Artistic Brand or Brand with Art?
- Brand and Art Collaborations in the Alcohol Industry

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MASTER PAPERS
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Abstract

Purpose: This article explores the relation between brands and the use of art, and in which way art helps brands in expressing their values and identity. Furthermore, this article will identify the components that characterize Artistic Brands and Brands with Art.

Design/Method/Approach: A qualitative approach will be used, and data will be drawn from six different case studies of brands collaborating with art. The focus will be upon visual art.

Findings: The findings of this study have identified five components that are of importance in brand and art collaborations. These components have further been used to establish differences between the concepts of Artistic Brands and Brands with Art.

Research limitations/implications: This article is constricted to the alcohol industry, and only focus on visual art. There is a possibility for future research to expand this narrow approach to other sectors and to see how other forms of art influence brands.

Originality/Value: The framework identified in this study provides a new theoretical approach that analyzes brand and art collaborations. The research fills in the gap of exploring brand and art cooperation within the alcohol industry. It has prominent significance in characterizing Artistic Brands and Brands with Art.

Keywords: Art, Branding, Artistic Brands, Brands with Art, Brand Identity, Visual Art

Introduction

Nowadays, there is an increasing number of brands adopting art in the marketing and branding process, making the collaboration with art a popular trend in various industries. Research has been conducted to explore the link between brand and art, including how organizations can express themselves through art to be more visible and reach a global market. It is common for brands to use art as a strategic branding tool. Literature also states how brands utilise art to be successful, by embedding art into the entire brand value system to attain a higher brand equity.

Most research within the field have focused on luxury brands, however, the alcohol industry is also keen on using art in the branding process, and some alcohol brands have been adopting an artistic branding strategy for decades and attained satisfying results. Previous literature does not clearly distinguish between brands that use art occasionally as a marketing strategy, and brands that use art constantly to empower their brand identity. Therefore, this article aims to explore the relationship between brand and art usage in the alcohol industry, to find out in which way art helps brands in enhancing core values and identity, and to distinguish between ‘Artistic Brands’ and ‘Brands with Art’.

Literature Review

The literature review will explain central concepts within brand management such as brand core and identity. Further, research regarding brands connection with art will be discussed to lay a solid foundation for this study.

Brand Core

Brands are what differentiate companies in highly competitive markets, and it is important that brands are managed properly in order to be successful (Wood, 2000). There are many concepts involved in the field of branding and brand management, one of those is called the brand core. The brand core, or the essence of a brand, is the fundamental values which a brand cannot
survive without (Urde, 2016). Urde (2009) states that it does not matter if the core values of a company are clearly defined or not, they are still the foundation of the brand. It is believed that the corporate brand can only be as strong externally as it is internally.

According to Yeoman et al. (2005) the history of a brand is very important to the essence of it. And it is important for managers to understand the brand essence, and how it is perceived by customers, to manage the brand properly. This is supported by brand management literature (Kapferer, 2012) that specifies the importance of managers fully understand the non-negotiable aspects of the brand.

It is further argued by Yeoman et al (2005) that the brand essence should be built in a way that it can capture feelings from perspectives that are both rational and emotional, this can be managed with the implementation of the essence wheel. The essence wheel is describing the product as well as explaining aspects such as ‘what the product does for me’, ‘how the brand makes me feel’ and ‘how the brand makes me look’. The wheel hub is seen as the essence of the brand.

Another perspective that considers the perception of the brand essence is whether the communication effort is laid upon the ancient rhetorical concepts of logos, ethos or pathos. The logos approach aims at attracting consumers through reason and logic thinking while ethos wants to convey trust, and lastly pathos creates connections through emotions. Even if the main focus is on one of these approaches the other aspects cannot be forgotten as they are all needed for effective communication and enables flexibility for the brand. (Urde, 2016) A concept that is closely connected to the brand core is brand identity.

**Brand Identity**

The concept of brand identity has not been discussed throughout history but was rather addressed more frequently in recent years. Companies have an urgent need to build up refined concepts in order to reveal its ‘true self’, differentiate itself from competition as well as resist to change in the long run. This is because, according to Kapferer (2012), companies are now facing problems that are much more complicated than those of the past 20 years: the society is saturated with communication that lacks distinction since most companies, that have not changed their traditional view of customer orientation, are looking very similar.

