McDonald's as a Cultural Brand in the Landscape of Attitudes of Polish Customers

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Abstract

Purpose of the article: The analysis of the attitudes of Polish customers towards McDonald's based on the identification of opposite social attitudes towards globalisation processes and perception of cultural brands.
Methodology/methods: The qualitative analysis of the record of Internet users' discussion has been conducted. The record of the discussion shall be regarded as an expression of opinion by an incidental group of respondents. For the purposes of the conducted research programmes weftQDA 1.0.1 and QSR NVIVO 10 have been used.
Scientific aim: Utilization of postmodern interpretation of the socio-cultural context of running business for purposes of strategic management.
Findings: The main differences between the supporters of the attitudes towards McDonald's were related to two problems. Firstly, the discussion concerns what McDonald's really is (how its service should be classified). Secondly, the thread of the discourse concerns the quality of McDonald's offer. Further discussion involved the issues of impact of McDonald's on the domestic business, and lifestyle of contemporary Poles and their dining habits.
Conclusions: The landscape of attitudes of Polish customers towards McDonald's is the issue of uncertainty in the strategic management within this company. It seems there is a need for paying attention to national cultural features of Poles and different attitudes of contemporary society expressed as a postmodern response to globalisation. Each group of problems mentioned may become an opportunity or a threat for McDonald's business activity in Poland.

Keywords: brand, culture, McDonald's, globalisation, strategy

JEL Classification: M1, M10

Introduction

Contemporary globalisation does not only refer to territorial expansion of business activity but also to dissemination of, first and foremost, qualitative changes in the sphere of market integration and regulations concerning the flow of products, capital and people (Rymarczyk, 2004). Globalisation is regarded as a phenomenon which is characteristic for postmodern description of reality, including economic, cultural and political spheres, and the beginnings of its scientific description (not its actual occurrence as a fact) shall be looked for, above all, in the 1980s (Kostera, Śliwa, 2012).

Postmodernism as an intellectual formation assumes lack of metanarration in the description of reality and interpretation of facts. Personal observations are of equal or even greater significance than socially present arrangements, whereas various personal opinions are equal. In this respect, it is impossible to create objective descriptions of reality since they are always immersed in the local and individual contexts. These assumptions about fragmentation of descriptions and the cognitive process are important for economic analyses. Contemporary attempts to evaluate economic efficiency of an enterprise have to, inter alia, struggle with parallel consideration of such problems as strategic and operational dimensions regarding evaluation of the success of an enterprise (thus, taking into account qualitative and quantitative evaluations), or upon the notions of property and supervision (especially from the perspective of their division) reconciliation of the interest of an enterprise with the interest of groups which are connected with the activity of an enterprise (Kostera, 1996), which is nowadays sanctioned by, inter alia, concepts of social responsibility of a business, sustainability and ethics (Jackson, Carter, 1992).

An essential feature of the postmodern description of reality, including the theory of management of the enterprise, are issues of shaping the structure of social relations as well as the roles assumed by group members in particular situations (Boje, Gephart, Thatchenkery, 1995). It is worth noticing that these aspects thanks to, inter alia, fragmentation of the cognitive process which has been mentioned earlier, are dynamic (McKelvey, 2003). Dynamics which occurs on the level of individual persons (Berg, 1989) becomes the second force that shapes contemporary image of globalisation. On the one hand, one comes across trends towards dissemination and standardisation which are represented by the economic world, however, on the other hand (the social sphere), there are also attitudes which are prejudiced against this trend. This attitude is equally socially validated as favour towards the process of globalisation. Simultaneously, the existence of social attitude of "anti-globalisation" turns the social sphere into a factor, which, next to economic processes and on a par with them, shapes the process of globalisation (Welsch, 1999). The pace of changes taking place in the sociocultural sphere is in turn possible thanks to, above all, modification of practices which are understood as the so called visible cultural sphere (Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov, 2010).

This dynamics is also the source of uncertainty in the strategic management of the company (DeFillippi, Grabher, Jones, 2007). The main contemporary aspect of uncertainty is the landscape of information. It is associated with the issues of how, where, when and why specific information is going to be used. Therefore, this landscape is contemplated as a socio-cultural frame of using information. It is composed of elements such as people, content, processes and relationships (Skovira, 2004). The attitudes of customers are therefore the important factors of uncertainty, and could also be presented as specific factors influencing the activities of the enterprise.

