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### **CONSTRUCTING A COMBINED BRAND IDENTITY**

*Identity has acquired the status of a key concept in social, cultural and economic contexts, because it affects the formation of human values, beliefs, preferences and behavior, in particular, consumer behavior. Moreover, consumption itself has long been a stable form of organizing social life, as it focuses on almost all social positions, becoming an almost ideal identifier. Because of this, the research of the target audience is considered the basis of branding, because its coincidence with the brand identity significantly increases consumer loyalty to the brand. On the other hand, brands tend to become part of the consumer's self-concept, influencing his values and lifestyle. It highlights the different roles of identity as an influencer (consumer on the brand) and as an object of influence (brand on the consumer). The search for ways to achieve a balance between consumer identity and brand identity outlined the research hypothesis, that systemic and structural approach will allow taking into account all elements of the consumer's identity in the process of brand identity formation and bring the "brand-consumer" relationship to a new emotional level through the construction of a complex, joint identity. Based on the methods of scientific analysis and synthesis, conceptualization and structural modelling, the key components of consumer*

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### **КОНСТРУЮВАННЯ СПОЛУЧЕНОЇ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ БРЕНДУ**

*Ідентичність набула статусу ключового поняття в соціальному, культурному та економічному контекстах, адже впливає на формування людських цінностей, переконань, вподобань і поведінки, зокрема споживацької. Причому саме споживання давно виступає сталою формою організації соціального життя, оскільки орієнтується практично на всі соціальні позиції, стаючи майже ідеальним ідентифікатором. Через це дослідження ідентичності цільової аудиторії розцінюється як основа брендингу, адже її збіг з бренд-ідентичністю суттєво підвищує лояльність споживачів до бренду. З іншого боку, брендам властиво ставати частиною Я-концепції споживача, впливаючи на його цінності й стиль життя. Це підкреслює різні ролі ідентичності як фактора впливу (споживача на бренд) і як об'єкта впливу (бренда на споживача). Пошуки способів досягнення балансу між ідентичністю споживача і бренд-ідентичністю окреслили гіпотезу дослідження: системно-структурний підхід дасть змогу врахувати всі елементи ідентичності споживача у процесі формування ідентичності бренду та вивести відносини "бренд-споживач" на новий емоційний рівень шляхом конструювання комплексної, спільної ідентичності. На основі методів наукового аналізу та синтезу, концептуалізації і структурного моделювання*



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identity and brand identity were identified. The structure of the consumer's identity has been improved by supplementing it with goals and ambitions of the consumer. A categorical apparatus of brand management has been developed due to the introduction of the concept of "combined brand identity", the starting condition for the construction of which is the analysis of the consumer's identity. The result of the proposed system-structural approach is a generalized matrix that allows forming a combined brand identity through a combination of different level factors of consumer identity and constituent elements of brand identity. The application of a system-structural approach will provide a detailed analysis of various consumer segments and will allow determining which elements of the consumer's identity should be reproduced in the brand for each segment. This will help to transform the brand's partnership with the consumer into a vital priority based on emotional intelligence

*Keywords:* identity, consumer, brand identity, factors, approach, method, emotional connection.

**JEL Classification:** B20, B40, D12, M31.

### Introduction

The evolution of marketing has demonstrated the need to take into account the consumer, relationships with whom largely ensure the success of the brand and the company's competitiveness in the market. Moreover, having become more knowledgeable, critical and demanding, consumers expect companies to have a deep understanding of their needs, preferences and values, and therefore they are ready to participate in the processes of creating and promoting brands and expect feedback.

Over time, it has also become clear that consumers buy brands or products that match their self-image, thereby buying a certain lifestyle. In other words, consumption becomes a means of demonstrating consumer identity (Ilaw, 2014). That is, the brand is an expectation that lives in the consumer's mind and helps him to define and demonstrate his identity; express his individuality and self-realization; take into account the consumer's characteristics in order to be chosen. On the other hand, a brand can transmit its values to the consumer, participate in the formation of his identity, integrating into the consumer's Self-concept (Saint Clair, 2023) and directly influence his desires and purchasing behavior (Zhang, 2023). In this case, the brand seems to dictate to the consumer that by purchasing it, he at the same time acquires a certain label in society: he belongs to a certain class, is socially responsible, such as "keeps up with the times". Thus, the aim of research interest also includes brand identity as a key component of its DNA,

виявлено ключові складові ідентичності споживача та бренд-ідентичності. Удосконалено структуру ідентичності споживача через її доповнення споживацькими цілями та амбіціями людини. Розвинуто категорійний апарат бренд-менеджменту шляхом уведення поняття "сполучена ідентичність бренду", вихідною умовою конструювання якої є аналіз ідентичності споживача. Результатом запропонованого системно-структурного підходу є узагальнена матриця, що дає змогу сформувати сполучену ідентичність бренду шляхом комбінації різнорівневих факторів ідентичності споживача та складових елементів ідентичності бренду. Застосування системно-структурного підходу забезпечить детальний аналіз різних сегментів споживачів і дозволить визначити, які елементи ідентичності споживача доцільно відтворити у бренді для кожного сегмента. Це сприятиме перетворенню партнерських відносин бренду зі споживачем на життєвий пріоритет на основі емоційного інтелекту.

