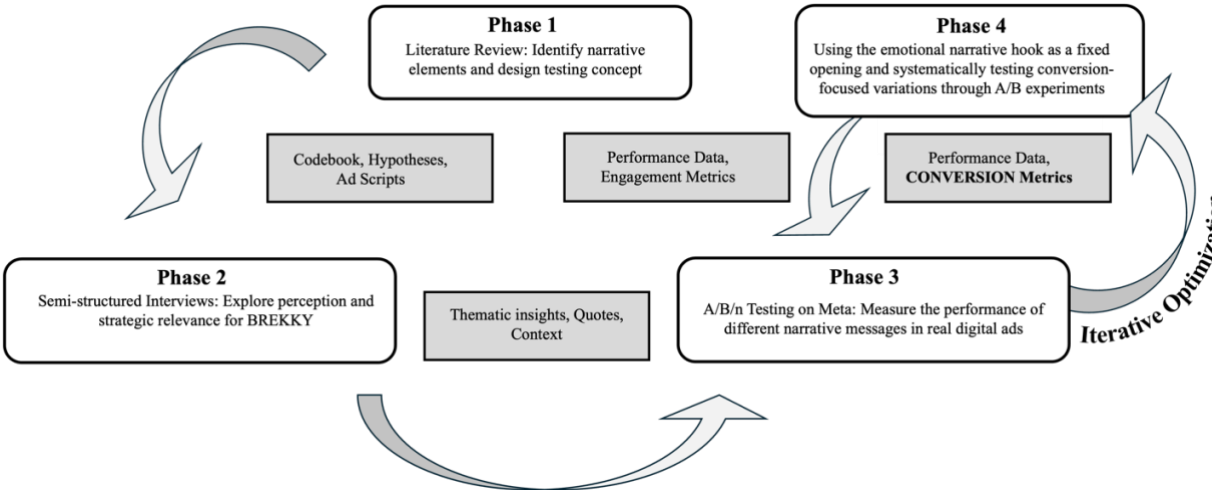


Figure 6 Extended Research Design with Iterative Optimization
 Source: Own Illustration.

The present results of the study primarily illustrate the immediate effect on click and interaction metrics, which can be derived from the Reach and Act phases of the RACE model. This fourth extended research phase would aim then to examine the subsequent Conversion phase in more detail and how narrative quality contributes to brand building, recognition, trust, and customer loyalty. Ads with emotional hooks could be adapted so that they not only generate initial attention but are also more strongly oriented toward concrete conversion actions. This could include a clearer benefit argumentation, different calls to action, or the integration of sequential story elements. This follow up phase can also be understood as an iterative optimization process

that is central to digital marketing. And shows that through continuous testing and adaptation, both the creative implementation and the algorithmic playout become increasingly optimized. This enables companies like BREKKY to further develop their communication architecture based on data and systematically expand the impact of narrative elements along the entire customer journey. A cross-platform comparison would also be useful to check whether narrative hooks work similarly on TikTok, YouTube, or LinkedIn, or whether platform-specific differences in algorithms, user behavior, and format logic require differentiated strategies. Ideally, different to this study, such analyses should take place in less seasonal periods to minimize external influencing factors such as Black Week or other high SALES periods in e-commerce. Another current trend that is equally important for the future concerns is the use of generative AI. This development enables the automated variation of narrative elements and dynamic adaptation to different target groups. Future research could investigate how users respond to such AI-based creatives and to what extent automatically generated narratives can compete with classic, manually developed approaches.

To conclude, storytelling in performance marketing can make a significant contribution to campaign success. At the same time, the results make it clear that narrative design in the digital environment is only at the beginning of its strategic potential. An in-depth scientific and practice-oriented examination of narrative mechanisms and long-term impact dimensions will therefore be crucial to attract attention in a highly competitive digital advertising environment and achieve a lasting brand impact. While this work primarily considers short-term performance metrics, it remains unclear how narrative design influences brand perception, recognition, trust, and customer loyalty. A combined consideration of short-term activation and long-term brand metrics could provide a more comprehensive picture of the role of narrative hooks in digital marketing.

For BREKKY, the study provides immediate practical value. Although the company already has interaction and performance data from past campaigns, this work provides specific and for the first time empirically validated insights into which type of narrative hook generates the strongest activation effects. This makes it possible for the company to prioritize creative resources in an informed way, establish clear communication guidelines, and provide an objective basis for designing future campaigns. In addition, other companies in the digital FMCG and start-up segment can also benefit from these findings, as they show how narrative microstructures can contribute to improving ad performance in concrete terms.

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Declaration of Originality and Integrity

I hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge and ability, this paper represents my original work and that I have used no other sources except as noted by citation.

In this project, AI tools such as ChatGPT have been used in compliance with the guidelines provided by Católica-Lisbon School of Business and Economics. Specifically, AI was utilized to enhance language clarity and grammar, as well as for translation purposes. All content presented in this thesis reflects my own original ideas and arguments.

Paderborn, Germany. 04.01.2026

Place, Date

Catharina Frey

Appendices

Appendix 1 Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The semi-structured interviews aim to generate qualitative insights into BREKKY's current brand communication, storytelling practices, and approach to digital marketing. They serve as a complementary qualitative layer to the quantitative testing experiment, providing contextual understanding, internal perspectives, and reflections on storytelling effectiveness. The interviews follow a semi-structured format, combining open-ended questions with guiding topics to allow both comparability across interviews and flexibility for in-depth exploration (Mayring, 2010; Flick, 2018; Kuckartz, 2024).

Interview Details

- **Interviewe:** Leon Jürgens, Elaine Laigne, Jonas Bernhard-Mader
- **Format:** Online: Google Meet
- **Date:** 27. & 29.10.2025
- **Duration:** 30 to 40 minutes

Before starting the interview, briefly introduce the research topic to provide context, without influencing the participant's responses.

1. Introduction & Context

To understand the interviewee's role and understanding of the overall brand communication approach.

- Can you briefly describe your role at BREKKY and your main responsibilities?
- How would you describe BREKKY's current brand communication strategy?
- Which communication channels play the biggest role for the brand (e.g., Instagram, Meta Ads, influencer collaborations)?
- How would you describe BREKKY's brand personality or values?
- How would you describe BREKKY's target audience, who are you mainly trying to reach?
- What are the main challenges or "pain points" you currently face in marketing communication?

2. Current Use of Storytelling

To explore how storytelling is currently applied in BREKKY's marketing and communication.

- In what way does storytelling play a role in your brand communication so far?
- What kinds of stories do you tell (for example, about the founders, daily routines, or customers)?
- Are there repeating themes, emotions, or values you try to communicate through your content?
- Can you recall a campaign where storytelling worked particularly well?

3. Perceptions of Narrative Elements

To understand how team members perceive the impact of different storytelling elements.

