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THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL IDENTITY OF THE TRADEMARK: THE MECHANISM OF PERCEPTION OF THE CONSUMER

The article is devoted to the problem of the formation of trademark identity. The article aims to clarify the essence of the mark identity category, determine the factors affecting its consumer mark perception and the role of national identity in this process. The difference between such categories as "mark identity" and "mark image" is clarified and based on the generalization of theoretical approaches. There is a proposed model of the mechanism of interaction experience between a certain mark and socio-cultural experience of the consumer, the creation of the image, and the competition barriers in this article. It is concluded that the difference between the created identity and perceived image comes from "market dissonance", which occurs for two reasons: a poor study of target consumers and not enough effective marketing tools of influence.

Keywords: national identity, brand perception, image of trade mark, consumer behavior, market dissonance, culture and identity.

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Formulation of the problem. In recent years, domestic companies are trying to differentiate their products on the market by the production of goods under its own trademark. Thus, the company considers premature "brand" almost each of the new trademark. But it is not completely true. A trademark should be approved by the consumer to become a brand. It can be argued, brands are those marks that do not exist on the market by themselves, but "belong" to consumers. Why does it happen that some trademarks with the high cost of promotion do not become brands, and others appear to be favorite trademarks of generations of consumers, so-called brand-legends? To answer this question it is necessary to observe the mechanism of consumer mark perception.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. The process of trademark perception of consumers was studied by French scientists R. Bordenav [1] and J.-N. Kapferer [2], some aspects of the problem were discussed in the works of American scientists G. Assel [3] and P. Doyle [4]. The issues concerning the problem of study of modern consumption problems and consumers society forming are covered in labors of Polish scientists A. Oleynychuk-Merta [5], F. Bilok [6], T. Zalega [7], and of the native scientists M. Oklander [8], V. Saveliyev [9]. However, factors affecting consumer behavior in the perception of the trademark are still not investigated to the full extent and the attempts to elaborate a mechanism of interaction between these factors and the process of perception is not undertaken so often in recent studies. It is a very significant issue for further adjustment of marketing programs to

transform new trademarks of business into profitable brands.

The emphasis of unsolved aspects of the general problem. A mark finds its meaning and value in the market due to cumulative ideas of it emerging in the consumers' minds. These ideas are formed by perception and subsequent synthesis of the information consumer receives under the influence of marketing communications of the enterprise.

According to the French scientist R. Bordenav [1, p. 128], the perception is a process in which course individual filters, classifies and interprets all the external elements of the information regarding the trademark or good, to create the image of his own and it corresponds to which it is informed. This image in marketing literature is called "mark image".

Consumers perceive information selectively, namely, they are able to take the same information differently due to a various range of needs and motivations and the current experience. According to G. Assel [3], selective perception includes three elements: impact, understanding, and memorization.

Selective impact means that people tend to see or read what best meets their needs. They also select the information that matches their views, nourish their "ego" and refers to their lifestyles. *Selective understanding* means that consumers are likely to interpret the information so that it is consistent with their psychological mood. *Selective memorization* means consumers remember the information that best matches their needs and psychological mood.

To understand consumer's mark perception we should dwell on such important category as a *mark identity*.

The article aims to clarify the essence of the *mark identity* category, determine the factors influencing the consumer mark perception, and the role that national identity plays in this process.

The main results of the study. Due to P. Doyle, the identity of the trademark is inherent in its address expressed in the product, its name, visual aspects, advertising. There is a significant difference between image and identity: more frequently mark image in the eyes of the buyer does not coincide with the request that the company seeks to convey to customers. The company's management should take care of individualization of its trademark since it is a pledge to its successful market promotion [4].

J.-N. Kapferer believes that "having identity is to have a personal stable and distinct project from others" [10, p. 336]. The author presents a mark identity in the form of a prism with six sides:

1. Primarily, the mark has "tangible" aspect – a set of measurable physical features, associations that are formed in the mind at the mention of the mark. Thus, with the mark name "Milka" we remember the purple cow and same color packaging, tender milk chocolate.

