

Folk Motifs as a New trend in Foods and Beverages Packaging Design ^{1,2}

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Abstract

As the number of self-service stores grows, the sales process is also changing, and the salesperson's ability to influence the customer during his purchase is lost. This function is taken over by the packaging of goods whose task is to sell itself. The aim of the article is to present and characterize examples of selected Slovak food and beverages packaging, on which manufacturers have introduced Slovak folk motifs and specify what factor influenced manufactures to use it. This article is divided into two parts. In the first part, we present examples of folk motifs on the packaging of selected Slovak food products and alcoholic beverages. In the second part of this article, we presented the results of a structured interview with 4 managers which introduced on the Slovak market food and beverages packaging with folk motifs. The reason of application of folk motifs on packaging was that employees from these companies are associated with folklore, patriotism and traditions. They honour the traditions of Slovak ancestors and Slovak country and are glad that the time has come when culture and traditions are preferred and supported. Companies sell Slovak products and therefore Slovak folk motifs are listed on packages their products.

Key words

Folklore design, food packaging, beverage packaging, innovation, Slovak

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Introduction

The consumer market is developing every year and the number of competing products from different manufacturers is growing all the time. Every company seeks to invent something new to succeed in a competitive battle between companies offering the same or similar product, to get new customers and keep old ones. Companies use different marketing tools to achieve this aim. Basic marketing tools known as "4P" include: product, price, place and promotion. The time has advanced and there are currently various

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extensions to this concept. One of them is that some marketers consider packaging (Draskovic, 2007) as another very important, least costly and most effective marketing tool, the "fifth P". Kotler and Keller (2006) argue that most buying decisions are made on the basis of impulses, which is why packaging needs to perform many tasks:

- catch attention,
- describe product characteristics,
- create trust and make a positive impression on the customer.

Products packaging that targets markets other than the home market must also meet export requirements or requirements from supply chain partners. It is necessary to use a smaller package size in markets with lower incomes to become the low-cost products, while in emerging markets, environmental issues play an increasingly important role, which manufacturers realize when designing packaging. Entry into a new market requires thorough analysis, which also includes packaging requirements, as the packaging has become an important marketing tool for companies and needs to adapt to cultural factors on the local market (Rundh, 2016).

More than a thousand new products (Rundh, 2016) are presented on supermarket shelves per month as part of the rapid movement of goods. The design of primary packaging is important, because it acts as a "silent trader", protecting content, informing and persuading consumers. On the other hand, secondary packaging is not only functional during transport, but it can also influence consumer behavior and serve as an advertising tool by utilizing the aesthetic and functional components of the packaging. Unique and attractive packaging through its material, shape, color, and graphics from modern printing technology offers new opportunities for creative design. Consumers are often willing to pay more for luxury packaging, comfort, appearance, better handling. Growing environmental issues should be considered in relation to packaging too (Rundh, 2016).

"Innovation" means any change made in the production process, either capacity, material, organizational, technological or other which can influence the quality of the final product and is expected to bring a direct or indirect economic effect such as profit, increase in turnover or consolidated market position (Lacková, 2017). As stated in the Oslo manual, innovation means any implementation of a new or significantly improved product, new marketing or organizational method in business practice. The company can make many types of changes to improve its productivity and commercial performance. The guide defines four types of innovations, including a wide range of business activity changes: product, process, organizational and marketing innovation, which involves the introduction of a new or significantly improved product design or packaging, implement product placement changes, product promotions, or product price policy changes in order to make the product and service more attractive, to better meet customer needs, to enter new markets or to create a new product position (Oslo Manual, 2005).

According to Kačénák (2011), packaging design means include the coloring of packaging, the font and text used on the label, drawing and photography, the shape of the packaging, and finally the packaging material used.

Each design has defined goals and functions. We can classify design goals and functions from multiple perspectives. From an economic point of view, it is about increasing the attractiveness of goods and improving their position on the global market. From a humane point of view, the goal of design is to humanize the current technology

and its products, bringing aesthetic value to machine civilization. From a social point of view, design increases the value of taste and increases the standard of living of each person (Knošková, 2014).

According to Brunner (2016) design fulfills three basic functions. Functional – it is related to the ability of a product to fulfill its primary purpose for which product was created. The second one - aesthetic function which focuses on how consumers perceive the appearance and beauty of packaging and what pleasure it will bring to the consumer when using it. The last one - symbolic function which reflects the thinking or value of the symbols through which it communicates with consumers (Brunner, 2016).

