

**CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR BUILDING
LOCAL FOOD BRANDS****Djurayeva Guzal****Ph.D, senior teacher at "Innovation Management" department,
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Abstract. The formation of a national food brand plays a pivotal role in enhancing a country's competitiveness in the global food market while also contributing to the sustainable development of its agro-industrial sector. This paper explores the theoretical and methodological foundations necessary for the creation of a national food brand, emphasizing the integration of economic, cultural, marketing, and policy-related components. Drawing on branding theories, consumer behavior studies, and value chain models, the research establishes a comprehensive framework that aligns national identity with product differentiation strategies. Synthesizing insights from resource-based theory, signaling theory, and stakeholder theory, the study delineates core dimensions of brand capital—awareness, associations, perceived quality, loyalty, and proprietary resources—and shows how each dimension can be strategically leveraged through integrated marketing communications, innovation governance, and data-driven customer experience design. Methodological attention is devoted to the selection and triangulation of valuation techniques—including financial market metrics, consumer-based surveys, and advanced econometric modeling—so that brand capital becomes a measurable and actionable corporate asset.

Keywords: marketing strategy, food brand, market, brand, methodological foundations, management, brand capital, local brand.

1.Introduction

Before the spread of the pandemic in the world, 820 million people, that is, every ninth person on the planet, did not have enough food. Of these, 113 million were in dire straits due to hunger. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, about 1.6 billion people may starve, and 500 million people may fall into poverty. [1]

The share of world food products in international trade has sharply decreased over the past 30-40 years, and over the past 20 years, food products have decreased from 13.1 to 5.1%, or 2.6 times, and the share of food products in world trade has decreased from 16.6 to 7.5%, or 2.2 times. As a result, there is a commodity shortage in the global food market.[2]

The situation with research in this area is complicated by the lack of universally recognized terminology. Differences in interpretations affect the most basic concepts such as brand and brand equity. This terminological problem leads to serious difficulties related to the integration of the results of individual scientists' works and their results. This makes it difficult to create a full-fledged system of strategic brand management as a key asset of the organization.

The main purpose of this article is to develop a brand equity model that would take into account the contribution of the most significant approaches and could serve as a guide for managers to make management decisions on brand equity development. To achieve this, the author analyzed the main approaches to such key concepts as brand, branding, brand management, brand equity, and reflected their main advantages and disadvantages. Also, scientific research aimed at increasing the competitiveness of food production enterprises based on branding strategies, including the creation of global brands, consumer personalization based on innovative marketing strategies, effective organization of market research, creation of local brands capable of competing with global brands, scientific research on improving the scientific and methodological foundations of increasing the prestige of national brands in the world based on the effective use of digital marketing communication channels, is gaining popularity.

The lack of sufficient experience of food production enterprises in Uzbekistan in creating a brand and increasing its value requires the use of new approaches, tools, and brand models in their marketing activities. In this regard, the issue of theoretical and methodological approaches to the effective organization of the brand development process with maximum consumer and added value, taking into account the influence of existing budget constraints and the competitive environment, is on the agenda. These circumstances require scientific research aimed at creating a brand strategy and increasing its value in the activities of domestic production and trade enterprises.

2.Literature review

The scientific and theoretical aspects of researching the problems of food production and its marketing, including the formation of a food brand, are reflected in the developments of

many foreign scientists. In this regard, the works of Assel G., Churchill G.A., Brown T.J., Kotler Ph., Keller K.L., Setiawan I., Karatajaya H., Malhotra N.K., Kennedy D., Praet V.D., Salenbacher J., Traindl A., Trout J., Doyle P. have become classics. Despite the significant contribution of these foreign scientists to marketing, marketing strategy, and brand formation, the issues of developing a marketing strategy for the formation of a food brand have practically not been considered.