2. The mark has its own identity, it finds its character appealing to the consumer. You can read between the lines what personality would be a mark while it delivers its products.

3. The mark is the cultural integrity. In fact, every product is a product of culture. The mark is its specification and material support (in terms of media communication). For instance, the mark "Svitoch" embodies the Ukrainian culture as the representative of marks with a strong national identity. The pronounced *national identity* promotes loyalty to both local (national) as well as to foreign marks.

4. Mark is an intercourse. In fact, marks are often an occasion for communication between people, a source of friendly relations, a sense of security guarantees, freedom, etc.

5. Mark is a reflection, it is an external image of the goal that the mark tells the consumer. During the survey, of a particular mark, most respondents can imagine a recipient. Often between terms of recipient and target consumer, there are no distinctions. In fact, the target consumer is a description of potential buyers and clients of the mark.

6. Finally, the mark is a self-portrait. If the reflection is an external mirror of the target market, then the self-portrait is an internal mirror. We support some type of relationship with ourselves by the usage of some marks.

The mark identity is achieved due to the development of a set of elements that distinguishes it from competing marks and cause certain associations in the minds of consumers. These are mark name, its logo, and symbol, characters, which are associated with a mark, slogan and design (packaging).

Developed trademark elements contribute to the appearance of its personality, expressing its identity. *The core identity of the mark* consists of the complex of characteristics that emphasizes unity, homogeneity of trademark supply that distinguishes it from others.

However, a consumer sees the mark not always like the company wanted it to be seen. Jean-Jacques Lambin admits that we should distinguish three levels of analysis of the trademark image [11, p. 262].

1. *The perceived image* or the way others see and perceive the mark: it is an “outside” point of view, which is based on field interviews taken at the basic market.

2. *The actual image* or facts about the mark, its strong and weak sides obtained by the company through the internal audits.

3. *The desired image* or how the mark should be perceived by target segment. It is a goal of strategic ranking.

French marketer R. Bordenav is an author of the method that uses consumer’s perception as a guide in order to properly convey the appeal in mark features to the consumer. To identify consumer’s perception of product and to understand its real value to the consumer, the author suggests asking questions to the focus group, the answers to which will later represent the product to customers as needed by referring to his “needs language”.

Firstly, it is necessary to ask the consumer what need is satisfied by the product of this mark or which commodity category is observed. The fact is the options of satisfying consumer’s demand should not be prematurely equated to the existing commodity category. It often happens that a particular commodity category that was established by the producer for a particular purpose is able to better meet the very different needs according to the consumer (Figure 1).

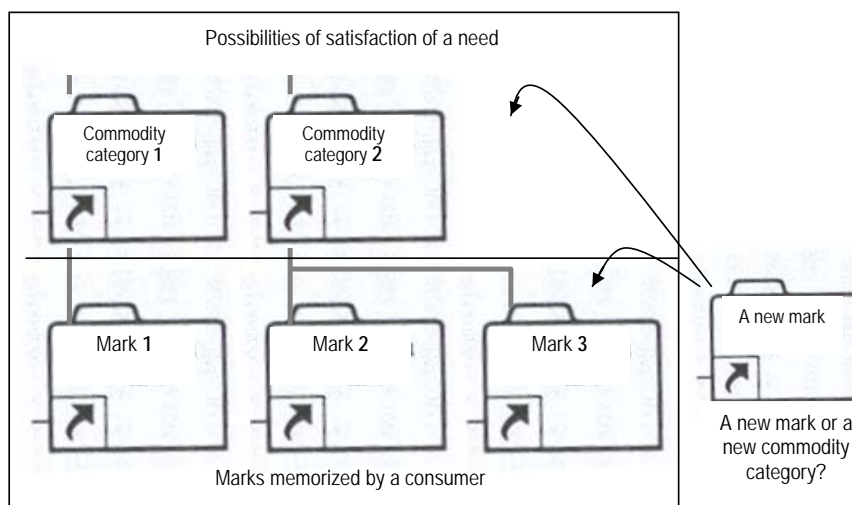


Figure 1 – The strategic decision-making about positioning a new mark [1]

The figure shows that a consumer can turn the new mark to one of the existing commodity categories among similar marks, and he or she can place it to a higher consciousness level – as a new commodity category (in the perception of the consumer it is a new way to satisfy the needs), which will be the only representative. The mark appears much more likely to be chosen by the consumer.