*Ключові слова:* ідентичність, споживач, бренд-ідентичність, фактори, підхід, метод, емоційний зв'язок.

which must be consistent with the identity of consumers through statements about the goals or values of the brand (Michel et al., 2022). This question requires a deeper understanding of the content of consumer identity and the search for ways to reconcile all its components with the brand identity.

Issues of identity were raised in the works of scientists back in the last century, and went beyond the spheres of psychology and sociology in studies of the phenomenon of consumption. Among the significant works that have outlined this research direction, we should recall the theory of consumption divergence (Saunders, 1986), on the basis of which conclusions have been repeatedly drawn that consumption is largely determined by the specifics of the individual, and not just by production processes. Such views led to the activation of an alternative direction of research. Moreover, scientific searches were carried out both to understand consumer preferences and consumer choice of brand (Schneck & Holman, 1980; Heath & Scott, 1993; Ilaw, 2014; Taranenko & Kovshova, 2020), and for the formation of brands that meet the criteria of this choice (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2002; Kapferer, 2014; Mindrut et al., 2015; Laburtseva, 2016; Yahelska et al., 2023).

Mihalcea & Catoiu (2008) justify that each person goes through the process of identity formation and looks for symbols with the help of which he can determine his self-esteem, therefore the brand preferences should be based on the correspondence between the brand identity and the individual perceptions of the consumer about himself.

In turn, consumer identity is influenced by consumer culture, which determines consumer choice, so marketers must identify their diverse consumers through an understanding of the relevant culture and produce goods with cultural and prospective identity in mind (Habib & Hossain, 2015).

More recent works also emphasize the importance of reconciling both categories under consideration (von Wallpach et al., 2017; Kristal et al., 2020; Anaza et al., 2021). We are increasingly talking about the fact that not only the consumer's identity influences the brand, being a factor in its formation, but also itself is the object of the brand's influence, adapting to the finished brand and its identity (Bilyavskiy & Doguzov, 2021; Lykholat & Zadorizhna, 2021; Konovalenko, 2018; Iankovets, 2024). Saint Clair provides a good example of brand-based identity building – "I am an "Apple person" (Saint Clair, 2023).

Alvarado-Karste & Guzmán (2020) consider emotional and rational brand identities, which create varying degrees of value depending on the cognitive style of consumers. Consumers internalize the brand's message or identify with what the brand represents. Although this has already been discussed in various sources, the original contribution of this work is that the authors attempted to tie all these concepts together.

Studying the formation of identity, endowment of goods with symbolism and personal consumption, Zhurylo et al. (2023) substantiate that these categories are constantly undergoing changes. Identity formation becomes a more "creative" process and focuses on self-expression through

available tools rather than simply following the crowd. Brand symbolism becomes more complex as brands integrate into their positioning the values on which people choose a particular brand.

Accordingly, the issue of balance between identity as a factor of influence and identity as an object of influence in the light of the constant movement of symbols, values, desires and proposals remains relevant. So, in what case the process of researching consumer's behaviour can be suspended and the consumer's identity must be taken as the basis for the formation of a brand identity. In addition, the question of identity components remains: whether all the features of consumer's personal and social identity are taken into account in the brand development process. And vice versa: in what case it can be argued that a brand's identity will allow to integrate into the consumer's Self-concept in the existing format. The search for answers to these questions leads importance to develop a practical approach to harmonize the categories under consideration in brand management and form a single, comprehensive brand identity that would include all elements of consumer identity, which is extremely important in the period of mass customization that we can observe in lately.

The aim of the research is to substantiate the systematic and structural approach to the construction of a combined brand identity. To achieve the aim, the following tasks must be solved:

- to carry out a structural analysis of the consumer and brand identity contents;
- to reveal the content of the combined brand identity as a complex category in brand management based on the definition of the connections between consumer identity and brand identity;
- to develop the methodological principles of constructing a combined brand identity.

