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HOW GLOBAL AND LOCAL ENERGY DRINK BRANDS COMPETE IN BRAZIL

COMO MARCAS GLOBAIS E LOCAIS DE BEBIDAS ENERGÉTICAS COMPETEM NO MERCADO BRASILEIRO

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é analisar a estratégia de marketing de marcas globais e locais de bebidas energéticas no mercado brasileiro. O autor utiliza teorias de estratégia de marketing e de análise da concorrência para apoiar seus argumentos sobre o impacto dessas marcas no Brasil. Este trabalho caracteriza-se como um estudo exploratório que fornece uma estrutura holística para importantes decisões estratégicas que os gestores têm de fazer. Os resultados mostram que o Brasil como uma economia menos desenvolvida tende a associar marcas globais como tendo uma maior qualidade do que as locais, assim, as marcas locais estão estrategicamente adaptando seus produtos para serem mais semelhantes às marcas globais conhecidas.

Palavras-chave: Estratégia de marketing; Marcas de bebidas energéticas globais e locais; Mercado brasileiro de bebidas energéticas.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the marketing strategy of global and local energy drink brands in the Brazilian market. The author utilizes marketing strategy theories and competition analysis theories to support his arguments about the impact of these brands in Brazil. This paper is characterized as an exploratory study that provides a holistic framework to important strategic decisions that managers have to make. The results show that Brazil as a less developed economy tends to associate global brands as having a high quality than the local ones, so local brands are strategy adapting their products to being more similar with the well-known global brands.

Keywords: Brazilian energy drink market; Global and local energy drink brands; Marketing strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The energy drink industry had a substantial growing in Brazil comparing to non-alcoholic beverages. Sales grew 152% between 2008 and 2011, according to ABIR (2013), and the consumption per capita in the country is 0.45 liters per year. It is interesting to observe that the growth of the Brazilian's energy drink market occurs on parallel to the crisis experienced by this sector abroad (GEROMEL, 2012). Due to this trend, several Brazilian researchers started writing about the theme (PONTUAL, 2004; GONÇALVES FILHO et al., 2007; TOLEDO et al., 2007). One factor that helped the energy drink growing in Brazil, for example, was the launch of major releases in pet bottles up to 2 liters. This package reaches a consumer profile that was not previously used to buy this product, with the intention of popularization of the brand and a different approach from what are usually seen in other countries (SM, 2013).

With good prospects and this proper market environment, new brands are launched, leading consumers to better understand this class of beverages (PARFITT; COLLINS, 1968). The Brazilian market is disputed by players like Burn (since 2001) and Gladiator (since 2009) of Coca-Cola Company, TNT of Petropolis Group (since 2009), Fusion of AmBev (since 2011), Red Bull (since 1998) of Red Bull, Flying Horse (since 1997), and Monster Energy (since 2010) of GlobalBev, Flash Power of Lizu Trading Company (since 1997) (ABIR, 2013). Thus, since the emergence of the first entrepreneur in Brazil, the market is growing with many players making use of its strong logistics process to grow and gain market share (BOWERSOX; CLOSS, 1996). However, the challenge for the brands that arrive at Brazil is the capacity of distribution of their products with logistic efficiency. After all, there is no use of having a very strong brand abroad without any capillarity in a huge country as Brazil, i.e., do not have a geographic coverage that represents a high volume of sales (GRACIOSO, 2007). Therefore, the aim of this research is to understand how global and local energy drink brands constantly compete against each other in the Brazilian market.

Moreover, competitive analysis should be developed as a part of the product planning. Through the knowledge acquired about the market and the players, companies can compete more efficiently. Thus, competition analysis should be an important part of the marketing strategy planning (HOOLEY et al., 2001; ZENONE, 2007).

The debate between global versus local brand has been intense and well documented in literature (HOLT; QUELCH; TAYLOR, 2004), but emerging markets energy drink marketplace, such as the Brazilian case, has been the subject of relatively few academic researches in this area. Thereby, this article contributes to the literature by examining the competition between local and global brands in the context of the energy drink market in

Brazil, and can be applied to other emerging markets. Until the date, there is a gap in the literature as to how global and local brands compete in less developed countries. The study raises a number of important issues for brand managers that are reluctant to expand abroad and compete with local or global brands, or that are struggling with their actual internationalization process.