The authors of “golden rules” Robert J. Trout and Riz say about the importance of such strategic decisions [12]:

- it is the best to be the first or to seem first to a consumer in its own category;
- in the worst case, its best to be the second, positioning as a distinct alternative leader;
- you can create your own commodity category in the consumer's mind and stay there as a single unit;
- in other ways, there is no chance.

The second question to the consumer will help find out what, in his opinion, is the real difference between this product and the equivalent product of competitors?

And finally, what personally worries the consumer and pushes him to choose this product?

The set of characteristics of perception, obtained from answers to questions, composes the description of a mark in a way that it should be presented. Only clearly formulated answers to these three questions obtained in the survey of consumer goods will help transform the product into an individual solution to the need.

However, the creation of a mark image in the minds of consumers is influenced not only by the efforts of the company. Let us dwell on the mechanism of forming the image of the mark and the factors that influence this process. Consumer perception of the mark depends not only on the instruments used by the company, but equally composed of the ideas that come from experience that consumer had gone through. These ideas are not always under the control of the company, and thus related to the individual himself and his surrounding environment. Let's consider the main factors affecting the process of perception of the mark by consumers.

First of all, the perception of the consumer is affected by a set of socio-cultural factors that influence the individual during his life in society: values, enclosed in traditions, beliefs, and customs adopted in social groups, in which individual is, and which each member of society embodied in a social habit. This can be represented as a model shown in Figure 2.

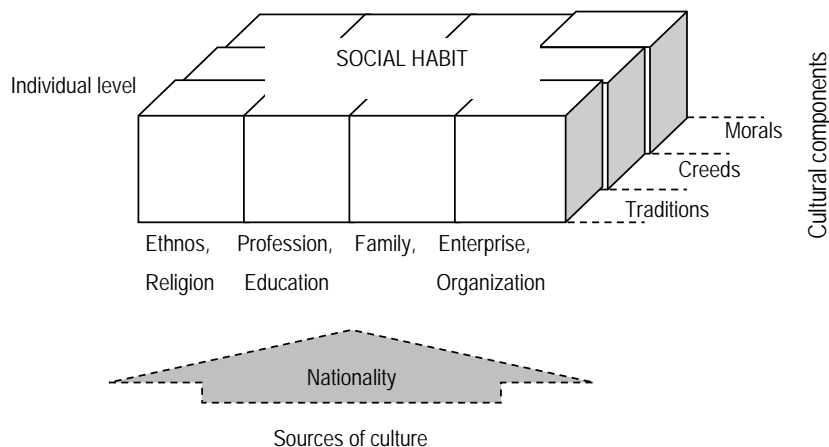


Figure 2 – Model of formation of consumer's social habits

At the bottom of the model are the sources of culture that affect members of society. On the right side of the model, there are cultural components. In each of them can be enclosed personal importance, for example, according to the French anthropologist E. Sapir [13] morals of society are defined by negative and positive attitudes that prevail in society. Defining traditions, the author focuses primarily on the historical heritage of society in understanding conscious beliefs or arbitrary acceptance in society of

certain behaviors that, according to members of the public, are the most appropriate in a given situation. Individual level directly is related to the specific personality of a consumer, due to its sex, age, temperament and so on.

Social habit of a consumer determines its socio-cultural experience (or level), which is an important component in the mechanism of consumer mark perception.

