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The Newest Slovak Television and Radio: Management Facing Low Brand Recognition

ABSTRACT

This paper examines branding management at Slovakia's public-service broadcaster, STVR, established on 1 July 2024, with particular emphasis on the implications of operating without a corporate visual identity (CVI). The absence of a coherent visual identity has resulted in a fragmented brand relying on logos from predecessor institutions, some of which are more than 30 years old, while public trust in the broadcaster has declined by seven percentage points in a single year. Using the corporate visual framework developed by Van den Bosh, Elving, and De Jong (2005), linking CVI to visibility, distinctiveness, authenticity, transparency, and consistency, the study investigates how the absence of CVI affects STVR's reputation. Based on desk research of publicly available documents, the study finds that reliance on a newly introduced name and legacy visuals undermines the broadcaster's reputation. STVR also illustrates Balmer and Greyser's (2002) model of five organisational identities: actual, communicated, conceived, ideal, and desired.

KEYWORDS: Slovak Television and Radio, Public-service media, brand management, corporate visual identity, reputation

STRESZCZENIE

Współczesna telewizja i radio w Słowacji: zarządzanie bez rozpoznawalności marki

Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest analizie zarządzania marką w słowackiej telewizji i radiu publicznym STVR, utworzonym 1 lipca 2024 r., które funkcjonują bez spójnej identyfikacji wizualnej (CVI). W rezultacie marka jest niespójna (używa logo poprzednich instytucji). Zaufanie do niej spadło o siedem punktów procentowych w ciągu roku. Wykorzystując ramy Van den Bosh, Elvinga i De Jonga (2005), łączące CVI z widocznością, autentycznością, przejrzystością i spójnością, badanie analizuje, jak brak CVI wpływa na reputację STVR. Na podstawie analizy dokumentów publicznych stwierdzono, że poleganie na nowej nazwie i dotychczasowych elementach wizualnych częściowo szkodzi

Suggested citation: Sámelová, A. (2026). The Newest Slovak Television and Radio: Management Facing Low Brand Recognition. © ⓘ *Perspectives on Culture*, 3(54), pp. 159–175. <https://doi.org/10.35765/pk.2026.5403.10>

Submitted: 11.12.2024

Accepted: 06.05.2026

reputacji nadawcy. W tekście analizuje się też model pięciu tożsamości organizacyjnych Balmera i Greysera (2002): rzeczywistej, komunikowanej, postrzeganej, idealnej i pożądananej.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: Słowacka telewizja i radio, media publiczne, zarządzanie marką, korporacyjna tożsamość wizualna, reputacja

Introduction

In the contemporary media environment, it is highly unusual for a public-service broadcaster to operate without a corporate visual identity (CVI). Yet, this is precisely the situation of Slovakia's public-service broadcaster, Slovak Television and Radio (STVR). Following the 2023 general election, the new national-populist government and parliament dissolved the former public-service broadcaster, Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS). According to statements by members of the governing coalition, the newly established public-service organisation, Slovak Television and Radio, was the most straightforward and legally permissible way to replace the Director General before his term expired. The new politically controlled organisation began operations on 1 July 2024. However, despite STVR management functioning for over eighteen months without a corporate visual identity, by the end of 2025, Slovakia's public service radio and TV broadcaster still lacked unified institutional brand logo, slogan, colours, typography, font, imagery, radio and TV channel logos, and audio branding. In other words, it operated without the core elements that make an institutional brand recognisable.

Even when a corporate visual identity is carefully designed, a brand's power also depends on its institutional reputation, including visibility, distinctiveness, authenticity, transparency, and consistency. As demonstrated by Van den Bosh, Elving, and De Jong (2005), corporate visual identity and reputation are mutually dependent in these areas. This study, therefore, uses their analysis to examine how the absence of a CVI affects STVR's corporate reputation in Slovak society.

To address this objective, desk research was used based on official, publicly available analyses, documents, and politicians' statements regarding the establishment of STVR and its corporate visual identity. The analysis indicates that STVR's inconsistent brand communication, which relies on the new name and legacy visual elements, may negatively affect its reputation. This case also illustrates Balmer and Greyser's (2002) model of five organisational identities: actual, communicated, conceived, ideal, and desired. The study contributes to research on media branding by emphasising factors that can harm a media brand in the absence of a CVI.