In emerging markets, as Brazil and Latin America countries, the brand is seen by most consumers as a sign of quality, assisting them to make their purchasing decisions (HIDALGO; FARÍAS, 2006; HIDALGO et al., 2007; MANZUR et al., 2005; MANZUR et al., 2011; MERINO; GONZALEZ, 2008; MILBERG; SINN, 2008; OLAVARRIETA et al., 2006; OLAVARRIETA et al., 2008; TORRES; HIDALGO; FARÍAS, 2007). Merino and Gonzalez (2008) found that Brazilian, Argentine and Mexican consumers prefer global brands to local alternatives. In the other hand, in developed countries as U.S.A., although the global success of a brand is seen as a signal of quality, North American consumers prefer the local options (HOLT; QUELCH; TAYLOR, 2004; ACNIELSEN, 2013). The same occurs in Europe where consumers also prefer the local brands (SCHUILING; KAPFERER, 2004). In fact, the most part of global brands are North American, European or Japanese, what leads developed countries to choose their local options while emerging markets prefer the global brands. Thereby, global brands are faced with a different kind of competition in the Brazilian market and in others developing countries. This paper will be organized as follows: we provide an overview of global brands, brands development, global versus local, followed by some theoretical foundations and research propositions. Finally, we offer some discussion and implications.

2. GLOBAL BRANDS OVERVIEW

Top brands have the power to create business value and tend to impose their strategies while the minor follow aligned or in response to this positioning (KOTLER, 2001). Accordingly, to Urban et al. (1986) there is a large loss of market share for new brands launched in a category other than the first entrepreneur. Moreover, top brands impact much more than revenues and profit margins and create competitive advantages by commanding the prices. They reduce business risk and help attract and retain talented staff (BROWN, 2009).

Products have different levels of brand awareness among consumers (OLIVEIRA-CASTRO et al., 2008), so the based brand equity is directly linked to informative reinforcement (FOXALL; OLIVEIRA-CASTRO; SCHREZENMAIER, 2004). Global brands were supposed to sweep away national differences by offering reduced costs and excellent quality. Indeed, in most of top brand rankings published by research agencies, the top positions feature a mix of

global and local brands (MERINO; GONZALEZ, 2008; BROWN, 2009; FERNÁNDEZ et al., 2009; ACNIELSEN, 2013).

Global managers confront difficult questions when developing the ideal brand portfolio (DOUGLAS; CRAIG; NIJSSEN, 2001). They must decide which brands to retain, and which to remove accordingly to the local culture (YENIYURT; TOWNSEND, 2003; KOTABE; HELSEN, 2004). These are important decisions that significantly influence any company success (HALLIBURTON; HÜNERBERG, 1993; DE CHERNATONY; HALLIBURTON; BERNARTH, 1995; DOUGLAS; CRAIG; NIJSSEN, 2001; KAPFERER, 2002; SCHUILING; KAPFERER, 2004; HOLLIS, 2008).

3. BRANDS DEVELOPMENT

In the 1980s, several broad environmental forces converged, encouraging firms to take the global brands discussion essential for a long-term success. Sheth (1986) cites three reasons for that: it has become easier to access international markets; there was an increased level of standardization of products; and an increase in the number of mergers, acquisitions and joint ventures.

However, there are many other reasons for the development that have transformed the global marketplace, for example, saturation of domestic markets, interdependence between countries, favorable logistics and marketing policies, standards compliant, technical laws and similar regulations, reduced fees and taxes, open markets etc. (JEANNET; HENNESSEY, 1992; JOHANSOON, 2000; KEEGAN, 2005). Media (e.g. television, newspapers and Internet) also showed lifestyles, reflecting a quality of life, inspiring demand for something better (PITTA; FRANZAK, 2008) and increasing similarity in lifestyles across the world (ALDEN; STEENKAMP; BATRA, 1999).