However, significant differences could appear between the brand identity and the brand image. Whereas the reality of a brand is in one way, the perception of the reality could be completely different. Thus, a conclusion could be drawn that an effective communication is of vital importance as to convey the proper information to stakeholders (Balmer 1998).

Brand’s identity is defined in the identity prism with six interrelated facets influencing one another. These facets help visualizing the process of communication between a brand and its customers. Physique and personality define the message-sender as brands don’t have a real sender with a physical form, reflection and self-image portrait the recipient, and finally relationship and culture connect the sender and the recipient together (Kapferer, 2012).

**Positioning**

The main reason for a company to build a clear positioning is that all consumer choices are comparative, and that a product will only be considered if it comes into the selection process. A clear positioning requires that the company emphasize its distinctive characteristics in order to stand out among its competitors and to appeal to the public. Unlike brand identity who is tied to the brand’s root and is more stable and long-lasting, positioning is competition-oriented; it attacks its competitors’ market shares in the best way, thus it may change accordingly to the expanding competition (Kapferer, 2012).
Within the general concept of a brand’s positioning, competitive positioning is argued to be the core theory and practice. A successful competitive positioning is achieved by the combination of the benefits that the target customers receive from the brand’s offering, which include the price charged, quality delivered, degree of innovation offered, delivery of specific features and degree of customization. Furthermore, an outstanding positioning also builds barriers to imitation which are created by the way company manages its resources and how they develop and accumulate these resources (Hooley et al., 2001).

**Brand Equity**

A brand should have its own element of differentiation in a world full of competition. According to Keller (2006), brand equity is the value directly or indirectly accumulated by the brand benefits. It is also stated that the concept can be thought as added value enriched to a product in the words, thoughts and actions of consumers. Thus, if a company completely understands its brand equity, it has power to influence the minds of consumers. Keller (2006) notes that this power comes from the images, beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, feelings and experiences, which summarizes into brand knowledge. This type of information allows the consumer to create mental memories of characteristics that are linked to the brand and consequently affects the purchasing decision process in terms of price, channel, product, communication and marketing activity. (Keller, 2006)

It is also important to highlight the key role of channel members within the concept of brand equity. According to Leuthesser (1998 cited in Kapferer 2012) the official Marketing Science definition of brand equity refers to “the set of associations and behavior on the part of a brand’s customers, channel members and parent corporation that permits the brand to earn greater volume or greater margins than it could without the brand name”. However, there is a need to clarify the margin aspect of the previous definition. Kapferer (2012) points out the connection between the consumer and financial approaches. For this, he uses three clear terms that specify the process to get financial value. First, brand assets are the sources of influences of a brand, best known as brand awareness. Second, brand strength can be measured by different indicators such as market share, market leadership, market penetration and loyalty rate. Lastly, brand value is achieved when there is profit potential of the brand assets, arbitrated by brand strength.

**The Definition of Arts**

There are various definitions of arts. Dickie (1992, cited in Jelinek 2018) defines art as an artefact, and the status of candidate for appreciation can be conferred upon art. Art concludes expression, representation, formal qualities and aesthetics (Miller 2007, cited in Jelinek 2018 p.296). According to Goodman (1968, cited in Fillis 2009), art can create an aesthetic experience for an audience and an individual’s aesthetic experience includes both sensory and symbolic dimensions. Furthermore, artists can embrace the symbolism by constructing and inferring meaning in their work through literal and semiotic communication processes. Art can also bring emotional satisfaction and pleasure into people’s lives (Carroll 2001 & Eaton 1998, cited in Fillis 2009).

**Visual Arts**

Visual art plays an important role within the art spectra. Sullivan (2010) notes that visual art is a form of human understanding, and the cognitive processes of human understanding are distributed throughout various medias, languages, and contexts used to make meaning of images and objects. Esaak (2018) concludes that visual arts include mediums such as drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, film, printmaking, and the decorative arts which contain ceramics, furniture and interior design, jewelry
making, metal crafting, and woodworking. “visual consumption is a key attribute of an experience economy organized around attention”, where images are “designed to capture eyeballs and build brand names” (Schroeder, 2002, p.3). As for the applicability of visual art, Rodner and Kerrigan (2014) concludes that mainstream businesses use visual art to attract contemporary consumers, and to ensure a sustainable, credible and branded reputation in the future, and this has become increasingly important in the age of social media.

