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Strategic Brand Management Method

Integrated Brand Analysis & Strategy –
Strategic Decision Guidelines for Brand Positioning & Market Strategy



Article

Integrated Brand Analysis and Strategy—Strategic Decision Guidelines for Brand Positioning and Market Strategy

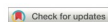
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Abstract

A method for integrated brand analysis and strategy is developed in this work. The foundation of this method is market research, through which the relevance of brand attributes, their evaluation for competing brands and the market performance of these brands on the steps of the buying process are determined. On this basis, the overall evaluation of brands and their number of brand attributes with the best evaluation are calculated so that strategic decision guidelines for overall brand positioning can be deduced. These strategic decision guidelines are securing the brand based on the existing identity/image, developing the brand based on the existing identity/image, developing (pivoting to) a new brand identity/image, whilst securing the strengths of the existing identity/image, and developing a new brand identity/image. On the level of brand attributes, the weighted relevance of attributes and their evaluation difference to the best competitor are calculated so that, again, strategic decision guidelines can be deduced. The strategic decision guidelines on brand attribute level are securing the attributes as the core brand identity (first priority), selecting and developing the attributes to the core brand identity (second priority), securing the attributes as the extended brand identity (third priority), and selecting and developing the attributes as the extended brand identity (fourth priority). Based on the market performance of brands across the stages of the buying process, the conversions between these steps are determined. On this basis, strategic decision guidelines for market cultivation are deduced, i.e., awareness, image, sales, and loyalty strategies. To gain first indications of the validity of the method for integrated brand analysis and strategy, it is applied to food retail and chocolate brands in the German market. Future research should focus on further validating the method and enhancing it by integrating segmenting and targeting processes and, potentially, marketing measures on an operational level.

Keywords: brand; brand management; brand strategy; brand identity; brand image; brand positioning; brand analysis



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1. Introduction

Brands are regarded as key factors for the success of companies by driving critical outcomes, such as sales and customer loyalty, amongst others (e.g., Aaker, 2012; Beverland et al., 2015; Iyer et al., 2021; W. J. Lee et al., 2016). Accordingly, brand management has a relatively long history of being considered as one of the most important managerial tasks to drive and secure a company's success (e.g., Aaker, 1992; Iyer et al., 2021; Keller, 2003; Pappu et al., 2005). The arguably most widespread brand management approaches provide general frameworks, which comprehensively outline overall brand management (Aaker, 2010; Burmann et al., 2023; de Chernatony, 2010; Kapferer, 2012;

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- Brand
 - A brand is a product, company, or other marketable object that consists of perceived attributes, which provide a target group with value, is distinguishable from competitors, and, therewith, has the potential to lead to behavioural outcomes on the side of the target group, such as brand awareness, purchases, and re-purchases.
- Brand management
 - Brand management consists of all of the functions and processes within a company or other brand-owning institution that design, develop, and maintain predefined brands.
 - Here: Focus on strategic brand management
- Perspectives of brand management
 - Brand image, identity & positioning
 - Behavioural outcomes & market strategies