In the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, such scientists as Bagiyev G.L., Tarsevich V.M., Bulanov A., Veselova A.O., Godin A.M., Golubkov E.P., Grechin E.Yu., Makashchev M.O., Pravda P., Rozhkov I.Ya., Kismerishkin V.G. conducted research in this area. Although these studies cover the scientific and theoretical aspects of brand theories and the formation of consumer goods brands and the development of branding strategies, the issues of developing a marketing strategy for the formation of a food brand have not been studied.

The authors mainly enriched modern marketing theory with new data and solved a number of issues related to the scientific analysis of marketing research problems. However, the issue of developing a marketing strategy for the formation of a local brand of food products, in particular food products, has not been studied.

3. Research methodology

In the scientific research, methods of scientific observation, theoretical analysis, and synthesis were used.

At the beginning of the article, an analysis of the prevailing interpretations of added value defining a brand in scientific literature is presented. Further, the main approaches to the classification of brand equity indicators are integrated, and the need to develop a unified system of indicators reflecting the difference in brand perception by consumers, manufacturers, and investors is substantiated. Then, based on the identified criteria, it is proposed to reinterpret the traditional concept of brand equity in order to distinguish its three interpretations and establish connections between them within the chain of brand equity distribution.

The scientific works of foreign and domestic scientists were taken as a methodological basis. In particular, the theoretical views of leading scientists of the CIS and foreign countries were summarized and conclusions were drawn.

4. Analysis and results

In scientific literature, especially in the scientific literature of Uzbek scientists, the concept of a trademark (trade mark) has been used more often. In our opinion, such approaches

do not fully reveal the content and essence of the brand. Brand refers to a brand created by the manufacturer or the manufacturer's brand (manufacturer's brand). In most cases, the intermediary or seller brand (retailer brand, store brand, or private label) is used only in the sales process, therefore it is advisable to use it in the research process. However, under certain conditions, "brand," "trademark," or "image" should be used as synonyms only when the content is appropriate.

The concept of a local brand stems from the existence of various regions of the region, especially the peculiarities of production, storage, and consumption of food products, the requirements of state standards for these products, and the need to take into account their characteristics when entering the world market.

Table 1**Systematization of definitions of the concept of "brand"**

| no. | Authors | Brand definition |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | American Marketing Association | The name, slogan, symbol, clay yes or mixed service cannot be provided. |
| 2. | Aaker D. | The existence of a brand is understood as a perception given to the consumer as a promise from the manufacturer. |
| 3. | Brown P. | The sum of the emerging mental connections between buyers and brand owners represents the brand. |
| 4. | Burnett Dj. | Name, instrument, design, project or combination thereof used to distinguish goods and services from other competitors |
| 5. | Brand Aid is a brand consulting company | A brand represents a set of specific, difficult to replicate, impressive, functional, emotional, and defined promises to the target consumer. |
| 6. | Vlasova E. | A brand is a system of features that distinguishes a product from competitors' products, consisting of interconnected, rational, and irrational characteristics of the product, which occupy an important place for the target audience. |

| no. | Authors | Brand definition |
|-----|--|---|
| 7. | Bojuk S.G. | It is not only the ideological significance of the enterprise, but also the management philosophy that shapes the practical application. |
| 8. | Kotler F. | A brand is a name, term, symbol, image, or combination thereof that defines the products of a single supplier or group of sellers and ensures their differentiation from the goods and services of competitors. |
| 9. | Krylov I. | Individual perception of a trademark in order to increase consumer choice in a competitive line |
| 10. | Ikramov M.A. | A brand is a criterion that expresses the degree of recognition of a company or product (service). |
| 11. | Ogilvie D. | A set of imperceptible features of a product: name, packaging, price, history, position, advertising style |
| 12. | Matantsev A.N. | Product individuality, characteristics of the enterprise or product that attract the attention of customers, serve to create the image of the enterprise |
| 13. | Pettis Ch. | Cultural-agreed emotional image of the product or enterprise; |
| 14. | Pechorsky A. | Quality assurance, facilitating consumer choice. |
| 15. | F. le Pla and L. Parker | - Competitive advantage and the main source of future income; |
| 16. | Stas A.K. | - Promise necessary consumer properties; |
| 17. | Rice L. | A trademark that has independent value independent of the product is called a brand. |
| 18. | Khotamov I.S. | A brand is not a trademark in the literal sense of the word, but a symbol, an image of product quality. |
| 19. | The Chartered Institute of Marketing | The physical characteristics of a product or service, trust and expectations towards it, are the image of a unified trademark in the consumer's consciousness. |