Art as Strategic Branding Tool
Brands use art as a strategic branding tool (Jelinek, 2018, p.294), and art used in marketing evokes a sensual and emotional connection between the brand and the audience (Fillis, 2009). Kapferer (2012) explains that organizations can express themselves through art to be more visible and to reach a global market. Art can be used as a source of renewal and as a competitive advantage by constantly enhancing brand image and personality; as well as by communicating brand identity (Chailan, 2017).

As for the ways to connect art with brands, “involving art can only be successful if it is embedded as an authentic, long-term strategy, and integrated into the entire value system” (Jelinek, 2018, p303). In terms of the significance, for luxury brands, “integrating art consistently and authentically within the whole brand value chain system can lead to a higher brand equity” (Jelinek, 2018, p294).

It can be concluded from previous research that art can be used as a strategic branding tool and helps to add value to the brand. Apart from luxury brands, the wine industry is also very frequent in utilizing and benefiting from cooperating with arts. Wine could be linked to art with its desirable qualities, such as exclusivity and sophistication, which are also common themes within art. (Niekerk & Conradie, 2016) Since there is very limited research regarding art and brand collaborations within the alcohol industry, the aim of this article is to fill the gap in the existing literature base.

Methodology
This article will have a qualitative approach and it will be concluded through multiple case studies concerning different brands who collaborate with visual art. Six cases are collected from the global alcohol industry and will be emphasized on the corporate perspective. According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2015), the use of multiple cases usually provides researchers with a better understanding of the theory of knowledge; which in the long run, could help with the analysis of similar situations. Additionally, Siggelkow (2007, cited in Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson 2015) refers to the case method as valuable for demonstrating the significance of particular research enquiries, for illustrating abstract concepts and for inspiring new thoughts. Thus, given these main points, it can be said that a qualitative approach can provide plausible information that can support the intent of this research.

Case Description
The following cases represent a broad variety of alcoholic beverages that collaborate with visual art.

Absolut Vodka
Absolut Vodka was one of the first corporations to use art in their advertising (Lewis, 1996) and has, since their establishment, become synonymous with concepts such as art and culture (Absolut, n.d.). The first collaboration with an artist was in 1985 (Lewis, 1996).

When the company started to express their values of ‘always striving to make the world a better place’ (The Absolut Company, n.d.) through art, they worked together with already established artists, but now Absolut
Vodka are working with unknown artist. Absolut Vodka has collaborated with painters, illustrators, street artists and photographers to mention a few. (Lewis, 1996)

Multiple advertising campaigns from Absolut Vodka has been filled with art pieces. The campaign ABSOLUT STATEHOOD ran in the beginning of the 1990’s in which artists interpreted the capital of the states in the U.S. (Lewis, 1996). A collaboration from 2017 called #ANightForChange was made by street artists across the globe. In October 2018, a limited-edition bottle was introduced that uses the ink extracted from ‘hate messages’ around the world to spread a message of ‘love’ with Absolut Drop (Absolut, 2018).

Dom Pérignon

Champagne Dom Pérignon is a brand of heritage created in 1668. It commits to express vintage produced by unique creation and first-class quality. (LVMH, n.d.)

Unlike most heritage champagne brands, Dom Pérignon is seeking an alternative path to convey its uniqueness to customers through collaborations with artists. In 2016, the German artist Michael Riedel introduced P2 Monolith, a marble art piece holding a bottle of the Ultimate Dom Pérignon, in the following year, Tokujin Yoshioka designed a luminous tribute to the Dom Pérignon Vintage 2009. Dom Pérignon launched the ‘inspirations 2018’ program with Benjamin Millepied and Dimitri Chamblas as curators. Inviting three choreography artists, three films were conducted with the theme of ‘inspiration’. Moreover, Lenny Kravitz was made the creative director and photographer for Dom Pérignon. His photo exhibition took place in New York in the fall of 2018. (Dom Pérignon, n.d.)