Symbols placed on product packages can perform several functions (e.g. help consumers to categorize the product immediately into the appropriate category of goods, identify the country of origin, easily identify the purpose or use of the product, help identify specific users of the product). There can be a sign that expresses consumer confidence or means of communication to express a specific lifestyle. The meaning of symbols is the result of the process of consumer socialization (cultural meanings or symbolic meanings) and without them the symbolic design cannot be used (Brunner, 2016).

In recent years, there has been a new trend of placing national symbolism on product packaging in order to present the nationality of the product. The national symbolism of each nation is different, unique, and as a result, manufacturers can gain a competitive advantage by placing national elements on packaging. The national symbolism can be displayed on the cover verbally, such as "Slovak" or visually. Visuals can be displayed either through signs and symbols of the nation, including the national emblem, flag, seal and color or with the help of cultural elements in the form of folk motifs and customs, or lace ornaments and illustrations depicting the country.

1 Methodology

The aim of the article is to present and characterize examples of selected Slovak food and beverages packaging, on which manufacturers have introduced Slovak folk motifs, and also specify what factors influenced manufactures to do it.

In the first part of our article we have given examples of folklore motifs presented on the packaging of selected Slovak food products and alcoholic beverages. As stated in the Oslo manual (2005), one of the types of innovation is marketing innovation, which involves the Introduction of a new or significantly improved product design or packaging in order to make the product more attractive. According to the authors of this article, the innovation of food packaging design is an implementation of folk motifs on the food and beverages packaging, e.g. lace, folk embroidery. For this reason, in the second part of the article, we presented the results of a structured interview with 4 managers representing some of the 8 selected companies listed in the article that introduced on the Slovak market food and beverages packaging with folk motifs. Other companies did not respond to our request about the interview.

The interview contained six questions, e.g.

1. What do you understand by „packaging innovation“?
2. How often does your company change packaging design?
3. In your opinion, what impression should the consumer have on the new packaging of your product?
4. What are your company's expectations from new packages design with folk motifs their products?
5. What factors influenced on your decision to use Slovak folk motifs on food or beverages packaging?
6. In your opinion, what are the current trends in food packaging design?

In the results of our interview with company managers in case of similar answers we combine them and present them as one answer. We present them each one separately. We do not list company names, managers' names, because it was a condition for us to receive honest answers to our questions.

The results relate only to the surveyed entities. They cannot be generalized because the research sample was not representative.

2 Results and Discussion

2.1 Impact of landscape culture on food products packaging design

According to Kotler (2007), culture is defined as an educational way of life that is characteristic of a certain group of people and represents a set of recognized and shared values, customs and rituals, opinions and attitudes towards domestic and international life, language and aesthetic system, including folklore, music, art and literature.

The strategic goal of all Slovak stores operating on the Slovak market is currently more intensive support for Slovak production, interesting regional food and specialties. Reserved shelves, special leaflets and other activities are examples of this strategy.

Folklore is one of the current trends in the Slovak Republic, to which manufacturers and retailers respond by placing folk motifs on their product packaging. The discovery of folklore in Slovakia is a direct phenomenon.

Figure 1 Packaging of "Bryndza Liptov"



Source: <https://www.nasliptov.sk/>

Its reflection is in fashion, design and food. Companies and brands like Savencia Fromage & Dairy Slovakia, COOP Jednota, Šariš, Rajo and others use folk motifs on their

products. First of the examples is the Slovak Liptov lace which is located on the packaging of sheep cheese – Bryndza from Savencia Fromage & Dairy Slovakia Company (Figure 1). This folk motif caused that the Liptov brand has become more visible and we can find it on packaging in the entire product line (www.retailmagazin.sk, 2018).

The Company COOP Jednota Slovakia uses fictitious lace designed by the graphic studio on the packaging of its products with brand "Traditional Quality" and „Mom’s goodies which was inspired by several types of Slovak folk lace. The philosophy of these brands is to offer consumers traditional Slovak products, the tastes that the consumer is accustomed to since childhood and to guarantee that the products were made in Slovakia. Figure 2 illustrates the packaging of "Mummy’s Goodies" products.