The disadvantage of this cultural model is releasing from the attention how these sources interact with the psychological state of the individual that is probably the subject of the psychology science. But another important omission is that objective model is not an image of the transformation process algorithm of all these theoretical measurement culture into action. According to Ralph Linton [14, p. 39], here it is impossible to observe the transformation of **implicit culture** into an **explicit culture**. Pursuant to this author, implicit side of culture is represented by psychological phenomena, which includes knowledge, attitudes and the values shared by members of society, while the material phenomena, that is, the results of human activities such as industry, and the kinetic phenomena i. e. behavior consist of an explicit side of the culture. Thus, implicit culture is hidden and it can yield to study only through its manifestation in the visible, manifest dimension.

To get closer to the disclosure of this question and form the first clear picture of the impact of national culture on consumer behavior, we should understand how the implicit dimension of culture can express itself in the behavior. Another aspect that can not be described in the derived model is imminent or transcendent nature of culture. According to J. Lombard [15, p. 77], the culture may be transcendental, exerting its influence on the individual more or less consciously, by reigning in a society sanctions, models, rules, but also it may already be internalized and be a part of the human personality.

The process of the creation of a certain behavior of transcendent culture can be represented by quoting Marc Filser [16, p. 155]. He argues that culture has an impact on consumption in two levels by orienting the existing needs of the individual due to its system of values, and in addition, some guiding behavior, including by the means of a symbolism. This circulation process of the various dimensions of culture can be represented by showing the mentioned measurement as axes. The vertical axis represents "display levels", and the horizontal represents the degree of awareness (Figure 3).

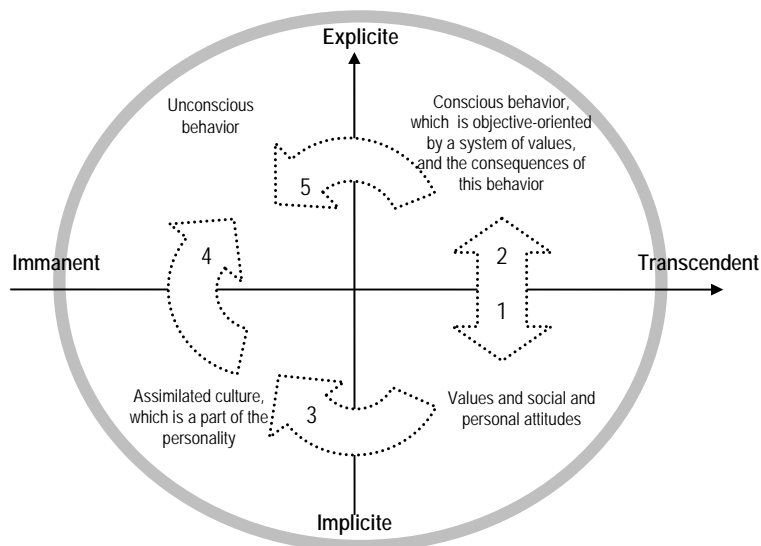


Figure 3 – Model of circulation of the cultural dimensions [11]

According to research by A. Semprini [17, p. 221], the social sphere is crossed by not too clearly defined streams of cultural and semiotic nature. This circulation (shown above) can be regarded as an attempt to present these flows. The point here is representing the flows in tangible form. Semiotic flows are closely connected with the cultural flows, because the culture is gradually composed of meanings and symbolism, and the culture generates new meanings and symbolisms. They are closely intertwined, and their separation is possible only in abstract terms. In addition, the author emphasizes that "social segmentation gives way to social fluidity (mobility), where the identity and way of life of an individual follows a predictable trajectory that is being in constant change" [17, p. 90-92]. For this reason, we should take into account the cultural trends that exist at a given moment, and at the same time, we should have an idea about the nature of the motion of these flows by studying the groups.

To observe the impact of the culture on the consumer's behavior, it would be appropriate to reveal the influence mechanism in behavioral models. We made the generalization that the national culture that has an impact on the consumer's behavior is one of the environmental factors on the basis of observing a several models, including a model of Engel J.F., Blackwell R.D. and Miniard P.W. [18], model M. Filser [16, p. 7], Amine [19, p. 67], and model Lendrévie et Lindon [20, p. 172]. It constitutes variables causing of consumer's behavior together with the characteristics of the consumer

However, since we are talking about a national culture according to our model of social habit is a root cause of any specifics in social groups, in addition to the differences in the socio-structural configuration we put it above all the other environmental factors (Figure 4).