The hypothesis is that the systematic and structural approach will allow taking into account all elements of the consumer's identity in the process of forming the brand's identity, and at the expense of their coherence, construct *lovemarks*, moving from partnership to emotional connection. The hypothesis was tested on the basis of the provisions of the classical and modern theory of consumption, the theory of marketing, the results of scientific research on branding, presented in the works of domestic and foreign scientists. In the process of research, the methods of systematization, comparison and generalization, as well as the dialectical method and specification were used to determine the components of consumer identity and brand identity, their features and justify the feasibility of constructing a combined identity as a complex category of brand management; a systematic approach, decomposition, structural analysis and synthesis to justify the methodological foundations of the construction of a combined identity; conceptualization, structural modeling, the method of morphological analysis

and the matrix method – in the process of developing a combined brand identity, as well as graphic and tabular methods.

The main part of the article consists of two subsections divided into paragraphs. The first subsection is devoted to the theoretical analysis of identity as a category of brand management; the second is about the justification of the scientific approach and method of constructing a combined brand identity.

### 1. Consumer identity Vs brand identity

#### 1.1. *Consumer identity in brand management: essence and main components*

Based on a number of studies (Habib & Hossain, 2015; Saint Clair, 2023), identity can be defined as the way in which a person perceives and understands himself in the context of a social environment, culture, group or brand. That is, the *consumer identity* describes the perception, self-awareness, beliefs and identification of oneself through the consumption of goods, services and brands. It reflects the way in which consumers define themselves, express their values, interests, preferences, social affiliation and personal characteristics through their consumer behavior.

By the *construction of consumer identity* we understand the process of forming and expressing personal identity through interaction with a product, brand or service. Companies' involvement in consumer identity construction relies on understanding how consumers use certain products or brands to construct and express their unique identity.

Understanding how consumers construct their identity through consumption is important for companies, because products and services that meet the needs and desires of consumers and allow them to express their uniqueness will be more sought after in the market. Accordingly, in the context of brand management, understanding consumer identity allows brands to better respond to the needs and desires of their target audiences and build strong connections with consumers. So, on the one hand, consumers independently construct their identity, on the other hand, this process is influenced by many factors, the understanding of which allows companies to indirectly participate in the process of constructing the identity of consumers, helping them to express their uniqueness, demonstrate their values and belonging to certain groups.

Based on Davydova et al. (2018), Kozlovets (2009), Zhadan et al. (2019), *the structure of consumer identity* can be described through the following aspects:

- Self-definition (consumer identity helps people define themselves in the context of consumption; it may include such components as values, beliefs, lifestyle, interests and aspirations);
- Self-expression (consumer identity enables people to express their personality and individuality through consumption. Choosing certain brands,

goods or services can be a way to express their preferences, style, taste and social position);

- Social belonging (consumer identity is reflected in social belonging and group identification. People may feel belonging to certain consumer subcultures, communities or groups that reflect their values, interests and lifestyle);

- Identification with brands (a consumer's identity can be associated with identification with certain brands. Consumers can choose brands that match their values, identities and create a sense of relationship with these brands).

In our opinion, another component that can complement the consumer identity is the consumer's goals and ambitions, which gives it a strategic vision. Talk about seeing yourself in the future with different norms of behavior and/or capabilities, belonging to a different social group, switching to other brands, etc.

That is, the consumer is self-determined (somehow sees himself and knows how he wants to be perceived by others), for this he chooses different ways of self-expression (through his actions, behavior, style, appearance, choice of products and services). He feels belonging to a certain social group (community, subculture) and demonstrates this through his consumption choices, in particular, through brands that reflect or emphasize his identity. These are brands that reflect his values, lifestyle or personal characteristics. However, taking into account aspects such as achieving success, status enhancement, self-development, health and well-being, promoting sustainability or creating change in the world will help to further understanding how the consumer sees his goals and ambitions in the context of his consumption and how these goals influence on his choice and perception of brands. For example, a consumer may seek to purchase health products, sportswear, exercise equipment, or fitness center memberships in order to maintain or improve his health and fitness. Therefore, including consumer goals and ambitions in the understanding of consumer identity will help to better reveal the motivations and values that underline consumer choices in specific areas of consumption.

### *1.2. Brand identity concept*

The identity concept is also applied to the brand. Although the development of the brand identity concept caused the variation of the components of this category (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2002; Kapferer, 2014; Kohli et al., 2004; Mindrut et al., 2015; Shiva, 2005; Wheeler & Meyerson, 2024), together they all define the image and character of the brand:

*Brand values* are values that reflect the principles and beliefs that the brand seeks to embody and share with its consumers. Values can include honesty, style, sustainability, innovation, quality, environmentalism, social responsibility, and others.

*Brand personality* is a component that determines which characteristic or typicality of a brand consumers associate with it. It can be expressed through attributes that describe the brand, through the "humanization" of the brand – fun, reliable, elegant, adventurous, authentic, etc.

*Brand promise* is a promise or an offer that a brand makes to its consumers. It defines what specific benefit or value the brand offers to its customers. It can be convenience, innovation, quality, personal care, unique experience, entertainment, etc.