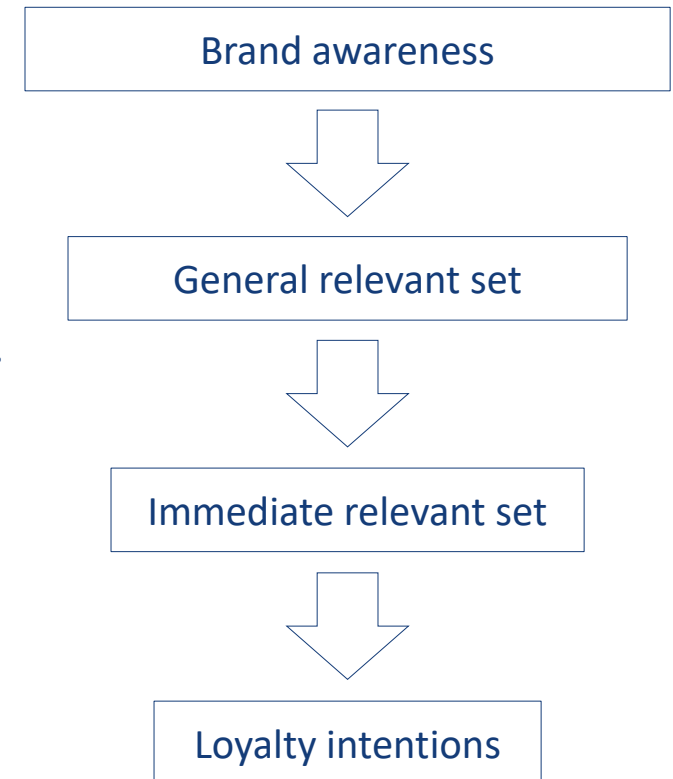


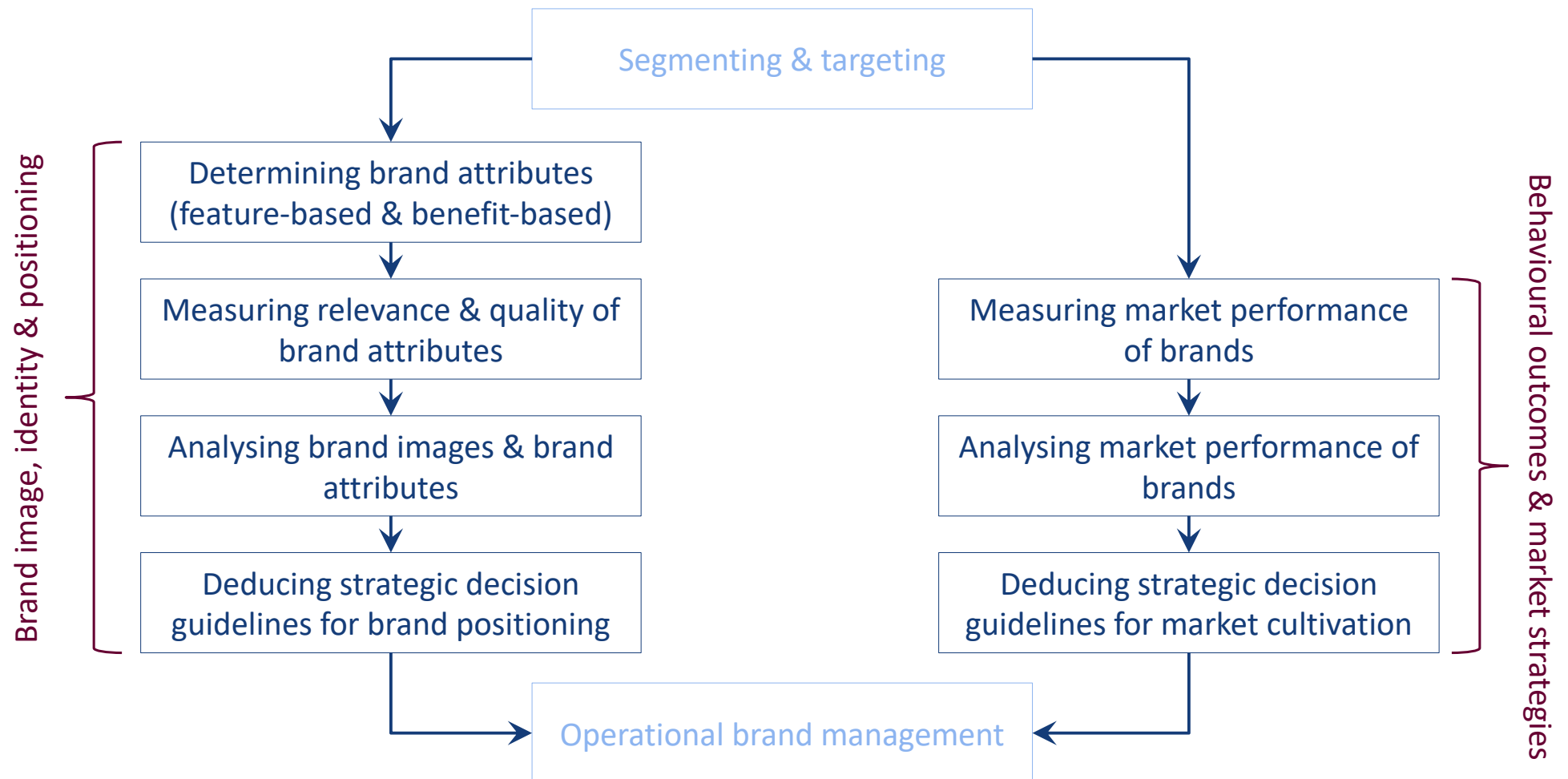
Brand Image, Identity & Positioning

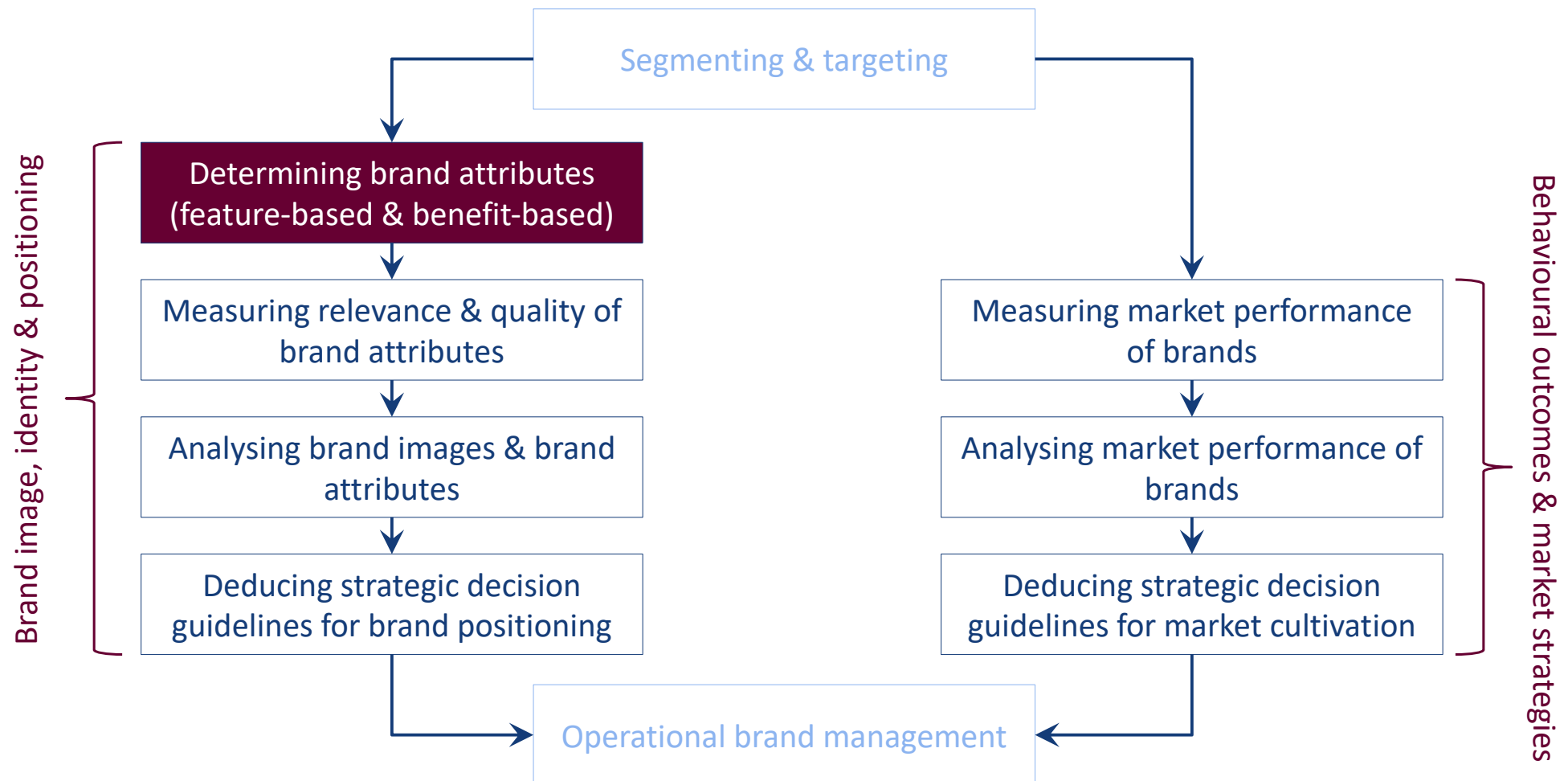
- **Brand image**
 - The brand image represents the external perspective of brand management and can be defined as all of the associations the target group has with a product, company, or other brand-owning institution.
- **Brand identity**
 - The brand identity consists of all of the brand associations, in other words, brand attributes, that a company or other brand-owning institution aims to establish in the perception of the target group.
- **Brand positioning**
 - Brand positioning is understood as the processes and decisions of measuring and analysing the brand image, and crafting the brand identity.
- **Perspectives on analysing the brand image & crafting the brand identity**
 - Relevance of brand attributes (~ needs, wants & motives of target group)
 - Quality of brand attributes or strength of association with brands (~ fulfilment of needs, wants & motives)



- **Brand awareness**
 - Brand awareness refers to the target group being consciously aware of a brand through recall or recognition.
 - Strategic emphasis: **Awareness strategy**
- **General relevant set**
 - The general relevant set consists of those brands that are evaluated well, so that they are generally considered for purchase.
 - Strategic emphasis: **Image strategy**
- **Immediate relevant set**
 - The immediate relevant set consists of those brands that are considered if a purchase has to be performed immediately.
 - Strategic emphasis: **Sales strategy**
- **Loyalty intentions**
 - Loyalty intentions refer to the brand that would be purchased most often.
 - Strategic emphasis: **Loyalty strategy**



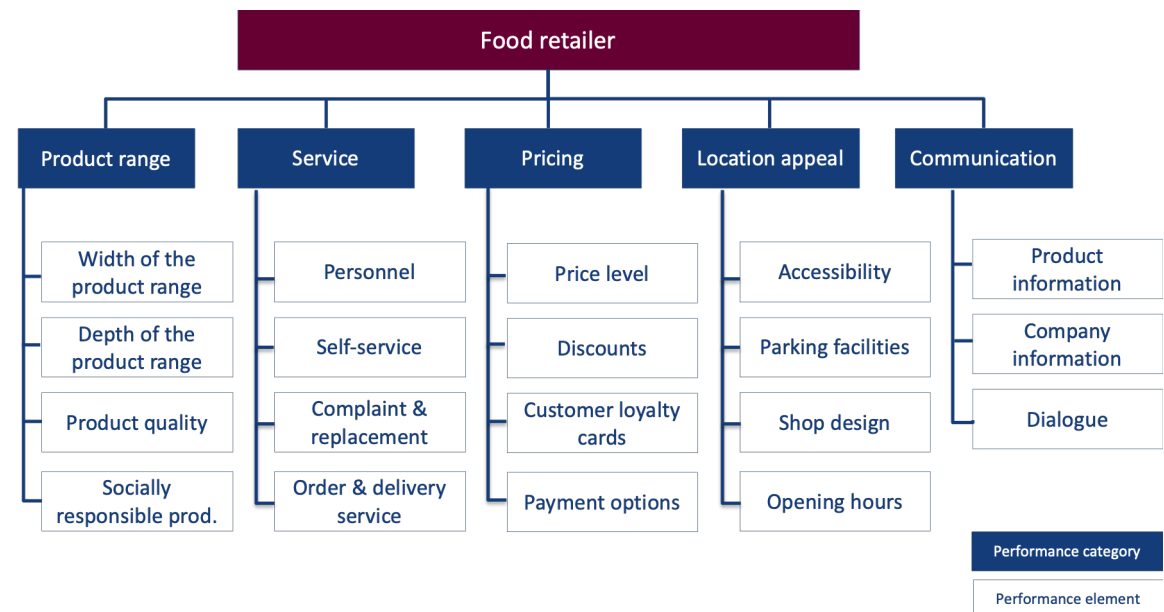




Determining Brand Attributes – Feature-Based Brand Attributes

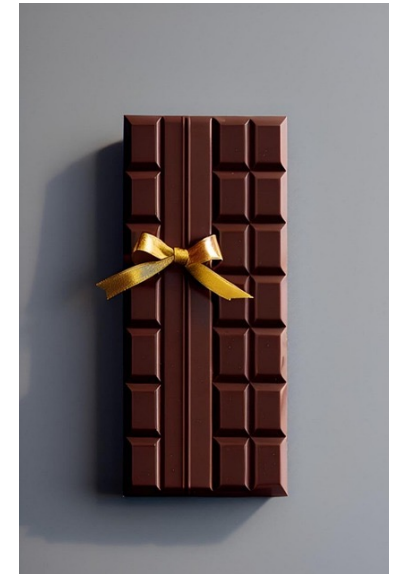
- Feature-based brand attributes
 - “Objectively measurable” product characteristics
- Theory-based inside-out approach
 - Determining the product category that is underlying the brand
 - Deducing product elements with relevance to target group
- Advice for practice
 - Using the marketing mix as a starting point
 - More differentiation is, however, required

- Example – food retail brands (Godbersen et al., 2023)



Determining Brand Attributes – Benefit-Based Brand Attributes

- Benefit-based brand attributes
 - Derivatives of target group's needs, wants & motives, which are evaluative by nature
- Outside-in approach through qualitative research (interviews or questionnaire) – example chocolate
 - Context of using product category: One can consume chocolate in different situations. Please list in keywords in which situations you consume chocolate.
 - Motives for usage: You have listed situations in which you consume chocolate. Please list in keywords to what end or purpose you consume chocolate in these situations.
 - Associations with context: You have listed situations in which you consume chocolate. Please list in keywords which emotions and thoughts you associate with these situations.
 - Associations with product category: Now, we would like to ask you which emotions and thoughts you associate with chocolate. Please list in keywords the emotions and thoughts you associate with chocolate.
- Analysis (cf. qualitative & quantitative content analysis)
 - (1) Inductively categorising answers → (2) Frequencies of answers → (3) Deducing brand attributes



Determining Brand Attributes (Example Chocolate Brands)

Table 3. Context of consuming chocolate (n = 509).

Table 4. Motives for consuming chocolate (n = 509).					
Positiv	Motives	Frequency	Percentage		
During					
During					
During	Mood-r	Table 5. Associations with context of consumption and chocolate (n = 509).			
During	Being h				
and eve	Being jo				
During	Comple	Context		Product	
streami	Enjoyin	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
In conju	Feeling	Mood-related associations			
Table 3. C	Feeling	304	17.82%	267	15.26%
		Social associations			
	Social r	150	8.79%	326	18.63%
	Sharing	203	11.90%	173	9.89%
		204	11.96%	195	11.14%
Social c	Escape-	Social associations			
In socia	Boostin	Conviviality, family and friends			
On spec	Distract	55	3.22%	47	2.69%
	escapin	13	0.76%	68	3.89%
Escape-	Reducin	Escape- and motivation-related associations			
During	Relaxin	Break from daily life			
During	Reward	61	3.58%	21	1.20%
In self-r		40	2.34%	23	1.31%
In situa	Chocol.	Relaxation and serenity			
is neede	Out of e	187	10.96%	121	6.91%
	Satisfyi	91	5.33%	110	6.29%
Negativ		Negative associations			
In situa	Other	Bad conscience or regret			
In situa	Other o	77	4.51%	77	4.40%
In situa		28	1.64%	--	--
and sad	Sum	37	2.17%	17	0.97%
In stressfu		Cravings or hunger			
		61	3.58%	22	1.26%
		90	5.28%	--	--
Chocolate-relate		5	0.29%	122	6.97%
In situations with		39	2.29%	16	0.91%
Other	Other				
Other or not appl	Other or not applicable	61	3.58%	145	8.29%
Sum	Sum	1706	100.00%	1750	100.00%

(1) Mood-related brand attributes

- Comfort and contentment
- Enjoyment and deliciousness
- Joy and fun
- Happiness