- When thinking about ads, which storytelling elements do you think are most effective (for example, showing a problem, a hero, a guide, or success)?
- Do you think customers respond more to emotional or informational content?
- How does the idea of “the customer as the hero” fit into your communication style?
- What type of story do you believe builds trust and drives action?

4. Experience with Meta Ads & Performance Marketing

To gain insights into practical experience with paid social campaigns.

- How would you describe your current Meta Ads setup? (e.g., internal management, agency collaboration, campaign structure)
- Which campaign objectives do you usually focus on (e.g., traffic, conversions, engagement)?
- What kind of metrics are most important for you (CTR, CPC, ROAS, etc.)?
- What are your biggest fears or challenges when it comes to running Meta Ads?
- From your perspective, what types of ads or creatives tend to perform best for BREKKY?

5. Strategic Relevance & Outlook

To discuss the perceived importance of storytelling and its future potential.

- How relevant do you think storytelling will be for BREKKY’s future marketing strategy?
- Do you see potential for applying narrative structures more systematically in your ad campaigns?
- How realistic is it to implement storytelling frameworks (e.g., StoryBrand, Hero’s Journey) in everyday marketing practice?
- In your opinion, what makes a story feel authentic to the audience?

6. Closing Reflections

To allow open reflections and expectations regarding the A/B test.

- Is there anything else you would like to add about storytelling or effective communication strategies?
- What do you expect or hope to learn from the upcoming A/B testing experiment?

Appendix 2 Summarized and Translated Interview Responses by Elaine Laigner

		Elaine Laigner
		Translated to English
1. Introduction & Context	1. Can you briefly describe your role at BREKKY and your main responsibilities?	Yeah, sure, my name's Elaine and I've been with BREKKY since 2022. I started as an intern during my studies and got hired full-time after graduation. Now I work full-time in marketing. My role is really broad I handle social media, work with influencers, edit videos, and take care of performance marketing on Meta, basically everything related to ads. I'd say I'm kind of the link between creativity and analysis, and I also help out wherever needed, haha.
	2. How would you describe BREKKY's current brand communication strategy?	Well, we're still kind of a start-up, even though we just turned five this summer. You can definitely feel that the processes are still quite flexible, sometimes a bit chaotic, but also kind of charming (laughs). That's something we show openly because we want to take our community along on our journey. At the core, it's about healthy, vegan products that are quick and easy to prepare without additives or sugar.
	3. Which communication channels are currently most important for the brand?	Definitely Instagram. Facebook is still there but not as active. Most of the engagement happens on Instagram it's much more direct and dynamic. That's where both our communication and our ad campaigns take place. We post stories regularly, share behind-the-scenes insights, and stuff like that.
	4. How would you describe the brand's personality or core values?	I'd say BREKKY is very lifestyle-oriented. We stand for healthy eating, but not in a strict or dogmatic way it should be fun. Our products are 100% natural and vegan, but also delicious and simple. It's really about the feeling of doing something good for yourself without stress or complicated preparation.
	5. How would you describe your main target audience?	Mhh, I think I fit quite well into our target audience (laughs). Mainly young women between 20 and 35, many living in cities, busy, wanting to eat healthy but without much time. And yeah, it's also a group that cares about aesthetics food should look nice, kind of "Instagrammable." Then we also have some moms looking for something quick and healthy for themselves or their kids. So it's a mix of health-conscious, practical, and lifestyle-driven people.
	6. What are the main challenges or pain points you currently face in marketing?	Puh, I'd say the pace and speed for sure. Everything changes so quickly something's trending today and gone tomorrow. It's really hard to keep up. And of course, the competition. There are so many brands fighting for the same attention. You really have to be creative to stand out.
2. Current Use of Storytelling	7. In what way does storytelling play a role in your brand communication so far?	A pretty big one. I'd say we're constantly telling small stories on our channels about us, our daily lives, our products. Our founders are often in front of the camera, which makes things feel more personal. And we show a lot behind the scenes so that people feel like they're part of it.
	8. What kinds of stories do you usually tell?	Mostly, it's about daily life, product development, or how everything started. Sometimes we also share personal things if something goes wrong, we talk about it honestly. That usually works really well because it feels authentic.
	9. Are there recurring themes, emotions, or values you try to communicate?	Yeah, definitely. Health, naturalness, and balance those are the big recurring themes. Especially at the beginning of the year when everyone's making resolutions, those topics perform best.
	10. Can you recall a campaign where storytelling worked particularly well?	Yeah, our 30-day challenge always does really well. It helps people make small changes gradually without feeling overwhelmed building a routine over 30 days. That worked great because it motivated people and felt realistic. Many proudly shared their progress like "17:30" or "20:30" in their stories. Best case, the product runs out, but the habit sticks so they reorder (laughs).
3. Perceptions of Narrative Elements	11. Which stories, hooks or trigger do you think are most effective in ads?	I think addressing the problem is super important. When you show something the audience relates to morning stress, no time for breakfast they feel seen. Then you show how easy the solution is and how quickly you can prepare something healthy with additives that's part of our identity. But emotionally it works even better, I think. When someone feels like "oh, that fits me," it sticks. Or like "I want to try these bowls too" or "I should eat healthier again." Morning stress and skipping breakfast is
	12. Do you think customers respond more to emotional or informational content?	Mhh, kind of both. I think transparency about our ingredients plays a big role. Many people care about what's inside vegan, no additives that's part of our identity. But emotionally it works even better, I think. When someone feels like "oh, that fits me," it sticks. Or like "I want to try these bowls too" or "I should eat healthier again." Morning stress and skipping breakfast is
	13. How does the idea of "the customer as the hero" fit into your communication style?	It actually fits really well. We show our customers and influencers using BREKKY in their everyday lives. It's always about them having control we're just the guide that makes it easier. We use UGC and influencers as examples, and that works well because customers can relate more to someone like Lisa than to one of our founders (laughs).
	14. What kind of story do you believe builds trust and drives action?	Honest and transparent communication, I think. Showing that not everything's perfect. For example, when we've had production issues or shipping delays. We communicate that openly, and it's surprising how many customers actually appreciate that and continue to trust us. I think that's what makes it authentic.
4. Experience with Meta Ads & Performance Marketing	15. How would you describe your current Meta Ads setup? Do you manage the ads by your own internal or do you have any external support?	We manage all our ads internally. Last year we also did some coaching, but in the end Jonas and I run most of it ourselves. I handle the Meta Ads Manager, testing different formats and audiences. We usually have several campaigns running at once and check after a few days which works best. Over the years we've developed two or three "evergreen" campaigns that perform so
	16. Which campaign objectives do you usually focus on?	Definitely conversions ideally new customer acquisition. But that's become quite expensive, so we have to look carefully at what's still worth running.
	17. Which metrics (CTR, CPC, ROAS, etc.) are most important to you?	I always look at CPC and CTR, they fluctuate a lot. But in the end, it's ROAS that matters whether the campaign actually pays off or not.
	18. What are your biggest challenges in running Meta Ads?	Hm, finding good new creatives and getting them out quickly before it's too late. Ads that really perform. It's constant testing. And costs are going up, which doesn't help.
5. Strategic Relevance & Future Outlook	19. From your perspective, what types of ads perform best for BREKKY?	Definitely natural videos user-generated content. When someone just talks or shows the preparation process, that performs way better than polished marketing spots.
	20. How relevant do you think storytelling will be for BREKKY's future strategy?	Very important. As I mentioned before, we're super transparent with our customers and try to take them along on our BREKKY journey every day. People really want to be part of the brand, which is beautiful. Many say they feel like part of the BREKKY family. I think that's something that makes us strong and gives us a good foundation.
	21. Do you see potential to apply narrative structures more systematically?	What do you mean exactly? ... Ah, right, yeah absolutely. We already have a basic ad structure hook, problem, solution. But I'd find it interesting to approach it more systematically, maybe using clear storytelling frameworks, to see if a specific structure or message performs better. Right now, we mostly go by instinct or by what's trending.
	22. How realistic is it to use storytelling frameworks (e.g., StoryBrand, Hero's Journey) in daily marketing practice?	Honestly, we don't really do that consciously. Those frameworks don't immediately ring a bell. I probably remember them from university, sure, but we work more intuitively based on what's worked before. Still, it wouldn't hurt to revisit that, go back to basics, and rebuild. I'll suggest it to Jonas (laughs).
6. Closing Reflections	23. In your opinion, what makes a story feel authentic to the audience?	As I said before honesty, definitely. And being relatable. If you're too perfect, the audience notices right away. I think it's about staying open, even when things go wrong.
	24. Is there anything else you'd like to add about storytelling or communication strategies?	I think storytelling is already deeply rooted in what we do, but sometimes we do it unconsciously. Maybe we should plan it more intentionally think about what emotion or story we want to tell and keep that in mind going forward.
	25. What do you expect or hope to learn from the upcoming A/B testing experiment?	I think your topic sounds really exciting, and I'm happy you're supporting us with this. Maybe we'll gain some new insights. I edit so many videos every day, so it's nice having someone with a fresh, outside perspective. I'm really curious which story element will perform best whether it's the problem, the transformation, or the customer. I think it could really help us plan our future campaigns more strategically. Of course, you've got limited resources, but keep that in mind and feel free to reach out