Global consumers and global distribution (JOHANSOON, 2000) made managers standardized new products and marketing programs around the world. In addition, they pruned the vast array of locally adapted products that country managers had insisted on (QUELCH, 2003).

When many firms became global, they took the products that were successful in their domestic markets and began selling them in foreign markets. This practice have eliminated or have greatly reduced costs associated with the product development and promotion. Some were successful and quite literally created the product category in the host countries (PITTA; FRANZAK, 2008). In the other hand, the brand should not be associated as a function of the product; instead, the product should be associated as a brand function (MESADAG, 2000).

Thus, the brand can be global, as Red Bull, Burn, Gladiator and Flash Power, but the product should be modified to adapt itself to the local market.

Accordingly, global firms routinely modify global brand strategies in individual country markets to balance cost-reducing standardization and relevance-maximizing localization (RIGBY; VISHWANATH, 2006; CAYLA; ECKHARDT, 2008). Such actions suggest that global managers have embraced the concept of hybridized or "glocalized" international branding, which highlights the capacity to have global and local brand attributes being at the same time "insider" and maintaining the benefits of an operation in a global scale (SVENSSON, 2001; 2002; KAPFERER, 2002; KEEGAN, 2005).

4. GLOBAL VERSUS LOCAL

Global brands are perceived to be more value added for the consumer, either through better quality and prestige (as a function of worldwide acceptance) or by enhancing the consumer's self-perception as being cosmopolitan, sophisticated and modern (FRIEDMAN, 1990; KAPFERER, 1992; THOMPSON; TAMBYAH, 1999; BATRA et al., 2000; STEENKAMP; BATRA; ALDEN, 2003; HOLT; QUELCH; TAYLOR, 2004; JOHANSOON; RONKAINEN, 2005). A research shows that perceived brand globalness could create consumer perceptions of brand superiority (SHOCKER; SRIVASTAVA; RUEKERT, 1994; KAPFERER, 2004). This research also confirms that quality and prestige are among the most important factors that drive consumer preference for global brands (STEENKAMP; BATRA; ALDEN, 2003). Global brands are believed to engender more positive affect (ALDEN; STEENKAMP; BATRA, 1999), enjoy greater esteem (JOHANSSON; RONKAINEN, 2005), and evoke appealing global myths (HOLT; QUELCH; TAYLOR, 2004). The Table 1 shows top energy drink brands in Brazil.

Brand	Market Share	Sale Share		
Red Bull (Global)	38%	51.5%		
Burn (Global)	11.6%	13.4%		
Flash Power (Global)	6.7%	5.8%		
TNT (Local)	5.9%	5.9%		
Monster (Global)	3.5%	2.3%		
Flying Horse (Local)	3.4%	2.3%		

Gladiator (Global)	2.4%	1.9%	
Other Brands	28.4%	16.9%	

Source: Adapted from ACNielsen (2013).

In most cases, consumer preference has not been the primary reason for companies to decide to move to global brands. Schuiling and Kapferer (2004) note that the push toward development of global brands has been driven more by supply-driven considerations linked to costs than by market considerations. A key advantage of globalization is firms' opportunity to benefit from strong economies of scale. The progressive market homogenization, standardization of consumer behavior and brands (YENIYURT; TOWNSEND, 2003) can generate significant cost reductions in all areas of the business system, including research and development, manufacturing, and logistics. The shift to a single global brand name also provides substantial savings in packaging and communication costs (LEVITT, 1983; CRAIG; DOUGLAS, 2000).

Local brands hold important advantages, such as high awareness levels, extensive distribution networks developed through time (i.e., local operational or logistical advantages), better knowledge and response to local needs (e.g., meeting unique local tastes), possibility of responding to local or international competition. Besides possibility of balancing a portfolio of brands, possibility of responding to needs not covered by global brands, and possibility of fast entry into new markets (WOLFE, 1991; KAPFERER, 2002; SCHUILING; KAPFERER, 2004).

5. RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

In Brazil, as in emerging markets, there is a gap in the existing literature in identifying whether consumers prefer global brands or local brands. Additionally, across countries, marketing literature offers some empirical answers for this question. In the U.S.A., Holt, Quelch and Taylor (2004) found that quality signal (i.e., global success of a brand as a signal of quality), global myth (i.e., global brands as symbols of cultural ideals) and social responsibility (i.e., influence on society's well-being) explained more than 60% of the variance in brand preferences. Schuiling and Kapferer (2004) documented the global and local brands in Europe as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Global versus local brands perceptions in Europe

	Awareness Level	Quality	Usage	Value Rating	Tradition	Reliability	Prestige
Local Brand	85%	25.3%	42.9%	18.8%	15.1%	22.1%	6.9%
Global Brand	73%	24.3%	37.4%	16.8%	12.7%	17.9%	7.4%

Source: Adapted from Schuiling and Kapferer (2004).

In developing countries, individuals associate global brands with having symbolic meanings (e.g., wealth and status), which enhances the emotional reward such as a sense of pleasure and happiness upon using these brands (BHAT; REDDY, 1998; BATRA et al., 2000; KINRA, 2006) caused, principally, by the global marketing promotions that can influence the local culture (BENNETT, 1995; YENIYURT; TOWNSEND, 2003). This can be explained by the relationship between culture and consumer behavior (LUNA; GUPTA, 2001): culture influences consumer behavior in which latter turns out to re-hang the cultural manifestations (PETER; OLSON, 1998).

Researches also suggest that consumers in less developed countries associate global brands with an aspiration toward the lifestyles of more advanced economies (ALDEN; STEENKAMP; BATRA, 1999). It is due principally because the 100 most well known brands in the world are from the U.S.A., Europe or Japan (ACNIELSEN, 2013). In developing countries, as Brazil, a brand's out country origin and from developed ones not only serves as summary of product quality, but also possesses a dimension of no local that, among some consumers and some product categories, contributes to attitudinal liking for status-enhancing reasons (BATRA et al., 2000). Based on the above argument and in Table 1, we suggest the following proposition:

P1: Foreign energy drink brands from developed countries tends to be more successful in Brazil than the local brands.

In addition, an efficient marketing strategy is important to forecast the market share and the market penetration of a new brand after the launch. Thus, it is necessary a marketing mix (for marketing mix theory see: Borden (1964), Kotler (1964), Hooley et al. (2005) and Constantinides (2006) action by the company in order to the launch hit the supermarket shelves, be perceived by the consumer and generate a change in his behavior (PARFITT; COLLINS, 1968). In turn, a single global brand name provides the advantage of the

development of a unique brand image across countries. Moreover, consumers prefer spend their money with known brands to risk losing their investment with unknown ones (MARTINS, 1997). It is especially important in certain product categories, whose brands target worldwide segments of consumers, such as teenagers and affluent segments (HASSAN; KATSANIS, 1991). Global brands are also attractive to an affluent market segment that is interested in displaying their worldly knowledge (PITTA; FRANZAK, 2008). As well as Dimofte, Johansson and Ronkainen (2008) verified, in the U.S.A., North American's global brands are well recognized by consumers and they are more powerful than other brands. Merino and Gonzalez (2008) also documented that top global brands have a better acceptance in Latin America. Based on the argument above, we suggest the following proposition:

P2: In Brazil, well known global energy drink brands have better acceptance among consumers.

Quelch (2003) suggests that local brands started to win back customers as their quality improve in response to new competitive pressure (for example, TNT from Petropolis Group, that arises the third place in the Brazilian energy drink ranking), and, in some cases, new ownership by global firms. The difficulty in transferring global brand equity from one market to another enhances the viability of using local brands by global firms (ANAND; DELIOS, 2002). And not only that, but multinational companies are transferring their industrial centers for underdeveloped countries because those have cheap labor, cheap and abundant raw materials, flexible environmental laws, and better tax among others incentives. The Coca-Cola Company is present in over 200 countries in the world and in Brazil, for example, is composed by Coca-Cola Brazil and more 17 independent business groups – the authorized manufacturers – which are undertake to produce, bottle and distribute Coca-Cola products' observing the standard worldwide quality of the company (COCA-COLA, 2013). The same happened with Red Bull that are building their first factory out of Europe, in Manaus (Brazil) (RED BULL, 2013), and Flash Power that has transferred their manufacturing to the country since 2003. Based on the above argument, we suggest the following proposition:

P3: There is a tendency of global brands of developed countries to ownership the Brazilian local brands or transfer their manufacturing into the Brazilian industry.

