

The Notoriety of Brands on the Romanian Market among Youth

Laura Cătălina Țimiras
Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau, Romania
timiras.laura@ub.ro

Abstract

Based on the results of a survey conducted among students from the Faculty of Economic Sciences of Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau, this paper highlights the brands on the Romanian market that enjoys the highest reputation among young people, for certain categories of products: food products, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, personal hygiene products, cosmetics, cleaning products, clothing, footwear, electronics and home appliances, and cars. The brand unaided awareness has been studied, each respondent indicating the top three brands that come to mind for each studied product category. The hierarchy of brands in terms of awareness was based by the respondents on two indicators: the number of respondents who identified a particular brand among the top three popular brands and the number of those who indicated a particular brand as the first nomination. The research was conducted on a sample of 100 students selected by group sampling scheme and has an exploratory nature.

Keywords: Direct research, brand, unaided awareness, top-of-mind awareness.

1. Introduction

The awareness of a brand is a quantitative component, being given by the share of members of a specified population who have heard of it (Zaharia, 2003). Brand awareness is a general goal for all promotional strategies, given that consumers cannot purchase a brand that they have not heard of (Peter & Olson, 2008). Developing a brand image is based on practical knowledge of its target audience. Awareness precedes in fact a favorable attitude to the brand; under conditions of favorable attitudes towards two brands, the better known brand is more frequently purchased (Datculescu, 2012). Of course, awareness is only one condition that allows the development of a favorable attitude to the brand, besides a multitude of other influential factors - related to the product, to the marketers that provide the product, to customer requirements etc.

In assessing the extent to which a brand is known one can opt either for the assessment of unaided awareness, case in which the respondents are asked to indicate what brands come to their mind when thinking of a certain category of product, or aided awareness, where respondents indicated known brands using a preset list. When using unaided awareness, the first mentioned brand indicates a greater knowledge of it, basically stating that it holds a central place in the consumer's mind – top-of-mind brand (Datculescu, 2012).

The study focused on young people and was based on the idea that they usually have different buying habits and preferences compared to older people, highlighted by Hawkins, Mothersbaugh & Best (2007), who stated that age influenced the media used by individuals, the places where they purchased products, the way they used products and in which they thought and felt about marketing activities.

2. Methodology and limitations of the research

The research method used was the survey, using a self-administrated questionnaire. The sample was made of 100 respondents, selected after a sampling group schema from a population made up of students from the Faculty of Economic Sciences of Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau, and aged between 18 and 30 years old. Thus, there were randomly selected four groups of students (out of a total of 9), which were subsequently subjects of the evaluation. Considering a probability of guaranteeing

the results of 95% (for which the z-value is 1.96), the attached error of the research results is 2.17% (for determining the error it was taken into account the value of variance according to the age of the investigated community).

We must emphasize that the results are representative only for the population made up exclusively of students from the Faculty of Economic Sciences of Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau, not for the larger communities, for which the information is only a guideline. Through the research was aimed to determine the notoriety of brands on the Romanian market, by product category. Being an exploratory research (on a non-representative sample at county, region, country level etc.), the conclusions can be used as hypotheses for conclusive researches whose results will support the decisions of market operators interested in increasing the awareness of their brands.

We opted for the assessment of unaided awareness of the brands, for the construction of the hierarchy taking into account both the nomination of the brand among the top three popular brands (the respondents were asked to indicate the top three brands that come to mind for each product category) and the nomination as a first brand (top-of-mind awareness). We considered only the brands indicated in the analysis by a minimum of five respondents.

The data collection period was April 2016.

3. Research results referring to notoriety of brands present on the market in Romania, by product category, among youth

Regarding the ability of young people to nominate three brands for each product category, except passenger cars (in which case all respondents indicated minimum one brand and over 90% of all, three brands), for any other category of products has not been a minimum of one brand indicated by all respondents. Thus, for other product categories, between 65-80% of young people were able to spontaneously identify three brands and between 1-10% were not able to identify at least one brand.