Appendix 3 Summarized and Translated Interview Responses by Leon Jürgens

		Leon Jürgens
1. Introduction & Context	Interview Question (English)	Translated to English
	1. Can you briefly describe your role at BREKKY and your main responsibilities?	My name is Leon Jürgens. Together with my co-founder Jonas, I started BREKKY around five years ago while we were still studying. What began as a student project has now grown into a developing e-commerce brand with more than ten employees. In my role as managing director, I am primarily responsible for procurement, operations management, finance, and strategic sales.
	2. How would you describe BREKKY's current brand communication strategy?	Since we are still operating 100% as an e-commerce brand, our marketing strategy is naturally very visual heavily based on imagery and photography across all social platforms and of course our online shop. We try to find a healthy balance between brand-building through a clear communication of BREKKY's values, and at the same time continually integrating transparency into this process. People follow people and especially in the digital world, that really matters. That's why, alongside our products, we intentionally highlight the development of our start-up and communicate it visually.
	3. Which communication channels are currently most important for the brand?	When it comes to communication, we essentially differentiate between two customer groups: new customers and existing customers, both of which are extremely important to us. Starting with new customers: we reach them best through social media platforms, especially Instagram and TikTok, because these channels allow us to attract cold traffic very effectively. At the same time, touchpoints along the customer journey such as Google or Pinterest are not irrelevant. Our online shop ties everything together and is the place where our overall marketing message must come through clearly. For existing customers, email marketing and also our own Instagram account not paid ads, but the organic account are by far the most important channels, because they are the most cost-efficient for us.
	4. How would you describe the brand's personality or core values?	Our main goal is to develop a product that is both healthy and efficient something that fits seamlessly into everyday life, especially in the breakfast category. Therefore, values like vegetarian or vegan ingredients, supporting a healthy diet, and ideally offering additional health benefits play an essential role.
	5. How would you describe your main target audience?	Broadly speaking, our target group is anyone who wants to eat healthily. More specifically, we focus on women aged 20 to 40.
	6. What are the main challenges or pain points you currently face in marketing?	A major challenge is of course the competitive environment. Reach can basically be bought by anyone today the one who is willing to spend the most money simply gets the most exposure. At the same time, consumer loyalty is decreasing, meaning that many people enjoy trying out different brands. That makes us heavily dependent on repeat purchases. I think that sums it up quite well: the biggest hurdle for the first purchase is convincing new customers, especially given the level of competition and the shrinking attention spans. You only have a tiny moment to capture someone's attention. And for long-term sustainability, we must turn new customers into returning customers and that's where competition, offer structure, and precise targeting again play a huge role.
2. Current Use of Storytelling	7. In what way does storytelling play a role in your brand communication so far?	Storytelling is still extremely important today. You need to adapt to the audience's attention span and their interests. The story has to be more engaging than average and authentic, otherwise people won't bother listening the urge to swipe away is simply too strong. And again, people follow people. That's ultimately the difference: telling an authentic, transparent story behind your brand. It's one of the most important aspects for us.
	8. What kinds of stories do you usually tell?	We also need to distinguish between brand communication and corporate communication. The mix is what makes it interesting. On the one hand, we try to give customers insight into our challenges, successes, and production processes to create transparency. On the other hand, we communicate product benefits, taste, and overall the breakfast experience with our products how it becomes healthy and efficient.
	9. Are there recurring themes, emotions, or values you try to communicate?	// already discussed before
	10. Can you recall a campaign where storytelling worked particularly well?	One campaign that performed extremely well for us was when we introduced the theme of "Summer Shape" and started running it in January based on the idea that people begin working towards their summer goals at the start of the year. It worked incredibly well. Another strong campaign revolved around explaining our pricing in detail, because we often get questions about why our products cost what they do. This transparency really resonated.
3. Perceptions of Narrative Elements	11. Which stories, hooks or trigger do you think are most effective in ads?	Of course, it always depends on the direction of the video campaigns and the size of the target group. But what performs best for us is clearly problem-solving content. Again: starting with "You want to lose weight, get into summer shape, eat healthier?" → "We have the solution for you." That consistently works best.
	12. Do you think customers respond more to emotional or informational content?	I would say: emotional.
	13. How does the idea of "the customer as the hero" fit into your communication style?	Customer proof is an important aspect in e-commerce and online business in general it works like social validation and trust. We try to integrate it regularly in all areas: Amazon reviews, online shop reviews, but also in ads by featuring customers as success stories. However, it's more part of the overall customer journey rather than a single standalone angle.
	14. What kind of story do you believe builds trust and drives action?	Founder stories are definitely important stories about our company, our development, how we build products, everything around product development, and of course product innovations and customer success stories.
4. Experience with Meta Ads & Performance Marketing	15. How would you describe your current Meta Ads setup? Do you manage the ads by your own internal or do you have any external support?	We manage our Facebook/Meta ads completely in-house. We have our own team consisting of a strategist, a media buyer, and a creative team. Our ads are always structured around the specific offer we're promoting.
	16. Which campaign objectives do you usually focus on?	// already discussed before
	17. Which metrics (CTR, CPC, ROAS, etc.) are most important to you?	All metrics matter to some degree because they tell us whether people interact with the video and whether the campaign is profitable. But in the end, ROAS is the decisive metric. If a campaign isn't profitable regardless of other metrics we stop running it.
	18. What are your biggest challenges in running Meta Ads?	As mentioned earlier, competition has increased significantly, especially since COVID. More people and more types of businesses, from e-commerce stores to local shops, use Meta ads, which drives up CPMs. Consumers also become less receptive to ads over time and get tired of constant advertising.
	19. From your perspective, what types of ads perform best for BREKKY?	conversion ads → videos with offer
5. Strategic Relevance & Future Outlook	20. How relevant do you think storytelling will be for BREKKY's future strategy?	Storytelling is an important component alongside offer structure and product focus, especially if you want to build repeat customers. First the product must be convincing, yes, but storytelling is what helps people understand the bigger picture of the brand and builds long-term loyalty.
	21. Do you see potential to apply narrative structures more systematically?	If you mean a specific structure in our ads: yes, they're systematically similar depending on the objective. Hook → show the product → call to action. Meta supports us with systematic analysis across ad sets, so we can compare everything clearly.
	22. How realistic is it to use storytelling frameworks (e.g., StoryBrand, Hero's Journey) in daily marketing practice?	I think that a lot of it happens intuitively. Especially if you want to appear authentic, you can't follow a rigid script. You learn from past campaigns, what needs to be said at the beginning as a scroll stopper, for instance. But overall it's a mix of intuition and spontaneous storytelling.
6. Closing Reflections	23. In your opinion, what makes a story feel authentic to the audience?	The person in front of the camera is key. It has to feel authentic not too salesy or fake. And then it's about communicating the message in a way that feels natural and meaningful to the viewer. Authenticity is everything.
	24. Is there anything else you'd like to add about storytelling or communication strategies?	In general, thanks to smartphones and the internet, storytelling has become incredibly easy, spontaneous, and more "360°" than ever. Traditional TV campaigns still exist, but they're overshadowed by daily behind-the-scenes storytelling on social media. But it always depends on the company's size and stage of growth. A small start-up like us has different constraints than a huge brand like Persil or Barilla. For us, social media storytelling is simpler and more cost-efficient but the competition is intense, and it's hard to stand out.
	25. What do you expect or hope to learn from the upcoming A/B testing experiment?	I'm definitely excited to see the results you'll present at the end. We've already tested many approaches ourselves, so it will be interesting to see whether your findings confirm our assumptions or whether you'll uncover completely new insights that differ from our current approach.

