Abstract: With the constantly growing needs of consumers, lifestyle brands were able to gain the recognition of many of those. Such brands are distinguished by their constant aim for understanding their consumers and creating meaningful relationships. The issue of lifestyle branding has not received considerable critical attention within marketing textbooks and academic journals, nonetheless it is a widely examined subject in magazines and books on societal issues. The aim of this article was to shine new light on this subject through an examination of the relations between lifestyle branding and consumers’ emotions towards the brand. The data for this study were collected using quantitative analysis. The methodological approach taken in this study is based on actual experimental research, based on a questionnaire predetermined by the “consumers’ emotional attachments to brands” scale. It aimed at determining a causal relationship between the following variables: independent variable, namely the lifestyle content in the fictional brand advertisement, and dependent variables, such as brand affection, passion, and connection.

Keywords: branding, lifestyle branding, customers’ emotions, multiple-case research, true experimental design.

1. Introduction

In recent years lifestyle branding has become a major element in creating a powerful and successful brand (Jones, 2021). The idea of placing functional elements of a brand in the background and highlighting the importance of brands’ values, attitudes, and personalities, has gained the recognition of many companies (Saracco, 2015).

With the constantly growing needs of consumers, lifestyle brands were able to gain recognition of many of them. According to the MSLGroup, as many as 73% of Millennials believe that a brand should have its own personality and point of view (Meyer, 2015). Therefore, consumers are no longer buying the products for their functional benefits, but rather to support the values and beliefs that the brand represents.

The issue of lifestyle branding has not received considerable critical attention within marketing textbooks and academic journals, nonetheless it is a widely examined subject in magazines and books on societal issue (Jung and Merlin, 2002).
The relatedness between lifestyle branding and brand-related effects is not yet a broadly investigated concept.

The purpose of this article was to shine new light on this subject through an examination of the relations between lifestyle branding and consumers’ emotions towards the brand. Exploring the success of lifestyle brands has an important meaning in the context of brand-related effects such as brand loyalty and brand awareness. The increase in brand-related effects allows the brands to charge higher prices and affects people’s desire to connect, share and participate.

The article is organized as follows. In the theoretical background section, the concept of lifestyle branding, as well as the concept of consumers’ emotions, is presented. Next, based on actual experimental design, the relation between lifestyle branding and consumers’ emotions towards the brand is verified. In this section, the research hypotheses are formulated, and the research design is described, concluding with a description of the results. Finally, the managerial implications, limitations of the study, and future research directions are discussed.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Lifestyle branding among other branding concepts

One can distinguish several branding concepts: functional branding, lifestyle branding as well as activist branding (Koch, 2020).

Functional branding focuses on creating or improving products or services with the purpose of intensifying the user experience. Through functional branding, companies are able to differentiate themselves by strengthening the value of their brands by virtue of design. They have the possibility to influence the perceptions of users every time the interaction with the company’s brand takes place. Functional branding strives to turn each of the interactions into a positive branding experience, based on outstanding functionality and usability. In essence, it can enlarge brand equity and loyalty (Töllinen and Karjaluoto, 2011). Customers commonly select functional brands in order to satisfy their functional needs.

Lifestyle brands are created based on cultural values, attitudes, and household structures of a specific group of the target audience. As branding aims to create awareness and communicate information, the purpose of lifestyle brands is to empower the target audience to associate with and relate to the aspects of the specific lifestyle backgrounds they prefer and aspire to. Therefore, lifestyle brands are a way of life established by activities and interests, which mirror the values, personalities, and attitudes accompanying a person or a group (Belch and Belch, 2013). Lifestyle branding adds value to consumers by its compelling role as an interactive mechanism, which is not just a name but also the symbolic association for products or services. It not only delivers functional benefits but presents the symbolism behind consumers’ choices with culturally meaningful elements.
Activist brands are the outcome of the evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility, which aims at brands to make decisions and content, providing value to societies and audiences influenced by their products. Moving a step further, brands grow into noticeable identities, which take the lead toward a specific matter. Sarkar and Kotler argue that brand activism is composed of companies’ efforts to promote social, political, economic, or environmental reforms with the purpose of encouraging progress in society (Sarkar and Kotler, 2021). Brand activism does not only ‘make a noise’ around a specific issue but additionally around the brand itself. This helps the brand in gaining a desirable impact on their profits and customer loyalty. It is also a meaningful source for connecting people who share common values and beliefs. Furthermore, the emotional connection overtakes the price and product quality (Eyada, 2020).

