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Analysis of the Innovative Factor in Branding

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Abstract: *To achieve success, brands must establish robust branding that conveys trust, stability, and loyalty through their products, services, and experiences. With ongoing advancements in technology and shifts in consumer preferences, it is essential for brands to continuously innovate in order to maintain relevance. Additionally, increasing competition within the industry intensifies the necessity for brands to distinguish themselves through the innovative products and services they offer. To stay authentic and pertinent to consumers, a brand must demonstrate its capability to respond swiftly to emerging trends and to evolve its branding strategy accordingly. By conducting a thorough analysis of consumer behaviours and preferences, brands can anticipate forthcoming market changes and adjust their strategies to ensure sustained success. From a scientific perspective, branding encompasses more than just a commercial activity; it represents a comprehensive practice grounded in consumer psychology, communication, and marketing.*

Keywords: *brand, branding, competition, consumers, innovation, preferences, trends*

1. Introduction

The concept of branding has evolved significantly over time, transforming from a mere name associated with a product or service into a narrative that resonates with consumers. The initial step in crafting this identity involves the creation of a logo, the selection of distinctive colours, and the development of a memorable tagline.

Branding and innovation are intrinsically linked concepts that reflect the ongoing changes within the business environment. In an era characterised by constant evolution, brands are compelled to pursue innovation to maintain relevance and distinguish themselves from competitors. Branding innovation encompasses multiple dimensions that contribute to a brand's success and evolution. This necessitates the generation of innovative ideas for the development of groundbreaking products that will capture consumer interest. Such innovations may include a modern and striking logo, packaging with unique details, a captivating advertising campaign, or even an authentic brand story.

In an increasingly competitive landscape, differentiation from competitors is not merely an option but has become essential. This involves the creation of offerings that enable a brand to stand out. The introduction of customised products, along with innovative services of superior quality, is fundamental. The success of this launch is closely linked to a brand's ability to swiftly adapt to market trends. The quicker the response, the greater the differentiation perceived by consumers.

While consumers often show a willingness to pay a premium for higher-quality products, it is advantageous for brands to maintain competitive and unique pricing strategies to distinguish themselves in the market. One approach could involve setting higher prices for premium products while offering lower, more accessible prices for standard items. Customers tend to value the agility of a brand in responding to trends and may feel more comfortable purchasing from a brand that consistently delivers positive experiences.

The effectiveness of innovation in branding can be assessed using key performance indicators (KPIs), which allow for a precise evaluation of the success of implemented innovations. Consequently, a brand can determine whether it has increased its recognition based on interactions across digital platforms and feedback collected from consumers through surveys and questionnaires.

Advanced storytelling in branding represents a strategic approach that transcends mere narratives, seeking to forge a profound connection between consumers and the brand through sophisticated strategies. A transparent presentation of the brand's story, including its challenges and setbacks, enhances consumer engagement.

Design plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Many brands tend to overload product packaging and advertising campaigns with excessive information, which is not necessarily an effective branding strategy. Research conducted by Mintel in France has shown that an abundance of details on packaging can diminish consumer trust in the product. In this context, minimalist design proves advantageous for brands, aiding in the creation of an identity that aligns with consumer ideals. By embracing minimalism, brands prioritise clarity, simplicity, and functionality. A minimalist brand identity typically features restrained colour palettes and straightforward logos devoid of superfluous elements. This approach enables brands to achieve greater recognition among consumers while also being valued for the straightforward principles they embody.

Looking ahead, it is anticipated that numerous innovations will emerge in branding, particularly in the realms of sustainability, product and service personalisation, e-commerce, and advanced technologies.

2. Research methods

To gain insight into how brands maintain relevance among consumers, a case study was conducted. This analysis focused on the most innovative strategies employed by brands to distinguish themselves

from competitors and enhance their positioning within consumer preferences.

Another research method utilised in this study was a survey created using the Google Forms platform. The survey questionnaire was designed on 25 May 2024 and remained open for responses for 48 hours, ultimately gathering 65 responses. The participants were residents of Romania, aged between 18 and 44 years. They were required to answer 27 questions, which included 2 independent variables, 20 closed questions, and 5 open-ended questions.