Figure 2 "Mummy's Goodies" food brand by the Coop Jednota



Source: <https://www.coop.sk/>

The new design of Slovak Šariš beer cans (Figure 3) is based on traditional folk embroidery, which had an identification function in the past. Based on embroidery, the village, social background or even whether a person was single or married was recognized.

Figure 3 Cans of "Saris" beer



Source: <https://www.saris.sk/>

There are two kinds of embroidery on the cans of beers - cross (from 14th - 15th century) and bold (late 18th and early 19th centuries). They are more ornate and come from six villages of eastern Slovakia from Torysky, Kendice, Rejdová, Ždiar, Úpor and from today's non-existent village Blažov (www.teraz.sk, 2018).

Other example is Rajo brand. Rajo's marketing communication is based on the linking of Slovak traditions and customs with product packaging. Company created a new Salt Slovak edition of products, whose packaging is inspired by Slovak motifs with red-blue colors (Figure 4) (www.medialne.blog.etrend.sk, 2018a). The main idea of this marketing communication is that "Not everything that looks like traditional Slovak product, is such a product"(www.medialne.blog.etrend.sk, 2018b).

Figure 4 Packaging of acidophilic milk from "Rajo"



Source: <https://www.rajo.sk/>

Another example from this brand is packages of yogurt. Rajo company launched in 2018 on the Slovak market a series of "Thick Traditional Yogurts" (Figure 5) which are made by the traditional crucible maturing method. It is sold in various flavors or as a basic variant without additional flavors. The special packaging design is inspired by the traditional Slovak craft of blueprint which was included in the UNESCO cultural heritage. By blueprinting we call indigo – a blue-colored substance, decorated with pattern suppression using the so-called 'reserve', which is preventing the substance from staining the pattern. This technique came from Holland and Germany. It's been in Slovakia since the 18th century. The company wanted to highlight the traditional yogurt production through this packaging.

Figure 5 "Rajo" Thick Traditional Yogurt



Source: <https://www.rajo.sk/>

Besides folklore elements, also the history of Slovakia was the inspiration for packaging designers. An example can be the Slovak gin "Gin Gin" (Figure 6), which is based on the tradition of ancient herbal medicine, macerating herbs and fruits with medicinal effects in home-made spirits. The bottle design of Slovak gin comes from pharmacy and resembles old medicine bottles or liquor. The color of the bottle is cyan blue inspired again by the original Slovak blueprint, which was used in history for dressing and decorating textiles. The color of the text on the label is a combination of gold and silver, with the first word in silver and the other in gold, which are references to the mining history of Slovakia (extracting gold and silver). The font on the label is in the old style and the bottom of the label contains several herbs and fruits which are displayed in gold. Another interesting feature of this product is its cork cap with metal ring, which is usually used for wines (www.ochutnaj.praveslovenske.sk, 2018).

Figure 6 "Gin Gin" product



Source: <https://www.bottles.sk/gin/gin-gin-0.70l/>

Another example is KARLOFF Company, which has redesigned the TATRATEA bottle. Originally, this product was sold under the name "Tatranský čaj" (Tatratea).

Figure 7 The old packaging of TATREATEA

TATRATEA 2004 - 2009



Source: <https://www.startitup.sk/jedinecny-dizajn-slovenskych-vyrobkov-vychadzajuci-z-nasej-tatranskej-prirody-zarezoval-aj-vo-svete/>

The reason for the redesign of the bottle was to export this product to the Czech market and Polish. While there was no problem with the original design in the Czech Republic, another situation occurred in Poland. Syrup was sold in similar bottles in Poland (Figure 7). Business partners therefore recommended them to come back when the company will have something more interesting, otherwise nobody will buy it in Poland.

The new packaging design best reflects the origin of the product and the Tatras region from where it comes (Figure 8).

Figure 8 The new packaging of TATRATEA



Source: <https://www.startitup.sk/jedinecny-dizajn-slovenskych-vyrobkov-vychadzajuci-z-nasej-tatranskej-prirody-zarezoval-aj-vo-svete/>

The shape of the bottle comes from objects that tourists take to the mountains. The TATRATEA bottle resembles a tea thermos and the bottle cap has cutouts on the sides as they are on flashlights, a flatbed or a watch. The logo is a capital letter "T" in the middle of a bottle inspired by traditional folklore patterns from village Čičmany and Old Slavic elements symbolizing earth, life, flora and fauna (Figure 9) (www.startitup.sk, 2018).