The decisions involving the type of branding are undoubtedly significant for the company and should be taken based on the testing results of various branding options, at the same time, companies need to constantly monitor if the implemented brand strategies are successful. Hence, scholars offer several approaches enabling to measure branding efforts.

2.2. Consumers’ emotions

The impact of emotions on consumers’ decisions has been for a long time an important issue in psychology and consumer behaviour (Williams, 2013). Scientists have made a progress from understanding the emotions as cognitions that have an impact on consumption, to a more complex understanding of emotional states. The question is no longer whether emotions do have an impact on consumption but what drives the experience of different emotional states, how those states affect the decision-making process, and the consumers’ motivation to regulate those emotions over time (Williams, 2013).

It is believed that emotional loyalty is the greatest driver of the customers’ experience (Evangelista, 2021). As the economic incentives lag behind the emotional tie with the brand, a deeper level of commitment to the brand can be formed. Since the rationally driven customers stay loyal to the brand as long as they are offered certain incentives, the emotionally driven customers are more likely to stick to the brand ‘no matter what’ (Bian and Haque, 2020).

The concept of loyalty is one of the most widely examined constructs in the marketing literature (Morgan, 2000; Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin, 2021); it is a positive belief in the context of the value that a company provides, which leads to repeat purchases and longitudinal interactions (Khan, 2013). One of the oldest definitions of loyalty is the one presented by Jacoby and Kyner, which describes it as “a biased behavioural response expressed over time by a decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of brands and being a function
of psychological processes” (Jacoby and Kyner, 1973). Oliver enriched this definition adding that loyalty as a “deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, causing repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences or marketing efforts” (Oliver, 1999). One of the more recent definitions is the one by Chegini, stating that loyalty is “theory and guidance leadership and positive behaviour including, repurchase, support and offers to purchase which may control a new potential customer” (Chegini, 2010).

The established concept of brand loyalty is that presented by Oliver, who states that the brand loyalty structure is composed of four stages: cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty, and action loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Cognitive loyalty (Oliver, 1999), also known as knowledge-driven, is the first step of brand loyalty development. In this step, the consumer’s motive to buy a specific product is based on its comparison with those of the competition based on available information. This step can result in the way that consumers would like the product, but if the buying process would become a routine without the consequential satisfaction, the loyalty would be low. However, if it manages to bring feelings, it will begin to create an affective loyalty. Affective loyalty (Oliver, 1999) is the second stage of brand loyalty and is based on the positive experience with the brand of an individual, and in consequence on the satisfaction with the transaction which was made. The third step of brand loyalty development is conative loyalty (Oliver, 1999), which is based on consumers’ intention to purchase and repurchase products. This stage is strongly influenced by affection loyalty, hence liking the product. Action loyalty (Oliver, 1999), which is the final stage and a combination of all three steps of loyalty development such as cognitive, affective, and conative, is based on buying the products from the same brand repeatedly (Isotalo and Watanen, 2015).

According to Kuusik, the long-term success of a brand is no longer achieved through the price of the product and its quality, but rather built on long-term customer relationships (Kuusik, 2007). Key factors when it comes to developing brand loyalty are consumers’ attitudes and intentions to buy as well as their perception of the brand (Aaker, 1991). Comprehension of consumer attitudes leads to the effective management of communication strategies, which when treated well, contribute to brand loyalty (Kurtoğlu, Özbölük, and Hacıhasanoğlu, 2022).

Consumers’ attachment to the brand can be described as satisfaction, loyalty, or love, determined by the degree of affection directed towards the brand. Brand love is commonly divided into three dimensions, namely affection, passion, and connection (Bagozzi, 2012). Nowadays, more and more companies have started to pay attention to the benefits generated by brand love and started to evoke those types of feelings in their customers (Kang, 2015; Quaye, Taoana, Abratt, and Anabila, 2022).
2.3. Development of hypotheses

Several previous studies have explored the relations between lifestyle branding and consumer emotions, but the results were contradictory.