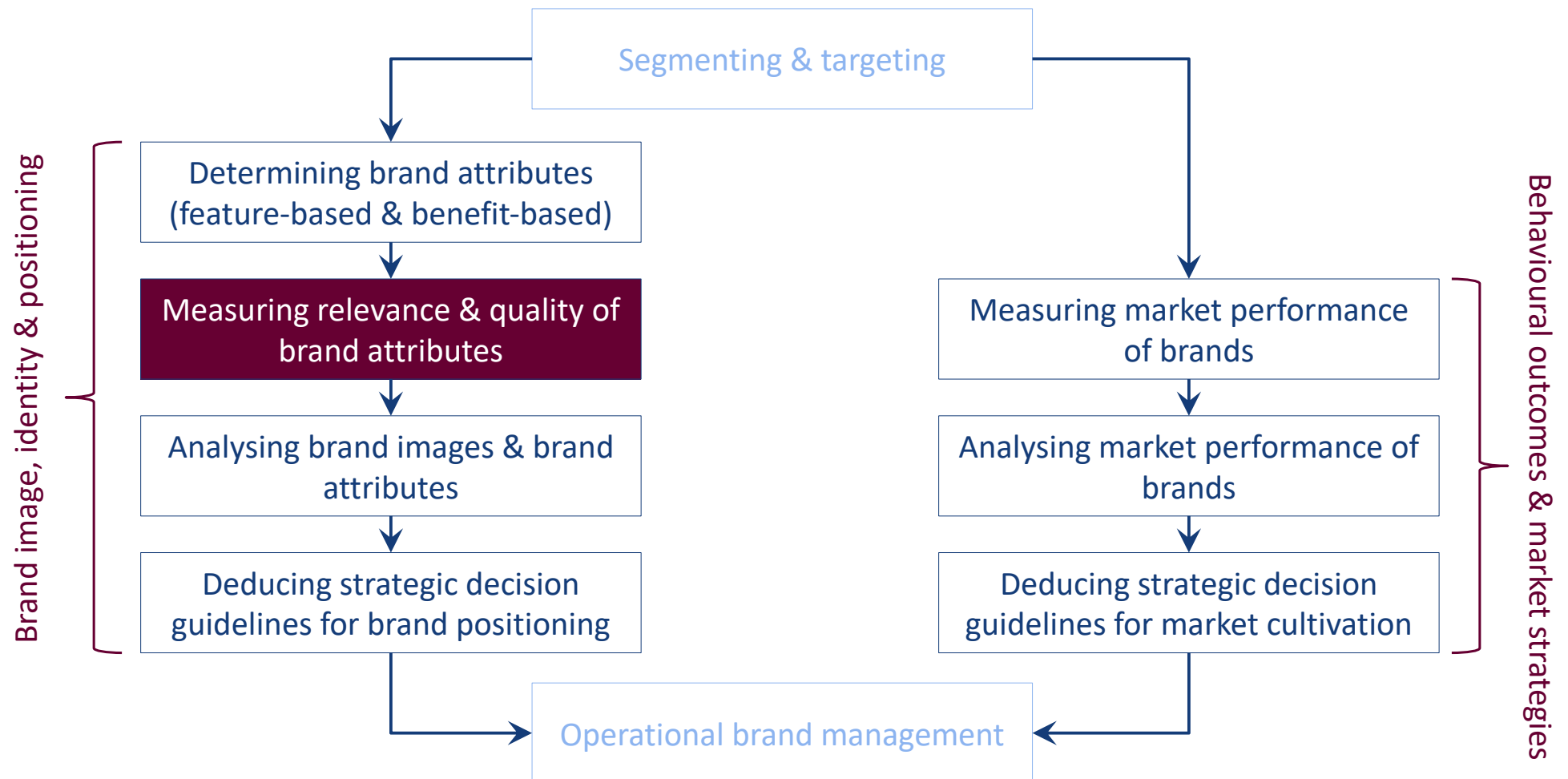
(2) Social brand attributes

- Conviviality
- Friends
- Family
- Special occasions and festivities

(3) Escape- and motivation-related brand attributes

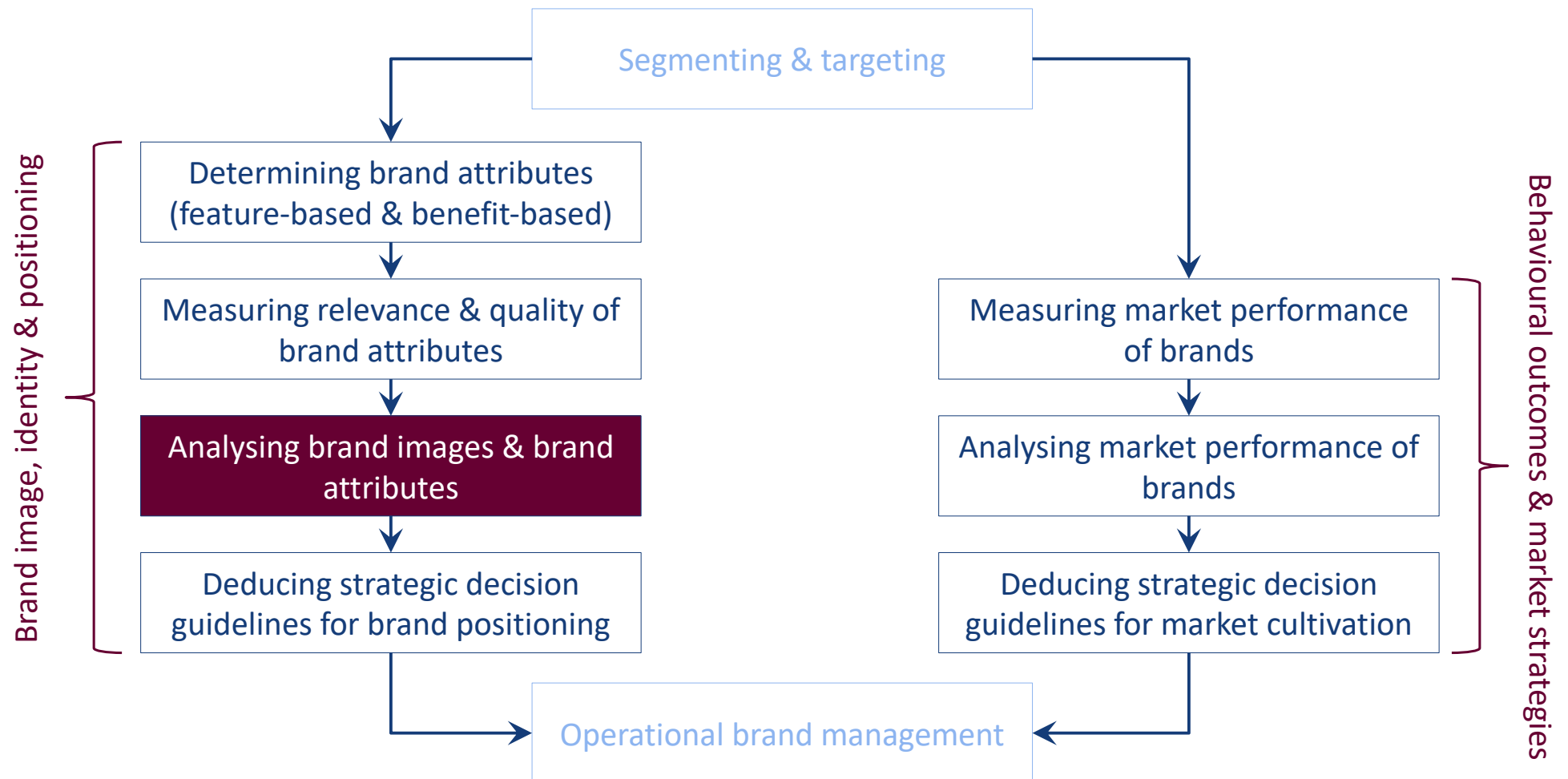
- Relaxation and serenity
- Break from daily life
- Motivation and energy boost
- Reward

Sample: 509 business psychology students, FOM University of Applied Sciences, Germany



Measuring Relevance & Quality of Brand Attributes

- **Relevance of brand attributes (eR)** ~ related to needs, wants & motives of target group
 - **Example food retailers:** When buying from food retailers, different aspects can be important. Please indicate on a scale from 0 “not important” to 100 “very important”, how important the following features of food retailers are for you personally.
0 not important ●—————● 100 very important
 - **Example chocolate:** When consuming chocolate, different aspects can be important. Please indicate on a scale from 0 “not important” to 100 “very important”, how important the following aspects are for you personally, when you consume chocolate.
- **Quality / strength of association (eQ)** ~ related to fulfilment of needs, wants & motives
 - **Example food retailers:** In this section, you should indicate how good you personally evaluate different features of different food retailers. Please give your answers on scales from 0 “not good” to 100 “very good”. Please indicate now how good you evaluate the following features of <brand>.
0 not good ●—————● 100 very good
 - **Example chocolate:** In this section, you should indicate how strongly you personally associate different aspects with chocolate brands. Please give your answers on scales from 0 “not at all” to 100 “very strong”. Please indicate now how strongly you personally associate the following aspects with <brand> .



Analysing Brand Images & Brand Attributes

- Weighted relevance (wR)

$$wR_j = \frac{eR_j}{\sum_{j=1}^n eR_j}$$

- Overall evaluation (tQ)

