CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF SELECTED BRANDS EXPLORED THROUGH ARCHETYPES

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Abstract

Archetypes as a concept originated in psychology. In marketing, a brand archetype is a genre assigned to a brand. There are 12 basic archetypes and each of them has a powerful identity, which is based upon symbolism. This concept helps marketers to anchor a brand against something iconic—something already embedded within the conscious and subconscious of humanity. Consumers relate to the personality and aspirations of the brand archetype. They are universal and eternal and they represent consumers' needs and desires. In the minds of both the brand owner and the public, aligning with a brand archetype makes the brand easier to identify. The purpose of this paper is to describe how Slovak consumers perceive the brands Nike, Nivea and Apple and determine the archetypes of these brands. An online survey with a sample of 229 Slovak consumers was carried out with the main goal to explore the main characteristic of selected global brands and specify their archetypes. The respondents were presented with 20 basic characteristics and their task was to assign the most matching brand (Nike, Nivea or Apple) to these characteristics. Based on these we were able to determine the brand's archetypes. Out of these Nike has the character of Hero. It is perceived as disciplined, string and persistent. Nivea is seen by Slovaks as caring, protective and family-orientated and it was identified as the Caregiver. Apple's archetype is the Creator and Slovak consumers describe it as innovative and inspiring. All the findings were in accordance with the overall image of the brand communicated worldwide no major differences in brand image and brand perception were found.

Keywords: archetypes, brands, Slovak consumers, Nike, Nivea, Apple

1 INTRODUCTION

Customers' attitudes towards brands are based not only on the attributes given by the brand building process (e.g. brand name, logotype, symbols, slogans, vision, brand personality, positioning, marketing communications, etc.) but are supported by their emotions. Based on the brand archetypes theory by Mark and Pearson (2012) archetypes (originated by psychologist Jung, C. G., the founder of analytical psychology, considered archetypes as a pattern of ideas and way of thinking consistent across time, generations and cultures) can be effectively used as one of the starting points especially for brand strategy planning and implementation (although the strong brands are mostly made and originate by the intuition of

their creators) and for marketing communications of a brand and additionally, it is possible to identify basic psychological associations towards bands shared by the selected groups of consumers. Moreover concerning consumer behavior itself, a new multidisciplinary approach implementing the Jungian archetypes to a marketing research model is needed (Dominici, Tullio, Siino and Tani, 2016). The archetypes methodology can be used by brand managers as a practical marketing tool for the successful brand development where the success is based and corresponding to fundamental patterns in the unconscious mind. The brand as a hero has to tell a story as the ancient heroes lived their lives (Vysekalová, 2011, p. 155). According to Gains (2013, p. 10), "the power of archetypes in great stories is their ability to tap into a rich vein of unspoken associations, in the same way that our limited conscious memory taps into the rich vein of our experienced world". Storytelling research is providing evidence as to how and why brands are becoming archetypal icons (Woodside, Sood and Miller, 2008). Strong brands are becoming strong through the consistent associations and strong messages directed to the minds of customers and prospects that are built around the brands' core values and twelve archetypal brand personalities might be used in the process of building brand identity (Gains, 2013). Additionally, using archetypes typology can help to identify consumer perception of a particular brand. In this way a research conducted by Roberts and Marshall (2014) focusing on investigation brand personality through archetypes can be mentioned. It is obvious, that "exploring the results of this study in order to further develop research that probes the details of consumer's resonance to archetypal qualities in brands could lead to the discovery as of yet unknown connections between consumer and brand, classic archetype and contemporary society" (Roberts and Marshall, 2014, p. 28).