Anttonen studied the factors which make Nike, the largest sportswear company in the world (Townsend, 2014), more popular than other existing sports brands. The study was conducted through quantitative research, based on a questionnaire consisting of three dimensions: background questions, questions about the relationship between consumers and the brand, as well as questions about sports brands, especially Nike. The results of the research showed that however certain brands were mentioned quite often in many different questions, the respondents were not as keen on certain brands as was hoped for. When it comes to Nike, the survey showed that naturally, the brand has a strong sense of popularity among many individuals since almost all of them own some Nike products. However, no deeper attachment to this brand was sensed. Furthermore, none of the respondents followed Nike on social media despite recognizing it as their favorite sports brand. The questionnaire did not reveal any unexpected conclusion, nor any deep relations between the respondents and a certain brand (Anttonen, 2015).

Another study was focused on lifestyle hotels category. Braun conducted a case study on the emergence of boutique and lifestyle hotels and how they successfully compete with the larger brands, which previously were considered as ‘giants’ in the hospitality industry (Braun, 2017). The results of the research determined several main success factors in the context of lifestyle and boutique hotel brands, the strongest being the experience and authenticity of the hotel as well as customer discovery. Social media enabled the industry to stay educated about their guests and consequently to create engagement and meaningful relationships. Finally, there is the community involvement and struggle to make the hotels’ personalities more visible. Personalised and authentic service, provided by the employees understanding company’s goal, is the source of this unforeseen success of boutique and lifestyle hotel brands as well (Braun, 2017).

Hence, lifestyle branding is all about an emotional response, both in the case of Nike, when individuals do not buy just a pair of sneakers but a particular lifestyle, an active and energetic one, and in the case of boutique and lifestyle hotels, when travelers do not just book a room to sleep in but choose an experience and access to excellent architecture, design, and authenticity of the story. In the matter of brand-related effects mentioned in the studies, the conclusions are mixed. On the one hand, lifestyle and boutique hotels proved a strong relationship between the lifestyle brand and brand loyalty, and on the other, Nike demonstrated complete irrelevance of those two aspects.

The author conducted multiple-case research in order to explore the relations between lifestyle branding and consumers’ emotions towards the brand incorporating a given brand concept. This approach allows studying many cases in
order to recognize the differences and similarities between each of them (Baxter and Jack, 2010; Stake, 1995). Moreover, it enables the analysis of the data using both within-case analysis and cross-case comparison (Yin, 2016). The multiple-case research was focused on the analysis of the data on three lifestyle brands: Oatly, Airbnb, and Nike. The research questions developed for the purpose of the multiple-case research were:

RQ1: How was the lifestyle branding executed and what were its effects?
RQ2: Which lifestyles were considered while incorporating lifestyle branding?
RQ3: What were the results of using lifestyle branding by the investigated brands?
RQ4: Do brands report the presence of an affective category in brand-related effects?

The multiple-case research findings enabled the identification of the relatedness between lifestyle branding and the consumers’ emotions towards the brand. The investigated brands started their rebranding with the identification of the consumers’ lifestyle, which allowed for further directing the mission and vision of the company according to consumer needs, enabling the brands to create loyal communities among the customers. All the brands reported some brand-related effects, which are presented in Table 1, as well as an increase in brand awareness and brand image. Two of them saw an increase in brand loyalty and one of them an increase in brand associations.

Table 1. Summary of the three brands’ lifestyle branding and their reported outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case no</th>
<th>Brand (campaign)</th>
<th>The lifestyle</th>
<th>Brand-related effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Oatly “Wow no Cow”</td>
<td>A growing tribe of activist consumers, vegans</td>
<td>Increase in brand awareness Improvement in brand image Increase in brand loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Airbnb “Until we all belong”</td>
<td>No lifestyle was discovered but a general sense of understanding of the importance of those individuals for the brand</td>
<td>Increase in brand awareness Improvement in brand image Improvement in brand associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Nike “Better for it”</td>
<td>An athletic lifestyle</td>
<td>Increase in brand awareness Improvement in brand image Improvement in brand associations Increase in brand loyalty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration.