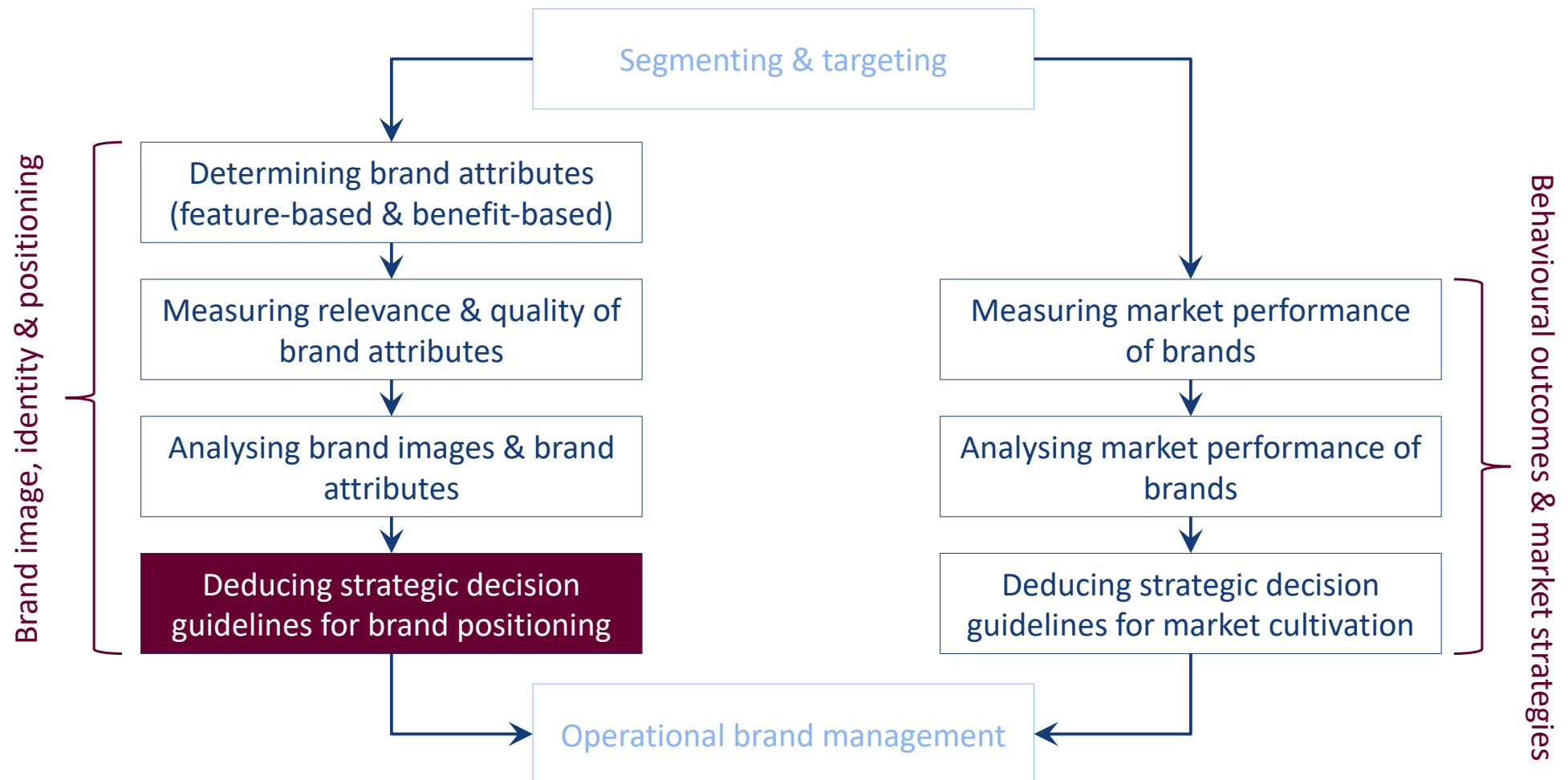
$$tQ_i = \sum_{j=1}^n \frac{eR_j}{\sum_{j=1}^n eR_j} \times eQ_{ij}$$

- Number of attributes with the best evaluation (N)

$$N_i = \sum_{j=1}^n \mathbb{I} \left(eQ_{ij} = \max \{ eQ_{1j}, eQ_{2j}, \dots, eQ_{nj} \} \right)$$

- Difference between the perceived quality of a brand to its best competitor for each attribute (qD)

$$qD_{ij} = eQ_{ij} - \max \{ eQ_{1j}, eQ_{2j}, \dots, eQ_{nj} \setminus eQ_{ij} \}$$



Deducing Strategic Decision Guidelines for Overall Brand Positioning

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- Example: food retail brands in Germany
- Sample: 923 business psychology students, FOM University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Question marks

→ Developing brand based on existing identity/image

Stars

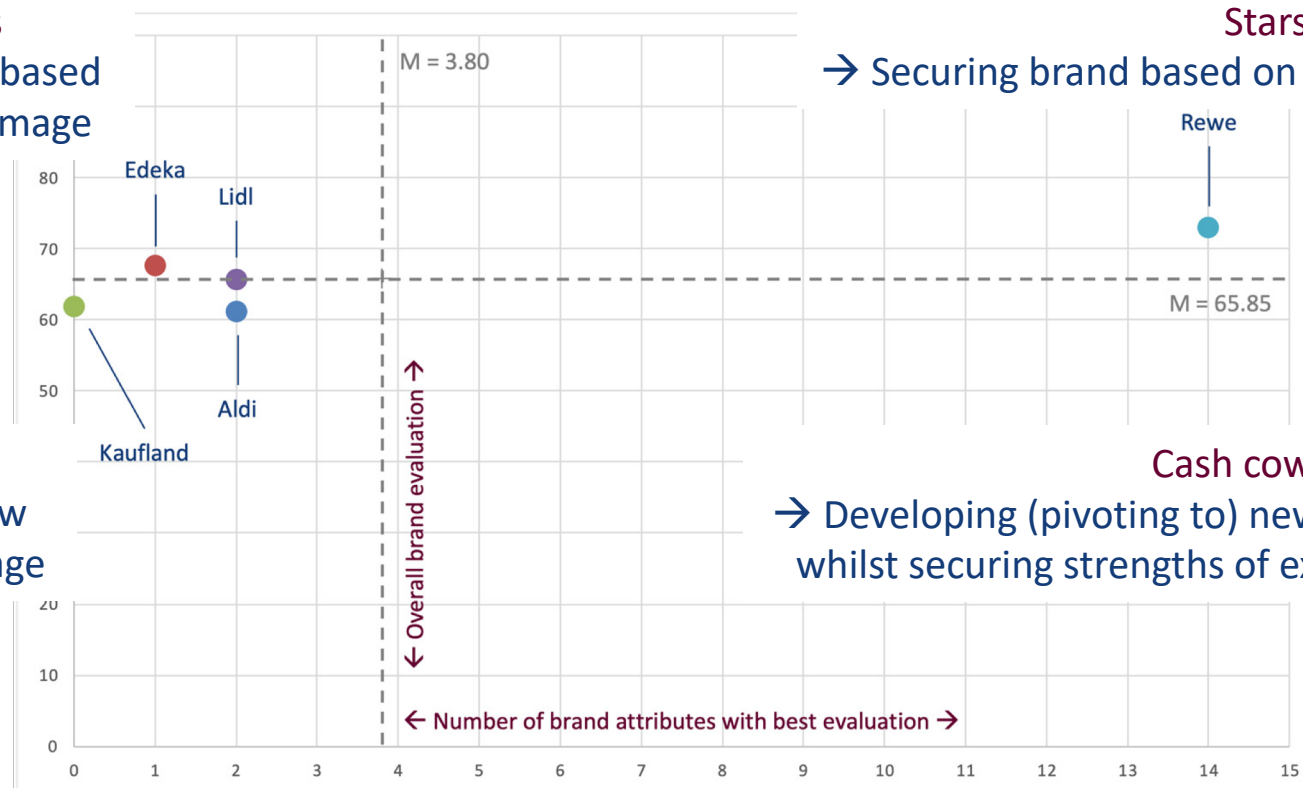
→ Securing brand based on existing identity/ image

Poor dogs

→ Developing new brand identity/image

Cash cows

→ Developing (pivoting to) new brand identity/image; whilst securing strengths of existing identity/ image



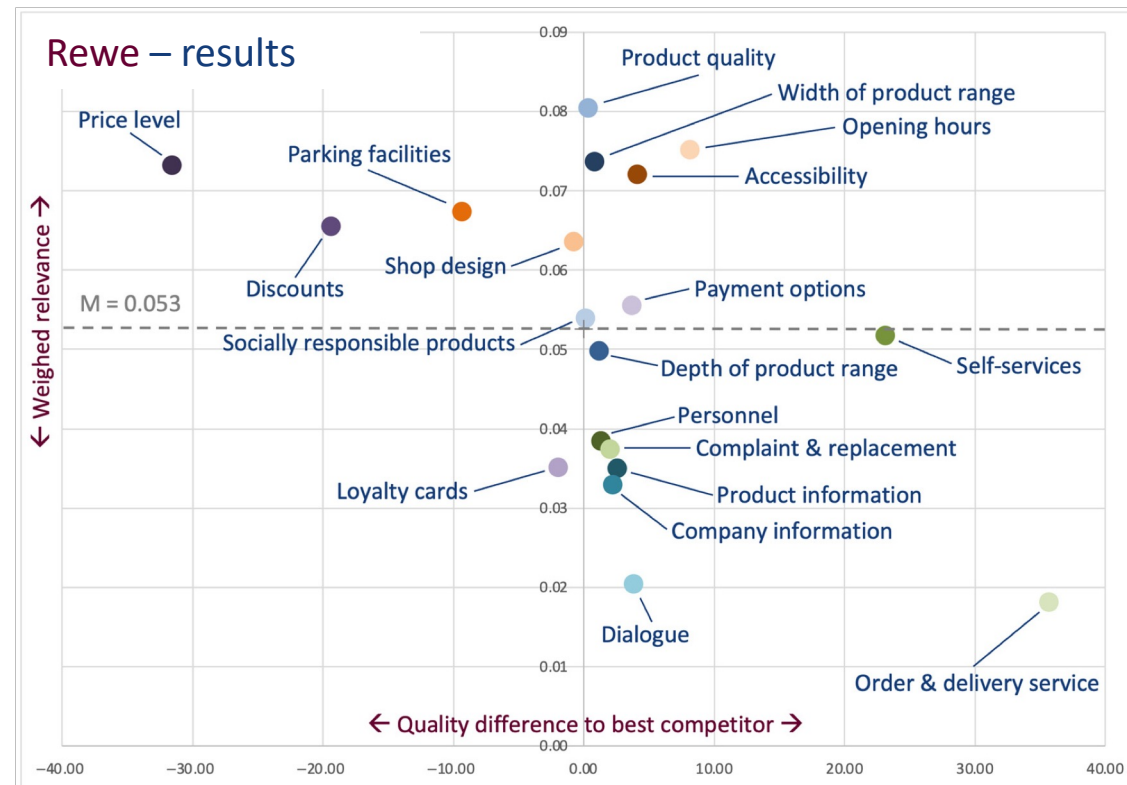
Deducing strategic Decision Guidelines for Differentiated Brand Identities

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Godbersen

- Example: food retail brands in Germany
- Sample: 923 business psychology students, FOM University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Question marks

→ Priority: 2nd
→ Selecting and developing attributes to core brand identity



Stars

→ Priority: 1st
→ Securing attributes as core brand identity

Cash cows

→ Priority: 3rd
→ Securing attributes as extended brand identity

Poor dogs

→ Priority: 4th
→ Selecting and developing attributes to extended brand identity (if at all)