Appendix 4 Summarized and Translated Interview Responses by Jonas Bernhard-Mader

Jonas Bernhard-Mader	
Interview Question (English)	Translated to English
1. Introduction & Context	<p>1. Can you briefly describe your role at BREKKY and your main responsibilities?</p> <p>First of all, thank you for letting me be part of your thesis project and also for involving all of Brekky, which of course makes us happy. Briefly about me: I'm one of the founders of BREKKY. Together with Leon, we started the whole thing in 2020 during our business studies in Münster, originally out of a personal need. I was really annoyed that there were no healthy, quick breakfast options that actually tasted good. The combination of wanting to start something and our inspiring Bali trip led us to Brekky. Today, I'm mainly responsible for marketing, design, and the overall brand appearance. I did study business but found my passion in marketing. Leon manages purchasing, production, and logistics. I handle everything around brand strategy, performance marketing, and creative direction, which makes up a big part of our online business.</p>
	<p>2. How would you describe BREKKY's current brand communication strategy?</p> <p>I'd say our communication is very authentic and approachable. We're not a corporation doing glossy advertising, but a young start-up trying to build an honest relationship with our community. We deliberately tell our story, show how we work, and also when things go wrong. At the same time, we try to make the brand more professional and clearer without losing personality. That also means Leon and I step in front of the camera even if it was challenging in the beginning.</p>
	<p>3. Which communication channels are currently most important for the brand?</p> <p>Instagram is clearly our main channel. That's where most of our daily business energy goes: community, content, and paid ads. But we also use Meta Ads Manager intensively for campaigns. We are testing TikTok more since the format perfectly fits our product short, snackable, visual. Influencer marketing is also a big lever, especially with long-term partnerships.</p>
	<p>4. How would you describe the brand's personality or core values?</p> <p>BREKKY stands for energy, naturalness, and being a daily helper. We want the brand to feel like a positive start to the day honest, fresh, uncomplicated. Authenticity is crucial. We don't just want to sell products but convey a certain lifestyle: healthy, but not preachy.</p>
	<p>5. How would you describe your main target audience?</p> <p>Our main target group is young adults, ages 20 to 35, mostly women but increasingly men due to our more protein-focused portfolio. If I had to describe a persona: many are working professionals (our products aren't super cheap, so income helps, heh), sporty, health-conscious, think classic "Pilates girls." Still, they don't want to compromise on taste or convenience. We see BREKKY more as a lifestyle product than a classic food product, it fits into a mindful yet modern lifestyle, ideally part of your breakfast routine.</p>
	<p>6. What are the main challenges or pain points you currently face in marketing?</p> <p>The biggest challenge is staying both relevant and authentic. Social media moves fast; what works today is outdated tomorrow. You constantly have to test, but stay true to your brand. Added to that is rising competition, especially in DTC food, where the market is saturated. Performance costs rise, and you have to become more creative to reach the same results, it's pretty exhausting at times.</p>
2. Current Use of Storytelling	<p>7. In what way does storytelling play a role in your brand communication so far?</p> <p>Storytelling has always played a central role for us from the start, we took people on this exciting journey, which was one of our biggest advantages. We told our story: two students with an idea, starting from their apartment during university, and now, five years later, offering a broad, quality portfolio. This authenticity resonated with many. Early on, some laughed at or doubted us, but that's part of it. Now, it's about customers' stories how they use BREKKY in daily life. Our marketing team is also increasingly getting in front of the camera, giving the brand more faces, which we like.</p>
	<p>8. What kinds of stories do you usually tell?</p> <p>Many small, honest insights we show the process behind our products, share learnings, talk about mistakes. There are also emotional stories, e.g., when customers write that thanks to our bowls, they finally eat healthier breakfasts. These moments show our brand is really part of people's lives.</p>
	<p>9. Are there recurring themes, emotions, or values you try to communicate?</p> <p>It's always about energy, self-care, and feeling good for the day. Our message: "a healthy breakfast in under 60 seconds." Joy, motivation, and lightness run through everything from the packaging to the ads. Our portfolio has grown a lot lately; we now offer more than just smoothie bowls, so we may have to rethink a bit.</p>
	<p>10. Can you recall a campaign where storytelling worked particularly well?</p> <p>I remember our "Morning Reset" campaign early last year. We showed how with simple routines and BREKKY bowls, you could start the day more consciously. It was emotional but tangible, and the response was huge, many users shared their own "Morning Reset" moments. That campaign proved that storytelling really works. We also offered a complete starter set, which increased basket size and sales. We run many sales events, each time a new challenge, even if it's for the same event year after year. Like now, Black Week is coming up soon, and big companies start hyping weeks in advance. We can't match those huge discounts or we'd move into the red, so our approach to campaigns is always evolving.</p>