The brands also reported some brand-related effects from the affective category, presented in Table 2.

The main limitation of the case study was its exploratory nature and the use of secondary data in all cases. Therefore, the impact of lifestyle branding on consumers’ emotions towards the brand should be further verified by the use of empirical research and qualitative analysis.
Table 2. Summary of the three brands’ lifestyle brandings and their outcomes from the perspective of affective category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case no</th>
<th>Brand (campaign)</th>
<th>Affective effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Oatly “Wow no Cow”</td>
<td>Emotional responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Airbnb “Until we all belong”</td>
<td>Emotional responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Nike “Better for it”</td>
<td>Emotional responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand attachment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 1. The research model

Source: own elaboration.

Aiming to determine the impact of lifestyle branding on consumers’ emotions towards the brand, and based on literature studies and case research, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Lifestyle branding has a positive impact on brand affection items.
H2: Lifestyle branding has a positive impact on brand passion items.
H3: Lifestyle branding has a positive impact on brand connection items.
3. Research design

3.1. Sampling and data collection

To test the hypotheses, an experiment that aimed to examine the relation between lifestyle branding and consumers’ emotions was developed (Kirk, 1969).

For the purpose of true experimental research design, the following variables were considered: independent variable, which was lifestyle content in the brand advertisement, and dependent variables, which were brand affection, passion, and connection. The dependent variables were chosen based on their likelihood to indicate attachment to a brand, which is a brand-related effect within the affective category.

The subjects of the study were selected according to convenience sampling. The sample consisted of 62 men and women from different age groups. As suggested by Dörnyei, convenience sampling is a nonprobability sampling, where members of the population are selected based on criteria such as accessibility, availability, geographical proximity, and the willingness to participate in the study (Dörnyei, 2007). This type of sampling is sometimes considered to be an “accidental sampling” due to its nature to be selected simply because of the participants being situated near to the place of conducting the research.

The data for the study was collected through a questionnaire, which was based on the “consumers’ emotional attachments to brands” scale (Thomson, MacInnis, and Whan Park, 2005). Other scales considered during the preparation process were: “brand love feeling scale” (Albert, Merunka, and Valette-Florence 2009), “brand love prototype scale” (Bagozzi, 2012), and “creation and validation of an advertising classification scale” (Jourdan, 2008). All of the mentioned scales were rejected either due to the lack of possibility to measure the advertisement itself or due to the lack of emotional measurement needed for the purpose of the research (e.g. the scale was developed for “indulgence” ads or for measuring how exactly ads work).

The research participants consisted of two groups: control ($n = 31$) and experimental ($n = 31$). The studied population was men and women from different age groups, randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups.

3.2. Stimuli and measures

As for the stimuli, two advertisements of a fictional brand of second-hand clothing were prepared for the purpose of the research. In the control group, a classic advertisement of a functional brand was presented (Figure 2), while for the experimental group the description was enriched by lifestyle branding – the contents concerning the idea of a brand challenging the status quo (Figure 3).
In order to check the stimuli, a manipulation check (Hoewe, 2017) was conducted prior to the survey. The participants consisted of two groups: control \((n = 38)\) and experimental \((n = 35)\). The studied population comprised men and women of different ages, randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups. The results of the manipulation check are shown in Table 3.
The Impact of Lifestyle Branding on the Customers’ Emotions towards the Brand

Table 3. Student t-test for manipulation check

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question from the manipulation check</th>
<th>T-test – p-value</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much do you agree that this ad represents some product features?</td>
<td>5.68816E-16</td>
<td>Statistically significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much do you agree that this ad represents a conscious lifestyle?</td>
<td>1.09622E-20</td>
<td>Statistically significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration.

As shown in Table 3, the respondents evaluated both stimuli properly and according to the researcher’s intent, which allowed for the further execution of the experiment.

The procedure was that, having looked at the advertisements, the subjects in both groups were asked to answer questions regarding brand-related effects. The research tool was a questionnaire with a 7-point Likert scale, which can be found in the appendix. The ANOVA method (Fisher, 1992), a statistical technique used for the estimation procedures used to analyse the differences among means, and post hoc test, used to uncover specific differences between at least three means only if the analysis of variance F test is significant, were applied for the data analysis.