Source: author's development

In the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the terms "trademark" and "brand" are not used, and a trademark is used for the legal protection of intellectual property. A trademark is understood to be expressed in words, images, volumes, a mixture of them, and other types.

This mark is registered with the Intellectual Property Agency under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan by legal entities or individuals.

However, over time, the above-mentioned terms were synonymous to a certain extent, which contributed to the complication of the classification of approaches and the creation of terminological ambiguity. In our opinion, the confusion of these concepts is one of the main reasons why, during the existence of the brand equity concept, a universally recognized system for its measurement has not appeared. Consequently, in this work, we propose to return to the original three-faceted concept of brand equity proposed by P. Feldwijk in order to reinterpret and better systematize the main achievements of scientists who studied the essence of brand equity and methods for its measurement for 17 years after the publication of the author's famous work. In some literature, the minimum level of recognition in the consciousness of the target audience is cited as 20%, some as 30%, others as 50%. For a local brand, in our opinion, such a recognition level should be at least 70 percent. Studies show that for a company or product to become a brand, it must operate in the market for at least 5 years. For this reason, the terms mentioned above are systematized in Table 1.2, divided into several groups according to their functions.

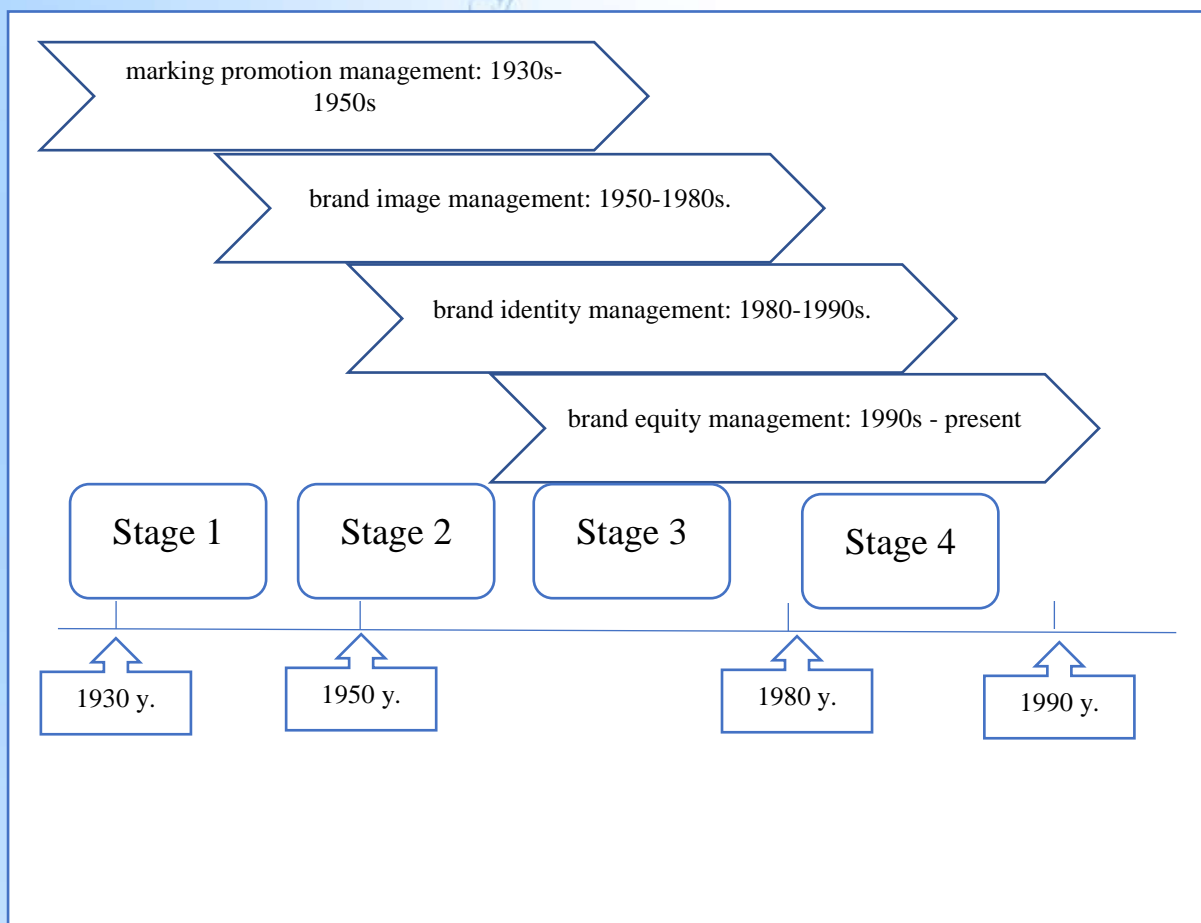
According to broader approaches to the term brand, clarifying the concept of a local brand is important for branding theories. National brands represent the Republic of Uzbekistan in the international market. So far, an attempt has been made to see the brand of the company (entrepreneurs) or their products on the scale of the domestic market. For this reason, the use of the term "local brand" is scientifically and methodologically expedient. Of course, in the food market, it becomes a "national brand" only when it is export-oriented, just like fruits and vegetables. These circumstances require the creation of scientific-methodological, practical, and theoretical aspects, methodological foundations for the formation of local brands in the food market.