Jiangxiaobai (Joybo)

Jiangxiaobai, a Chinese sorghum liquor brand founded in 2012, has been dedicated to integrate its branding and marketing strategy with art since 2013, the brand has become very popular since its establishment. Jiangxiaobai embeds Chinese pop culture, cartoon figures, resonating and emotional copywriting into its visual design. This visual design covers the bottle design, advertisements, and all other communication forms. In addition, Jiangxiaobai sets up art funds to support young artists in China and regularly holds various art events such as exhibitions, music festivals and graffiti competitions, which correspond to the brand’s mentality (Jiangxiaobai, n.d.).

Johnnie Walker

Since the beginning of the 20th century The Striding Man has been the signature symbol of Johnnie Walker whisky. The man was first created by a cartoonist (Diageo, 2018) and has later been redesigned by sculptors and illustrators. The Striding Man is included in Johnnie Walker’s art collaborations in different materials such as textile (Floating Canvas Company, 2018) and mosaic (Johnnie Walker, 2015).

Many of the art collaborations are used under a limited period of time, one is created by a street artist and used for a series of gift packages (Johnnie Walker, n.d.). In 2018 a limited-edition whisky was introduced, collaborating with the HBO series Game of Thrones, named The White Walker by Johnnie Walker. (Johnnie Walker, 2018)

Ron Zacapa

Ron Zacapa Centenario is an expression of patience, quality, richness and master blending that is crafted in Guatemala (Ron Zacapa, 2018). The history of Guatemala is rooted into the Maya Culture, which is still alive in the language, traditions and art across the multiple departments that build the country. Ron Zacapa wanted to portray this heritage in every bottle by decorating them with a ring made of the traditional fibers of the leaves of palm trees named ‘petate’. (Barman in red, 2012)
In April 2018, Ron Zacapa decided to launch a new product: Ron Zacapa Ambar, which has a subtler taste. It collaborated with four Mexican illustrators that could reinterpret the classic cocktails such as Mojito, Piña Colada, Cuba Libre and Daiquiri by using more colors and creativity. Each of the Mexican artists had a different style, which made every drink different, modern and unique. The illustrations were displayed at the launching event to convince the guests that a cocktail can be a work of art if Ron Zacapa Ambar is one of the main ingredients. (Barman in red, 2012)

**Tequila Herradura**

Awarded with the ‘World’s Most Gold Medal Tequila’, Casa Herradura is dedicated to its tradition and offers outstanding innovation. The value chain of Casa Herradura is characterized from the moment the Jimadors gather the best agave nectar to the oak barrel-aging process, which makes Tequila Herradura’s final product a complete work of art. (Herradura, 2018)

Compromised with the creativity of its society, Casa Herradura sponsorships ‘Common People’ which is the largest concept store in Latin America that integrates designers, brands, creatives, artists, musicians, entrepreneurs and chefs to create a superior art-based shopping experience. Casa Herradura, wanted to expand its support in the artistic world. As a result, the program ‘Art in Barrels’ was created with the purpose to encourage artists to communicate their feelings and thoughts about the brand using the iconic White Oak barrel of Tequila Herradura. Each year, Herradura will exhibit the barrels as a way to boost art and to enhance the brand equity in the long run. (Herradura, 2018)

**Case Analysis and Results**

Taking in consideration the facts and situations previously stated, theory will be applied to analyze the brand and art collaborations.

**Absolut Vodka**

As seen in the Absolut Vodka case, art can be a very important part of a brand’s identity and image. The art is connected to the core of the company and this connection is clearly stated as the company has “become synonyms with art” (Absolut, n.d.). The art and brand connection is shown through their campaign #ANightForChange where Absolut Vodka try to bring communities together and lessen social gaps within the society and through their newest bottle design Absolut Drop, where the ink from previously harmful messages are used to spread positivity and love. These campaigns are clearly connecting to Absolut Vodkas core values of ‘improving the world’.

Absolut Vodka has chosen not to collaborate with the same artist for all its projects as that would limit the modes of expression of the company values. By using different artists, the company has been able to progress and formulate their messages in unpredictable ways, which helps them distinguish themselves on the market. They are not dependable on one person to communicate their values and messages and Absolut Vodka is not clearly promoting collaborations by introducing the artist by name.