Literature Review and Clarifying Concepts

Corporate visual identity forms a core element of organisational identity. It is commonly defined as the set of “qualities, characteristics, traits, or attributes” that are “fundamental, unique, and long-lasting” (Foroudi et al., 2024, p. 1). In practice, CVI encompasses the visual and audio elements through which an organisation communicates its purpose, mission, and vision, consistently expressing its strategic values and professional credibility (Balmer, 2008; Balmer, 2001; Baker & Balmer, 1997). It shapes how an organisation presents itself to its stakeholders (He & Mukherjee, 2009, p. 2). In the era of media convergence, media organisations must promote their brands not only through traditional platforms, such as print, radio, and television, but also digital channels, such as websites and social media, which is essential for both survival and growth in a competitive market (Melewar, Dennis, & Foroudi, 2022).

In public-service media, branding is inherently more complex because these organisations embody multiple organisational identities (Heckert, Boumans & Vliegienthart, 2022; Sarasvuo, 2021; Balmer & Greyser, 2002). Among these are “ideological” and “utilitarian” identities. Ideological identity reflects abstract human values, tradition, and the organisation’s public-service mission, guiding it “to foster human well-being and the common good” (Heckert et al., 2022, p. 557). Utilitarian identity, on the other hand, emphasises commercial objectives, highlighting “economic rationality, maximisation of profits, and self-interests” (Heckert et al., 2022, p. 557). The coexistence of these identities has important implications for an organisation’s reputation, as ideological and utilitarian identities involve fundamentally different value systems. Media organisations cannot fully control which identity becomes dominant in stakeholders’ perceptions, particularly in public-service media that involve diverse stakeholder groups. When ideological identity is evaluated through utilitarian values, or a utilitarian identity through ideological values, can both lead to negative reputational assessments (Heckert et al., 2022, pp. 558–559).

Another important aspect of corporate reputation is that institutions, large and complex, do not possess a single unified identity but rather maintain five parallel identities: (1) *actual*, (2) *communicated*, (3) *conceived*, (4) *ideal*, and (5) *desired*, reflecting both internal and external perspectives (Balmer & Greyser, 2002). Together, these identities form the theoretical framework of the present study and are briefly outlined below.

1. *Actual identity* comprises an organisation’s current characteristics, including its ownership, structure, management style, values, activities, and performance. It is shaped primarily by internal stakeholders.
2. *Communicated identity* refers to the visible and audible expression of an organisation through advertising, sponsorship, and PR, involving internal communication staff, partners, external agencies, and the media.

3. *Conceived identity* concerns perceptions of branding, image, and reputation. It is shaped by stakeholder perceptions that influence management decisions, primarily those of external groups such as government, regulators, NGOs, and audiences. Management must prioritise some stakeholder perceptions over others.
4. *Ideal identity* emerges from research and strategic analysis, reflecting planners' understanding of the organisation's capabilities and optimal market position, shaped by both internal planners and external experts.
5. *Desired identity* reflects the strategic vision of corporate leaders, primarily managers, the CEO, and the governing board (Balmer & Greyser, 2002).

Since these five distinct identities operate simultaneously, corporate reputation also depends on which identity aspect stakeholders find most salient when evaluating the organisation. This has further implications for management at both senior and middle levels. Research shows that managers need to understand corporate identity in order to communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders.

Corporate reputation is also strongly linked to corporate visual identity, with the relationship operating in both directions. Dutch scholars Anette van den Bosh, Menno de Jong, and Wim Elving (2005) conceptualise this through five aspects: visibility, distinctiveness, authenticity, transparency, and consistency. Within media management research more broadly, media branding management has been examined within one of five thematic clusters. A researcher duo from Finland, Nando Malmelin and Johanna Moisander, identify the five "brand dimensions in media management": (1) brand as product, (2) brand as extension, (3) brand as identity, (4) brand as differentiation, and (5) brand as equity (2014, p. 12).

1. The brand-as-product refers to a tangible branded service that attracts audiences through engaging content, such as multichannel news, documentaries, or entertainment under the institutional or network brand.
2. Brand as an extension is a strategy in which a media company uses its existing name and reputation to launch new content, platforms, or products, thereby enhancing credibility and consumer loyalty.
3. Brand as identity relates to institutional visual elements—name, logo, colours, imagery, and typography—often referred to as the brand's "personality."
4. Brand as differentiation uses a media brand's unique identity—voices, visuals, values, expertise—across channels to stand out, employing authentic storytelling and platform strengths to enhance recall and preference.
5. Brand as equity reflects the relationship between a brand and its consumers, built on trust, awareness, and positive associations. Strong brand

equity boosts loyalty, supports premium pricing, enhances advertising effectiveness, and transforms the media platform into a valuable asset (Malmelin & Moisander, 2014, pp. 13–14).