As a result, strategies of enterprises should be adapted in accordance with cultural and consumption differences (Shenkar, 2001) between countries/nations/social groups at which particular business activity is aimed (Park, Rabolt, 2009). This remark entails significant consequences. In connection with fragmentation of description of reality as well as active role of societies/groups/consumers enterprises need to take local sociocultural context into consideration. Nowadays, it is this very context (not standardisation of offer) which is regarded as the key one for the efficiency of activity of internationalised enterprises (Qin, Ramburuth, Wang, 2011).

1. McDonald's as a global enterprise

McDonald's is tightly connected with the definition of something that may be referred to as the exemplification of "Americanness". Right after the Second World War McDonald's witnessed and participated in social transitions in the USA. Thanks to its strategy of activity invoking mobility, speed and standardisation manifested in the principles of serving the maximum number of customers within a time unit and offering products at a low price, the enterprise became an integral part of the cultural context of America and then also its cultural symbol (Tańska, 2002).

Nowadays, McDonald's is perceived, above all, as a global giant, *i.e.* an enteprise which operates on

a global scale and makes the most of its attributes, which, in the opinion of some, enables to describe its activity from the perspective of transnationality (Watson, 1997).

However, it is worth highlighting that presence of the enterprise, thanks to its connotation with "Americanness" is perceived as a symbol of social, economic and political transitions which take place in various parts of the world, nowadays, in Asian countries in particular (Goodman, Robison, 2013). As a result, McDonald's becomes an entity which, according to many opinions, has to face contemporary management problems. Among them the application of glocalisation (globalism and localisation) strategy may be mentioned, which is often present in the marketing sphere (Vignali, 2001) and which results from a high level of internationalisation of the company's activity and the need to become an integral part of the local sociocultural context.

At this point, it should also be emphasized that the meaning which McDonald's brand entails is connected with its cultural aspect and perceived differently in various parts of the world. It is pointed out that in many countries this brand/enterprise constitutes the symbol of affluence and wealth, whereas it is not the case in its home country (Kincheloe, 2002). Moreover, the importance of the brand is also an element of a conscious strategy of the enterprise itself. It uses the excess of information and knowledge in the contemporary world which results in fragmentary cognition and similarly fragmentary memory of the representatives of communities creating what is being referred to as the superficial meaning of its own brand name among consumers. McDonald's promotional activities in the USA aimed at children and focused on a healthy, balanced and varied diet which may be attained thanks to the company's offer may serve as an example of such activity (Kincheloe, 2002).

Nowadays, however, also societies themselves manifest some activity in shaping of reality, including the economic sphere. Thus, there is a social movement in the United States which pursues the fight against obesity in the American society, which has already enforced certain solutions in McDonald's (launching of the so called healthy food offer). Whereas, presence of the enterprise in China results in a division of the society into two opposing attitudes. The research results indicate that cultural significance of the McDonald's brand is often in opposition to traditional Chinese cultural values connected with the collectivistic nature of the society of this Asian country, which also finds its reflection in eating habits. Simultaneously, McDonald's is thereupon perceived, especially by young Chinese people, as a manifestation of modernity and new view of social relations. It points out that the meaning of the brand depends on co-shaping of traditional and new values for a particular local culture (Eckhardt, Houston, 2002). At the same time, it suggests that there is active participation of the society in this process, which, in this context (the McDonald's case), is connected with its representatives being in favour of one of the possible attitudes towards the process of globalisation. Among these attitudes the following may be distinguished: acculturation (the process of changes taking place between groups or between groups and individuals representing distinct values, the result of which is a generation of syncretic values); and nostalgia, that is longing for values which are traditional for particular groups and individuals as well as attempts to return to them (Guzmán, Paswan, 2009). These arrangements, according to the description of contemporary brands, which, from the perspective of both enterprises and consumers, are a subject of accumulation of symbolism and a way of cultural self-expression (O'Reilly, 2005), make it possible to state that McDonald's may therefore also be regarded as a cultural brand.