*Legend, brand history and heritage* reflect the history, roots and heritage of the brand. It can be based on traditions, values, significant events or features that distinguish the brand from others. A brand's history can strengthen its uniqueness and create an emotional connection with consumers.

*Brand elements* are visual identity and verbal identifiers that distinguish the brand, such as the logo, color scheme, fonts, sound logo, slogans, etc. These elements help create brand awareness.

In the process of interaction, these components form a unique brand identity; help determine how the brand is perceived by consumers, what value it offers and how it differs from competitors. A comprehensive understanding of these components allows brands to develop strategies, communication and products that meet consumer needs and form reliable relationships with consumers.

*1.3. Combined identity as a complex category in brand management*

Mostly, consumers want to feel a connection with the brand, to be co-owners of its values and identity. When a consumer identity aligns with a brand identity, an emotional connection is created that fosters loyalty, repeat purchases, and positive brand image dissemination.

Consumer identity and brand identity are two distinct but interrelated categories in marketing and brand management (*Table 1*).

*Table 1*

Meaningful filling of consumer identity and brand identity in terms of their comparative analysis

Criterion	Consumer identity	Brand identity
Essence	It is defined as a set of ideas, beliefs, values and preferences that the consumer associates with himself	It is defined as a set of values, features, image, message and way of identifying the brand
Formation	It is formed through interaction with different social groups, culture, experience and self-perception	It is established by the brand independently as a result of strategic positioning and communication
Influence	Influences consumer behavior, choice of products and services, preferences and loyalty to brands	Influences consumers' perception of the brand, their perception of it, loyalty and purchase decisions
Accent	It focuses on the consumer himself, his values and self-perception	Focuses on the image and way of presenting the brand
Mobility	Flexible because it is personal and individual (consumers can change their interests, attitudes and values over time and this can affect their identity. This is especially important in markets with rapid change or new technologies)	Can be developed strategically with target audience and positioning in mind, can be sustainable and persist over a long period to ensure recognition

*Source:* compiled by authors based on (Mindrut et al., 2015; GBS.com.ua, n. d.).

Although these two categories are separate, they share certain similarities:

- both categories form a key to creating a connection between consumers and brands;
- consumer identity and brand identity are interconnected and can interact with each other;
- with a successful interaction between the consumer and brand identities, an emotional connection arises, which contributes to brand loyalty and perception.

Based on the above and research on the impact of consumer identity on brand recognition (Sturdy, n.d), it can be summarized that consumer identity affects various aspects of brand management: on brand strategy, on brand positioning, on communication and messages, on trust and loyalty.

The dynamism of consumption and the mobility of consumer identity require flexibility, constant adaptation and innovation in brand management strategies. For example, recently, manufacturers around the world are trying to understand the behavior of representatives of "Generation Z" (according to the theory of generations Howe & Strauss (2000)), habits and characteristics of consumers of this group in order to form effective marketing strategies. Ukrainian consumers have also changed under the influence of the war, because priorities and consumer preferences have changed, interest in domestic goods has increased, environmental and patriotic consciousness has increased.

Consumers often use products or brands that they perceive as a reflection of their values, interests, and personality. In turn, companies try to understand these consumer motivations and create products and organize marketing campaigns that help consumers construct their identities through consumption. This may include creating an impression of prestige, style, individuality or belonging to a particular group. Accordingly, the participation of companies in the construction of the consumer identity in the process of brand management requires a systemic and structural approach that takes into account the relationship of all brand elements with elements of the consumer identity to create a common identity, let's call it a *combined identity*, which characterizes the commonality and convergence between the brand and consumers, reflects not only the idea of cooperation and partnership between the brand and its audience, but also forms a close emotional connection, making the brand a priority in life.

## **2. Methodological principles of the combined identity construction as a starting condition of branding**

### *2.1. Conceptualization of combined identity in brand management*

In order to support the interaction between the brand and the consumer, identity construction in brand management should be based on a



number of principles that will help create a connection between both parties and contribute to the further formation of a combined identity.

The main *principles of the combined identity construction* can be formulated based on the general principles of marketing and brand management (Kotler et al., 2009; Bonuke & Charles, 2017; Chukurna & Solidor, 2023):

*Cooperation and interaction* (studying the needs and opinions of consumers, open dialogue, feedback, involving the consumer in the process of constructing a brand identity)

*Personalization* (awareness of the uniqueness of each consumer, provision of a personalized approach in communication and services, which allows consumers to feel that the brand understands their individual needs and lifestyle);

*Authenticity* (consumers appreciate brands that are authentic and truthful. When constructing an identity, it is important to be true to the brand's values and mission, which helps build consumer trust and loyalty).

*Innovation and creativity* (the implementation of innovative and creative solutions helps to create a unique identity that attracts attention and goes beyond the traditional);

*Unification of values* (the brand should unite people around common values and beliefs).