By having a long experience in art and brand collaborations and by working with different types of artists, Absolut Vodka knows how to, as Fillis (2009) states, market themselves through art and evoke emotions among their customers. Absolut Vodkas artful marketing efforts can also be connected to Urde’s (2016) pathos, ethos and logos approach. This is mostly done by appealing to emotional reasoning, as it tries to persuade consumers to be a part of the Absolut community. However, Absolut Vodka is also using their most recent campaign, Absolut Drop, to convey trust by the corporate strive to create a better world.
Lastly, Absolut Vodka speaks to rational decision makers by expressing that they are delivering a high-quality vodka with only pure ingredients.

Dom Pérignon

Three elements shape the brand’s identity. The first is vintage. The House of Dom Pérignon communicates its heritage through the bottle design and the label which has never been changed (Juhlin, 2010). Secondly, Dom Pérignon promises quality by stating that each bottle of champagne is to be made out of the finest grapes. The third element that composes the identity is the creation that lies within the production process of blending two types of grapes to create a unique vintage each year. This aspect enhanced with art, has been the focus of brand positioning and communication.

Dom Pérignon started to collaborate with Michael Riedel in 2016 to launch a limited-edition sculpture of marble with an art implication and practical use. It showed Dom Pérignon’s identity of quality and creation through the material and shape of the art piece. As art in marketing evokes a sensual, emotional connection between the brand and the audience, Dom Pérignon was clearly working on the pathos perspective in its communication to portrait their core values.

Further on in 2017 the Japanese artist Tokujin Yoshioka designed an art piece with very limited functional use. Inspired by the words of Dom Pérignon himself - ‘I’m drinking stars!’ - the artist presented the crystal tribute ‘Prism’, using light to illustrate a vibrant spectrum as an indication of the complexity and richness of the champagne given by the sun. This tribute was only placed and limited to Dom Pérignon Vintage 2009 (Dom Pérignon, 2017).

Two French directors, Benjamin Millepied and Dimitri Chamblas conducted the ‘inspirations 2018’ program. Inspired by Chef de Cave’s creation process as well as the brand’s heritage, they conducted three different short films with three contemporary choreography artists, intending to emphasis on ‘inspiration’ itself rather than to bridge an intimate relationship between the artists and the brand. On one hand, with a clear understanding of the intention of the collaboration, this aligns well with the brand’s creative core. On the other hand, the collaboration is displayed on the homepage of the House without a vivid explanation of the purpose, therefore customers who are skimming through the website would easily be confused and interpret the content and the purpose of the films in their own ways.

The well-known Lenny Kravitz is the creative director of Dom Pérignon. His collaboration with the House started in 2018 and he had in-depth conversations with Chef de Cave to understand the champagne making process and the identity. Therefore, Kravitz was able to convene a group of artists, designers, models, athletes etc. to join a party where inspirations collided between people, and he captured these floating inspirations in his striking photographs, which we exhibited in the New York City (PR Newswire, 2018). This collaboration did not focus on any particular product and the emphasis was on the artist. Dom Pérignon is obviously profiting from the artist’s reputation and its appearance in social media like Instagram (Dom Pérignon, 2018), which is a very useful tool to communicate with young customers. Hence the collaboration could also be considered as a method to target on a new customer segment.

Since art is emotional and interpretation of art differs significantly among customers, the brand may in some way risk establishing a vague positioning, because a good positioning should be conveyed and received in the same way; however, as positioning also requires that the brand perform distinctive characteristics in order to outstand the competition, Dom Pérignon are very likely to be using art as a strategic
tool in the effort of repositioning themselves.

**Jiangxiaobai**

The core value of Jiangxiaobai is ‘Joy above all’, and it advocates simplicity and purity. Jiangxiaobai changes the conservative image of traditional Chinese liquor from getting people consoled physically to getting people connected affectionately. Jiangxiaobai builds their brand from the inside-out, meaning that the brand kernel is expanded to the communication. Departing from the brand core, it develops a series of product categories: the ‘Expression Bottle’, the ‘Joyouth’, the ‘Intimate Friend’, the ‘Gold Label’, the ‘Share with 10 Guys’, and the ‘Taste of Chongqing’, each of them targets different market segments or occasions by using different forms of visual arts (Jiangxiaobai, n.d.).