2. Objective and research methodology

The intention lying behind the conducted research was to determine attitudes of nostalgia and acculturation towards McDonald's brand expressed by the representatives of the Polish society. For the purposes of its realisation statements of Internet users under the article concerning closing in Warsaw on 1 Oct 2014 the first eating place of this franchise chain published on warszawa.gazeta.pl website on 30 Sep 2014 were analysed (Ostatni dzień pierwszego w Polsce McDonalda na Świętokrzyskiej, 2014). The article contained seven photos of the eating place opening celebration on 17 Jun 1992. The title of the article and its layout served as a pretext for expressing opinion on the subject of McDonald's brand by an incidental group of Internet users. The record of 77 statements of the discussion under this article was obtained altogether (the record of the discussion was made on 30 Sep 2014 at 5.21 p.m.). It is worth highlighting that on the day of opening of this eating place in Warsaw the world record in the number of transactions that were carried out was broken (13300 orders). The record was broken again when the second eating place of this franchise chain in Poland was opened in Katowice: 13600 orders (McDonald's Corporation, Wikipedia). These facts

show the importance of the Polish market for McDonald's which opened to foreign investors along with political changes at the beginning of the 1990s.

The Internet users' statements under the article on gazeta.pl mentioned above were divided into 9 threads (in accordance with the answer tree). The content of these statements underwent analysis the purpose of which was to track down statements that were connected with expression of opinions and attitudes characteristic for either acculturation or nostalgia. The next step was to code the collected source material in compliance with the adopted dichotomy (acculturation vs. nostalgia). WeftQDA 1.0.1. was used for this purpose.

The conducted analysis of the Internet users' statements concluded with the exclusion of threads 2, 5 and 9 from further research procedure. The Internet users' statements within these threads concerned: the price of McDonald's products in Poland at the beginning of the 1990s (thread 2 and thread 5); within thread 5 there was also a problem with writing down the abbreviations of currencies in international transactions; whereas thread 9 was totally connected with the opinion regarding the quality of photos taken on the opening of the first McDo-nald's eating place in Poland which were presented in the cited article on gazeta.pl. As a result of the conducted coding procedure, the content classified to the "acculturation" group amounted, in total, to 1238 signs (they were present in 5 threads altogether: 1, 3, 4, 6, 7), whereas in the "nostalgia" group there were 1344 signs (present in 6 threads altogether: 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8).

In order to assess reliability of coding the second person was asked to code part of the material on the basis of the assumptions of the research. Threads 4 and 6 were selected for that purpose. The choice of them was justified by their length: these are the two longest threads with 21 statements altogether, *i.e.* 27.7 % of all statements in the collected record of the whole discussion. Subsequently, both coded versions were compared with regard to presence of one of the codes in the given statements (acculturation or nostalgia). Value 1 was assigned if a given code was present, whereas value 0 was assigned when there was no code. The Krippendorff's Alpha coefficient was calculated on the basis of nominal data obtained in this particular way. The obtained values of this coefficient for both codes are presented in the Table 2. They fall within the ambit of 0.67–0.8 and may therefore be regarded as sufficient (Reidsma, Carletta, 2008).

The value of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was also calculated so that the obtained indication regarding the reliability of coding could be confirmed. In this case the results at the level above 0.8 were obtained. Thus, it may be stated that in this case the Cronbach's Alpha values signify appropriate reliability of coding.

While making the analysis of the Internet users' statements, it becomes indispensible for the researcher to refer to the role assumed by the participants of virtual reality. For it is freely shaped by Internet users themselves and may influence the results of the conducted analysis (Markham, 2004). Therefore, all the participants of the discussion within the framework of threads which were taken into consideration were identified (threads 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8). Their number amounted to 19 persons: 6 of them expressed opinions connected with the attitude of acculturation (31.58% of discussants), whereas the attitude of nostalgia was manifested by 13 persons (68.42% of discussants).

It should be noticed that during the discussion each of the participants supported one attitude that was familiar to them (acculturation or nostalgia). Within 6 studied threads the total number of

Table 1. Overall information regarding coding.

Code	How many documents does it occur in?	Number of signs assigned to the code	Number of codes
Acculturation	5	1238	9
Nostalgia	6	1344	13

Source: Own work.

Table 2. Values of the Krippendorff's Alpha and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the codes.