Based on these five brand management clusters, we devised our data collection plan and methodological approach.

Methodology

This theoretical study is based on desk research conducted between June and December 2024 using publicly available documents, press releases, and other publications. Data were collected using the following search terms: “STVR brand,” “STVR branding,” “STVR logo,” “STVR identity,” “STVR visual identity,” “STVR reputation,” and “STVR public service.” The search results showed that the CVI and reputation of the newly established public-service broadcaster attracted considerable mainstream media and politicians’ attention. Political statements reflected different positions: members and supporters of the government coalition (pro-STVR bias) versus the parliamentary opposition (anti-STVR bias), while the mainstream media generally opposed the political takeover of the public-service broadcaster. While these sources reflected divergent political positions, they provided valuable information as they documented societal consensus (across both coalition and opposition) that the minister of culture interfered in STVR’s institutional managerial decisions, such as ordering a new logo, and the associated costs. The main difference was that the coalition approved it, while the opposition and media rejected it.

Key sources included the 2023–2024 RTVS/STVR annual reports, the 2023 Government Policy Statement, parliamentary records, analyses published by MEMO’98, the *Reuters Institute Digital News Report*, reports of International Press Institute and Reporters Without Borders, as well as decisions of the Media Services Council. In addition, the study analysed visual materials published on the STVR website and in the STVR News archive to illustrate the broadcaster’s evolving CVI.

Data collection

Following Malmelin and Moisander’s (2014) five-dimensional media branding framework which involved categorising all data into the brand clusters (product, extension, identity, differentiation, and equity) examples are demonstrated in order to inform the first research question.

RQ1: Which dimensions of media branding were most affected by the absence of STVR’s corporate visual identity? To answer this question,

the findings were interpreted using Van den Bosh, De Jong, and Elving's (2005) framework, which conceptualises the interdependence between corporate visual identity and reputation across five dimensions: visibility, distinctiveness, authenticity, transparency, and consistency.

RQ2: How, and to what extent, did the absence of STVR's corporate visual identity influence or undermine STVR's reputation in Slovak society?

The two theoretical frameworks adopted in this study focus on strategic management in the field of visual identity. They agree that CVI and media branding are not just about aesthetics but also serve as strategic tools for managing stakeholder relationships. They align with each other, as Malmelin and Moisander demonstrated a specific application of Van den Bosh et al.'s model to media organisations. However, they differ in their analytical emphasis. Malmelin and Moisander's (2014) framework focuses primarily on building a media brand. By contrast, Van den Bosch, De Jong, and Elving's (2005) emphasises developing a media reputation. That is why we decided to use both in this research. We chose the first framework for data collection as it covers a broader range of attributes related to media's institutional identity and considers narrative consistency—such as the coherence between the brand's story and media content—as a key aspect of a media organisation's visual identity. It emphasises that a media brand must be consistent not only visually (e.g., regarding its logo) but also in its narrative content, promoting narrative-visual unity. Using this framework, we captured a wider range of CVI elements for analysis, including political interference in STVR branding. The second model, on the other hand, is built upon the 5-dimensional framework of brand visual consistency and authenticity on managing the organisation's reputation. That is why we decided to apply this latter model for interpretation. In other words, for data collection, we used the model that aligned more with gathering a broader “enumerative” dataset to address RQ1. However, when interpreting the results, we focused on the “reputation-building model,” which provides a better “interpretative” framework for addressing RQ2.

The study's main *conclusion* is informed by Balmer and Greyser's (2002) model, which argues that organisations do not possess a single identity, but comprise five distinct identities: actual, communicated, conceived, ideal, and desired. The case of the Slovak Television and Radio brand illustrates this concept. That is why we believe Balmer and Greyser's structured approach provides a useful understanding of how STVR media's top and senior managers could effectively target specific “identities” and progress towards the “desired” one. This is especially relevant given that the organisation is still in its early stages of institutional development and has yet to establish a coherent corporate visual identity.