3. Results

The detailed analysis of brand innovation revealed that the success of certain brands can be attributed to their strategy of personalising products or services. A notable example is Nike's campaign, Nike By You, which allows consumers to customise their purchases based on their preferences regarding colours, materials, and designs.

Additionally, emotional messaging in advertising campaigns has proven effective for many brands. For instance, Procter & Gamble's Thank You Mom campaign highlights the significant role of mothers in children's lives, empowering them to achieve their goals. Similarly, the Like A Girl campaign by Always promotes values such as determination, intelligence, femininity, and girl power, resonating strongly with consumers.

The analysis also highlighted the ALS Association's campaign, which involved a challenge where participants poured buckets of ice over their heads to raise funds for individuals suffering from ALS. The number of videos created for this challenge directly influenced the amount donated, resulting in substantial engagement from the public. Furthermore, consumers exhibit a preference for brands that actively involve them in the innovation process for products and services. Apple exemplified this approach with its Shot On iPhone campaign, encouraging users to showcase their photography skills with their

iPhones, thereby fostering a community united by shared values and interests.

True consumer-valued innovations often revolve around the development of specific services. For instance, Spotify provides an interface that allows users to listen to their favourite music without interruption from advertisements, enabling the creation of personalised music libraries. Similarly, Airbnb facilitates tourists in sharing their experiences, aiding in decision-making regarding accommodation. The platform also allows locals to share their homes, enriching the cultural experience for visitors. Through its We Accept campaign, Airbnb communicated its stance against discrimination within its community, which was positively received by consumers.

Netflix has transformed the television landscape with its streaming innovation, offering users the flexibility to watch their favourite films and series at any time without the constraints of traditional scheduling. Another notable innovation appreciated by female consumers was Dyson's introduction of a hair dryer featuring a ventilation system that efficiently dries hair without causing damage.

The survey questionnaire provided insights into consumer perceptions of innovation in branding. When asked to define what innovation in branding means to them, the majority of respondents (52.3%) identified it as the launch of new products or services in the market. The second most popular response, selected by 43.1% of participants, was the consistent adaptation to consumer trends, while 24.6% cited the creation of impactful advertising campaigns. Additionally, 13 participants opted for two answers each, with the most frequent combinations being the correlation between constant adaptation to consumer trends and the creation of impactful advertising campaigns, as well as the launch of new products or services alongside impactful advertising campaigns. Responses varied across different age groups and genders, reflecting a diverse range of opinions rather than a specific demographic focus.

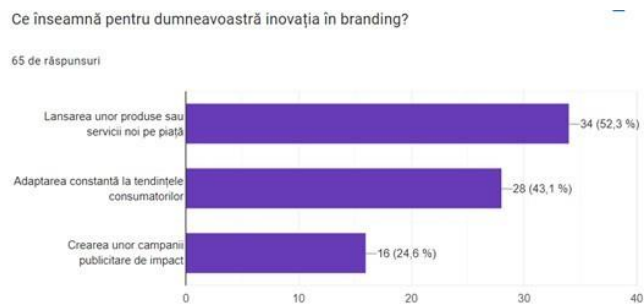


Fig. 1. Innovation in branding

When asked how innovation in branding contributes to a company's success, 64.6% of respondents indicated that it increases brand awareness. The other two options received equal support, each selected by 38.5% of participants, reflecting that innovation also improves customer loyalty and differentiates the brand from competitors. Responses to this question were varied, showing no significant differences in answers based on gender or age demographics.

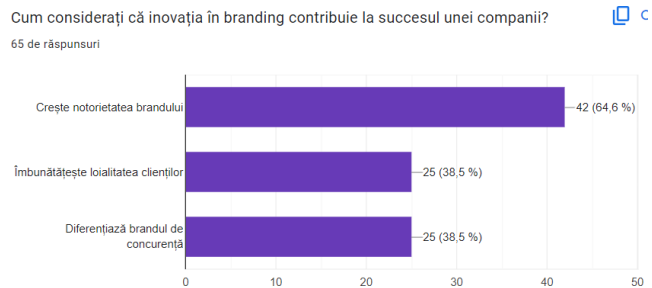


Fig. 2. How innovation contributes to the success of a brand

In response to the question regarding the main trends in innovation in branding, the option with the highest percentage, at 38.5%, was the use of emerging technologies, such as AI and AR. The other options, focusing on sustainability and social responsibility and personalising the customer experience, received equal support at 30.8%. This question was a closed one, allowing respondents to select only one

answer. Interestingly, a higher percentage of female respondents chose the use of emerging technology compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, both genders expressed concern for sustainability and demonstrated support for the idea of personalising products, indicating a shared interest in these trends. Age-wise, respondents did not clearly divide into distinct groups.