The domestic brand Pambac is the best known food brand (excluding alcoholic beverages) among those present on the Romanian market. Regardless of the indicators taken into account – the number of respondents who indicated it among the top three known brands or the number of respondents who nominated it as a first brand, Pambac is ahead with more than double compared to the following brand which is most popular among young people. After Pambac, rank II in terms of number of respondents that indicated it in the top three known brands we find Coca-Cola, followed by Milka (third place), Agricola (fourth place), Fanta (fifth place) (See Table 1). The hierarchy of brands in terms of top-of- mind awareness is slightly modified (the top brands in this regard are: Pambac - first place, Coca-Cola and Milka - both on the second place, Fanta and Danone - both on the third place, Napolact - fourth place), given that, in comparison, there are brands known by a larger number of respondents without holding the first place in their minds, and brands known to a fewer people, but with the "first name" when thinking of that category of products.

It is noted that 40% of the brands in the Table 1 are indigenous (Pambac, Agricola, Napolact and Poiana).

Table 1. The most famous* food brands (the number of respondents who indicated a particular brand among the top three that come to mind)

Brand	As first option	As second option	As third option	% persons who indicated brand among the top 3 known brands in total number of respondents
Pambac	20	14	2	36
Coca Cola	9	4	4	17
Milka	9	5	2	16
Agricola	4	8	1	13
Fanta	6	5	1	12
Danone	6	1	4	11
Napolact	5	3	1	9
Pepsi	1	2	6	9
Poiana	2	1	3	6
KFC	1	2	2	5
Other answers	30	43	41	X
Total	93	88	67	X

* brands indicated by a minimum of five respondents

In the category of alcoholic beverages, given the number of respondents who indicated a brand among the top three known brands, Cotnari and Ciuc - domestic brands - two spots hold the top, followed by J&B, Jack Daniel's, Timisoreana and Ursus (all ranks III) Cricova (fourth place), Bucegi and Noroc (fifth place) (See Table 2).

Considering the indicator top-of-mind awareness, stands a top Jack Daniel's, followed by Ciuc, Cotnari, J&B and Timisoreana, Ursus and Bucegi.

Compared with food, in the case of alcoholic beverages there is a greater degree of knowledge of brands, as evidenced by the number of nominations made by the respondents. Half of those brands can be found in the table. Two (nominated by at least five respondents) are local (Cotnari, Ciuc, Timisoreana, Ursus, Bucegi, Noroc, Bergembier, Ciucas), this product category is practically one that has the highest percentage of brands known to the Romanian respondents.

Table 2. The most famous* alcoholic beverages brands (the number of respondents who indicated a particular brand among the top three that come to mind)

Brand	As first Option	As second Option	As third option	% persons who indicated brand among the top 3 known brands in total number of respondents
Cotnari	11	7	8	26
Ciuc	12	10	3	25
J&B	7	8	4	19
Jack Daniel's	13	3	3	19
Timisoreana	7	10	2	19
Ursus	6	9	4	19
Cricova	4	2	7	13
Bucegi	6	2	4	12
Noroc	3	4	5	12
Bergembier	1	4	2	7
Ciucas	3	2	2	7
Heineken	4	1	2	7

Tuborg	2	1	3	6
Absolut Vodka	-	4	2	6
Angelli	-	3	3	6
Alexandrion	1	-	4	5
Other answers	16	21	21	X
Total	96	91	79	X

** brands indicated by a minimum of five respondents*

Cigarette brands enjoying the highest reputation, as indicated by most respondents among the top three known brands, are: Kent, Winston, Sobranie, Marlboro, Pall Mall. In terms of top-of-mind awareness indicator, there is a low position of Sobranie and Marlboro brands compared to Pall Mall (See Table 3).

Table 3. The most famous* cigarette brands (the number of respondents who indicated a particular brand among the top three that come to mind)

Brand	As first option	As second option	As third option	% persons who indicated brand among the top 3 known brands in total number of respondents
Kent	51	22	6	79
Winston	11	16	9	36
Sobranie	6	7	7	20
Marlboro	5	6	7	18
Pall Mall	7	5	5	17
Dunhill	5	6	5	16
L&M	3	5	5	13
Parliament	2	1	7	10
Winchester	1	4	3	8
Camel	1	1	4	6
Other answers	1	11	8	X
Total	93	84	66	X

** brands indicated by a minimum of five respondents*

The most recognized personal hygiene brands, according to their nomination among the top three known brands, are: Dove (first place), Nivea (second place), Colgate (third place), Garnier, Rexona and Palmolive (fourth place), Pantene (fifth place). Dove, Nivea and Colgate are also in first place in terms of top-of-mind. It appears that only a brand (Gerovital), from the local ones, was indicated by at least five respondents among the top three known brands (see Table 4).