The integration of brand identity with art is very strong. The brand logo is inspired by the meaning of ‘xiaobai’ which expresses a confidence and modest life attitude among young people. When introducing the ‘Joyouth’ product, Jiangxiaobai created a cartoon figure of a boy named Joybo, a very common figure who can be seen as a self-reflection of the young Chinese population (Jiangjdistillery, n.d.).

What makes the brand famous is its affectionate and emotion-arousing copywriting displayed on the bottle. The ‘Expression Bottle’ series uses large fonts on a short sentence, matching backgrounds with realistic illustrations. The sentences express a variety of messages that arouse emotions and thinking. By utilizing different forms of visual art to communicate the brand essence, the company creates strong emotional connections, resulting in the resonance of the target audience, and achieving effective communication (Sina, 2017).

Although Jiangxiaobai is a young brand, it has been cooperating with art through the most of its existence and the collaborations focus more on the product than the artist. Jiangxiaobai works with artists to strengthen the brand identity. In 2013, Jiangxiaobai founded the Youth Art Support Fund to sponsor young people who are passionate about art. Supported by the fund, the annual Contemporary Young Artists Invitational Exhibition is held to integrate Chinese youth culture with art (Sina, 2018).

There is a wide range of artists such as contemporary literature writers, cartoonists, painters, and street dancers that the brand collaborates with. Furthermore, Jiangxiaobai produced a video series for their cartoon figure ‘Joybo’, making the figure a cultural identity with clear personality (Sohu, 2017).

The company also collaborated with the cartoonists Zhangxiaoho and Haolang to create the series of ‘Connections’ and ‘Seeing the Cute World’, illustrations that will be used on the packaging, and to hold cartoon exhibitions. Jiangxiaobai have created a lot of buzz and enjoyed a great success nationwide, which is shown in the extensive annual sales increase, over the past six years (Sina, 2017).

**Johnnie Walker**

Johnnie Walker connects their art collaborations to limited edition products, which means that they try to create exclusiveness and a more luxurious atmosphere by incorporating art in these special products. They try to position themselves differently compared to competitors (Kapferer, 2012) by creating a collector’s series that is made by a talented street artist as well as limited-edition whisky that uses special ink on the bottle to display a message connected to the Game of Thrones TV series when the bottle is frozen.

Even though art collaborations regarding products is a relative new thing within Johnnie Walker, they are not unfamiliar with the incorporation of art into the company, as they have been working with different forms of artists to visualize the
Striding Man since the beginning of the 20th century. The Striding Man started out as a cartoon figure that appeared in Johnnie Walker’s advertising to showcase the typical consumer of their product, and as time went by the image of the Striding Man changed to accurately fit society (VinePair, 2017). This shows that it has been important for the company to relate to their customers and create added value by evoking emotions and a sense of friendship with the Striding Man and by that, the company. Today the Striding Man is the logotype of Johnnie Walker, embodying the luxurious gentleman image of the typical Johnnie Walker consumer (Johnnie Walker, n.d.), it has been a long-term project to successfully (Jelinek, 2018) attach the image of the company to that of the prosperous Striding Man. The personality and physique of the company (Kapferer, 2012) is expressed through the Striding Man.

Ron Zacapa

With 42 years in the market, Ron Zacapa keeps receiving awards and recognitions worldwide. ‘The Art of Slow’, as they call it, is the main philosophy behind the excellent and unique characteristics that represent Ron Zacapa. Lorena Vásquez, master blender, compares this ideology to painting a picture as it is a detailed process that takes time between layers but instead of playing with colors, they play with scents and flavors (Ron Zacapa, 2018). As a result, there is a perfect mixture between science and art.

Proud of its origins, Ron Zacapa is deeply committed with its people to generate more jobs. Indigenous women can contribute, without leaving their home, by handcrafting the iconic ‘petate’ decoration that distinguish each of the brand’s bottles. For many years, this image has not only helped the brand to keep its positioning as a premium liquor in several markets, but also to preserve its personality deeply attached to its roots.

‘The house above the clouds’, where Ron Zacapa takes its slow aging process, is located 2,300 meters above the sea level, which benefits the production with low temperatures and less oxygen. However, being blessed with high quality raw materials and unique surroundings does not mean that there is no space for innovation. On the contrary, the brand core is not about perfecting the technique, is about the passion and curiosity of discovering new things. In this sense the master blender team tries to incorporate art within the production process with the purpose of having a new result that could differentiate Ron Zacapa from the rest of the market.