*Strategic orientation and continuous development* (brand identity must be alive and change along with changes in consumer needs and tastes).

*Systematicity* (adherence to systematicity in communication, image and values of the brand helps maintain the stability of the identity and create recognition among consumers).

From the defined principles, it follows that identity construction is a continuous process that requires adaptation to changes in consumer needs and requirements, as well as to changes in the market and competitive environment. It requires careful planning, systematic updating and improvement to remain relevant and effective, and its complexity is due to a wide range of audiences with different needs and values, the multiplicity of factors of the identity of consumers themselves and the influence on how they perceive and identify brands. The formation of the brand image should be preceded by the research of the target audience and the formation of various identity options, and the implementation of communication strategies for the reproduction of the consumer identity requires analytical support for the purpose of appropriate correction if necessary (*Figure 1*).

Since the platform of identity construction in the process of brand management is consumer research, the first stage provides for the selection of research approaches and methods (*Table 2*).

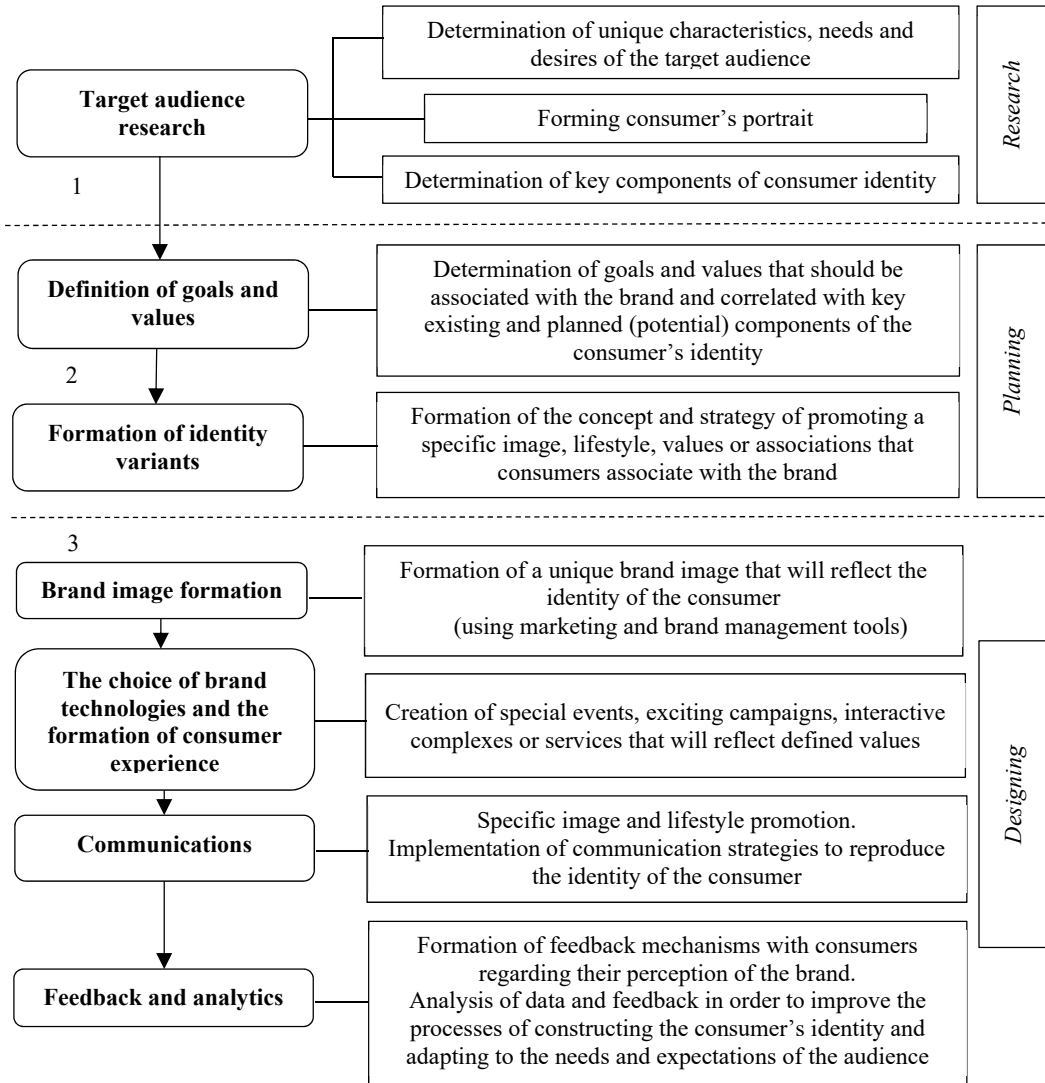


Figure 1. Algorithm for constructing a combined identity in brand management

Source: compiled by the authors.