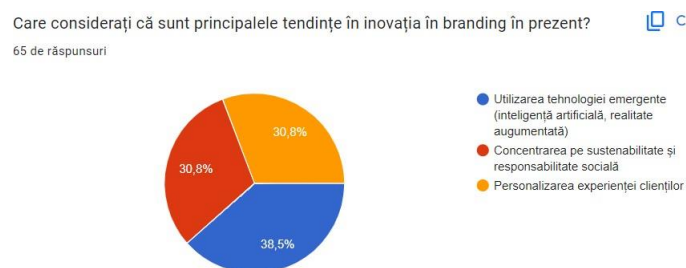


Fig. 3. The main trends in innovation

In question 8, respondents were asked which aspects most attract them to an innovative brand. Both the design and aesthetics of the products and services and the unique customer experience ranked highest, each receiving a percentage of 29.2%. Following closely, with a percentage of 27.7%, was the relevance and adaptability to customer needs and preferences. In last place, with 13.8%, was the use of advanced technology to enhance services. This question was a closed one, allowing only one response. The preference for advanced technology was predominantly selected by male respondents, with only two females choosing this option. Females showed a greater inclination towards design, unique experiences, and adaptability, while a small number of males indicated preferences for unique experiences and adaptability, with only four selecting design. Age-wise, it was noted that those who preferred the use of advanced technology to improve services were predominantly under 30 years old.



Fig. 4. The most appreciated aspects of an innovative brand

When asked about the relevance of Nike's product customisation campaign, Nike By You, 47.7% of respondents indicated that they found it very relevant, while 33.8% deemed it relevant, and 6.2% described it as somewhat relevant. The campaign was considered not very relevant by 3.1% of respondents, and 10.8% reported being unaware of it. Notably, no respondents selected the option for not relevant. This question was closed, allowing for only one choice. It is noteworthy that only one male respondent was unfamiliar with the campaign, whereas a greater number of females indicated they had not seen it. The responses categorised as very relevant and relevant came from both male and female respondents.

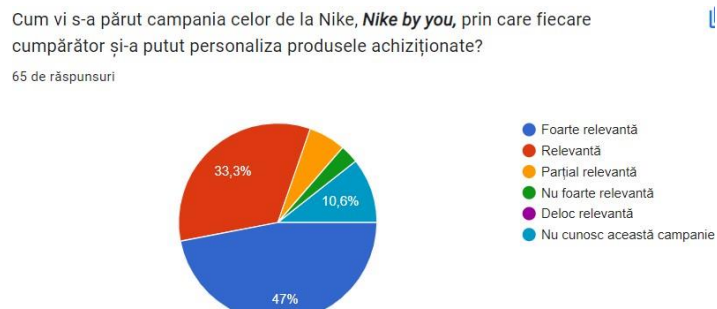


Fig. 5. Impression about the campaign *Nike by You*

When asked whether P&G's Thank You, Mom campaign had a positive impact on their perception of the brand, 33.8% of respondents selected the option "very much." The highest percentage, at 36.9%, indicated that they felt influenced to a certain extent, while 21.5% stated that they were not influenced at all. The remaining 9.2% chose the option "a little." This was a closed question allowing only one response. Contrary to expectations, there were male respondents who indicated they were influenced significantly or to a certain extent, while some female respondents chose the options "not at all" and "very little." From a generational perspective, no distinctions were observed among age groups.

Cei de la P&G au lansat acum câțiva ani, campania *Thank you Mom*, care celebrează rolul mamelor în viața sportivilor. V-a influențat aceasta campanie în mod pozitiv percepția față de acest brand?