Ron Zacapa released ‘The Art of Slow series’ in which it shows different stories of chefs around the world. Each trailer has different interpretations of the ‘The Art of Slow’ ideology but they all agree that art in any expression will require time and dedication to successfully show the uniqueness of the piece of art. Ron Zacapa brand’s equity is aimed to influence the consumers’ perspective towards the idea of taking things slow and appreciate things that surround you as both of them could guide you to achieve great things.

Ron Zacapa wanted to maintain and portray its core values and beliefs at the launching event of Ron Zacapa Ambar. Mexican artists’ illustrations combined the traditional cocktails with the contemporary elements of the art style and the subtle flavor of the new product. One of the success factors of the event was the mixture of visual arts from illustrations to 3D figures that completely capture the essence of Ron Zacapa.

Tequila Herradura

For the past 145 years, Casa Herradura has never stopped trying to enhance the world’s best tequila while portraying that Mexican culture goes beyond a drink. The essence of Herradura is closely related to taking care of every detail of make things right, meaning that there are no shortcuts to achieve greatness (Herradura, 2018). One of the strongest brand beliefs is about creating its own luck instead of leaving everything to
chance. In this sense, Herradura wants to highlight that success is only earned by continuous hard work and innovation.

Parcerisa (2017) states that the acquisition of Herradura by Brown Foreman changed the positioning strategy towards a premium market that represents 17% of the tequila industry, of this figure, 12% belongs to Herradura. Enrique Gavica, Marketing Director of Brown Foreman, indicates that the transformation was gradual and subtle to maintain the existent consumers and gain new ones (Parcerisa, 2017). The primary objective was to engage with the consumer instead of leaving the consumers with a temporary role. According to Gavica, the new image of Tequila Herradura is aimed to depict the Contemporary Mexico and that, in spite of having 145 years of history, it did not refer to something old and outdated. There was also a motivation to reinterpret the Mexican iconography by showing the urban life and symbols from a more elegant perspective. (Parcerisa, 2017)

According to Berrueco’s (2017), Tequila Herradura in 2017 launched ‘Made from Mexico’, for the third time, a national campaign that represented the sophistication and incarnation of the Mexican spirit. He also emphasizes that Herradura wanted the consumers to understand that ‘Made from Mexico’ was not only symbolizing that the product was originally from that country, but also that it was prepared with the best of the nation. Unlike its competitors, Herradura engages with its own culture by supporting young artists from different fields, to follow their dream without forgetting their heritage. Therefore, it can be said that Herradura’s brand equity is characterized by bringing together the old and contemporary culture of Mexico with the help of artists’ expressions.

Herradura, motivated by the creative tequila-making process, inaugurated the Barrel Art Program in 2013, in which artists in seven cities across the U.S. could have the opportunity to reinvent, transform and re-craft the iconic White Oak barrel into a work of art. Each year, the winners of the participating cities receive an award of $10,000 and an invitation to the final competition that takes place in Miami. (Smith, 2013) Herradura also donates $70,000 to Creative Capital, a non-profit organization that supports adventurous and innovative artists. (Herradura, 2018).

In conclusion, several similarities have been found by comparing the case analysis. For example, companies have in general been engaging a wide range of visual arts using online and offline sources. Jiangxiaobai and Tequila Herradura have not only engaged art in their brand but also set up funds to support artists and boost artistic creation. Despite the same will of applying art in the brand, different paths have been observed throughout the case study process.

Whether art is embedded in the brand identity or in the production process is counted as one of the big differences. Art is clearly constructing the core of Absolut Vodka and Ron Zacapa, while both Johnnie Walker and Jiangxiaobai used cartoon figures as a part of the brand identity. Dom Pérignon and Tequila Herradura, on the other hand, had an indirect link between the art collaborations and their brand identities. Secondly, art has been related to most of the brand for a long time, except for Dom Pérignon and Ron Zacapa whose collaborations with art occur in limited periods. Furthermore, Dom Pérignon displays collaboration artists’ names in capital letters on the company webpage, clearly profiting from the popularity of the artists, whilst others emphasis on how art pieces are adding value to the products and the brands in general. However, as Johnnie Walker and Ron Zacapa place attention to the profitability of brand and product, they have also displayed the artists’ names around the art pieces.