Table 2  
Scientific approaches to research and modelling of consumer behavior

Approach	Content	Methods
Social	Considers the influence of the social environment on consumer behavior	Analysis of group dynamics, influence of social norms, cultural characteristics and other social factors
Psychological	Examines the psychological aspects of consumer behavior, such as perception, imagination, stereotypes, the influence of emotions, individual characteristics and thoughts; is based on psychological theories and research methods, and its goal is to reveal the psychological mechanisms that influence consumer behavior	Psychological theories and research methods, such as questionnaires, observations, interviews, experiments, projection methods (image projection techniques, associative testing, role-playing games, projective drawings, situation construction)

*End of the Table 1*

Approach	Content	Methods
Motivational	Focuses on the study of motives, values, needs and beliefs that motivate consumers to certain behavior, for example, the purchase of certain goods or services; distinguishes two groups of motives for consumer behavior between people: selfish (aimed at the personal well-being of the consumer) and altruistic (aimed at the collective well-being of the family, social group and society as a whole)	Focus groups, questionnaires, observations, interviews, experiments
Economic:	Focuses on value, benefit and cost analysis in the context of consumer decision making	Factors affecting the rational choice of products and brands are studied
- ordinalist	Consumers are considered capable of making only comparative evaluations of goods and services	Qualitative research methods prevail (the approach does not involve absolutely accurate numerical values, but only an order of importance or satisfaction)
- cardinalist	Consumers are believed to be able to assign specific numerical ratings to their impressions or preferences, allowing accurate comparisons to be made between goods and services	Quantitative methods of research prevail (implies the measurement of utility or satisfaction from the consumption of goods and services in numerical units)
Institutional	Consumer behavior is considered irrational; the institutional environment of the consumer market is considered as its regulator	Ethnographic studies, in-depth interviews, sociological surveys, cultural studies
Synergistic	Considers consumers and brands as a dynamic system, the interaction of which leads to unpredictable results. Takes into account that the formation of needs is a process of transition from a state that corresponds to the orientation of consumer behavior to satisfy only the basic needs of existence, to a state where the needs to achieve life goals prevail under the influence of values, interests, inspiration, etc.	Methods that allow you to study dynamic interactions and unpredictable phenomena (system analysis, structural analysis, simulation modeling, agent modeling, content analysis, focus groups and interviews, sociology)
Motivational marketing	The analysis of consumer behavior goes beyond the ordinary utility of goods and income and takes into account a number of personal and psychological factors (the consumer pays attention to value, price and a number of personal and psychological factors)	Focus groups, in-depth interviews, social studies, experiments, surveys, questionnaires

*Source:* formed on the basis of (Kolomytseva & Vasylychenko, 2022; Ratsa, 2015; Semenda & Semenda, 2018; Taranenko & Kovshova, 2020).

Choosing consumer research methods, it is important to consider research objectives and available resources. Traditional methods such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, observations and social media analysis are best used in combination. For example, combining a survey with focus groups or interviews with observation can provide a deeper understanding of consumer motivations and needs. The use of non-standard methods will make it possible to better understand consumers and reveal unexpected motivations

and preferences, contribute to the discovery of new ideas and opportunities for innovation, which allows brands to differentiate themselves in the market and meet the changing needs and preferences of consumers.

Formation of the consumer's portrait and determination of the key components of his identity is considered as the basis of brand adaptation to the consumer or, on the contrary, the proposal or even "imposition" of certain elements of identification. For example, vapers appeared as a result of the offer of electronic cigarettes, their active promotion and involvement of consumers in the vaping process, as a result of which a whole lifestyle was formed.

To determine the key components of the consumer's identity (both at the stage of research and direct construction), in our opinion, it is advisable to turn to the method of morphological analysis proposed by F. Zwicky, due to the possibility of considering different solutions to the problem by decomposing it and combining possible implementations of individual attributes (Ritchey, 2002). Therefore, combining the main structural elements of identity will make it possible to choose the most appropriate version of it.

Along with, as Nahorna (2011) noted, typology of identities is complicated by their multifacetedness. Thus, each person is aware of himself as a member of several communities at the same time: "identifies himself with a nation, state system, region, language community, social, age or professional group, religious denomination, etc." According to Huntington (2004), along with independent sources of self-identification (age, gender, belonging to an ethnic group, racial belonging), there are also cultural (national, linguistic, religious, civilizational belonging), political (party or factional belonging, ideological priorities), economic (work, profession, belonging to strata or classes), collectivist-group (social status, social roles, family, friends, clubs), territorial (city, region, region) identities. Accordingly, Nahorna (2011) operates with the concepts of identification "core" and "orbit", describing the combination of identities and a person's belonging to social structures, various systems of relationships and cultural values. So, in our opinion, it is expedient to systematize the factors of consumer identity formation by levels.