Deducing strategic Decision Guidelines for Differentiated Brand Identities

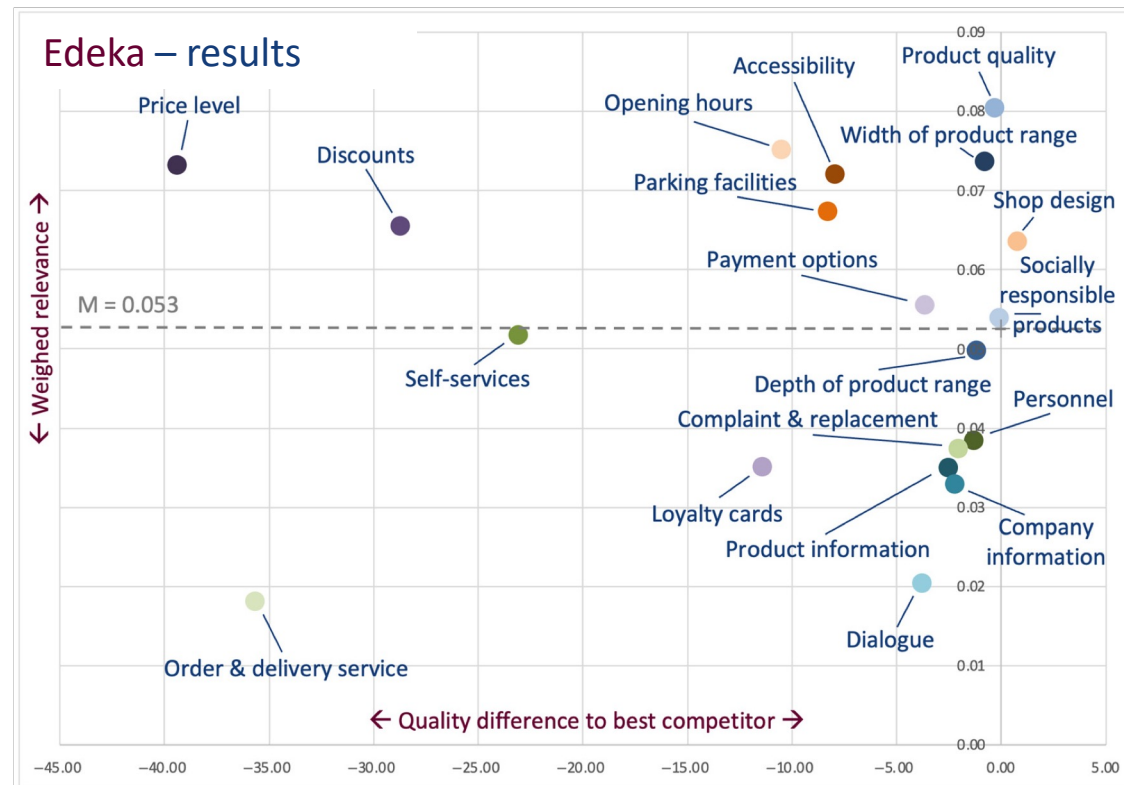
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Stars

→ Priority: 1st
→ Securing attributes as core brand identity

Cash cows

→ Priority: 3rd
→ Securing attributes as extended brand identity

Deducing Strategic Decision Guidelines for Overall Brand Positioning

Prof. Dr.
Godbersen

- Example: chocolate brands in Germany
- Sample: 907 business psychology students, FOM University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Question marks

→ Developing brand based on existing identity/image

Stars

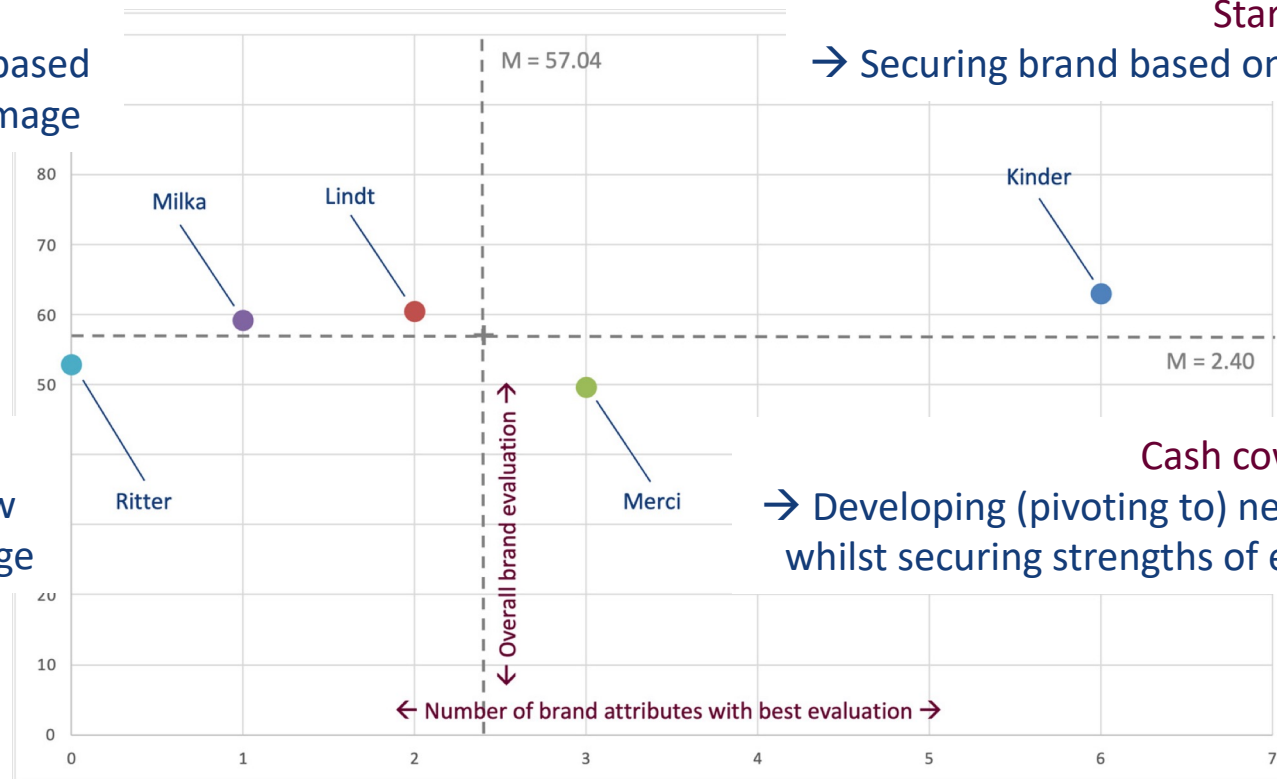
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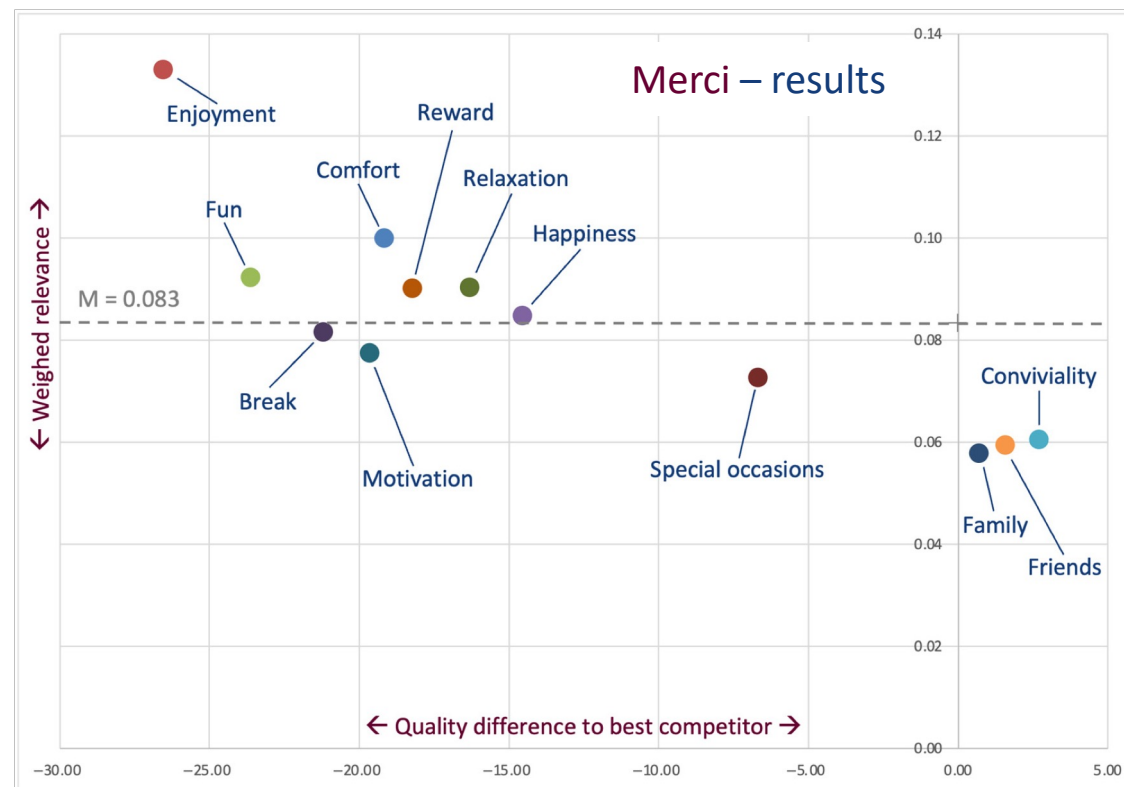
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Question marks