3. Perceptions of Narrative Elements	<p>11. Which stories, hooks or trigger do you think are most effective in ads?</p> <p>Part of it is creating need for the customer (pain points), and part is showing the results of using BREKKY, customers want to see positive changes. When you reach someone emotionally at their trigger point, like "stressed morning, no breakfast," and give a clear solution, you stick in their mind. People remember change, that's what makes stories strong, not the product itself, but what it enables.</p>
	<p>12. Do you think customers respond more to emotional or informational content?</p> <p>Emotion is most important. Facts matter, but rarely spark enthusiasm. People want to feel understood, when they see themselves in the story, they react, and the rest almost happens on its own. We communicate facts as a supplement in our online shop.</p>
	<p>13. How does the idea of "the customer as the hero" fit into your communication style?</p> <p>We don't want to be the star of the show, but the companion. The customer is the protagonist (laughs). To put it pragmatically: we give them the tool to make their daily lives easier and healthier. So, in our ads, you often see real users or creators, not models.</p>
	<p>14. What kind of story do you believe builds trust and drives action?</p> <p>It helps if you don't just show perfect moments, but reality—like setbacks or challenges. We once admitted publicly that a delivery spoiled completely. It was annoying, but the community responded positively because we were upfront. That builds long-term trust.</p>
4. Experience with Meta Ads & Performance Marketing	<p>15. How would you describe your current Meta Ads setup? Do you manage the ads by your own internal or do you have any external support?</p> <p>We run everything internally but with a very data-driven approach. I handle creative strategy, Elaine executes in Ads Manager. We test constantly, it can be a pain! Different hooks, audiences, lengths. Performance creatives and UGC (user-generated content) videos work best. Even uploading and editing versions can take hours, and sometimes the "simplest" ads work better than the complex ones. In the beginning, we had regular calls with Meta, but now we know when to increase budget or pull campaigns.</p>
	<p>16. Which campaign objectives do you usually focus on?</p> <p>As CEO, obviously, conversions matter most (laughs)! Jokes aside, we also look at ROAS across the funnel. Awareness is also important, branding matters for long-term performance. As a start-up, we need both: short-term sales and long-term brand loyalty.</p>
	<p>17. Which metrics (CTR, CPC, ROAS, etc.) are most important to you?</p> <p>All KPIs matter for the full picture. I'd highlight ROAS, CTR, and view-through rate. CTR shows if the story works; ROAS tells if the campaign is profitable; view-through rate tells if people are really hooked, if they stay emotionally engaged.</p>
	<p>18. What are your biggest challenges in running Meta Ads?</p> <p>Lately, creative fatigue is a major problem. Content wears out quickly, if you show the same thing too long, performance drops. Also, balancing between data and creativity is tough, focusing only on numbers can make you lose the story's feel. Many companies use the same ad strategy, so you need to keep questioning and testing your structure or else consumers will quickly notice you're not telling a new story, just selling.</p>
	<p>19. From your perspective, what types of ads perform best for BREKKY?</p> <p>UGC, authentic videos, simple stories, that's what works. People really using the product, not models or scripted ads. Short, dynamic clips with real emotion perform best.</p>
5. Strategic Relevance & Future Outlook	<p>20. How relevant do you think storytelling will be for BREKKY's future strategy?</p> <p>Super relevant, the market is flooded with ads, but good stories stand out. There are many founder success stories, like Johannes from SNOCKS. At BREKKY, we want to be much more strategic and deliberate with storytelling to build long-term brand loyalty. For us, storytelling isn't a "nice-to-have," it's central to performance marketing.</p>
	<p>21. Do you see potential to apply narrative structures more systematically?</p> <p>Yes, I know models like StoryBrand or Hero's Journey, intuitively we already do a lot of that. I read Miller's book at the start (laughs), it's very American and the market is different in Europe, but it gave me an idea of what matters in a story for our brand. Still, I think a more structured approach would help us, especially for A/B testing. Then we could really check which story structure works best.</p>
	<p>22. How realistic is it to use storytelling frameworks (e.g., StoryBrand, Hero's Journey) in daily marketing practice?</p> <p>It's realistic, but you have to simplify. In day-to-day life, you need something you can apply quickly. A framework that explains in three sentences how to build suspense would be gold.</p>
	<p>23. In your opinion, what makes a story feel authentic to the audience?</p> <p>When it's true, when stories come from real experiences (ours, our customers', the team's). Authenticity comes from people recognizing themselves. No staged scenes, no perfect wording, just honest storytelling.</p>
6. Closing Reflections	<p>24. Is there anything else you'd like to add about storytelling or communication strategies?</p> <p>Maybe this: Storytelling isn't a discipline to me, but an attitude. It's about understanding why people feel something, not just why they click. If you get that, you can make campaigns with real impact over time.</p>
	<p>25. What do you expect or hope to learn from the upcoming A/B testing experiment?</p> <p>I'm very curious whether certain elements will clearly be most effective, because as marketing head, you think you know what works and have found the triggers. Still, I hope your analysis will show which storyline really converts what combination of emotion and info works best, and that we can scale that. My guess: starting with the problem/trigger will convert best. Let's see I'm looking forward to your analysis.</p>

Appendix 5 Short Definitions and Scripts of Narrative Message Hooks presented in the Three-Act-Structure