Table 4. The most famous* personal hygiene brands (the number of respondents who indicated a particular brand among the top three that come to mind)

Brand	As first option	As second option	As third option	% persons who indicated brand among the top 3 known brands in total number of respondents
Dove	34	20	8	62
Nivea	23	21	14	58
Colgate	10	8	7	25
Garnier	1	4	4	9
Rexona	-	4	5	9
Palmolive	-	4	5	9
Pantene	1	3	3	7
Gerovital	2	-	4	6
L'Oreal	4	1	1	6
Protex	2	2	1	5
Wash&Go	2	-	3	5
Other answers	20	22	23	X
Total	99	89	78	X

* brands indicated by a minimum of five respondents

The brands of cosmetics from the top five places in terms of awareness among young people (were listed among the top three known brands) are: Avon, Oriflame, L'Oreal, Sephora, Mac. In the first places in terms of first nominated brand is also Avon, followed at a considerable distance by Oriflame. As in the case of products for personal hygiene, just a Romanian brand (Farmec) was included in the hierarchy shown in Table 5, other domestic brands not being indicated by a minimum of five respondents (see Table 5).

Table 5. The most famous* cosmetics brands (the number of respondents who indicated a particular brand among the top three that come to mind)

Brand	As first option	As second option	As third option	% persons who indicated brand among the top 3 known brands in total number of respondents
Avon	34	9	10	53
Oriflame	4	27	11	42
L'Oreal	11	6	2	19
Sephora	4	4	4	12
Mac	4	2	3	9
Farmec	2	5	1	8
Rimmel	4	2	2	8
Vichy	3	-	2	5
Kallos	4	-	1	5
Other answers	24	32	31	X
Total	94	87	67	X

* brands indicated by a minimum of five respondents

In the cleaning products category, the first five places, according to the number of respondents who have indicated the top three popular brands, we find: Cif, Domestos, Ariel, Pronto, Mr. Proper. Depending on the first nomination made, Cif and Domestos remain on top, followed by Pronto, Mr.

Proper, Ariel and Dero. One Romanian brand is found in the top in terms of awareness among young people (Dero).

Table 6. The most famous* cleaning products brands (the number of respondents who indicated a particular brand among the top three that come to mind)

Brand	As first option	As second option	As third option	% persons who indicated brand among the top 3 known brands in total number of respondents
Cif	16	11	8	35
Domestos	16	11	6	33
Ariel	7	11	9	27
Pronto	14	7	5	26
Mr. Proper	8	2	5	15
Fairy	5	5	3	13
Dero	7	3	1	11
Coccolino	-	3	6	9
Pur	1	5	2	8
Rivex	1	5	2	8
Clin	1	2	3	6
Axion	1	2	2	5
Persil	1	2	2	5
Vanish	-	3	2	5
Other answers	20	20	20	X
Total	98	92	76	X

* brands indicated by a minimum of five respondents

In the category of clothes, the most notorious one is H&M, followed by Zara, Bershka, Pull&Bear, New Yorker, both in terms of the top three known brand and as first indicated brand. No domestic brand is in the nominations of at least five respondents.

Table 7. The most famous* clothes brands (the number of respondents who indicated a particular brand among the top three that come to mind)

Brand	As first option	As second option	As third option	% persons who indicated brand among the top 3 known brands in total number of respondents
H&M	27	22	12	61
Zara	25	15	6	46
Bershka	13	13	15	41
Pull&Bear	7	6	5	18
New Yorker	5	5	5	15
Adidas	4	2	4	10
Nike	4	3	3	10
Stradivarius	-	2	6	8
Takko	2	3	1	6
Puma	-	2	3	5
Other answers	11	21	16	X
Total	98	94	76	X

* brands indicated by a minimum of five 5 respondents

In the footwear products category, top five brands indicated by young people as a first three nominees are: Nike, Adidas, Puma, Deichman, Marelbo; except Puma, all other brands were first nominated. Gratifying (compared to the clothing category) is that at least one domestic brand (Marelbo) is among the top in terms of notoriety.