	Krippendorff's Alpha value	Cronbach's Alpha value
The "acculturation" code	0.7438	0.863
The "nostalgia" code	0.7211	0.857

Source: Own work.

9 statements expressing acculturation (39.13% of all the statements) and 14 statements expressing nostalgia (which constitutes 60.87% of all the statements) were identified. It should also be noticed that although the were more supporters of the attitude of nostalgia (13 persons) than acculturation (6 persons), the latter were more active during the discussion. It may be stated that there is 1.5 statements for one supporter of acculturation, whereas for one supporter of nostalgia there is 1.08 statements.

While analysing the course of the discussion within particular threads, it may also be noticed that the activity of participants of the discussion was focused on disagreeing with persons of opposing opinion or emphasizing agreement and legitimacy of views with persons representing the same attitude towards McDonald's. Summing up, it may be stated that discussants within six analysed threads expressed clear opinions connected to the assessment of McDonald's in Poland which was related to the attitude of nostalgia or acculturation being expressed by them and sustained their opinions in a continuous manner during the discussion. These arrangements made it possible to realise further steps of the research procedure.

3. Analysis results

The analysis of the researched content of threads made it possible to distinguish particular issues raised by discussants and assign them to the appropriate category (nostalgia/acculturation).

The discussion regarding the perception of McDonald's in Poland was dominated by the issue of the status of the company and services it offers. Discussants got into an argument whether McDonald's should be referred to as a restaurant (such term was used by the author of the article). Opponents of this point of view pointed out traditional understanding of the term "restaurant" in Poland concerning an eating place with a range of customer facilities, *e.g.* waiting service. Supporters of referring to McDonald's as a restaurant, in turn, raised the issue of the way in which the term is understood and used all over the world. They also pointed out the differences between the scope of services and their quality between "restaurants" and "bars" (the aim of which was to prove that McDonald's should not be regarded as "a bar").

The exemplary discussants' statements which were for referring to McDonald's as a restaurant are presented below:

- Thread_6 [767–908]; user- dwa_grosze:
  "Remember once and for all that McDonald is a restaurant. Acquaint yourself with the definition of the word restaurant which is used in the Western world."
- Thread_6 [1236–1393]; user- cronbie:
  "You can drink alcohol in a bar. You can't do that in McDonald's."

Whereas, the exemplary discussants' statements being in opposition to the claim saying that McDonald's ea-ting places are restaurants are as follows:

- Thread_6 [148–192]; user- ooii:
  "There is neither a waiter nor a cloak-room;) It's a canteen."
- Thread_8 [6–213]; user – ao.a:
  "I'm not going to call it restaurant because it has nothing in common with a restaurant."

There were 13 statements concerning this topic altogether within six analysed threads, out of which 6 concerned acculturation (it was a call for taking into account the international meaning of the term "restaurant" in the context of business form conducted by McDonald's), whereas 7 statements supported nostalgia by raising the importance of traditional Polish understanding of the words "bar" and "restaurant".

Table 3 presents a list of frequencies of all the issues related to acculturation and nostalgia raised within the analysed threads.

The second most popular issue raised by the discussants was the issue of quality of meals offered by McDonald's (5 statements altogether). Supporters of acculturation (2 statements) pointed, above all, at standardisation of dishes offered by McDonald's which they regarded as a major advantage of the

Table 3. Issues of acculturation and nostalgia in threads of the discussion altogether.

Discourse	Acculturation	Nostalgia	Total
Status of McDonald's (restaurant/bar)	6	7	13
Quality of meals	2	3	5
Form of development of domestic enterprises	1	2	3
Form of satisfying the need for food	1	2	3

Source: Own work.

company's offer (they correlated this statement with the possibility to avail oneself of exactly the same service all over the world). Whereas, supporters of the attitude of nostalgia (3 statements) raised the issue of chemical processing of products offered by McDonald's and their possible influence on health. It should also be noticed that the discussants supporting nostalgia pointed out higher quality, including the gustatory value of traditional, local dishes, and called for opening of this type of eating places.