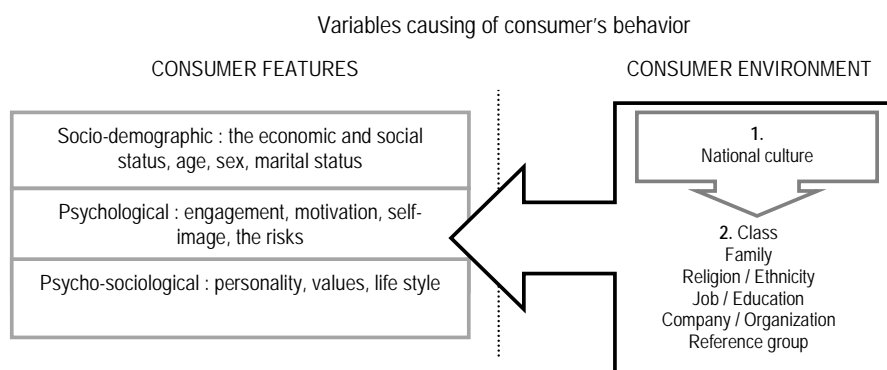


Figure 4 – Levels of national culture influence

In addition, each of the environmental factors causes its influence on the three categories of consumer characteristics (socio-demographic, psychological, psycho-sociology).

The national culture, the effect of which it is carried out on two levels: the individual and the public influences on the national identity of the customer and his perception of the trademark.

On the **societal level** the national culture, as a legacy of the set of historical events, has the "designing" effect on the structure of society that each country has its own by creating a class system, the concept of family and so on, through the social values.

At the same time, it generates social values, so they go back from individual values. This circulation of values, marked on the circulation model of cultural values as arrows 1 and 2 (Figure 4), is a continuous and inclusive process within a single society. And it can be illustrated with a quote of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann "Society exists as both an objective and subjective reality ... the individual, which is part of the exteriorized his own world inside the social world, and at the same time internalized society as objective reality" [21, p. 177-178].

On the **individual level**, the national culture has an indirect impact by environmental factors. An instance of this type of impact can be considered as the results of the research conducted by Douglas B. Holt [22, p. 19-21], who had the aim to determine whether social class impacts on the formation of a certain consumer's behavior. He compared the behavior of two social classes of consumption the so-called "Low Cultural Consumers" and "High Cultural Consumers". The results showed that LCC were more willing to accept the value invested by marketers in the marked goods because they considered them in this regard, more functional and scarce. In contrast to them, HCC tried to avoid the semantic load marketers invested in the image of the mark, because they considered them false.

The research led to the conclusion that mark identity always carries the imprint of a national culture it influences and thereby creates a national identity mark.

Another factor is the consumer's experience with a certain mark (marketing past of the company associated with the introduction of a mark to the market) it is a whole period of "communication" between the company and its customers, during which in the minds of consumers is formed a certain image of the mark and the thought about it: the period from the moment of first marketing company until now. Figure 5 shows a proposed model of the mechanism of interaction experience between a certain mark and socio-cultural experience of the consumer, the creation of the image, and the competition barriers.