3.3. Results

3.3.1. ANOVA method

Executing a two-way ANOVA with replication, the following ANOVA hypotheses were considered:

H0: \( \mu_c = \mu_e \)

H1: Not all population means are equal.

Table 4 presents the results of the two-way ANOVA.

Table 4. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of advertisement</td>
<td>8.290E-90</td>
<td>Statistically significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items from the scale dimensions</td>
<td>2.181E-08</td>
<td>Statistically significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>0.039101</td>
<td>Statistically significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration.

As the p-value for advertisement type was approximately 0 (\( p<0.05 \)), the p-value for items from the scale dimensions was approximately 0 (\( p<0.05 \)), and the p-value for the interaction between advertisement types and items from the scale dimensions was 0.04 (\( p<0.05 \)), the null hypothesis was rejected.
3.3.2. **Post-hoc test**

The Table 5 presents the results of the *post-hoc* test.

**Table 5. Post-hoc test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Average C</th>
<th>Average E</th>
<th>Fc</th>
<th>Fe</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affectionate</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>2.746237</td>
<td>1.797849</td>
<td>0.125828</td>
<td>Fc&gt;Fe, p&gt;5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>3.156989</td>
<td>1.423656</td>
<td>0.016358</td>
<td>Fc&gt;Fe, p&lt;5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loved</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>3.692473</td>
<td>1.584946</td>
<td>0.011777</td>
<td>Fc&gt;Fe, p&lt;5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>2.623656</td>
<td>1.980645</td>
<td>0.222934</td>
<td>Fc&gt;Fe, p&lt;5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>2.694624</td>
<td>1.812903</td>
<td>0.141653</td>
<td>Fc&gt;Fe, p&lt;5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delighted</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>2.273118</td>
<td>2.073118</td>
<td>0.401260</td>
<td>Fc&gt;Fe, p&lt;5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captivated</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>2.406452</td>
<td>1.916129</td>
<td>0.268240</td>
<td>Fc&gt;Fe, p&lt;5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>1.294624</td>
<td>2.124731</td>
<td>0.090319</td>
<td>Fc&lt;Fe, p&lt;5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonded</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>1.333333</td>
<td>2.761290</td>
<td>0.025222</td>
<td>Fc&lt;Fe, p&lt;5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attached</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>2.864516</td>
<td>2.851613</td>
<td>0.495109</td>
<td>Fc&gt;Fe, p&gt;5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration.

**Affectionate factor.** The research participants (the experimental group) achieved lower average affectionate indicators than the control group. These were not, however, statistically significant differences.

**Friendly factor.** The research participants (the experimental group) achieved lower average friendly indicators than the control group. These were statistically significant differences.

**Loved factor.** The research participants (the experimental group) achieved lower average loved indicators than the control group. These were statistically significant differences.

**Peaceful factor.** The research participants (the experimental group) achieved lower average peaceful indicators than the control group. These were not, however, statistically significant differences.

**Passionate factor.** The research participants (the experimental group) achieved lower average passionate indicators than the control group. These were not, however, statistically significant differences.

**Delighted factor.** The research participants (the experimental group) achieved lower average delighted indicators than the control group. These were not, however, statistically significant differences.

**Captivated factor.** The research participants (the experimental group) achieved lower average captivated indicators than the control group. These were not, however, statistically significant differences.
Connected factor. The research participants (the experimental group) achieved higher average connected indicators than the control group. These were not, however, statistically significant differences.

Bonded factor. The research participants (the experimental group) achieved higher average bonded indicators than the control group. These were statistically significant differences.

Attached factor. The research participants (the experimental group) achieved lower average attached indicators than the control group. These were not, however, statistically significant differences.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The concept of lifestyle branding is a fresh approach to brand positioning (Vial, 2021). Its uniqueness has helped the companies to meet the vast expectation of consumers who have started to desire much more than the pure functionality of the products. Lifestyle brands have gained their admirers both within companies and the customers. They are distinguished by their emphasis on brand values, attitudes, and personalities as well as the desire to create meaningful relationships with customers (Barasa, n.d.).