The exemplary statements which illustrate these attitudes have been presented below (the first one is related to the attitude of acculturation, the second one – to the attitude of nostalgia):

- Thread_4 [414–565], user – rumpa:
  "The point is that I prefer McDonald's and that's it. Just like that. It is optimised. It always tastes the same and new tastes usually make me retch."
- Thread_4 [13–197], user- brat_ ram-zesa:
  "While in Kiev, I noticed that there was just one McDonald in the city centre. Ukrainians simply don't go the-re as they regard them as muck. For them it is a chain of fast food bars with Russky food. Forget about McDo-nald's. Poland could also open its chain with its own food, the one from the East could be served as well."

Another issue raised by the discussants was the problem of influence of McDonald's activity on Polish business. One side pointed at lack of possibility of Polish enterprises from this sector to compete with a global tycoon, whereas the other one pointed out that Polish companies may actually develop themselves as franchisees of the McDonald's chain. The last issue defined in the analysis of the Internet users' discussion was the issue of the habit of Polish people regarding the form of satisfying the need for food. It is about confronting traditional way which consists in preparing meals on one's own at home with availing oneself of services of all kinds of eating places (especially the so called fast food ones which are mainly regarded as competitive against preparing and having meals at home).

4. Findings

The key issue for the Internet discussants in the researched threads was the issue of classifying business activity conducted by McDonald's. The significance of this problem may be noticed while analysing the list of frequency of usage of particular words in both categories of the analysis (acculturation and nostalgia). Tree maps devised for a particular category on the basis of excerpts of the discourse content coded and assigned in an appropriate way are presented below (QSR NVivo 10 has been used for that purpose).

The tree maps show that supporters of the attitude of acculturation of McDonald's as a brand, most frequently used the word "restaurant" and its inflected forms (15 times altogether), whereas the word "bar" and its inflected forms were used 10 times. It coincides with previous remarks concerning the fact that this group of discussants made an attempt to compare comprehension of both terms and argue that eating places run by McDonald's are restaurants. Supporters of the attitude opposing this attitude towards McDonald's brand (*i.e.* nostalgia) most frequently used the word "restaurant" and its inflected forms (again 15 times altogether), whereas the term "bar" and its inflected forms were used (again) 10 times altogether. These very facts may suggest that the groups of discussants were oriented more at direct confrontation of opinions.

At this point it is worth noticing that one of the Internet user's statement classified to the "acculturation" category was of historical nature. It directly referred to the moment of opening of the first McDonald's eating place in Warsaw and raised the aspect of social acceptance of the company's offer. However, in further part of the statement there was also a clue that, in principle, since McDonald's entered the Polish market doubt among Polish citizens has arisen regarding in what way eating places under the company's brand name should be classified. The excerpt from the statement illustrating the issue in question is presented here:

- Thread_6 [333–633], user – awonek:
  "When I was there for the first time in 1992 and saw the sign inviting to the restaurant upstairs I thought there was a bar downstairs and a restaurant upstairs. I was surprised to find out afterwards that some customers would buy food downstairs and take their trays upstairs to the restaurant".

Other key terms used by the discussants representing both groups (apart from the name McDonald's which was equally often used by both groups again, *i.e.* 8 times) showing their attitude towards McDonald's brand name from the perspective of either nostalgia or acculturation were used several times at the most.

The analysis of content of the research threads points out also that the discussants could pass smoothly through particular issues. It is especially visible in case of the quality of meals served in McDonald's and ways of having one's meals (at home or eating out at an eating place). Basically, these threads were interchanging.

Figure 1. The frequency of the most popular words (literally recorded) for the "acculturation" category, pictured as a treemap. Source: Own work.

Figure 2. The frequency of the most popular words (literally recorded) for the "nostalgia" category, pictured as a treemap. Source: Own work.

The discussants within the framework of their attitude confronted views regarding high level of technological processing of McDonald's products and the need for eating traditional, healthy food (the attitude of nostalgia) with the commonness of access to the standardised offer of the enterprise around the world and preference for fast service at the eating places of this franchise chain (the attitude of acculturation). Supporters of traditional, local dishes indirectly implied that, following other countries, they expected development of chains of eating places offerring that kind of food on the domestic market. Thus, these statements may as well be regarded as superficially connected with the issue of development of Polish business. In this matter the representatives of the attitude of acculturation, in turn, pointed out that running an eating place within the framework of McDonald's franchise chain may even be regarded as an opportunity for Polish entrepreneurs.