Trigger	ACT I	ACT II	ACT III
Emotional trigger: Start with an emotionally charged, relatable problem	„Gesund essen am Morgen – klingt einfach. Aber wenn der Kühlschrank leer ist oder schnippeln ewig dauert, greift man doch wieder zu ungesunden Varianten oder Snacks zurück. Warum muss das so kompliziert sein?“	„Deshalb haben wir BREKKY entwickelt > 100 % natürlich, ohne Zuckerzusätze und in 1 Minute zubereitet. Du musst einfach nur ein bisschen Wasser mit dem Pulver vermengen, toppen und fertig ist deine gesunde Smoothie-Bowl.“	„Jetzt testen und spare diese Woche mit dem BREKKY Aktionspaket!“
Rational benefit focus: Fact-based presentation of clear product advantages	„100% natürlich, ohne Zuckerzusätze und in 1 Minute zubereitet.“	„Du musst einfach nur ein bisschen Wasser mit dem Pulver vermengen, toppen und fertig ist deine gesunde Smoothie-Bowl.“	„Jetzt testen und spare diese Woche mit dem BREKKY Aktionspaket!“
Social proof: Reference social validation	„Über diese Bestellung kannst du dich nur freuen. Täglich starten tausende zufriedene Kunden, mit genau diesem Frühstück in den Tag. Weils einfach funktioniert, richtig gut schmeckt und morgens nicht stresst“	„Deshalb haben wir BREKKY entwickelt > 100 % natürlich, ohne Zuckerzusätze und in 1 Minute zubereitet. Du musst einfach nur ein bisschen Wasser mit dem Pulver vermengen, toppen und fertig ist deine gesunde Smoothie-Bowl.“	„Jetzt testen und spare diese Woche mit dem BREKKY Aktionspaket!“
Transformation / future self: Show a positive state that can be achieved through using the product	„Fit in den Tag starten? Dafür brauchst du morgens keinen perfekten Plan > nur das richtige Frühstück. Schnell, gesund, lecker und du fühlst dich einfach direkt besser.“	„Deshalb haben wir BREKKY entwickelt > 100 % natürlich, ohne Zuckerzusätze und in 1 Minute zubereitet. Du musst einfach nur ein bisschen Wasser mit dem Pulver vermengen, toppen und fertig ist deine gesunde Smoothie-Bowl.“	„Jetzt testen und spare diese Woche mit dem BREKKY Aktionspaket!“

Appendix 6 Definitions and Scripts of Narrative Message Hooks

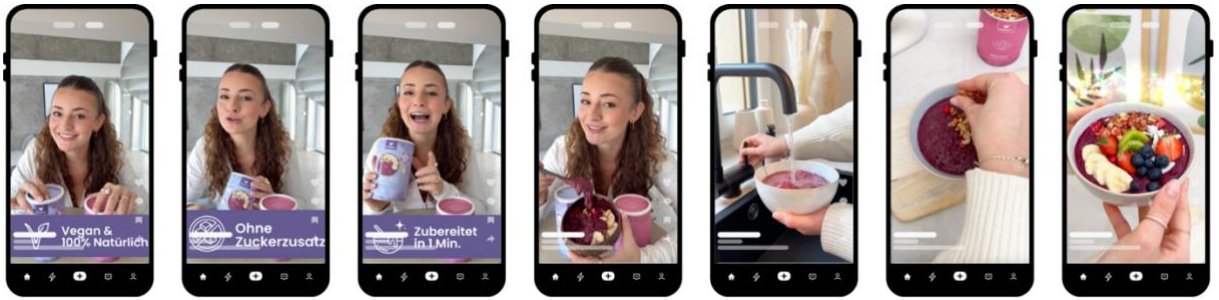
Narrative Message Focus	Definition	Script German (Original)	Script English
A_Emootional Problem	Emotional problem storytelling focuses on a relatable negative situation or frustration in the customer's daily life. It creates tension and emotional relevance by highlighting a pain point that the product resolves.	„Gesund essen am Morgen klingt einfach. Aber wenn der Kühlschrank leer ist oder schnippeln ewig dauert, greift man doch wieder zu ungesunden Varianten oder Snacks zurück. Warum muss das so kompliziert sein? Deshalb haben wir BREKKY entwickelt -> 100 % natürlich, ohne Zuckerzusätze und in 1 Minute zubereitet. Du musst einfach nur Wasser mit dem Pulver vermengen, toppen fertig ist deine gesunde Smoothie-Bowl. Jetzt testen und spare diese Woche mit dem BREKKY Aktionspaket!“	“Eating healthy in the morning sounds easy, but when the fridge is empty or chopping takes forever, you end up grabbing unhealthy options or quick snacks again. Why does it have to be so complicated? That’s exactly why we created BREKKY -> 100% natural, with no added sugar, and ready in just 1 minute. Simply mix the powder with a bit of water, add your toppings, and your healthy smoothie bowl is done. Try it now and save this week with the BREKKY special offer!”
B_USP Fokus	Rational storytelling emphasizes functional product benefits, clear facts, and logical arguments. It appeals to cognitive processing and supports decision-making through clarity and information.	„100 % natürlich, ohne Zuckerzusätze und in 1 Minute zubereitet. Du musst einfach nur ein bisschen Wasser mit dem Pulver vermengen, toppen und fertig ist deine gesunde Smoothie-Bowl. Jetzt testen und spare diese Woche mit dem BREKKY Aktionspaket!“	“100% natural, no added sugar, and ready in just 1 minute. Just mix the powder with a little water, add your toppings and your healthy smoothie bowl is ready. Try it now and save this week with the BREKKY special offer!”
C_Social Proof	Social proof storytelling builds trust by showing community validation, shared experiences, or collective endorsement. It leverages the psychological principle that people follow the behavior of others.	„Über diese Bestellung kannst du dich nur freuen. Täglich starten tausende zufriedene Kunden mit genau diesem Frühstück in den Tag. Weil's einfach funktioniert, richtig gut schmeckt und morgens nicht stresst. Deshalb haben wir BREKKY entwickelt -> 100 % natürlich, ohne Zuckerzusätze und in 1 Minute zubereitet. Du musst einfach nur Wasser mit dem Pulver vermengen, toppen – fertig ist deine gesunde Smoothie-Bowl. Jetzt testen und spare diese Woche mit dem BREKKY Aktionspaket!“	“You’re going to love this order. Every day, thousands of happy customers start their morning with exactly this breakfast because it simply works, tastes great, and takes the stress out of your mornings. That’s why we created BREKKY -> 100% natural, with no added sugar, and ready in just 1 minute. Just mix the powder with water, add your toppings, and your healthy smoothie bowl is done. Try it now and save this week with the BREKKY special offer!”
D_Transformation	Transformation storytelling shows the positive “after” state of the user. It visualizes how life improves after using the product and highlights emotional and functional outcomes.	„Fit in den Tag starten? Dafür brauchst du morgens keinen perfekten Plan -> nur das richtige Frühstück. Schnell, gesund, lecker und du fühlst dich einfach direkt besser. Deshalb haben wir BREKKY entwickelt -> 100 % natürlich, ohne Zuckerzusätze und in 1 Minute zubereitet. Du musst einfach nur Wasser mit dem Pulver vermengen, toppen fertig ist deine gesunde Smoothie-Bowl. Jetzt testen und spare diese Woche mit dem BREKKY Aktionspaket!“	“Want to start your day feeling energized? You don’t need a perfect morning routine -> just the right breakfast. Quick, healthy, delicious and you instantly feel better. That’s why we developed BREKKY -> 100% natural, no added sugar, and ready in just 1 minute. Simply mix the powder with water, add your toppings, and your healthy smoothie bowl is ready. Try it now and save this week with the BREKKY special offer!”