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Stars

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Poor dogs

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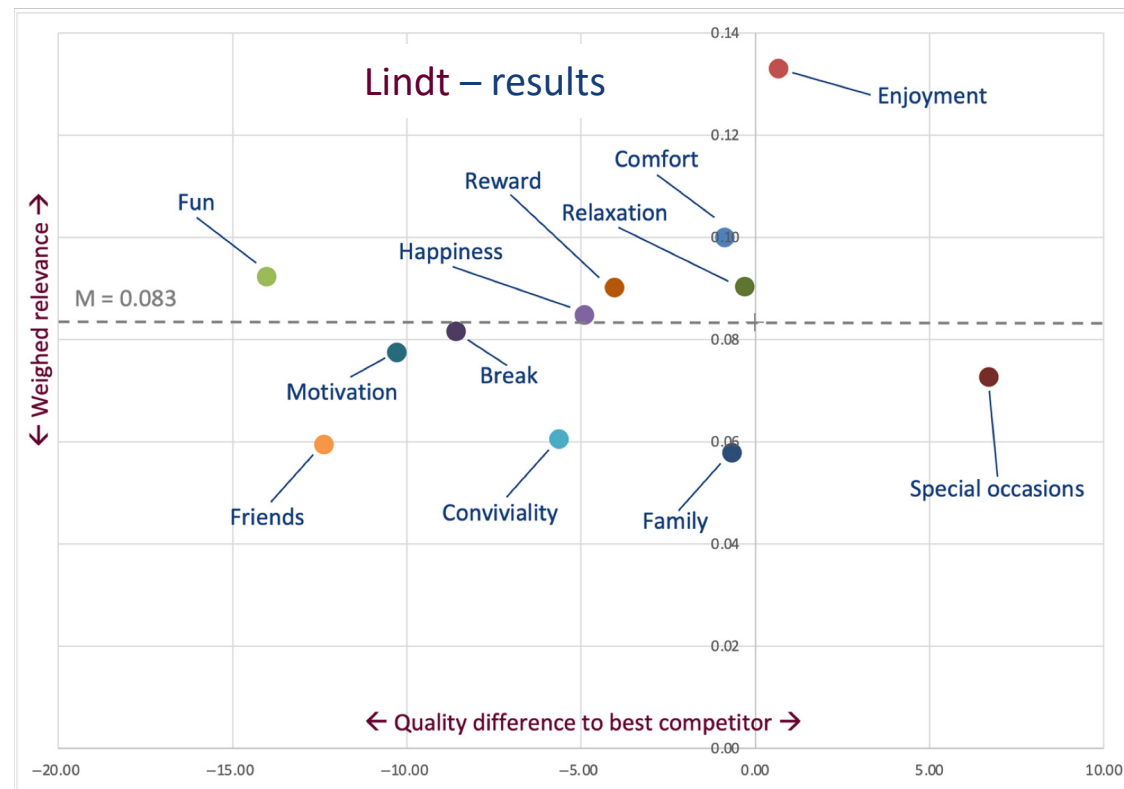
Deducing strategic Decision Guidelines for Differentiated Brand Identities

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- Example: chocolate brands in Germany
- Sample: 907 business psychology students, FOM University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Question marks

→ Priority: 2nd
→ Selecting and developing attributes to core brand identity



Stars

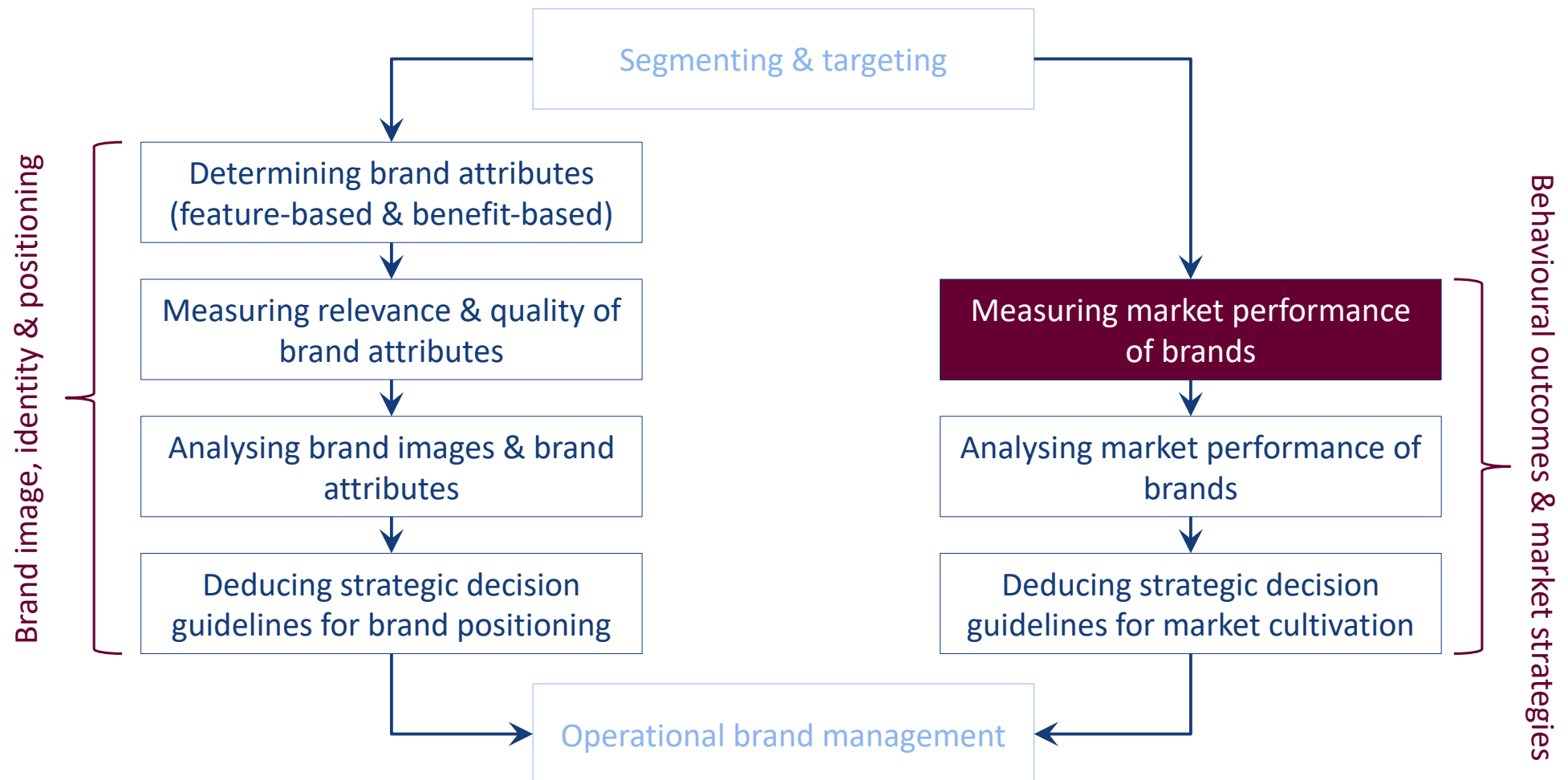
→ Priority: 1st
→ Securing attributes as core brand identity

Cash cows

→ Priority: 3rd
→ Securing attributes as extended brand identity

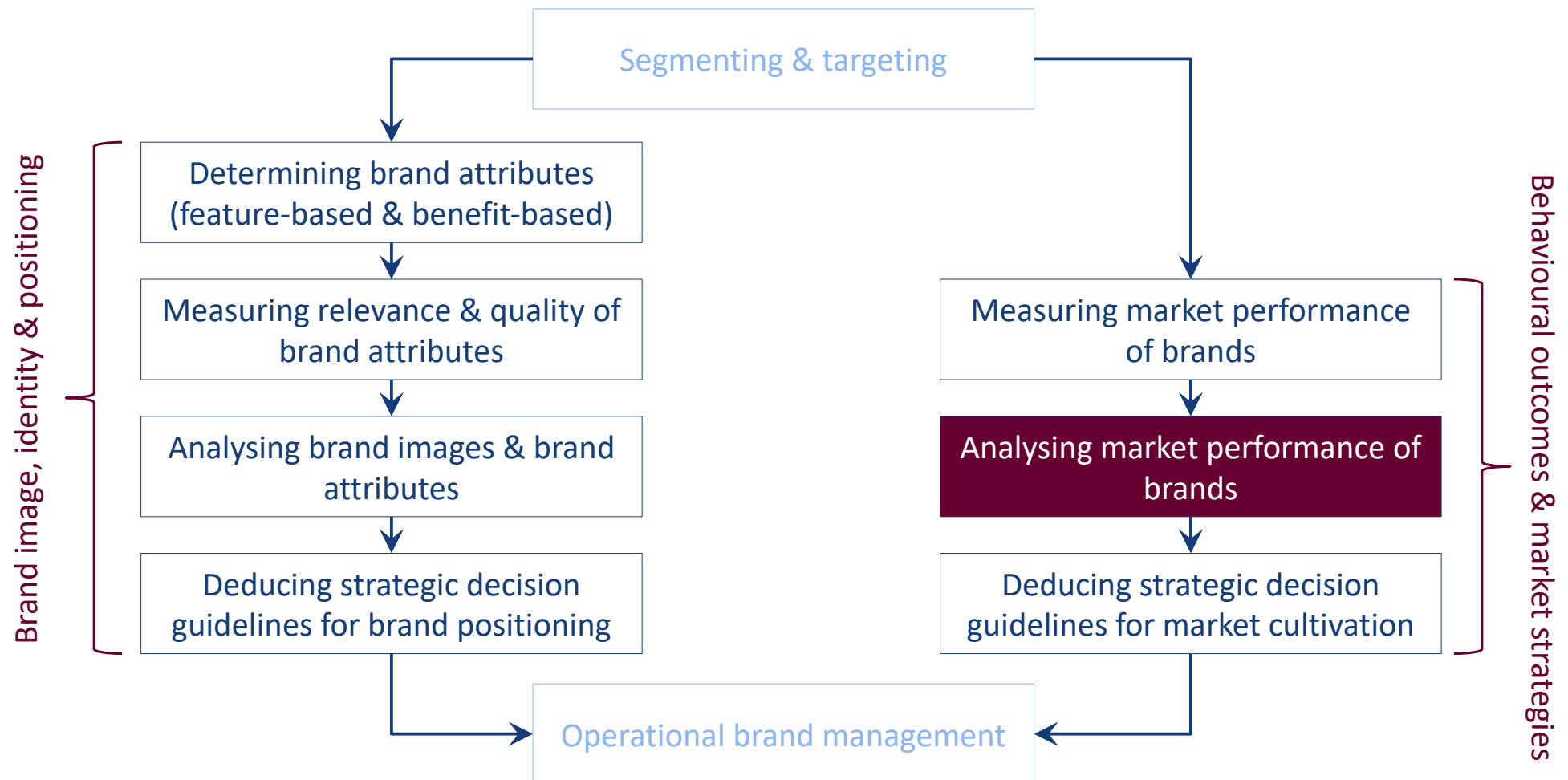
Poor dogs

→ Priority: 4th
→ Selecting and developing attributes to extended brand identity (if at all)