Figure 9 Products from KARLOFF Company



Source: <https://www.karloff.sk/>

The new design of this bottle has won several awards at international competitions such as: bronze medal of "European design award 2010" in the subcategory packaging of alcoholic beverages, Gold trophy and packaging design certificate at the Penta Awards in Shanghai in 2010, National Design Award 2011 and Packaging Oscar for the entire TATRATEA. The most acclaimed "Red dot design award" was awarded to Karloff twice (for the first time in 2010 for the design of the Tatratea series and the second time in 2017 for the CZECHOSLOVAKIA VODKA) (www.karloff.sk, 2019).

Another product of this company, whose design is also inspired by the national elements of the Slovak Republic, is CZECHOSLOVAKIA VODKA. The design of this product commemorates the fraternity of two nations, represents countries and contains significant places in the Czech and Slovak Republic. Colors are symbolic. Golden and silver represents Czech art and intellect (www.startitup.sk, 2018). Figure 7 shows the range of TATRATEA products and the CZECHOSLOVAKIA VODKA product from KARLOFF. Other elements that indicate to the customer that the product comes from Slovakia is the quality label SK, which is allocated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, voluntary indication of the country of the producer, such as the slogan: "made in Slovakia", Slovak flag or other state symbols (www.hnonline.sk, 2016).

The AGROKARPATY Plavnica Company launched herbal teas in packaging made from wood. The packaging presents an elderly woman collecting herbs. There is a folk motif in the bottom of this packaging (Figure 10). The packaging is hand-painted.

Figure 10 Tea in Wooden Cassette - Painted



Source: <https://www.agrokarpaty.com/>

LEVICKÉ MLIEKÁRNE a.s. is one of the oldest dairy companies on the Slovak market. It has been producing dairy products continuously since 1953 and during this time it has built three strong brands NIVA ORIGINAL, TEKOVSKÝ SALÁM SYR and BABIČKA. All these trademarked brands cover a wide range of products produced from the Tekov region cow's milk with using technology proven for decades. The company is also trying to transform all these product benefits into packaging. Their application is not only in the form of brand logo, pictograms and texts, but also in the form of graphic elements evoking the emotions of the benefits. One of the company's products is shown on the figure 11.

Figure 11 Tekov smoked grill cheese



Source: <http://levmilk.sk/produkty/prirodne-syry>

2.2 The results of a structured interview with managers from companies that have launched folk motifs on food packaging

On the first question "What do you understand by „packaging innovation“? The managers responded that they understand this term as change of graphics, text, any renewal of the old packaging (material or design) or introducing a new package on the market. In practice, companies combine innovation most often with a change in overall packaging image or by improving its functionality. A strong societal appeal to the environmental performance of packaging is increasingly persuading manufacturers to gain a competitive advantage by introducing eco-friendly packaging, thus contributing to resource renewal.

In the next question, we have asked how often companies change packaging design. The companies change the packaging design according to their own needs, needs of suppliers, customers, the law. The rapid development of technology, the pressure to use renewable resources, but also the globalization of markets, forces manufacturers to impulsively change packaging as planned. When placing a new product and packaging on the market, no one can assume how long the packaging will deliver the desired effect on the market. The most common impetus for changing packaging design is the launch

of new products, but also the need to differentiate from the competition (the company's motto is BE DIFFERENT).

„In the third question, we asked, "In your opinion, what impression should the consumer have from the new packaging of your product? " The companies responded as follows:

“The consumer should have a pleasant impression from the packaging; the packaging should be so homely... „

“The design should be in line with current trends, it should produce a desire for a product that is something new, nice...„

“Every new product package, not just ours, should first and foremost attract the attention of the customer, induce him / her to interest in the product, and bring it to the stock, i.e. to buy...„

In the fourth question, we wanted to know what are the company expectations in relation to the new packaging folk design. The companies responded that the main goals are attracting the consumer's attention, bringing him to the purchase and thus increasing the company's turnover, as well as making a good reputation with the customer, clearly strengthening and developing the community of customers with a positive relationship to the products.