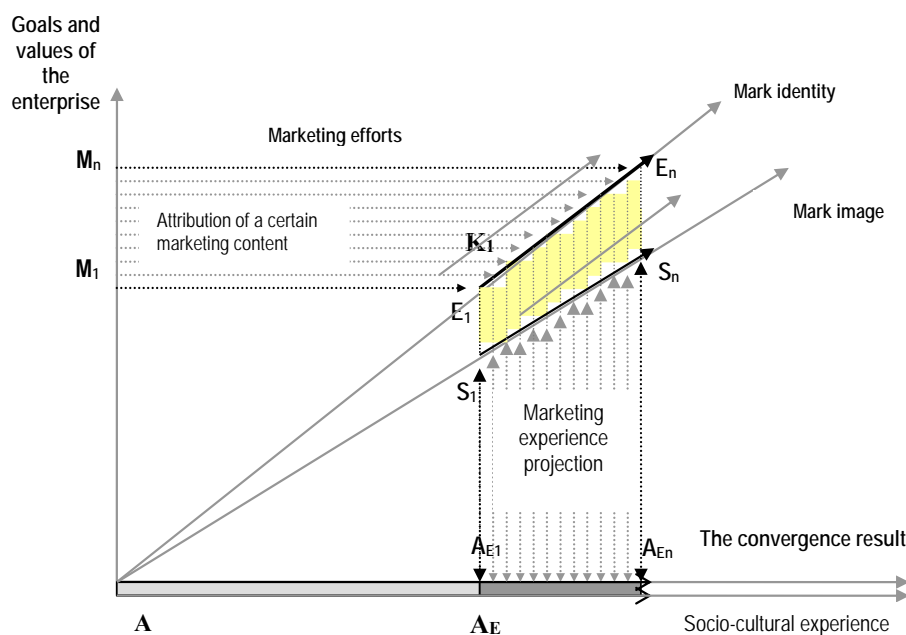


Figure 5 – Model of image formation of the mark in the consumer's mind

On the axis of "goals and values of the company" point M_1 reflects the first marketing campaign started by the company, the point M_n activities that are carried out at the moment. The space between them $M_1M_nE_1E_n$ is a set of company's marketing activities for a particular mark during its existence started in order to form a certain consumer perception of it.

On the axis of socio-cultural experience, the segment AA_{En} illustrates the process of obtaining certain socio-cultural experience by the individual, during which are formed the convictions, assimilated

traditions, that is all his experience to the actual moment in time (A_{E_n}). The parallel axis that is higher is an attitude to the information received, that is formed from the experience (socio-cultural and marketing) going through personal characteristics that are conditionally situated in the figure between experience and attitude.

The mark, how the company sees it (vector E_1E_n), is projected on the cultural experience of the individual. Thus, vector $A_{E_1} A_{E_n}$ is an advertising past of company aimed at consumers. And in the perception the consumer it is a marketing communication experience with the mark. The point A_{E_1} is a moment of the first contact between the individual and marketing information. The point A_{E_n} is an actual time of the marketing incentive for the consumer. The suggested model of "overlapping" of marketing experience on individual cultural experience indicates that marketing information, which is addressed to the consumer, is seen through the prism of values that are formed during his life. That is marketing communication is not the only factor influencing the consumer opinion about the mark.

Lastly, referring to the third factor that influences consumer mark perception (after those of socio-cultural components and consumer communication experience with the mark) it is worth noting the competition barriers. Figure 5 depicts them as vectors that run parallel to the vector E_1E_n and constitute a similar marketing impact of competitors on this target group of consumers. As well as marketing activities of "our" company, the actions of competitors have their effect on the axis of the consumer experience. They weaken the effectiveness of efforts of "our" company by their advertising past that is remembered in the minds of consumers, and by the influence of other marketing incentives (similar to $E_nA_{E_n}$).

Releasing the mark on the market, the company wants to create its specific identity. However, as a result of the projection of the marketing experience on socio-cultural experience of the consumer, mark image, which is formed in the mind of the consumer based on the characteristics that were communicated to him by the company, and under the influence of the factors listed above may not match the image which company wanted to create.

Let's look at the mechanism of image formation of a mark. Due to marketing solutions, a mark is endowed with a certain sense ($M_1 E_1 E_n M_n$), is formed its identity ($E_1 E_n$), which gradually spreads to the consumer environment ($E_1 A_{E_1} A_{E_n} E_n$). In other words, marketing experience is projected on socio-cultural. But during the marketing campaign, this content is perceived and interpreted by the consumer ($A_{E_1} A_{E_n}$) according to his life experience, going through personal characteristics of the individual and forming a certain attitude. As a result, the consumer forms the new content of a mark image, his personal vision - the image that it gives ($S_1 S_n$). Thus, consumer's understanding of the mark diverges from what a creator wanted it to be.