## *2.2. Constructing a combined identity: a method of creativity*

Based on the outline and developing the ideas of the researchers mentioned above, we can present consumer identity ( $i$ ) as a complex category reflecting self-definition ( $A$ ), self-expression ( $B$ ), social belonging ( $C$ ), identification with brands ( $D$ ), consumer goals and ambitions ( $E$ ) and is determined by a complex of different level factors  $x_n$ :

$$\begin{cases} i = A \cdot B \cdot C \cdot D \cdot E, \\ i = f(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4). \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

The components of identity are not fixed by certain factors and can flexibly respond to their dynamics. As mentioned, we suggest structuring different level factors using a morphological matrix (*Table 3*).

*Table 3*

Morphological matrix of consumer identity construction

Factors				Identity ( <i>i</i> )
1. Socio-demographic ( $x_1$ )	2. Behavioral ( $x_2$ )	3. Psychographic ( $x_3$ )	4. Geographical ( $x_4$ )	
$x_{11}$	$x_{21}$	$x_{31}$	$x_{41}$	A. Self-determination
$x_{111}$	$x_{211}$	$x_{311}$	$x_{411}$	
$x_{112}$	$x_{212}$	$x_{312}$	$x_{412}$	B. Self-expression
...	...	...	...	
$x_{12}$	$x_{22}$	$x_{32}$	$x_{42}$	C. Social belonging
$x_{121}$	$x_{221}$	$x_{321}$	$x_{421}$	
$x_{122}$	$x_{222}$	$x_{322}$	$x_{422}$	D. Identification with brands
...	...	...	...	
$x_{1n}$	$x_{2n}$	$x_{3n}$	$x_{4n}$	E. Consumer goals and ambitions

Source: compiled by the authors.

That is, the identity of a conditional consumer based on the example of a morphological matrix (*Table 3*) can be represented as a morphological set (2):

$$\left\{ \begin{matrix} x_{111} & x_{121} & x_{122} & x_{1n} \\ x_{211} & x_{212} & x_{221} & x_{222} \\ x_{312} & x_{321} & x_{322} & x_{3n} \\ x_{411} & x_{412} & x_{421} & x_{4n} \end{matrix} \right. \quad (2)$$

Developing ideas of Blagopoluchna and Lyakhovska (2022), Escalas & Bettman (2005), Yevtushevskaya (2016), Zhaldak & Yatsenko (2021), and Nahorna (2011), we will present the factors of construction of the consumer identity in groups of different levels.

The group of social and demographic factors ( $x_1$ ) can consist of the following levels:

- $x_{11}$  – age;
- $x_{12}$  – gender;
- $x_{13}$  – family size;
- $x_{14}$  – stage of the family life cycle;
- $x_{15}$  – income level per month;

$x_{16}$  – education;  
 $x_{17}$  – activities;  
 $x_{18}$  – creed;  
 $x_{19}$  – nationality;  
 $x_{1n}$  – etc.

Factor sublevels can be converted to numerical values or described by accepted criteria. For example, behavioral factors ( $x_2$ ) may include the following levels:

$x_{21}$  – expected benefits:

$x_{211}$  – quality:  
 $x_{2111}$  – perfect;  
 $x_{2112}$  – adequate;  
 $x_{2113}$  – predictable;  
 $x_{222}$  – price:  
 $x_{2221}$  – high;  
 $x_{2222}$  – acceptable;  
 $x_{2223}$  – low;

$x_{233}$  – prestige:

$x_{2331}$  – insufficient (or 1 point);  
 $x_{233n}$  – prestigious (or up to 5 points);  
 $x_{234}$  – service:  
 $x_{2341}$  – basic (or 1 point);  
 $x_{234n}$  – additional (or up to 5 points);

$x_{22}$  – consumer status:

$x_{221}$  – does not consume;  
 $x_{222}$  – consumed before;  
 $x_{223}$  – potential consumer;  
 $x_{224}$  – regular consumer;

$x_{23}$  – personal behavior:

$x_{231}$  – innovators;  
 $x_{232}$  – pioneers;  
 $x_{233}$  – early majority;  
 $x_{233}$  – late;  
 $x_{234}$  – laggards;

$x_{24}$  – degree of consumption:

$x_{241}$  – weak;  
 $x_{242}$  – moderate;  
 $x_{243}$  – active;

$x_{25}$  – a reason to buy:

$x_{251}$  – for own consumption;  
 $x_{242}$  – for a gift;

$x_{26}$  – degree of commitment:

$x_{251}$  – an undisputed supporter;

- $x_{252}$  – tolerant;
  - $x_{253}$  – a fickle follower;
  - $x_{254}$  – "wanderer";  
or (absent, weak, medium, strong, absolute);
  - $x_{27}$  – degree of readiness for perception:
    - $x_{271}$  – uninformed;
    - $x_{272}$  – informed;
    - $x_{273}$  – interested;
    - $x_{274}$  – willing;
    - $x_{275}$  – intends to purchase;
  - $x_{28}$  – attitude to the product / brand:
    - $x_{281}$  – delighted;
    - $x_{282}$  – positive;
    - $x_{283}$  – indifferently;
    - $x_{284}$  – negative;
    - $x_{285}$  – aggressive
- or according to Rokeach's value scales; Schwartz value scales; the Fishbein model; by the VALS method, etc.