Appendix 7 Hook Scenes Emotional Trigger



“Eating healthy in the morning sounds easy, but when the fridge is empty or chopping takes forever, you end up grabbing unhealthy options or quick snacks again. Why does it have to be so complicated? That’s exactly why we created BREKKY...”

Appendix 8 Hook Scenes Rational



“100% natural, no added sugar, and ready in just 1 minute. BREKKY your guide for better mornings. Just mix the powder with a little water, add your toppings and your healthy smoothie bowl is ready...”

Appendix 9 Hook Scenes Social Proof



“You’re going to love this order. Every day, thousands of happy customers start their morning with exactly this breakfast because it simply works, tastes great, and takes the stress out of your mornings. That’s why we created BREKKY...”

Appendix 10 Hook Scenes Transformation



“Want to start your day feeling energized? You don’t need a perfect morning routine - just the right breakfast. Quick, healthy, delicious and you instantly feel better. That’s why we developed BREKKY...”

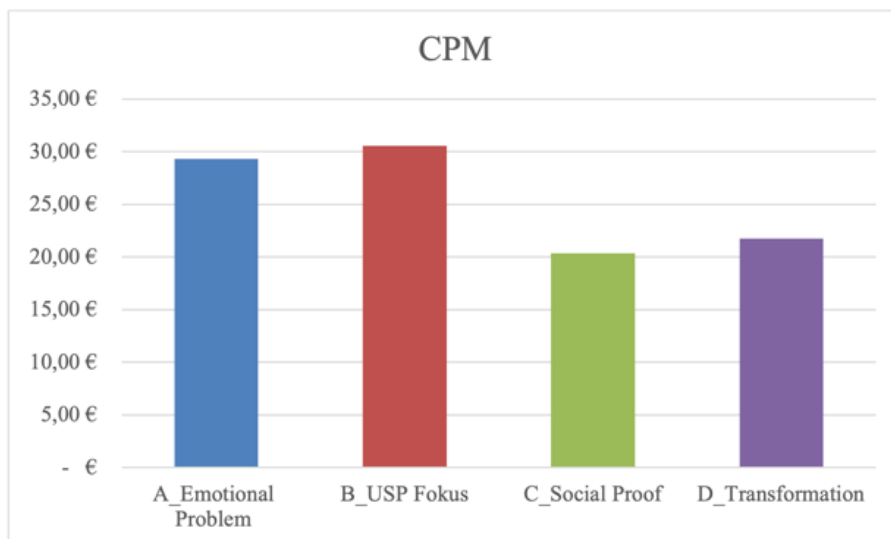
Appendix 11 Meta Ads Manager Interface Showing Ad Set Performance Metrics

Aus/Ein	Anzeigengruppe	Auslieferung	Empfehlungen	Ergebnisse	Kosten pro Ergebnis	Budget	Ausgebener Betrag	Impressionen	Reichweite
●	D_Transformation_FINAL()	● Kampagne des	—	Website-Kauf	10,00 € Pro Kauf	Täglich	27,04 €	1.242	993
●	C_Social Proof_FINAL	● Kampagne des	—	Website-Kauf	10,00 € Pro Kauf	Täglich	27,72 €	1.361	1.207
●	B_USP Fokus_FINAL	● Kampagne des	1 Empfehlung	Website-Kauf	10,00 € Pro Kauf	Täglich	28,83 €	944	794
●	A_Emotiona Problem (Variante 1)	● Kampagne des	—	Website-Kauf	10,00 € Pro Kauf	Täglich	27,89 €	952	791

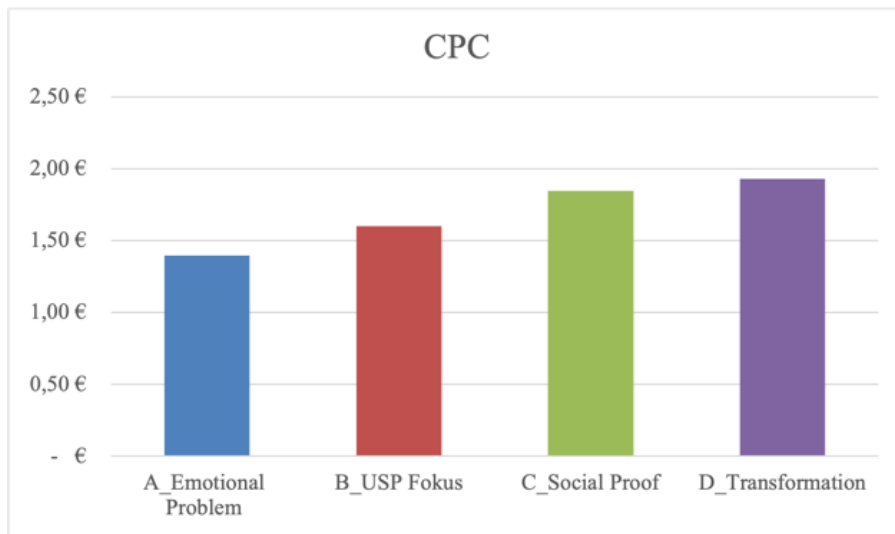
Appendix 12 Quantitative Analysis Calculated KPIs

Calculated KPIs						KPIs for Calculation					
Formula	Link Clicks / Impressions	Spend / Link Clicks	Spend / Impressions * 1000	Views25 / Impressions	Views100 / Impressions		Clicks	Impressionen	Spend (EUR)	25 % viewed	100 % viewed
Name of the Ad Group	CTR_calc	CPC_calc	CPM_calc	Video Views at 25%	Video Views at 100%	3-second video views					
A_Emotiona l Problem	0,0210	1,39 €	29,30 €	0,1040	0,0273	172	20	952	27,89 €	99	26
B_USP Fokus	0,0191	1,60 €	30,54 €	0,0964	0,0265	122	18	944	28,83 €	91	25
C_Social Proof	0,0110	1,85 €	20,37 €	0,0573	0,0059	232	15	1361	27,72 €	78	8
D_Transformation	0,0113	1,93 €	21,77 €	0,1135	0,0121	284	14	1242	27,04 €	141	15