Conclusions and directions of further researches. The difference between the content embedded in the company and the mark image that is perceived by a consumer, first noted J.-N. Kapferer, who wrote that at level of mark management, identity precedes the image. Identity is the result of creating a certain vision of the company, it is the empowerment of mark by certain content and image is a derivative of decoding this message and interpretation of this content to a consumer.

Therefore, the difference between the created identity and perceived image ($E_1 S_1 S_n E_n$) comes from "market dissonance", which occurs for two reasons:

1. Insufficiently thorough study of target consumers. So, before you create a mark image in the minds of consumers you need to think about how it is perceived. For this purpose, you need to closely examine the target segment, which is inherent to a certain set of knowledge and beliefs in order to predict consumer reaction. In other words, you should examine existing socio-cultural experience of consumers.

2. Lack of effective marketing influences. The efforts of companies that are carried out through a complex of pricing, communication and marketing strategies should be focused on the target audience considering the studies of its behavior.

The result of incorrect determination of competitors is the arising dissonance. So, creating identity of

the mark the company, based on its vision of the image of mark, thinks its direct competitor is K_1 , and the consumer, which has a slightly different idea of the mark, sees the alternative to meet their needs for products of another mark K_2 , which the company did not consider its competitor. As a result, a mark is not correctly positioned, and marketing efforts do not achieve their goals. That's why in the management of the trademark considerable attention should be given to the study of consumer behavior research and competitive environment in the target market.

Further studies will be used to search for the specific marketing tools to reduce the market dissonance between mark identity and what it seems to be for the company and image formed decision-making of the consumer.

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Роль національної ідентичності торговельної марки: механізм сприйняття споживачів

Стаття присвячена проблемі формування ідентичності торговельної марки. Метою статті є уточнення сутності категорії "ідентичність марки", визначення чинників, що впливають на її сприйняття споживачем торговельної марки, та ролі яку в цьому процесі займає національна ідентичність. На основі узагальнення теоретичних підходів уточнено різницю між такими категоріями як "ідентичність марки" і "імідж марки". Сукупність характеристик, які підкреслюють єдність, однорідність пропозиції марки, що відрізняє її від інших, складають ядро ідентичності марки. У статті запропонована модель механізму взаємодії досвіду спілкування з певною маркою і соціально-культурного досвіду споживача, формування іміджу і перешкоди конкуренції. Зроблено висновок, що розбіжність між створеною ідентичністю і сприйманим іміджем з'являється через "ринковий дисонанс", що виникає з двох причин: неякісне вивчення цільових споживачів і недостатньо ефективні інструменти маркетингового впливу.

Ключові слова: національна ідентичність, сприйняття марки, імідж бренду, споживча поведінка, ринковий дисонанс, культура й ідентичність.

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Роль национальной идентичности торговой марки: механизм восприятия потребителей

Статья посвящена вопросу формирования идентичности торговой марки. Целью статьи является уточнение сущности категории "идентичность марки", определение факторов, влияющих на ее восприятие потребителем торговой марки, и роли которую в этом процессе занимает национальная идентичность. На основе обобщения теоретических подходов уточняется различие между такими категориями как "идентичность марки" и "имидж марки". В работе предложена модель механизма взаимодействия опыта общения с определенной маркой и социально-культурного опыта потребителя, формирование имиджа и помехи конкуренции. Сделан вывод, что расхождение между созданной идентичностью и воспринимаемым имиджем возникает из-за рыночного диссонанса, а он, в свою очередь, по двум причинам: некачественное изучение целевых потребителей и недостаточно эффективные инструменты маркетингового воздействия.

Ключевые слова: национальная идентичность, восприятие марки, имидж бренда, поведение потребителя, рыночный диссонанс, культура и идентичность.

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