Components
As a result of the case analysis, it has been possible to identify different components
that are prominent within the field of art and brand collaborations as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**: Components

The ‘integration’ component refers to the degree of connection between the identity of the brand and visual art. A brand with high integration shows a deep correlation when stakeholders can perceive the brand core throughout the artistic activities while low integration indicates that the identity is not incorporated in the final artistic work. The ‘time frame’ indicates the period of time in which the artistic collaboration has been happening. This can be evaluated from two perspectives, firstly, the number of years that the brand has been using art and, secondly, for how long of the brands existence it has been using art.

The factor of ‘involvement’ specifies the depth of the relationship with the artist. A brand with high involvement will show great concern of making the artist known to the public while in low involvement the brand will not clearly state the author of the artwork. The ‘focus’ component refers to the main purpose of the collaboration. Product focus describes a brand that highlights the features of a certain product using art whereas an artist focus will drive the attention towards the creator of the piece of art. The ‘range’ indicates the variety of visual arts that a brand usually uses. A wide range implies more than two types of visual art while narrow makes use of only one or two.

**Artistic Brands and Brands with Art**

Based upon these components it is possible to identify two different types of art collaborations, leading to two brand categories: The Artistic Brand and The Brand with Art. Table 1 showcases the differences between the two brand categories.

Artistic Brands need to fulfill the components in the way stated in Table 1. The integration between the brand and art must be high for an Artistic Brand, as it connects the brand identity with art. In other words, when individuals think of this specific brand, they also think of art. The time frame of using art should be long for an Artistic Brand, which shows that the brand is truly devoted to integrating art into its identity.

**Table 1**: Artistic Brand vs Brand with Art
An Artistic Brand should further have a low involvement with the individual artist as this connects the brand identity with the concept of art rather than the creator behind a specific art piece. This also ensures that the brand reputation is not directly connected to the reputation of the artist.

Furthermore, the focus of the art pieces resulting from the collaboration should be on the product instead of on the artist, meaning that the corporate values of the brand is incorporated into the art but not the promotion of the artist. The last component states that an Artistic Brand should collaborate with multiple visual artists to catch various perspectives of art and create diversity in their communication and expressions.

By using these components Figure 2, shows the classification of Artistic Brands and Brands with Art regarding the cases studied in this article, where the Artistic Brands are displayed on a dark background and the Brands with Art on a light background.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper has explored the connection between brand and art in the alcohol industry based on the case study of six alcohol brands. These cases indicate different approaches of integrating brand and art, involving six components in the collaboration: ‘integration’, ‘time frame’, ‘involvement’, ‘focus’, and ‘range’. Based on the components, the alcohol brands studied are classified into two categories: Artistics Brands and Brands with Art. A brand should fulfill all the six components in accordance with the measurements of Table 1, to be identified as an Artistic Brand. Building an Artistic
Brand can bring a lot of benefits to the brand, including differentiation, unique perception, competitive advantages and barriers of imitation. It also contributes to enhance brand image, strengthen the brand identity, and add value to the brand equity.

Managerial Implications

The framework provides a new theoretical approach to analyze brand and art collaborations. It is a tool with which companies could reflect upon their ongoing strategies to verify the alignment of the collaboration with the brand identity. By categorizing the brands, a company could establish a clear understanding of the identity and position itself accurately among its competitors. Also, companies could examine themselves and make adjustments of the collaboration action plans as well as communication methods to portrait the desired image.

Limitations

The study is constricted to few selected cases, but more brands should be analyzed to support the selection of components of the framework. Moreover, the focus was only on visual art and in the alcoholic industry, thus the application of the framework to different art types and industries have not been discussed. Interviews with the companies are not conducted, therefore the study lacks first-handed corporate insights as well.

Further Research

For further research, case studies based on other industries could be conducted, and interviews with the leading companies using art should be arranged in order to gain a deeper understanding from the corporate perspective. The components of the framework could be further discussed, and the definition of Artistic Brands and Brands with Art may vary as more cases are considered and as companies come up with new ways of applying art in their brand strategy and brand identity.

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