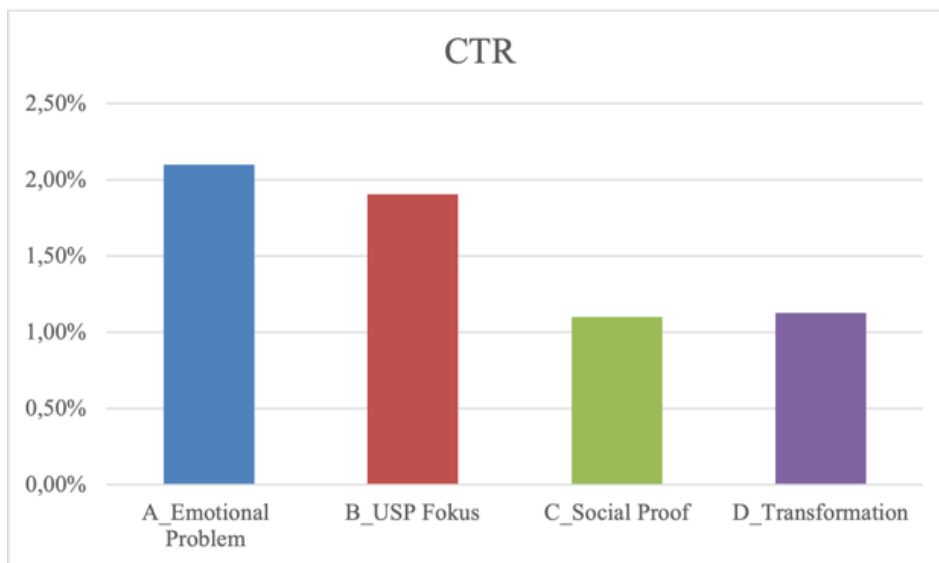
Appendix 13 Descriptive Results of Cost-per-Mille by Message Focus



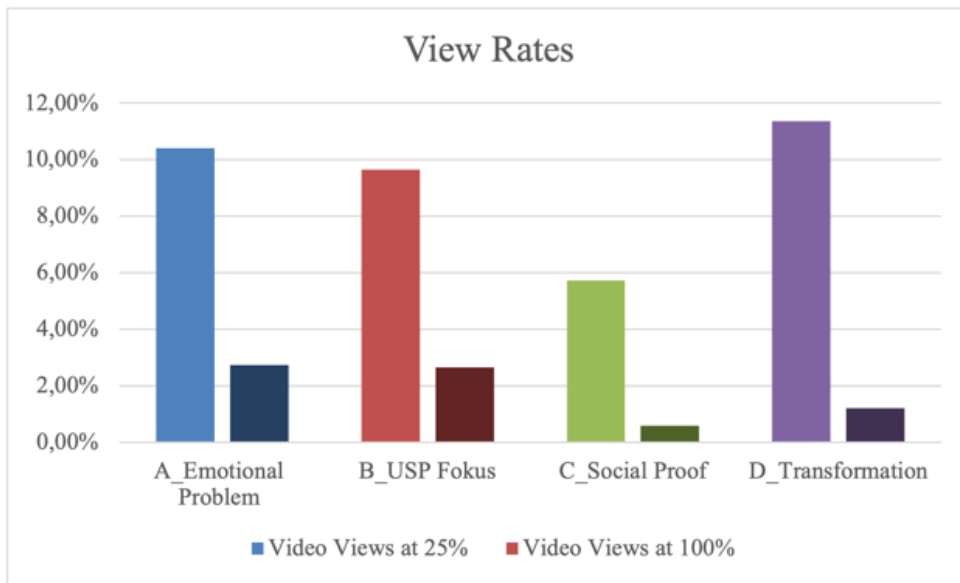
Appendix 14 Descriptive Results of Cost-per-Click by Message Focus



Appendix 15 Descriptive Results of Click-Through Rates by Message Focus



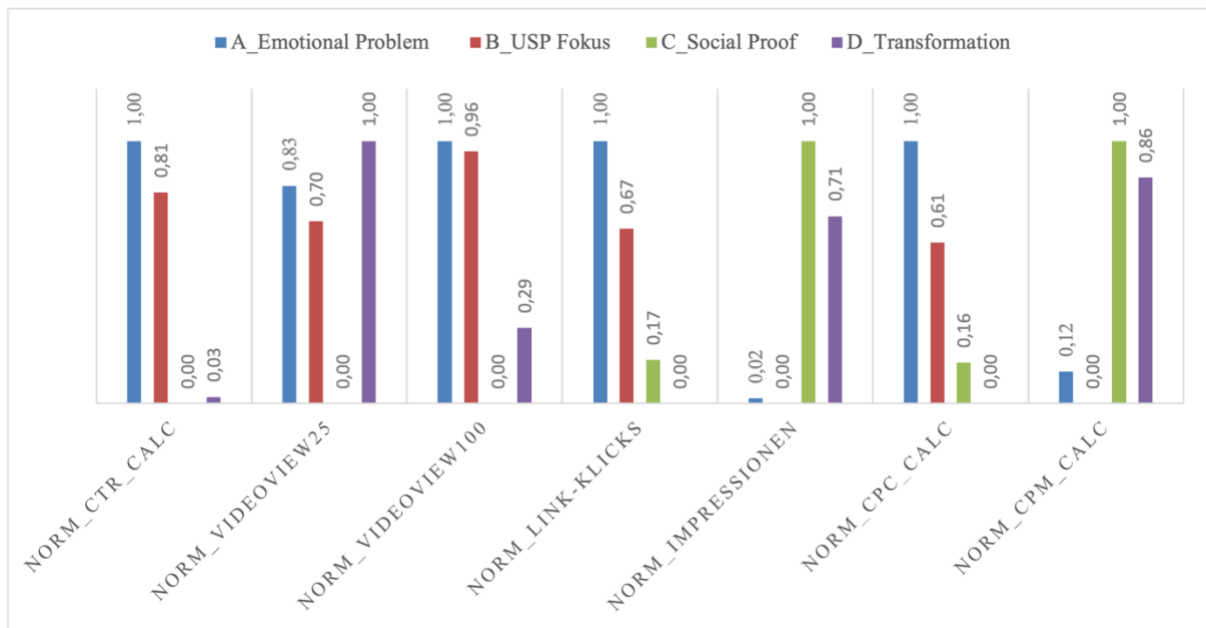
Appendix 16 Descriptive Results of View Rates by Message Focus



Appendix 17 Quantitative Analysis Normalized KPIs

Normalized KPIs								
Normalization is used to bring all KPIs onto a comparable 0–1 scale. Since the metrics in digital advertising have different units and ranges (e.g., CTR in decimals, CPC in euros, impressions in absolute counts), raw values cannot be compared directly. By transforming each KPI using min–max normalization, all metrics receive the same scale: 1 represents the best performance within the dataset, and 0 represents the worst. This allows multiple KPIs to be combined into a single composite performance index (WKPI) without one metric dominating the others due to its numerical scale.								
	More is better				Less is better			
Formula	$(value - min) / (max - min)$				$(max - value) / (max - min)$			
Name of the Ad Group	Normalized CTR	Normalized VideoView25	Normalized VideoView100	Normalized Link Klicks	Normalized Impressionen	Normalized CPC	Normalized CPM	WKPI
A Emotional Problem	1,00	0,83	1,00	1,00	0,02	1,00	0,12	0,71
B USP Fokus	0,81	0,70	0,96	0,67	0,00	0,61	0,00	0,53
C Social Proof	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,17	1,00	0,16	1,00	0,33
D Transformation	0,03	1,00	0,29	0,00	0,71	0,00	0,86	0,41

Appendix 18 Normalized Key-Performance-Indicator



Appendix 19 Ranking Weighted-Key-Performance-Indicator