In the penultimate question, we asked companies' managers „What factors influenced your decision to use Slovak elements such as Slovakian suppository, folk costumes or use a type of folk ornament? Managers responded that executives and employees of these companies are united with folklore, patriotism and traditions. They honor the traditions of our ancestors, our country. They are glad that the time has come when culture and traditions are preferred and supported. Companies sell Slovak products and therefore these ornaments are listed on both sides of these products.

Trends in the packaging area are changing very quickly that's why in the last question we asked managers "What are the current trends in food packaging design?" The different responses were as follows:

“In terms of trends in food packaging, product design, these include environmental sustainability, the minimum environmental impact, also their close ability, ease of handling and shelf life. The packaging design itself demands the aesthetic image of the products, the readability of the texts, and the uniqueness of the label”.

“Priority from just "affectionate" packaging moves from quality, functionality to the environment. Another progressive element is also the form of the packaging printing method, where low series printing is preferred. It is a consequence of the necessity to bring new products to the market and repeatedly try consumer perceptions”.

“Current trends in packaging are folk motifs from the world, natural materials associated with a distinctive element. Slovak symbols not have to be only folklore motifs. We find inspiration also in nature, people or in the overall shape of our country”.

“We consider the trend to use folk motifs on food packaging as a positive trend. In our opinion, it gives consumers a sense of belonging to the nation, people or traditions and folklore. It also evokes with the consumer that these are Slovak products with a long tradition. It is for this reason we have decided to use folk motifs on the packaging

of our new product line. Specifically, it is the use of traditional Tekov lace, which should evoke to consumers that our products are manufactured in the area of Tekov, with a long tradition and traditional recipe”.

It can be concluded that the Slovak food market has a larger share of foreign products than Slovak products (Jarossová, 2017). The food producers are using folk motifs on the packages, to attract consumers to buy Slovak products and thus support the Slovak economy.

Conclusion

The packaging industry is constantly evolving. Today, packaging is not only protecting the product from damage, but through design communicates with consumers, and is a major promoter in a competitive marketplace creating brand identity.

The packaging designers were once regarded as commercial artists, currently appearing as marketing professionals who not only solve design problems, but also help in finding solutions to marketing problems, and they must know their craft, follow the development of the market, be an illustrator, control verbal and visual communication and, last but not least, they must be able to adapt to the requirements of the manufacturer, the trader, the intermediary, the consumer and the authority imposing regulations and restrictions. Designers must also address the issues of functionality, hygiene, social responsibility and efficiency in product packaging design. On the other hand, from the consumers' perspective, the idea of design narrows down only to the visual-aesthetic solution of the surface and consumers consider the package design as buying a product although particular attention needs to be paid to each component or means of packaging design.

The aim of the article was to present and characterize examples of selected Slovak food and beverages packaging, on which manufacturers have introduced Slovak folk motifs, and also specify what factor influenced manufactures to use it.

There has been a new trend of placing national symbolism on food packaging in order to present the nationality of the product in Slovakia. Manufacturers place national symbols displayed verbally on their product packaging, such as "Slovak" or visually (using the signs and symbols of the nation, which include the national emblem, flag, seal and color, or with the help of cultural elements in the form of folk motifs and customs, lace or ornament, and illustrations depicting the land).

For many people using folklore motif on food packaging is controversial, mainly because the growth of folk motifs is spontaneous in the short term, across the full spectrum of our daily lives, not just packaging. No wonder the distinction made only from the euro area point of view gives us greater visibility and thus the possibility of more enforcement. This phenomenon is more important in food area, because there is more imported food in Slovakia than domestic once. Therefore, the distinction Slovak manufacturer by using quick and unambiguous information on the packaging is beneficial. In addition, the richness of Slovak folk culture, and especially its diversity, enables producers to define regional affiliation and tradition through folk elements.

Results of the research have shown that employees from companies that have implemented folklore motifs on packages on their food products are connected with folklore, patriotism and traditions. They honour the traditions of Slovak ancestors and Slovak country. They are glad that the time has come when this culture and traditions are preferred and supported. These companies sell Slovak products and therefore Slovak folk motifs are used on packages of their products.

The issue of placing folk motifs on the foods and beverages packaging is a new issue and would require further research. It would be interesting to study the types of folk motifs placed on the packaging of the mentioned products in other European countries, and also indicate the reasons and factors influencing the implementation of this action.

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