Findings

Following STVR's establishment on 1 July 2024, it was managed by an interim leadership team, and did not have the authority to make decisions regarding future corporate branding. It fell under the jurisdiction of the upcoming regular management of the new Director General, who was expected to be appointed in the summer of 2024. However, tensions within the coalition prevented the National Council of the Slovak Republic from electing members of the board—the STVR Council—which is responsible for choosing the Director General. As a result, the current first STVR Director General, Martina Flašíková, was elected for a six-year term on 12 May 2025, nearly a year after the parliament adopted a law on the dissolution of Radio and Television of Slovakia and the creation of Slovak Television and Radio (20 June 2024), and following the institution's establishment (1 July 2024). Therefore, interim management focused solely on a provisional marketing and communication strategy, primarily to introduce a new institutional name.

The brand as a product has become the most prominent aspect of STVR's communication, focusing on the external promotion and internal cross-promotion of news programmes, political and societal talk shows, discussions, entertainment, drama, documentaries, sports, programmes for children and youth, co-production projects, partnerships with third parties, public interest campaigns, and live broadcasts. As a result, STVR carried out a necessary graphic redesign of the existing CVI elements inherited from the former institution and removed the previous logo and slogans from all relevant areas.

Although the verbal promotion sounded natural, all efforts in print, on television, and on social media appeared amateurish due to the lack of a corporate brand identity. Figure 1 shows two flagship STVR programmes in the news and current affairs section and the entertainment section—the Sunday political discussion *O 5 minút 12* (5 Minutes to 12) and the lifestyle show *Pečie celé Slovensko* (Whole Slovakia Bakes), both mainly promoted through the programme's name and logo, as well as through product-related symbols, such as the host and baked goods.

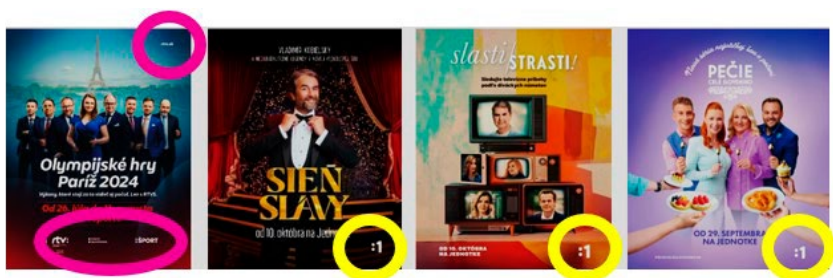
Figure 1. Promotion of STVR programme brands using programme name and its logo without STVR's CVI elements



Source: STVR.

Figure 2 also shows examples of current programme promotion without the STVR corporate logo, using only the graphic elements inherited from the former RTVS CVI (the first image, with magenta highlights, even features the former RTVS institutional logo).

Figure 2. The STVR programme promotion incorporates branding elements inherited from its predecessor, RTVS, which are identified by magenta and yellow circles



Source of images: STVR; Highlighting added by the author.

In the area of brand extension, the STVR interim management focused on SEO optimisation and preparations for website migration, including transferring the microsites “spravy.rtv.sk” and “rtvs.sk” to the new domain STVR.sk. Afterwards, it concentrated on stabilising website traffic. However, following the launch of the new website, the number of visitors to the STVR website in the second half of 2024 decreased by 16.03% compared to the first half of 2024. STVR also experienced a 17.73% year-on-year decline in website traffic. Stream traffic fell by 3.57% year-on-year. Finally, traffic to the STVR News website

decreased by 15.34% compared to the period before STVR's establishment and by 14.87% year-on-year (STVR, 2025, pp. 214–217).

The corporate souvenir sale, which does not feature any STVR CVI elements, concentrates on popular programme brands, neutral images, or the silhouette of the iconic Slovak Radio building—the inverted pyramid, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The corporate souvenirs without STVR's CVI elements



Source: STVR.

Brand as identity is the most challenging dimension in the case of STVR. The institution is strongly associated with the iconic inverted pyramid of the Slovak Radio building, as evidenced by its image or silhouette, which appears not only on souvenirs (as mentioned earlier) but also on various marketing, business, and sales materials. Figure 4 shows the almost identical appearance of the document with the business model of the current Media STVR and its predecessor Media RTVS. The main difference, however, is that STVR lacks any corporate logo, colours, font, typography, or any graphic elements that normally constitute corporate brand identity.