The contradictory nature of previous studies that explored the relations between lifestyle branding and consumer emotions towards the brand as well as the exploratory nature of authors’ earlier studies, have created the need for further verification of the topic.

The aim of the article was to verify the relations between lifestyle branding and consumers’ emotions towards the brand. In light of the ANOVA analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and statistically significant differences in the types of advertisement, items from the affection, passion, and connection scale dimensions, and interaction between these terms were found, which allowed for further verification of the significant differences between items from the affection, passion, and connection scale dimensions with the use of a post hoc test. The test revealed significant pairwise differences between the items such as friendly, loved, and bonded, and regarding other items from the scale dimensions no such statistically significant differences were confirmed. Thus, all the research hypotheses were rejected: lifestyle branding does not impact brand affection items, brand passion items, and brand connection items. The rejection of the hypotheses shows that lifestyle branding does not bring benefits to enterprises in terms of consumers’ emotions.

The results of the experiment proved surprising. As mentioned in the literature review, the main aim of lifestyle brands is to empower the target audience to associate with a specific lifestyle background, which mirrors their values, beliefs, and interests (Poon, 2014). The advertisement for the experimental group was enriched with the characteristics of a conscious lifestyle. However, the results did
not reveal any significant differences between the emotions that were present in contact with both advertisements. It seems possible that these results are conditioned by the lack of identification with the present lifestyle by the majority of respondents. It is advisable for future research to conduct the experiment on respondents identifying themselves with the verifying lifestyle. Another possible explanation is that the research investigated a fictional brand. As affective loyalty is the second stage of loyalty and its occurrence is determined by the presence of a positive experience with the brand, a fictional brand may not induce the feelings that a familiar brand can.

5. Management implications

There are some management implications that the study may indicate. The cases of Oatly, Airbnb, and Nike as well as the experimental study of the fictional brand may be considered an inspirational benchmark for brand managers who consider incorporating lifestyle branding. Although the studies indicated that the application of lifestyle branding does not influence the brand-related effects with regard to the affective ones, managers could attempt to change their brand into the lifestyle one, bearing in mind the need for prior tests and the moderate level of associated risk. It can be predicted that the unfamiliar brands may not indicate quite as many feelings as well-known brands can. Furthermore, the author believes that, in due time, more and more consumers in Poland will start to familiarise themselves with the lifestyle branding concept; such a change would probably allow the companies to take more advantage of incorporating this concept.

6. Limitations of the study and future research directions

Certain limitations of the conducted experiment were identified. As regards the advertisement, the use of the fictional brand might have influenced the affective effects, which are the second stage of consumers’ loyalty, after the cognitive one (Oliver, 1999). Therefore, to develop an affective loyalty, cognitive loyalty must be already expanded. With this in mind, the respondents did not have the ability to develop affective loyalty as when they became familiar with the brand for the first time. Hence, future research may attempt to investigate an already existing brand. Another limitation is that the concept of lifestyle branding is just emerging in Poland, and thus the respondents may not be familiarised with its purpose. There is a possibility that changing the country of conducting the research could influence its results. The following limitation is connected with the previous one, and is based on the data collection method. Since the study used convenient sampling, the knowledge of the respondents on a given topic remains unknown. As the conducted experiment requires a certain knowledge of lifestyle branding content, the lack of it
might have influenced its results. Therefore, it may be advisable for future research to explain the topic in advance or carry out the research on respondents already familiar with lifestyle branding. The lack of a coherent scale is another limitation of the conducted study. The chosen scale was felt to be the most appropriate yet not the perfect one. Since the experiment focused on the advertisement, not the brand itself, it might have been difficult for the respondents to visualise and pronounce judgment on the actual brand. A future research direction is to develop a scale which would describe the verifying content in a meaningful way. The areas for further research may cover issues such as the impact of lifestyle branding on other brand-related effects, including cognitive or conative loyalty, and the impact of activist branding on consumers’ emotions towards the brand.

References


Słowa kluczowe: marka oparta na stylu życia, emocje konsumentów, analiza jakościowa, studia przypadków, eksperymentalne badanie.