It is worth noticing that upon reading the content of the coded excerpts of the Internet users' statements one may have an impression that persons expressing the attitude of nostalgia would do that in a more emotional manner than persons representing the attitude of acculturation. This is manifested by the usage of personal references, addressing statements, often directly, to other participants of the

discussion, as well as the usage of spiteful utterances towards McDonald's, its products and Internet users manifesting the attitude of acculturation as well.

5. Discussion

Although the tools for traditional strategic analysis recognise the sociocultural context of functioning of an enteprise, they consider it to be one of many dimensions of macro environment. Nowadays, it is being pointed out that the main force of macro environment of an enterprise is the sociocultural dimension represented by communities interpreted not only as social groups expressing active attitude but also as a defined system of values and the dimension within the framework of which an enterprise conducts its business activity. Thus, strategic management in the planning sphere faces a challenge of taking into account the sociocultural context, its complexity, and what is essential, also its dynamics and active role in the evaluation of an enterprise and values it represents (Kukalis, 2009).

The analysis of McDonald's as a cultural brand from the perspective of the attitudes of nostalgia and acculturation presented in the article helps to realise that the sociocultural context actually actively assesses the activity of enterprises as well as particular products/services. Simultaneously, it should be emphasized that from the postmodern perspective there is no strict boundary line between particular terms/phenomena. In case of a cultural brand the object of cultural entangling may be the product itself, a group of products or the enterprise itself. Opinions regarding these objects may also be connected with general social and economic processes in the world or in a given local corner of the globe. Even if the majority of society recklessly expresses their opinion about a problem it does not mean that their argumentation and convictions are the same. The reason for that may be, inter alia, the effect of closeness between a personal attitude, opinions and what is offered by, among other things, the market of consumption goods. Nowadays, this effect is frequently surprising, which means that it may even occur in spite of the fact that everything points at the discrepancy between what is represented by a product for example and customer's expectations and values. Nevertheless, a single fact, a single aspect of the product or expressed convictions may lead to breaking of this distance (Welsch, 1999).

The established fragmentation of the sociocultural context serves as an additional source of uncertainty for the functioning of enterprises, however, simultaneously, it seems that it might also be the source of market success. It is so, among other things, when information about a brand/product does not only reach a selected target group (Wursten, Fadrhonc, 2012). The success may be based on appropriate recognition of the network of views, attitudes and actions taken by consumers. Thus the sociocultural context gains significance which is strategic for an enterprise. However, the prospective analysis of the context as well as strategic planning undertaken on its basis should be based on the assumption that sociocultural environment itself conducts the analysis of the market or a company's offer as well. Therefore, from the postmodern perspective there is a situtation in which both parties (enterprises and consumers) conduct mutual analyses that is they are active within built and sustained relations. In case of McDonald's, problems which the company had to face while entering the Chinese market may be pointed out. What may be mentioned are the attempts to implement traditional Chinese dishes/traditional food products as fast food (the aim of which is to overcome reluctance of a great part of the Chinese society to the company and its offer themselves) or the necessity to train Chinese customers within the scope of how McDonald's services, McDrive in particular, should be used (CNBC, 2007). This example shows that the problem of making use of the contemporary sociocultural context within the framework of strategic management processes is a tough challenge (Ng, Van Dyne, Ang, 2009) requiring the use of approach which combines both globalisation in a traditional sense, as well as the so called localisation (Svensson, 2001).

The conducted analysis of attitudes of the Polish Internet users towards McDonald's shows that even in Poland, a European country, whose cultural conditionings do not differ dramatically from the American ones (what is more, where everything of American origin is favourably responded to), diametrically opposite assessments of the brand exist.