Table 8. The most famous* footwear brands (the number of respondents who indicated a particular brand among the top three that come to mind)

Brand	As first option	As second option	As third option	% persons who indicated brand among the top 3 known brands in total number of respondents
Nike	25	29	3	57
Adidas	19	18	15	52
Puma	4	6	15	25
Deichman	9	7	3	19
Marelbo	5	4	3	12
CCC	3	2	3	8
Lacoste	2	2	1	5
Bershka	2	1	2	5
Leonardo	-	-	5	5
Other answers	28	16	17	X
Total	97	85	67	X

* brands indicated by a minimum of five respondents

Five most popular brands of consumer electronics and home appliances indicated in the top three are: Samsung, Philips, LG, Apple, Nokia. In this category there is the biggest difference between the hierarchy presented and the one carried out according to the top-of-mind awareness. So if Samsung and Philips occupy the top positions even from this perspective, the brands following them are: Sony, Apple, Arctic (local brand) and Bosch - the last three being on the same position.

Table 9. The most famous* consumer electronics and home appliances brands (the number of respondents who indicated a particular brand among the top three that come to mind)

Brand	As first option	As second option	As third option	% persons who indicated brand among the top 3 known brands in total number of respondents
Samsung	27	19	11	57
Philips	14	3	9	26
LG	2	11	6	19
Apple	5	5	5	15
Nokia	1	6	5	12
Arctic	5	3	2	10
Beko	2	7	1	10
Sony	6	3	-	9
Bosch	5	-	3	8
Asus	1	1	6	8
Lenovo	1	2	2	5
Rowenta	3	2	-	5
Whirlpool	2	2	1	5
Other answers	25	26	28	X
Total	99	90	79	X

* brands indicated by a minimum of five respondents

In the cars category, especially indicated by young people as first three known brands are: BMW, Dacia (local brand), Audi, Volkswagen, Mercedes. As the first nominated, Opel is ahead of Mercedes, the first four positions remaining as before considering this similar indicator.

Table 10. The most famous* cars brands (the number of respondents who indicated a particular brand among the top three that come to mind)

Brand	As first option	As second option	As third option	% persons who indicated brand among the top 3 known brands in total number of respondents
BMW	33	16	10	59
Dacia	23	10	17	50
Audi	12	22	13	47
Volkswagen	10	11	6	27
Mercedes	4	9	10	23
Ford	4	8	9	21
Opel	5	4	4	13
Renault	3	3	3	9
Skoda	1	4	4	9
Other answers	5	10	15	X
Total	100	97	91	X

* brands indicated by a minimum of five respondents

After analyzing the data obtained by categories of respondents depending on a series of recorded variables - gender, income and number of members of the household to which they belong, we noticed that there are not major differences in terms of awareness of various brands according to the above listed variables at the investigated sample level.

4. Conclusions

The results of the research conducted among young people referring to the notoriety of brands on the Romanian market can constitute indicative information (which can be verified through representative research) for companies interested in raising awareness of the portfolio of the brands owned, given that the basis for developing a successful brand is that target audience know about its existence; other attributes of the brand cannot be valued as long as it is not known. This information is especially important for Romanian operators, since local brands, excluding food and alcoholic beverages, are too little known by young people. Virtually, for product categories such as cosmetics, personal hygiene products, cleaning products, footwear, electronics and home appliances, and cars, only a single Romanian brand was mentioned by at least five respondents.

The information obtained through research, assessed in the context of its exploratory character and the characteristics of the investigated sample showed that the brands most known by young people, which are present on the Romanian market (were nominated among the top three that come to mind) are the following: Pambac, Coca-Cola, Milka, Agricola, Fanta (for food products); Cotnari, Ciuc, J&B, Jack Daniel's, Timisoreana, Ursus, Cricova, Bucegi, Noroc (for alcoholic beverages); Kent, Winston, Sobranie, Marlboro, Pall Mall (for cigarettes); Avon, Oriflame, L'Oreal, Sephora, Mac (for cosmetics); Dove, Nivea, Colgate, Garnier, Rexona, Palmolive, Pantene (for personal hygiene products); Cif, Domestos, Ariel, Pronto, Mr. Proper (for cleaning products); H & M, Zara, Bershka, Pull & Bear, New Yorker (for clothing); Nike, Adidas, Puma, Deichman, Marelbo (for footwear); Samsung, Philips, LG, Apple, Nokia (for consumer electronics); BMW, Dacia, Audi, Volkswagen, Mercedes (for cars).

For deepening the studied problems, these results can be hypotheses for research conducted on representative samples at regional, national level etc., as well as in other age groups.

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