Figure 4. Almost identical graphic design of RTVS and STVR documents. *Advertising under One Roof* (*Reklama pod jednou strechou*) was the business slogan of STVR's predecessor, RTVS (left), together with the CVIs of all the main TV and radio stations. STVR (right) uses the same slogan without including any specific CVI element



Source: RTVS / STVR.

As mentioned above, STVR pragmatically adopts some corporate brand identity elements from the former RTVS to differentiate its programme services (television channels, stations, and streams), usually placing a colon before the numerical or textual designation of individual services, streams, and radio stations (e.g., :1, :2, :24, :Šport: Rádio Slovensko, :Rádio Regina, Live:1, Live:2, etc.). This practice is evident across internal and public documents, websites, social media platforms, print media, and broadcast media. In short, STVR lacks a consistent corporate brand identity, as illustrated in Figure 5, which presents the broadcaster's Christmas greeting. These display only the institutional name in a typographically neutral black font, with Slovak Television on the first line and Slovak Radio on the second line. The greeting reads, "A magical and loving Christmas."

Figure 5. STVR's corporate Christmas greeting, "A magical and loving Christmas," lacks any CVI elements; the institution's name is presented in a neutral black font



Source: STVR.

Figure 6. The STVR 7 p.m. news service *Správy*, 1 Oct. 2025.



Source: STVR; Highlighting added by author.

The most confusing and visually inconsistent aspect of STVR brand identity, however, appears in its daily news coverage. Reporters use plain black microphone covers, present news broadcasts without any corporate brand identity on the news ticker, and appear on a television channel under the branding of a broadcaster that no longer exists. This is illustrated in Figure 6, which shows the evening news edition *Správy* (News).

In contrast, Figure 7 shows a microphone flag (often referred to as a microphone cube) displaying the former Slovak Radio logo. According to Logopedia (n.d.), this logo was used by Slovak Radio from 1992 to 2004.

Figure 7. Using a microphone cube with the Slovak Radio (Slovenský rozhlas) logo from over 30 years ago



Source of image: TRUNI, 10 July 2025; Highlighting added by author.

The institutional identity was also affected by a political controversy after the Minister of Culture claimed that the entire new branding of STVR would cost less than €10,000. She dismissed experts who argued that such a rebranding would cost hundreds of thousands of euros. To support her claim, in June 2024, the minister commissioned the design of three logos—the institutional logo of STVR, the logo for Slovak Television, and the logo for Slovak Radio—for a total of €9,800. This politicisation of the new branding, even before the organisation was established, took on a new dimension when the current Director General of STVR announced that STVR would not use these logo designs, as it was developing an entirely new, cohesive CVI in-house.

Brand as differentiation. The interim management developed guidelines for the temporary communication of the new institutional name as the foundation for the future brand to mitigate reputational risks. It then established an internal working group to create a new CVI for STVR. Afterwards, they shifted their focus to fostering a positive perception of the newly established Slovak Television and Radio, mainly because its public-service image had been systematically undermined by political actors even before the institution's inception.

Since STVR lacked its own institutional narrative, it began to build one through marketing and communication support for its existing programme services—TV channels, streams, and radio stations—as well as through the success of its programmes.

Brand as equity. Without a CVI, the demands of daily communication make the most popular programmes its primary brand representation. Therefore, the institution focuses on promoting itself through its most popular programmes, such as the lifestyle TV entertainment show *Pečie celé Slovensko* (Whole Slovakia Bakes), the charitable fundraising programme *Rádio Slovensko Slovensku* (Radio Slovakia for Slovakia), or the Sunday political discussion *O 5 minút 12* (5 Minutes to 12), to ensure that at least the verbal brand “Slovenská televízia a rozhlas” becomes familiar to viewers, helping them become accustomed to the institution’s new name.

Discussion

RQ1: Which specific aspects of brand dimensions in media management were affected by the absence of the STVR corporate visual identity?

The absence of a cohesive corporate visual identity hampers STVR’s ability to communicate its brand effectively, as it relies solely on spoken or written brand names presented in neutral fonts on plain backgrounds. All brand dimensions identified by brand management researchers—product, extension, identity, differentiation, and equity—are affected by this shortcoming. The organisation, which possesses only an institutional name and lacks a unified brand, faces challenges in external communication, relying primary on product-related content such as teasers broadcast on programme logos (TV channels, streams, or radio stations). It also involves selling corporate souvenirs featuring only the logos of specific programmes or the silhouette of the iconic inverted-pyramid Slovak Radio building. The most recognisable features of STVR are the absence of branding beyond the institutional name “Slovenská televízia a rozhlas,” displayed wherever space permits, and plain black microphones used by its reporters instead of branded microphone flags.