It appears that the request that McDonald's operating on the Polish market approach drawing up and implementing of glocalisation strategy in Poland in a significantly more versatile manner, relying not only on strictly marketing activities, may be deemed justified. In Poland (next to adverts of products) promotion campaigns presenting McDonald's as an attractive workplace for young people are known (the campaign could be treated as an attempt to fight against common belief, according to which the company takes advantage of young and inexperienced employees). Another stage of this promotional action were spots showing McDonald's as an

enterprise which enables young people to get promoted fast and to occupy managerial positions. In this case, it may be acknowledged that McDonald's tried to present itself as a socially-involved enterprise, since there is youth unemployment problem in Poland as well as badly-paid, dead-end positions on which they may possibly be employed. With regard to problems established in the analysis of the record of the Internet discussion, McDonald's in Poland made an attempt to deal with the issue of quality of products and materials used for the purpose of their production. However, it again took the form of advertising spots. This way of making an attempt to influence the sociocultural context does not seem to suffice. Broadcasting of advertising spots is usually a one-time action, the realisation of which is phased within a certain time bracket. Therefore, it seems that failing to recognize the conditionings of diversity of the context of attitudes, judgements and values behind the assessement of a cultural brand which the company is and lack of long-term connection of company's business activity with this context with the use of adequate tools of (re)action may become the source of market turbulences which will be used by present or future competition.

It is worth highlighting that attempts to communicate with customers in Poland face the issue of features of Polish national culture. As the results of research concerning national cultures based on G. Hofstede's method point out (values for six dimensions of culture), Poles in the cultural sphere are characterized by substantial contradiction. On the one hand, they accept hierarchical relationships, have emotional need for the existence of principles and are not open to non-standard actions and way of thinking. On the other hand, however, Poles constitute a society of individualists who tend to be cynics, pessimists and think that social norms limit them. It is emphasized that this contradiction within the features of national culture makes relationships with Poles very delicate, but if properly built and sustained they may turn out to be very fruitful (The Hofstede Centre, 2015).

6. Conclusion

The research results (limited to the recorded discussion) emphasize the fact that McDonald's as an enterprise operating on a global scale is entangled in the local cultural context. The context became the ground for consumers' self-definition and expression of personal attitudes ranging from full acceptance to full rejection of what is offered by a classically defined globalisation (in this case: this particular enterprise interpreted as a cultural brand).

Therefore, McDonald's in Poland as well as in other parts of the world needs to face problems of the active consumer role and increasing role of the sociocultural context in both strategic planning and implementation of the assumed development strategies (also in countries with similar frame of the sociocultural context). Thus, it seems that one of the most vital challenges for contemporary company management in the context of increasing internationalisation of business activity is also to find ways of dealing with local (not only global) complexity and variability of how consumers (even individuals) understand what the enterprise represents and offers (Komańda, 2013).

Financial losses of McDonald's in recent years have given rise to many studies on the causes of this situation. Apart from issues related to labor matters in the US, as well as political aspects that determine the functioning of this franchise chain in different countries (eg. in Russia) (Mandel, 2015), in the context of cultural conditions first and foremost the enrichment of the company's offerings should be mentioned. This phenomenon appears to have two main aspects. On the one hand, it is dictated by deep individualized dietary habits of modern societies (Rozwadowska, 2015), and therefore seems to be something necessary in the company's offer. On the other hand, diversifying the menu at the franchise subsidiaries turns into higher prices and lower level of customer service (especially in the dimension of speed of service) (Morawski, 2014), so it hits directly all associations with McDonald's since the mid--twentieth century.

McDonald's in such situation is testing many new solutions that can possibly contribute to a better reception of the brand and products. One of them is, for example, introduction of the waiting service at selected premises. It is also being tested in Warsaw, Poland (Rewolucja w McDonald's. Od dziś sam skomponujesz burgera, a do stolika poda go kelner, 2015). Such treatment could directly enter one of the aspects of the discussion analyzed for this paper. However, the inclusion of opinion on whether McDonald's is a bar or a restaurant in the conflict mentioned would require an active role of the company (particularly in the field of long-term communication with customers).

Taking into consideration the features of national culture, it may be, in accordance with recommendations in the commentary to cultural contradictions occurring in Poland (The Hofstede Centre, 2015), expected that in this country McDonald's, apart

from introducing formal and official principles of communication with consumers, concurrently made informal relations. Such acitivies based on individualisation of creation and sustaining of relations would become a valuable addition to official ways of communication and would probably enable to create among Polish consumers the conviction that every customer matters for the enteprise. The interaction between McDonald's brand and shared cultural symbolism and values of various generations of Poles may be indicated as an area for further analysis.

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