Taking into account the comments made, we can offer the following definition of brand management. Brand management is a scientifically based synthesis of the processes of creating, maintaining, and developing a system of tangible and intangible characteristics unique to each brand, generating value for the company, ensuring the achievement of its strategic goals by creating, maintaining, and developing unique and relevant value for consumers and other stakeholders.

Brand management as a concept of strategic brand management in its evolutionary development has gone through four main stages:

- management of the promotion of a branded product: 1930-1950s;
- brand image management: 1950-1980s;
- brand identity management: 1980-1990s;
- brand equity management: 1990s - present.

Having analyzed domestic and foreign literature on brand management (monographs, textbooks, scientific articles, conference materials, etc.), the authors identified the indicated stages and determined their time intervals based on the identification of specific management functions.



For successful implementation of the brand in the company's activities, effective branding management, it is extremely important to align branding strategies with business strategy. This means that the company needs to carry out a set of measures to explain the essence of the brand and branding, which should be understandable not only to marketers, but also to employees of all departments, and first of all - its top managers. As directions for further research on the problem of brand management, we can propose: clarifying the classifying features and expanding the list of criteria for a deeper analysis of the evolution of brand management concepts; using modern data mining technology to analyze the essence and

specifics of each stage of changing brand paradigms, determining the time limits of these stages; researching the specific opportunities for business that the implementation of a certain brand management concept provides.

The results of the analysis of economic literature are divided into several groups according to the content and essence of the term brand:

1. The term brand is expressed as a group of product characteristics to distinguish it from competitors' goods or services. Such an expression leads to attention to the elements that make up the brand, that is, the name, symbol, history, packaging, etc.
2. The brand is considered by consumers as a source of the formation of a stable image. Such expression expresses a stable perception of the product by consumers and pays more attention to the psychological perception of the product.
3. Directions as a consumer-oriented activity for the brand as a trademark for its presenters. In such an expression, attention is paid to the relationship between the trademark and the consumer, and special emphasis is placed on the mental connections between them.
4. Representation of the brand as a means of creating value. Such an expression emphasizes that each brand has its own value in relation to the product and product brand.