Based on Mark and Pearson (2012) there are 12 individual brand archetypes particularly associated with specific motivations, values, drivers and attributes. The 12 archetypes are as follows: The Caregiver (protects others from harm, helps and serves others), The Everyman (wants to belong, believes in the inherent worth and dignity), The Hero (courageous, wants to improve the world), The Innocent (spontaneous and optimistic, desires happiness), The Explorer (wants to explore new in the world), The Rebel/The Outlaw (a rule breaker, wants to change what doesn't work), The Lover (achieves the intimacy, lives to experience pleasure), The Creator (forms visions, fosters imaginative endeavors), The Jester (wants to live in a good time having a fun), The Sage (intelligently and analytically seeks the truths), The Magician (seeks out the fundamental laws of the world, makes dreams and visions into reality), The Ruler (wants us to take the responsibility in the society). Current practice enlarges twelve fundamental archetypes into five archetypes to a family that allows developing unique brand characters by complex of 60 archetypes (Archetypesinbranding, 2015).

Archetypes might be used for the marketing research purposes too. As an example global BrandZ™ and CharacterZ combining brand personality characteristics into brand archetypes by Kantar Millward Brown (2012) can be mentioned. It allows identifying the brand characteristics that are most likely to ensure success in different regions and their homogeneity or discrepancies. The combination results into 10 brand personality archetypes: Joker, Seductress, Rebel, Hero, Wise, King, Mother, Friend, Maiden and Dreamer. For instance, based on this research, the Apple iPhone is viewed as a Seductress in Italy, Spain, and the UK; as a Joker in Australia or as a Dreamer in Japan. These differences are not connected only with customers' experience with the brand or product itself and with particular marketing activities, but also with cultural backgrounds (WPP, 2016). Concerning global brands or brands that are sold worldwide does not necessarily mean that the same brand is perceived as global by consumers in all countries (Mooij, 2014) and consumer brand perception can vary (Shukla and Purani, 2012, Zhanga, Doornb and Leeflangb, 2014). The question how a brand archetype can be universal (especially when speaking about global brands) within different sociocultural and personal backgrounds is still opened for the future research, although the brand archetype research based on international approach or on international comparison approach was already applied (e.g. Tsai, 2006, Hadad, Hamza and Brazil, 2015). But, in contrary to that, brand marketing researches according to Tsai (2006, p. 659) "should not waste time and effort discussing which brand archetype is the most universally acceptable, but should adopt a multiple methodology in exploring how the brand representation may correspond to the variability in the desires, fantasies, dreams and aspirations of the target market". Identifying the brand's archetype image helps to understand the relationship between the brand and the influence on consumers' preference and the willingness to buy within the frame of a product form design (Sieh, Tsu, Tian and Chen, 2016).

2 METHODOLOGY

The participants were 229 adult Slovak subjects. They were chosen on principles of convenience sampling and the participants have been selected from available population. Sixty-five percent of the respondents were female and 35 percent male. Thirty-six percent of them had a university degree, 33 percent were

undergraduate students and the rest had high-school education. Average age was 26 years with standard deviation of 5.17. Respondents were presented a questionnaire. An online survey was carried out with the main goal to explore the main characteristic of selected global brands and specify their archetypes. The respondents were presented with 20 basic characteristics – protection, welfare, persistence, care, revolutionary, hero, innovation, inspiring, rebel, reliability, discipline, strength, challenge, family, pioneer, shocking, independent, liberty, determination and maternal. These adjectives were chosen on basic characteristics of brand archetypes and the task of the respondents was to assign these adjectives to the most matching brand (Nike, Nivea or Apple).

3 RESULTS

Apple is one of the leaders amongst several highly competitive markets, including the computer industry with Macintosh computers and the consumer electronics like mobile phones and tablets. Apple's branding strategy focuses on emotions. It is cantered around a person's lifestyle, imagination, passion, hopes, dreams and aspirations, and it aims to empower people through technology. The Apple brand aims to make people's lives easier and it is a company with a genuine connection with its consumers. Most of Apple's target market seems to be people who have a reasonably good amount of disposable income and are willing to spend it on a high quality of product Apple's brand personality is about, lifestyle, imagination, innovation, simplicity, passion, hopes, dreams & aspirations, power (Johnson, 2011). When Apple entered the market, it introduced itself as the one who breaks the rules, who is out of time and contains values that promise a revolution, a joy of destroying everything that holds them to society (Mark and Pearson, 2012). Nowadays we can see a shift in personality of the brand. All these slogans approach Beauty, Colour and Creation. Hadad, Hamza and Xara-Brasil (2015) analyzed recent promotion of Apple and found out its current promotion strategy is using words such as "bright colours", "design", as well as a more visual and less technical description of the changes made to the product.