65 de răspunsuri

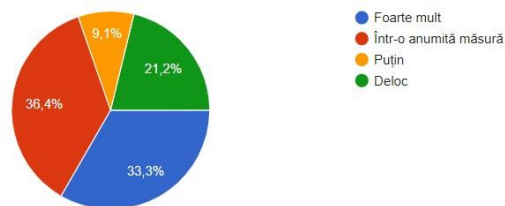


Fig. 6. The influence of the campaign *Thank you Mom*

In response to the open question regarding innovative aspects appreciated by respondents, females aged 19 to 24 highlighted the campaign's song, message, diversity, and effectiveness as notable innovations. Both male and female respondents recognised customisation and attention to detail as key factors. A 17-year-old male recalled the logo, while an 18-year-old boy remembered the advertisement. The negative pressure experienced by athletes, emphasised in Adidas' You Got campaign, was identified as an innovative aspect by a 26-year-old male respondent. Additionally, a

male participant suggested the eMAG Genius subscription as a notable innovation. A 20-year-old boy mentioned that Lays has innovated by investing money into the bags of chips. Interestingly, one female respondent pointed out the short biographies of athletes featured in advertisements as an innovative element.

Female respondents aged 22 to 28 considered several aspects innovative, including the stickers with Lala Band from Tempo biscuits, the video from Jacobs, the bracelets from Coca-Cola, the strawberries from Dr. Oetker, the 3D campaign from Sephora, the packaging in the colours of the Romanian flag from Rom, and initiatives aimed at helping the elderly through Dr. Max sales. A 23-year-old female also noted the use of augmented reality (AR) in the Pepsi Max Unbelievable Bus Shelter campaign as innovative. Furthermore, Maybelline's Sky High campaign was recognised for the idea of lashes attached to the subway alongside a mascara-like brush. Notably, both male and female respondents of various ages considered the involvement of public figures or characters as an innovative aspect of campaigns. Female participants recalled names such as the shepherd Ghiță from the Vodafone commercial, Antonia from Avon, Alexia Eram from Storia, the girl from Oreo, the character Dino from Danonino, the blue piglet from Antrefrig, and the cow from Milka. Among male respondents aged 18 to 35, personalities such as Daniela Crudu from Elfbet and Felix Baumgartner from Red Bull were highlighted, alongside characters like the bear from Carpathi beer, Santa Claus from Coca-Cola, and the train featured in the same campaign. This indicates the formation of two distinct camps: one group that views stars and characters as innovative elements in advertising campaigns, and another that focuses on innovative details.

When asked for suggestions on improving advertising campaigns, 21 respondents of various genders and ages opted not to answer. An additional seven participants stated that they had no suggestions to offer. The majority of responses centred on themes such as sustainability, creativity, authenticity, trends, honesty, consumer needs, relevance, and posts on Instagram and TikTok. Some respondents also suggested the

involvement of public figures in promoting products or services. These insights were provided by both male and female respondents aged 18 to 44, who were required to present their own suggestions in response to the direct question.

4. Conclusions

In discussing the relevance and success of a brand in the free market, innovation and community involvement emerge as two essential components. Brands must continuously adopt innovative marketing strategies to remain current within the marketplace. In an industry characterised by constant evolution, the ability to adapt to rapid changes and to monitor feedback effectively are critical for achieving a positive impact and ensuring branding success. The synergy between branding innovation and genuine community involvement facilitates the establishment of a strong reputation, thereby supporting brand advancement.

Research on innovative branding encompasses a broad array of topics, offering detailed insights into the potential evolution of branding strategies. The influence of digitisation is a fundamental area of focus, examining how technology affects interactions between audiences and brands. These processes are directed towards fostering authentic and enduring relationships between brands and consumers.

Innovation in branding can be evaluated using relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) that assess the effectiveness of strategies. This enables a brand to maintain its position in the market for an extended period within a competitive and ever-changing landscape. Furthermore, innovation is reshaping consumer preferences and establishing new standards for adaptability to emerging trends.

When considering risks, it is imperative for a brand to acknowledge the potential challenges that may arise during the implementation of innovations and branding strategies. To manage these risks effectively, thorough analysis of the market and target audience behaviour is essential. This includes testing products and

services prior to launch, encouraging consumer involvement in the innovation process, monitoring competitive dynamics, and conducting rigorous financial planning to mitigate the likelihood of failure.

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