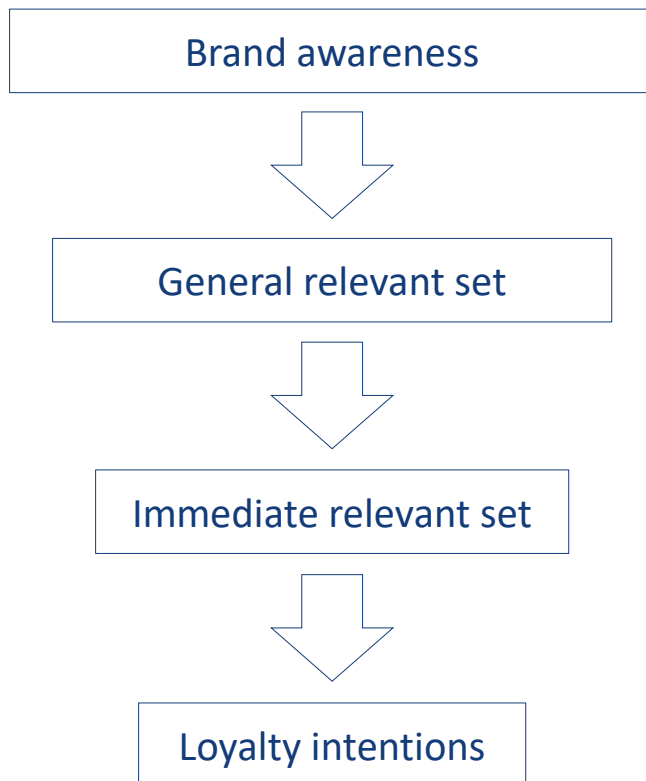


Measuring Market Performance

- Awareness
 - Example **chocolate**: Which of the following chocolate brands do you know, even if only by name?
 - Example **food retailers**: Which of the following food retailers do you know, even if only by name?
- General relevant set
 - Example **chocolate**: Which of the following chocolate brands do you consider good so that you would principally buy them at some stage of your life?
 - Example **food retailers**: Which of the following food retailers do you consider good so that you would buy from them at some stage of your life?
- Immediate relevant set
 - Example **chocolate**: Which of the following chocolate brands would you consider buying if you had to make a purchase right now?
 - Example **food retailers**: Which of the following food retailers would you consider if you had to make a purchase right now?
- Loyalty intentions
 - Example **chocolate**: Which of the following chocolate brands would you buy most often in the future?
 - Example **food retailers**: From which of the following food retailers would you buy most often in the future?



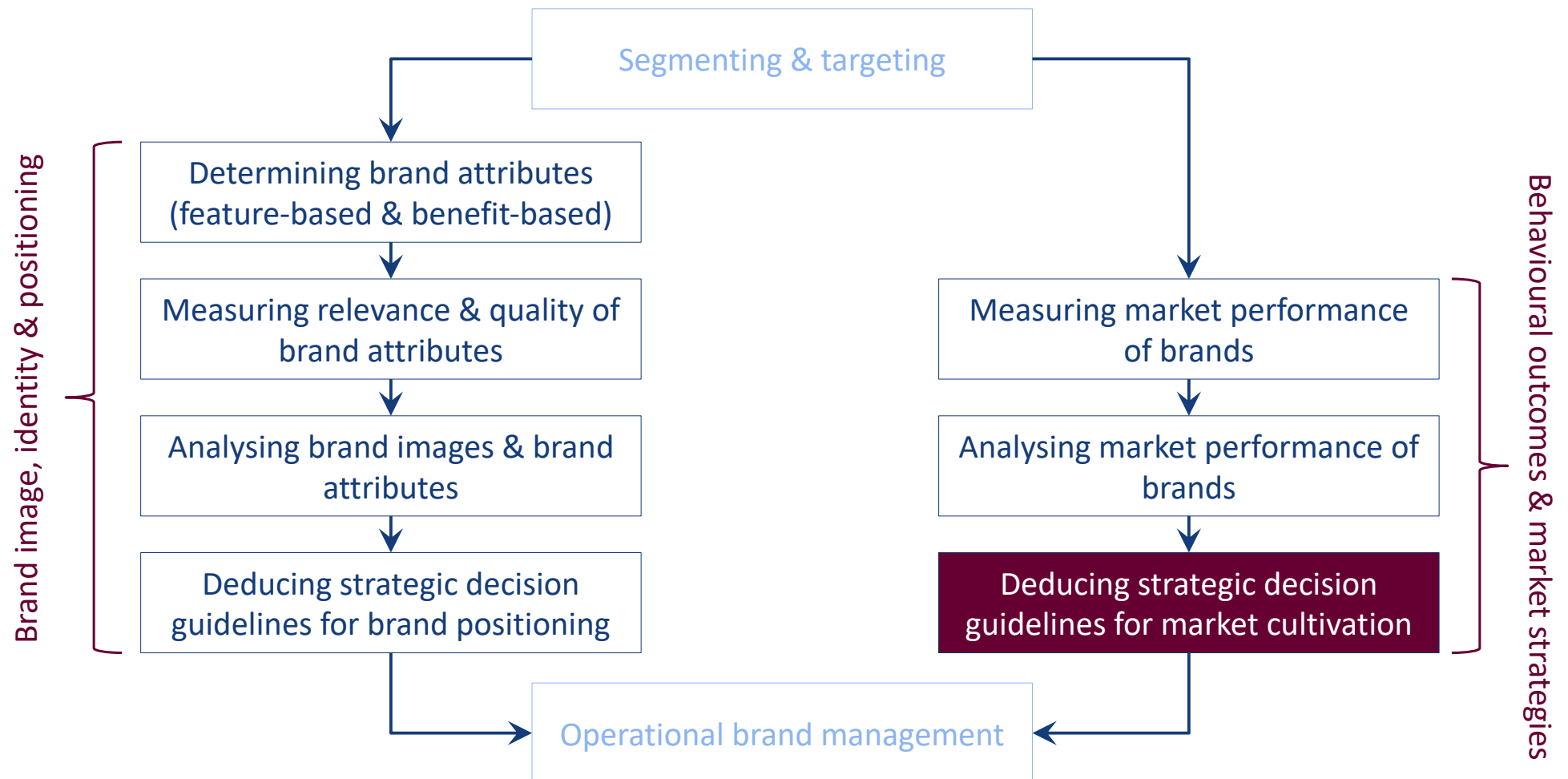
- Steps of the buying process



- Determining the frequencies of the buying process (F_i)
- Calculating conversions (C_i) from one step of the buying process to the next

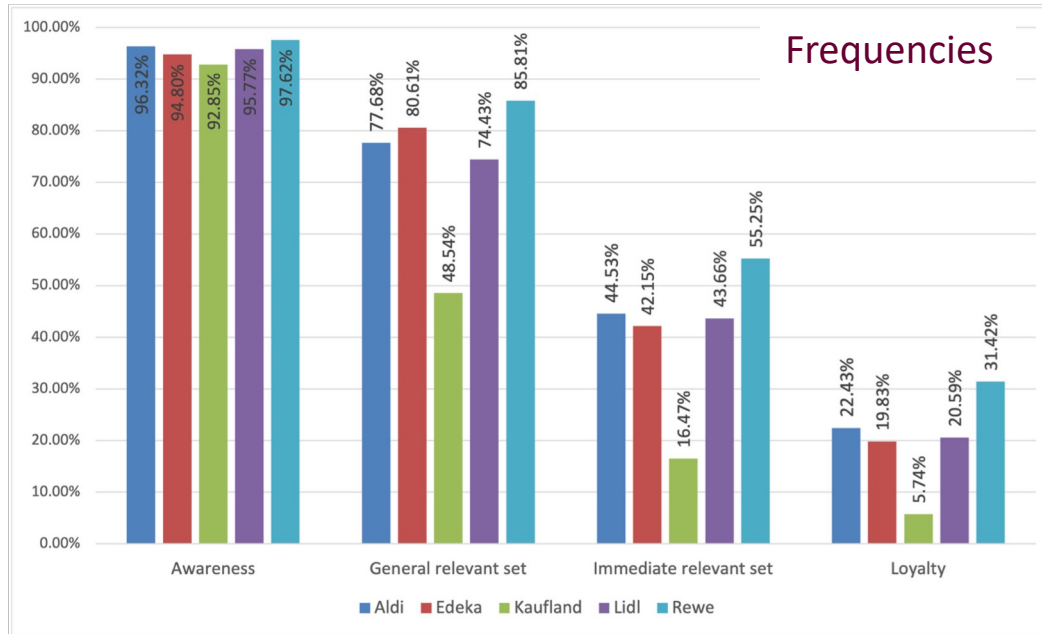
$$C_i = \frac{F_i}{F_{i-1}}$$

- Guiding question
 - How many targets can we convert from one step of the buying process to the next?
- Strategic decision guidelines
 - Emphasise the market strategies on the steps of the buying process on which a brand is outperformed
 - Awareness strategy
 - Image strategy
 - Sales strategy
 - Loyalty strategy

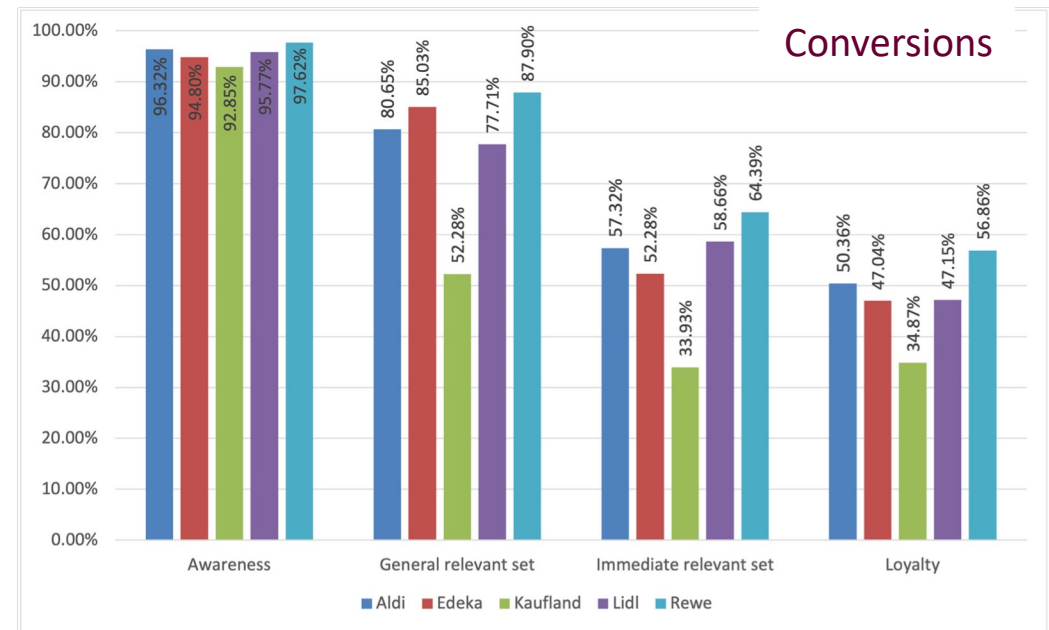


Deducing Strategic Decision Guidelines for Market Cultivation

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Sample: 923 business psychology students, FOM University of Applied Sciences, Germany