According to Slovak respondents, Apple was identified as the Creator. Slovaks see it as a revolutionary brand extremely innovative, a pioneer in its field. Further it can be described as shocking, independent, wealthy, strong and reliable.
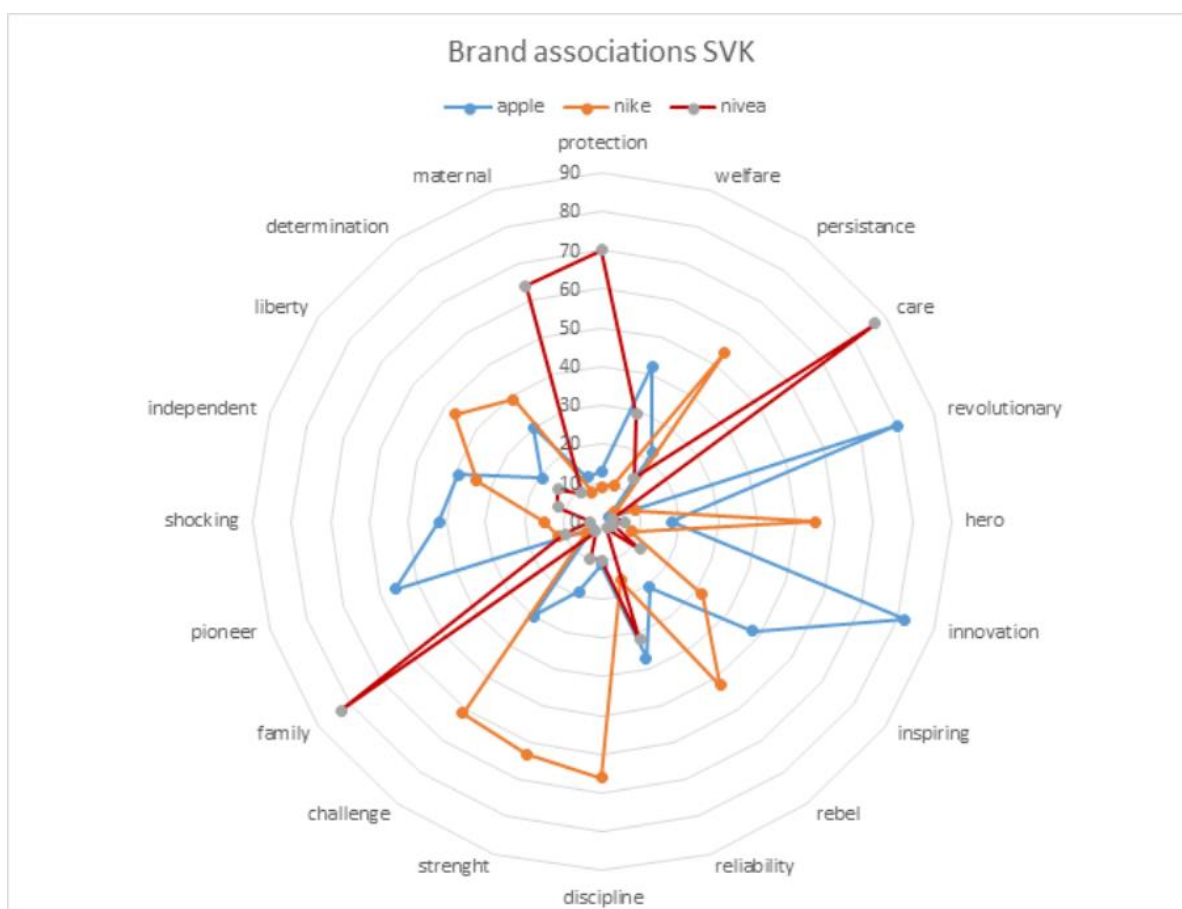