RQ2: How, and to what extent, did the absence of STVR’s corporate visual identity influence or undermine STVR’s reputation in Slovak society?

From an institutional reputation perspective, these findings reveal significant negative effects on reputation across all areas discussed. If corporate visibility is defined as the prominence of the brand in customers’ minds (Van den Bosh et al., 2005, p. 109), then STVR remains largely invisible to the public. Although STVR could not remove all visual elements of its predecessor—for example, corporate vehicles or camcorders still display the old RTVS

logo—its microphones, news tickers, and programme promotions in print and on social media remain unbranded. The most visible manifestation of “visibility” for STVR in society is radio broadcasts. The reputational risk is that, after 18 months of its operation, STVR has remained almost invisible as a corporate entity. Meanwhile, its predecessor remains highly visible in media coverage.

Distinctiveness is an institution’s unique image in the minds of stakeholders, extending beyond its corporate logo. It encompasses the entire CVI, supporting the strategic objective of distinguishing the organisation from competitors and ensuring this impression is memorable. Currently, STVR must preserve distinctiveness in two ways. First, to stand out from competitors such as radio and TV broadcasters in Slovakia. Second, to differentiate itself from its predecessor. None of the strategies currently employed seems to effectively enhance STVR’s reputation. While plain black microphones are distinctive enough from competing organisations, as they are the only ones without a logo on the Slovak media market, maintaining a colon before the programme name, and sometimes also magenta, helps keep the dissolved public-service broadcaster relevant in Slovaks’ minds, reminding them of the STVR brand’s problematic branding transition.

Authenticity relies more on storytelling than on visual presentation. Nonetheless, CVI elements also influence this dimension of institutional reputation. They aim to link visual expression with the institution’s origins, slogan, mission, or vision. Since STVR lacks these elements and, moreover, uses some of its predecessor’s slogans, its reputation is affected in terms of independence, accuracy, reliability, and trustworthiness as a public-service broadcaster. This absence further weakens STVR’s institutional reputation.

Furthermore, the authenticity of STVR is even lower than that of newly established institutions. In such cases, the public expects a clear mission and vision in an entirely new organisational narrative. In contrast, the story of STVR’s establishment has already been closely linked to narratives about the politically motivated cancellation of RTVS. As the data collected in this study show, these narratives dominate Slovak political and media debates and international debates involving the EU, the EBU, Reporters Without Borders, and others. Consequently, politicians have undermined the authenticity of the STVR story, and the range of potential future narratives for STVR has been shaped by political decisions made during its founding and afterwards.

This is also evident from the perspective of CVI management, where the Minister of Culture interferes with STVR’s managerial autonomy by issuing instructions on the corporate logo and its graphic elements, and then commissioning and funding their design. In addition, the story behind the logo of the now-defunct RTVS constitutes a compelling narrative in its own right. This visual identity received the prestigious gold award from the PROMAX World Academy in 2016 in the main category of global television design,

outperforming logos from companies such as CNN Worldwide, HBO, Fox Sports, and MTV (STVR, 2016). The award is regarded as the Oscar of graphic design. Thus, from the perspective of the future STVR logo, this legacy also seems limiting. Even if STVR management presents a graphically outstanding logo, it might still be overshadowed not only by politicised narratives but also by the highly acclaimed visual identity of its predecessor.

Considering Malmelin and Moisander's (2014) view that visual and narrative identity together form a brand, and Van den Bosh et al.'s (2005) argument that the authenticity of a brand's story influences its reputation, we can conclude that Slovak politicians have created a highly inauthentic and polarised narrative environment that hampers STVR's ability to establish its own identity. Simply put, regardless of the current management's efforts to present an authentic narrative, some stakeholders will regard it as a significant achievement without question, while others will never consider it sufficiently genuine. This narrative ambivalence does not provide a strong foundation for building an authentic and trusted institutional reputation.