It is advisable to consider a local brand as a combination of stable perceptions that ensure the recognition of the product in the minds of consumers in the market of a specific region.

Table 2

The role of the brand in ensuring competitive advantages

| № | Competitive forces | Impact of the brand on the company's position in the industry |
|----|------------------------|---|
| 1. | Customers | Forms inclination. Reduces customer loyalty |
| 2. | Goods-News | Helps bring a new product to the market based on a well-known brand |
| 3. | Commodity substitutes | Helps save time when risks arise in the market |
| 4. | Suppliers | Provides control over distribution points |
| 5. | In-network competition | It blocks access to the network. Strengthens market position |

Source: author's development

In foreign economic literature, the brand is perceived as a strategic resource that ensures a stable competitive advantage of the enterprise. Sustainable competitive advantage "Improving product profitability is a set of actions carried out by achieving a long-term advantage using a specific strategy." The concept of a stable competitive advantage was first used in the work of M. Porter in 1985.

Of course, in the period of the formation of the digital economy, the form and content of a stable competitive advantage are changing.

The local brand also helps to enter other markets with the manufacturer's new products. For example, the Nestle brand in the Uzbek market has the opportunity to expand its position not only in the food market, but also in the markets for water, confectionery, and other food products. The success of this company can be determined by the trust placed in it. This situation indicates the possibility of achieving the transition from one market to another without excessive spending on advertising and other promotional activities.

Studies have shown that the role of a local brand in increasing the effectiveness of a product or service is high. If more marketing approaches are applied, it will also be easier to promote the local brand. In modern marketing, a product is viewed as a means of satisfying human needs. The stronger the local brand, the more it creates advantages for its owners over competitors. Especially in food products, as the number of manufacturers increases, it becomes difficult for consumers to switch from well-known brands to other products. The manufacturer wants the consumer to choose their product among competitors.

In the process of using brand strategies in Uzbekistan, although the marketing concept of "brand" exists in the minds of consumers, there are no clear directions for viewing it as the main concepts of modern marketing. There is practically no understanding of how the processes of assessing the brand of goods perceived by the consumer by enterprises, the formation of consumer value for brands, provide maximum market opportunities. These circumstances determine the need to describe brand concepts in an interconnected way.

The main goal of the research is also to transform a local brand into a strong national brand. Based on this, a fundamental change in the existing legislative framework, standards, criteria, and norms of Uzbekistan is required.

5. Conclusions and suggestions

The presence of a large number of definitions of relevant concepts significantly hinders both scientific research in this area and the development of practical tools for managing company brands. The author attempted to comprehensively consider the brand's capital and presented a model that integrates various aspects of this concept. In the developments of foreign scientists, various definitions of branding, that is, the formation of a brand, its use, promotion, are given. Due to the lack of sufficient experience in the specific branding model in the conditions of Uzbekistan, it is formed on the basis of approaches consisting of imitating a foreign company or product brand, direct transfer, a mixture of Western and Eastern models. These circumstances require the use of branding technologies and modern methodologies to constantly study consumer purchasing desires and inclinations based on marketing research.

Depending on the characteristics of the consumer market of Uzbekistan, due to the low culture of branding awareness, the creation of a new brand and its application in the market does not require much time and financial resources, the rapidly changing dynamics of the renewal of the range of consumer goods in the domestic market does not allow the formation of consumer inclination towards a particular brand, consumer confidence in foreign brands is decreasing, there is still no full consumer confidence in the brand of manufacturers in the domestic market, the need to create a local brand in the market and conduct a wide advertising campaign is growing, and consumer confidence in advertising is high.

The results of systematizing the principles of brand formation and development became the basis for understanding that the principles of branding for the market are related to the principles of four positions (creation, positioning, price formation, development, and management).

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