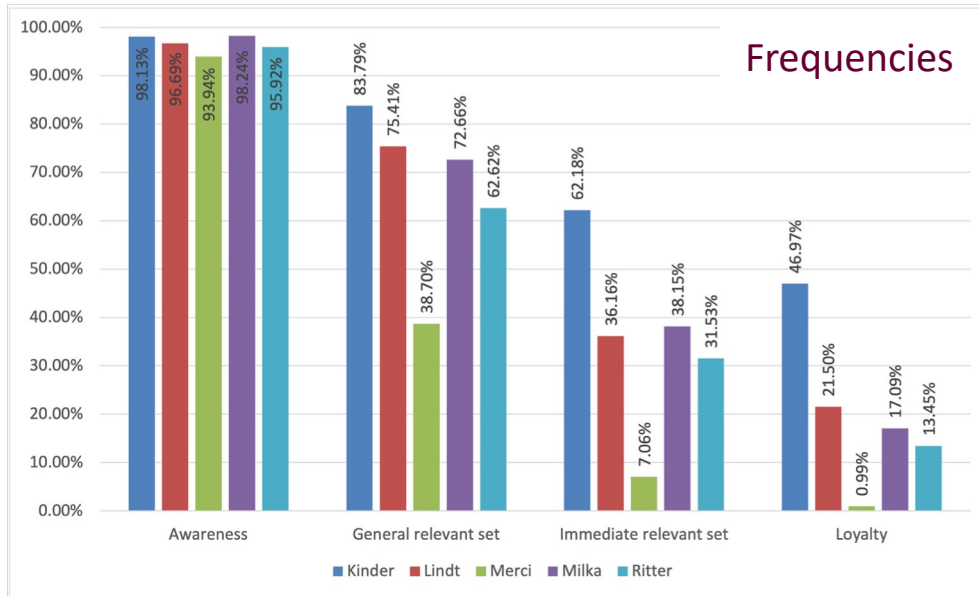


Exemplary Strategic decision guidelines for market cultivation

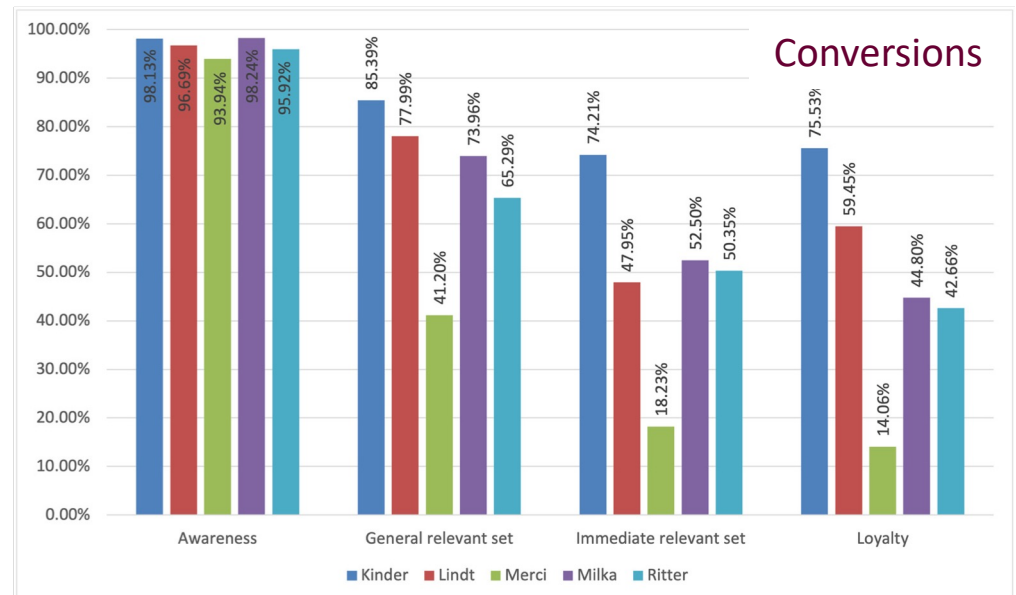
- **Rewe** shows the highest conversions on all steps of the buying process. Thus, Rewe should place an equal emphasis on image, sales, and loyalty strategies to secure its leading market position.
- **Edeka's** relative gaps to Rewe are larger for the conversions to immediate relevant set and loyalty intentions than for the conversion to general relevant set. Thus, Edeka should primarily focus on sales and loyalty strategies and secondarily focus on image strategies.

Deducing Strategic Decision Guidelines for Market Cultivation

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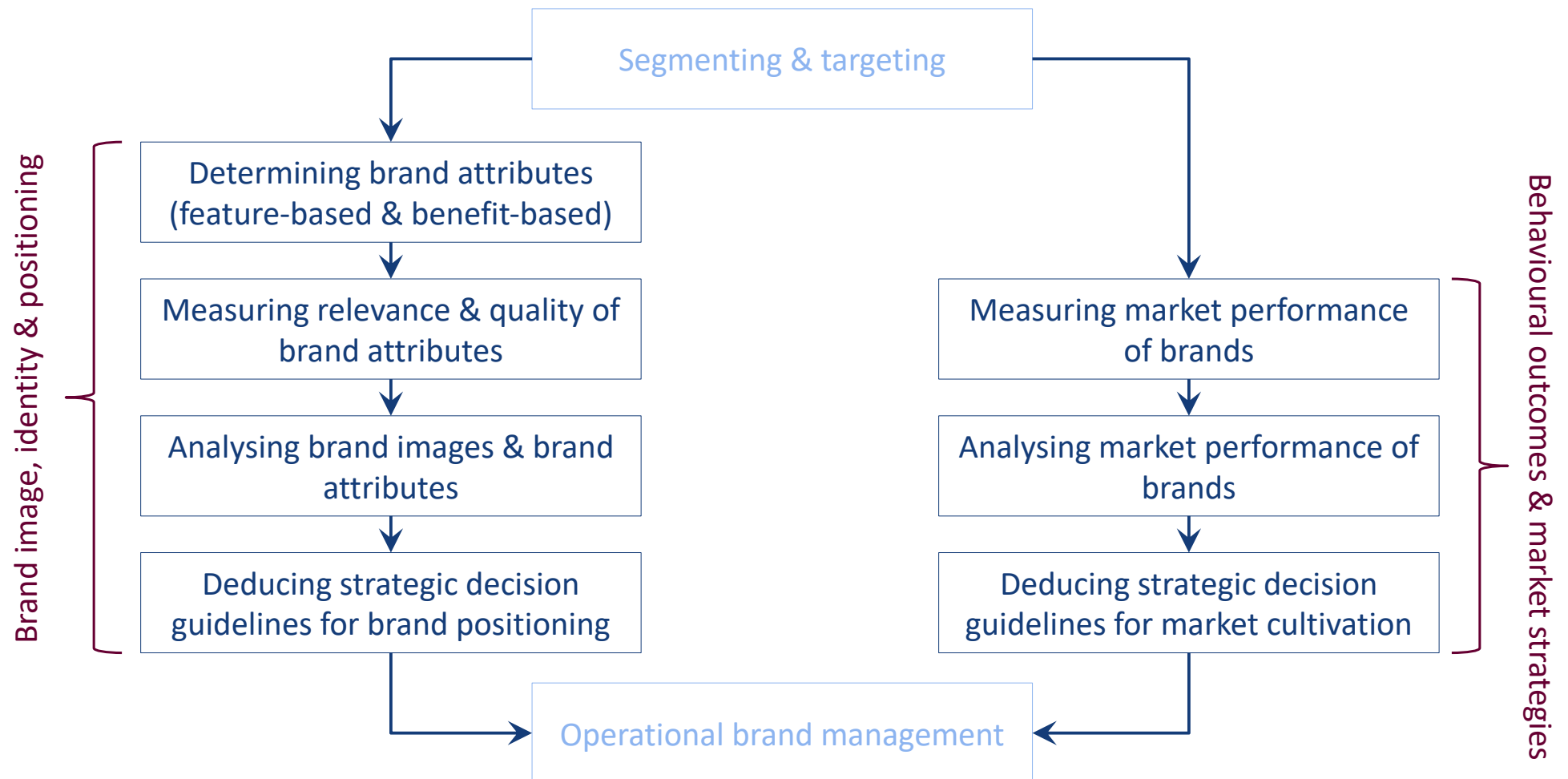


Sample: 907 business psychology students, FOM University of Applied Sciences, Germany



Exemplary Strategic decision guidelines for market cultivation

- Compared with the other brands, **Merci** shows the largest gaps to Kinder in its conversions and substantially lags behind its competitors. Thus, Merci is advised to build the foundations in the market along the sequential steps of the buying process. This means Merci should place the strongest strategy emphasis on image, followed by sales and loyalty.
- In comparison with Kinder, **Lindt** shows a larger relative gap in its conversion to immediate relevant set than in its conversion to loyalty, which, in turn, shows a larger relative gap than the conversion to general relevant set. Thus, Lindt should give sales strategies the first priority, loyalty strategies the second priority, and image strategies the third priority.



Conclusion

- **Method of Integrated Brand Analysis and Strategy** = Actionable & repeatable method to
 - measure & analyse
 - brand images
 - market performance
 - deduce strategic decision guidelines for
 - brand positioning, i.e., crafting the brand identity
 - market cultivation, i.e., emphasising on awareness, image, sales or loyalty strategies
- **Evaluation & limitations**
 - Method's application to food retail & chocolate brands demonstrates its applicability & gives first indications of its validity
 - But: The samples of its application do not (entirely) represent the target groups of the examined brands
- **Outlook**
 - Applying the Method of Integrated Brand Analysis and Strategy in projects with samples that precisely & comprehensively represent the target groups of the examined brands
 - Integrating segmenting & targeting (& potentially operational brand management) into the Method of Integrated Brand Analysis and Strategy

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