Transparency is a vital factor that influences the reputation of public-service institutions. Questioning their transparency is like questioning their core purpose. In the case of STVR, transparency was compromised even before the Slovak Government coalition and its Members of Parliament established it. They have never concealed their intention to control the public-service broadcaster, and the institution's founding was a contentious yet lawful step to replace the former Director General, whose term ended with the dissolution of the previous STVR. Additionally, members of the STVR oversight bodies—the STVR Council and the STVR Ethics Committee—were appointed from among individuals affiliated or supporting the governing coalition. As a result, the transparency of matters related to STVR continues to be undermined by ongoing politicisation.

Consistency involves maintaining coherence across the institution's visual and auditory communications. It begins with adhering to clear and consistent communication guidelines without exception. This includes the institution's letterhead, with its characteristic graphic design and text layout, as well as external marketing communications. Currently, STVR lacks a unified CVI, resulting in inconsistent implementation. The institution's reputation, built around its new name while retaining its predecessor's CVI, enables STVR to function but not to develop a strong and coherent brand.

Conclusion

This study examined the corporate identity of Slovak Television and Radio (STVR), which has operated without a CVI for 18 months. The analysis showed that the absence of a visual identity can significantly threaten an

organisation's reputation. Since the organisation has no authentic brand identity beyond its name, the research focused on the management of visual identity in external communication. This is characterised by a pragmatic yet confusing use of visual elements inherited from its predecessor, RTVS, especially the colon preceding the names of television channels, streams, and radio stations, as well as plain black microphone covers. As a result, the brand remains partly visible, while the new institutional identity is marginalised.

STVR's actual identity remains uncertain, as it still incorporates elements inherited from the former RTVS, such as the magenta colour. All eleven radio stations continue to display their former corporate colours, and the distinctive RTVS colon used before channel and programme symbols remains in use.

STVR's communicated identity emphasises the institution's presence by highlighting the popularity of its flagship programmes, political discussion, charitable initiatives, and entertainment.

The STVR's conceived identity remains fragile in terms of reputation because it depends on politicising various issues, from the controversial reasons for establishing the institution to the political influence exerted over it and the appointment of political nominees to the board, ethics committee, and management. As a result, it also faces media scrutiny with negative references.

STVR's ideal identity remains unclear, and it is difficult to generalise because STVR has yet to present a CVI; consequently, no research on its current brand position is available. The provisional communication established by the organisation primarily aims to familiarise the public with the new STVR brand name.

STVR's desired identity remains unclear because the institution lacks a clearly articulated strategic vision. The statements made by the political representatives who established and politicised the institution are of limited relevance from a strategic standpoint. However, the Director General outlined her vision during the election hearing; in her project, she described it as "point zero," signifying a new beginning. Nonetheless, she did not specify which institutional qualities she aims to build upon and develop, which she plans to gradually phase out, or which she would abandon immediately.

It is clear that STVR's current state of corporate visual identity results not from management's failure to rebrand but from hurried political decisions. These decisions overlooked the long-term consequences of abolishing an institution without allowing sufficient transition time between the adoption of the legislation and establishing a new entity. The issue affects not only the visual dimension but also the institutional narrative. Such a transition period is vital for developing the corporate identity of the new institution, as it enables the smooth integration of new elements with existing ones, creating a natural visual and narrative link between the old and the new.

Conversely, the current STVR management faces not only the absence of visual identity but also a narrative gap that disrupts the continuity of the Slovak

public broadcaster's story. However, given the current leadership's already fragile reputation, this situation may also present an opportunity. After more than a year and a half of using a hybrid visual identity—combining elements of the former radio and television identities with muted, neutral colours and fonts under the new name—the experience gained during this transitional period can inform strategic decisions in developing a future CVI. A detailed analysis of the actual, communicated, and conceived identities should serve as the basis for STVR management to develop its ideal and desired identities. The first step could involve conducting a broad internal survey of employees in the sales, marketing, and public relations departments, as well as other key stakeholders, to gather insights into their experiences communicating the STVR brand over the past 18 months. Focusing on positive branding experiences—despite polarised and often negative narratives—could help restore the organic development of the public broadcaster's visual identity, which has been disrupted by political influences. In this way, the complex process of addressing reputational damage caused by politically driven rebranding could shift towards a narrative that aligns the development of the new STVR brand with the strengthening of the existing public-service broadcasting brand.

The study does not provide a comprehensive overview of STVR's operation without a CVI, but it highlights pitfalls of branding management that lead to tension and inconsistency in public communication. It contributes to media branding theory by demonstrating how the lack of CVI can undermine the reputation of a media brand.

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