Fig. 1 *Brand associations of Slovak consumers* (own research)

The personality of Nike is very much related to the product that the company sells (active and athletic) as well as the characteristic of athletes (competitive) and of a heroic person (determined and focused) (Hadad, Hamza and Xara-Brasil, 2015). According to Mark and Pearson, Nike is perceived as a hero, the one who triumphs, gets through challenges and, in doing so, is an inspiration to all of us, it is a warrior and a leader. Nike's personality is athletic. The company is positioned as providing the best athletic gear to all athletes no matter what sport. They have successful products in every major sport around the world. The brand created a personality of being a cool, successful and athletic (Mengxia, 2007).

For Slovak consumers Nike is a clear Hero. Disciplined, strong and taking challenges. It also is independent, persistent, heroic and rebellious.

Nivea is a typical Caregiver. It is characterized by generosity, friendliness and protection giving people a perception of appreciation (Eliasson and Alftén, 2016). When many other care and beauty brands, in order to stay relevant, focus on innovation and expertise, Nivea prides itself on using the same basic product formula, which cares for skin and protects it, for more than 100 years. Nivea has spent years building up a unique and consistent brand, creating such associations as gentleness, warmth, closeness, softness, and care. Nivea's brand philosophy is 'pure and simple' (Thangaraj, 2004).

Slovak consumers perceive Nivea as the Caregiver. According to them it is caring, family-oriented, maternal and very protective.

4 DISCUSSION

Jung identified 12 archetypes. Each of these has a powerful identity. Each archetype has its own set of characteristics, values, attitudes and behaviours. The idea is that any brand can relate to one of these twelve models. In marketing archetypes can be used to understand what motivates the customers whereas these universal patterns of behaviour can help individuals and companies stay true to their mission and brand promise. Or in other words, archetypes can facilitate the experiencing of a brand and why it attracts certain customers. Consumers can connect with or relate to the brand archetype that help define the brand and breathe life into it and help bring consumers closer to the company and its products.

According to Slovak consumers, Nike is a Hero. Heroes are eager to prove their worth, they are not afraid, do not have any weakness and do not fail. Considering their positive features, they are brave, determined and skilful. However, they can be arrogant, aggressive and ruthless. Hero customers shop for quality and efficiency. They like to think their consumer choices will put them ahead of everyone else because hero brands are superior to their competition and make a positive mark on the world.

Slovaks see Nivea as the Caregiver. The core desire of Caregivers is to protect and care for others. This brand archetype is moved by compassion and generosity, and strives to make people feel nurtured and secure. Customers of caregiver companies want to be loved, taken care of and safe. They need to feel secure and that they are not alone. Marketing strategies of Caregiver brands would provide helpful experiences and nurturing relationships, sentimentality, happy memories, the comforts of home and family.

Apple was described as the Creator. The Creator archetype contributes to society by bringing something new into life, by realizing a vision - something that did not previously exist. This archetype is an inventor, artist and entrepreneur. Creator companies create high-quality, beautiful products or services. Because they are precise, detailed, imaginative and inventive. Creator consumers do not like mass-production. They are very demanding and demonstrate their taste and quality standards by the things they buy. They do not buy expensive items to impress others, but for themselves. The Creator brands are a means of self-expression of a consumer.

The presented study makes contributions to examining the brand archetypes of three global brands in Slovak audience. However, a number of important limitations need to be considered. First, the current research was not specifically designed to evaluate all the factors related to archetypes. Second, the research is not representative because of the sampling method and clearly; the sample may not represent any definable population larger than itself. Non-probability sampling is a good method to use when conducting a pilot study therefore; further research is required to obtain representative results. Thirdly, the generalizability of these results is subject to certain limitations. A number of possible future studies using the same experimental set up would be a contribution to this topic.

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