Similarly, psychographic and geographical factors can be described. In general, their main levels can be presented as follows:

Psychographic factors ( $x_3$ ):

- $x_{31}$  – belonging to a social class;
- $x_{32}$  – lifestyle;
- $x_{33}$  – personality type;
- $x_{34}$  – personal values;
- $x_{35}$  – personal motives;
- $x_{36}$  – interests;
- $x_{37}$  – adaptation to the new product.

Geographical factors ( $x_4$ ):

- $x_{41}$  – demography:
  - $x_{411}$  – regional demography;
  - $x_{412}$  – economic demography;
  - $x_{413}$  – ethnic demography;
- $x_{42}$  – administrative division;
- $x_{43}$  – number of residents;
- $x_{44}$  – level of infrastructure development;
- $x_{45}$  – climatic conditions;
- $x_{46}$  – cultural differences.

At the planning stage, in the process of defining goals and values and further constructing a brand identity for a defined group of consumers and their identity, it is possible to build a matrix of combined identity, which is the result of the ratio of brand identity and consumer identity (*Table 4*):

Table 4

Matrix of combined identity

Consumer identity	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3	Segment n	Brand identity
Self-determination	...	...	...	...	Brand values
Self-expression	...	...	...	...	Brand personality
Social belonging	...	...	...	...	Brand promise
Identification with brands	...	...	...	...	Legend (history)
Consumer goals and ambitions	...	...	...	...	Brand elements

Source: compiled by the authors.

Based on the results of the study, the cells of the matrix are filled, which will indicate how each element of the consumer identity corresponds to each segment and what the elements of the brand's identity should be in order to be chosen by this segment.

For example, segment 1 may include consumers who value sustainability and quality, while segment 2 may include consumers who seek ground-breaking and innovative solutions, so the corresponding cells may be filled with the values and promises offered by the brand.

### Conclusions

The conducted research allows us to state the need to ensure the coincidence of the consumer identity with the brand identity in order to create a strong emotional connection and transfer the brand to the category of consumers' life priorities. The improved structure of the consumer's identity at the expense of its addition with consumer goals and ambitions adds to it and, accordingly, the branding of a strategic vision. The analysis and synthesis of the structure of the brand identity using different approaches made it possible to identify its key components, which must be filled depending on the specifics of the consumer identity.

In the search for a way to ensure the coincidence of the consumer identity with the brand identity, the concept of "combined identity" is proposed, which characterizes the commonality and closeness between the brand and consumers, reflects not only the idea of cooperation and partnership between the brand and its audience, but also forms a close emotional connection, translating brand in the status of priority in life.



The conceptualization of the combined identity made it possible to determine a set of its cognitive features in brand management, to formulate the principles and algorithm of its construction. The detailing of individual stages of the construction of a combined identity as a platform determines the research and modelling of consumer behavior, which operates with a wide range of scientific approaches. Based on their analysis, the conclusion has been drawn regarding the feasibility of the classical and non-traditional research methods combination.

The proposed system-structural approach allows for the formation of a combined brand identity through the combination of various factors of the consumer identity and constituent elements of the brand identity and this confirms the proposed hypothesis. The developed concept of the combined identity will allow transforming the partnership of the brand with the consumer into the priority of the brand without the perception of substitutes based on emotional intelligence. The proposed matrices of consumer identity construction and combined brand identity can serve as a tool both for the analysis of different consumer segments and for determining which elements of the consumer identity should be reproduced in the brand identity for each segment. This can contribute to the creation of a brand that better meets the needs and values of a specific target audience on the one hand, and participate in the formation of consumer identity, in particular, national.

The formation of the brand image based on the defined elements of the combined identity will allow taking into account a number of strategic and tactical elements necessary for effective branding, namely: brand architecture, the unique offer of the brand and its place on the market in comparison with competitors, customer orientation, design and emotions, management of the consumption experience, creating consumer trust in the brand by providing quality products and services. The outlined components of the brand may vary depending on the identity of the consumer, the combined identity of a specific brand and its development strategy.

Approbation of the system-structural approach to the construction of a combined brand identity in various business areas is a perspective for further research.

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