Studies have found that consumer brand recall is affected by foreign-sounding brand names (SCHIMITT; PAN; TAVASSOLI, 1994). In addition, foreign-sounding brand names can project different images for different products (CHAO; WÜHRER; WERANI, 2005; LECLERC; SCHMITT; DUBÉ, 1994). For example, Salciuvienea et al. (2010) suggests that services with a French-sounding brand name are perceived as more hedonic. By the way, these findings are consistent with previous research on foreign branding effects in Latin American countries, which indicate that English-sounding brand names have better evaluations than Portuguese (or

Spanish)-sounding brand names (OLAVARRIETA; LILLO; PATUELLI, 2001; OLAVARRIETA et al., 2009). Less developed economies consumers link English-sounding brand names with global ones, and so tend to attribute a major value. In the Brazilian market, we have, for example, TNT and Flying Horse. Based on the argument above, we suggest the following proposition:

P4: The Brazilian energy drink market use English-sounding brand names to compete in the national marketplace with the global brands.

6. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research try to explain the competition between local and global energy drink brands in Brazil, which is an emerging market of Latin America. It is important to note that the presented propositions need to be empirically verified. It is also important that, although Brazil is a developing market, it has a growing middle class that starts to give attention to a product that was considered superfluous before. The top Brazilian positions of energy drink brands feature a mix of global and local brands (MERINO; GONZALEZ, 2008), although almost 60% of the market share still dominated by foreign brands: Red Bull, Burn and Flash Power hold together 58.7% (ACNIELSEN, 2013). Nevertheless, there are obstacles, both too global as to local brands, as the difficulty to reach all regions of the country – as Brazil is a huge one –, the government incentives for the establishment of factories in remote areas far from the main consumer's centers and the transport deficit.

Our theoretical framework and propositions suggest that Brazil is a potential marketplace for global brands. In turn, local brands that are strategy adapting their products to being more similar with the well known global brands (DOW, 2005; CALANTONE et al., 2006; OKAZAKI; TAYLOR; ZOU, 2006; WONG; MERRILEES, 2007), and are using English-sounding names, have been more effective, growing in the national market share.

This study contributes to the literature showing a framework of how global and local energy drink brands compete in Brazil and thus, possibly, in others developing economies, further the markets prospects. In addition, there were raised important issues for brand managers that are reluctant to compete with global brands, or that are struggling with the actual globalization process.

Nowadays, the current trend towards globalization added to the media evolution, anyone could see the company's Facebook page or its Twitter stream or videos on YouTube, as things start to pass from border to border. With this increased interconnectivity, markets that

were previously seen as second or third tier must now be treated in the same way as the top tier ones.

The emerging markets energy drink managers need to include strategic alliances, licensing agreements and joint ventures in order to sell under global brand names associated with higher status and prestige. With partnership, local brands' weakness can be offset by global brands' strength (KUMAR; LEE; KIM, 2009). Unit managers can also reshape their consumers' attitudes toward local brands through marketing and promotional campaigns.

Clearly, this is an exploratory study. Several other topics are worth exploring in the future. Not all consumers within a country are identical. Indeed, there is substantial variation within a country. Consumer differences should be incorporated into future research, as enduring brand loyalty, value consciousness, smart shopper self-perception, among others (MANZUR et al., 2011). Finally, possible differences in Latin America countries and less developed economies make essential to develop studies that measure, compare, and analyze the different levels of acceptance of global and local energy drink brands among those different countries and their possible causes. This article attempts to encourage similar research in other emerging markets regions that confirms or refutes the results presented in this work.

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