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«How creation of brand identity affects consumer behavior (Kazakhstani old and new dairy brands)»

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Abstract

Companies need to build a strong brand and differentiate from competitors in today's highly competitive environment. The brand is the emotion, and it is the first thought that comes to the consumer's brain when he hears the company's name or sees the logo. There is a shift from a product economy to an experience economy, where consumers' focus shifts from what I get to how I get it or what I feel when I consume the product or service. The companies become providers of experience, not only products. As many goods have the same or likely the same characteristics, the company should add some intangible values to products to create the desire to buy them. Nowadays, a brand is essential because companies strive for customers' trust, leading to the final decision to buy the product. The branding also promotes recognition and helps to differentiate from the competitors. This paper aims to assess the impact of brand identity on consumer behaviour of some customers of Kazakhstani old and new dairy brands. This work aims to identify if there is a correlation between customers' perception of a brand and their purchases. The study is important for marketers, brand managers and owners of dairy companies.

Research questions: What is the impact of brand identity on consumer behavior? To what extent brand identity influence decision making process of purchasing a milk brand.

Research objective:

- 1) To define the influence of brand identity on the decision making process of consumers in milk purchase.
- 2) To define the factors affecting on purchase of milk, especially the impact of the

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design package.

Hypothesis:

- 1) Clear brand identity directly affects consumer decision making process by inducing a desire to buy product.
- 2) Package design is an essential factor influencing the purchase decision of milk.

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Introduction

Today, there is much more interest in branding and the importance of building a solid brand than it was approximately 10 or 20 years ago. Brand value plays an essential part in firm valuation. (Dorfleitner G., 2019) The brand is something that creates awareness, noticeability, and reputation. Branding is crucial in building a long-term relationship with customers and keeping their loyalty. The proper positioning, clearly defining the target audience, keeping the promises, and always conducting the customers may lead to enormous results turning the company into a strong brand and well-recognized brand identity. The economic value of brands is crucial. In 2008 the capitalization of the 100 most valuable brands was more than \$1.2 trillion, which could make them the 11th biggest country in the world in terms of GDP. The willingness of consumers to support the brands that meet their requirements and values with their wallets makes those powerful companies institutions. Fortune magazine (1997) stated that in the twenty-first century, the only differentiation between companies would be branding.

The main purpose of this paper is to consider the evidence of brand identity's impact on consumer behaviour.

I. Literature review

1.1. Primary Data

1.1.1. Branding

A brand is a name, symbol, sign, design, or any other attribute or combination that aims to distinguish a specific good or service from others. (Kotler Ph., 2014)

Elements such as logo, name, URL, design, and package that characterize and differentiate the product are called brand elements. (Keller K., 2013)

The brand name is an essential element because it is closely related to the product and stays a key association in consumers' minds. However, choosing a brand name is a responsible and challenging process that can take along. It is crucial to find a good name and check the availability to register the name as a legal trademark because tens of thousands of brand names are registered each day. Simple, short, and easy to spell brand names are preferable as people better remember them, and companies spend less effort on teaching how to pronounce names correctly. Moreover, such brand names positively influence brand awareness. Naming the product is a crucial procedure that can be compared to naming the baby. Companies approach the issue responsibly as renaming the company is high cost and time-consuming procedure because a company should spend big budgets on advertising in order to be sure that customers are accustomed to and remember the new name (Keller K., 2013)

There are six steps in the naming procedure. The first one is to determine the brand objective, meaning it should transmit, and its role in corporate branding, marketing strategy, and target market. Secondly, brainstorm on names using as many sources as possible. Thirdly, screen all the generated names on their appropriateness

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to brand objective and standard criteria. Then, collect information on the narrowed list and do the international legal check. After filtering the names, the next step is consumer research. This step provides and checks the memorability and meaningfulness of the name, how it spells, and how it correlates with the product, promotion, and price. The last step is to choose the one name based on all collected information and register that name. (Keller K., 2013)

Logotypes or symbols are crucial visual elements of brands that influence brand awareness and take part in brand equity building. Logotypes were used many years ago to designate the origin and were used by countries and families to show their names visually. Logos may be in different forms. For instance, they might consist of only words and be written distinctively but reflect the brand name or be entirely abstract from the brand name and consist of non-word marks. (Keller K., 2013) Logos and symbols are vital to brand elements as they are easily recognized by consumers and used to identify the product. However, logos and symbols might be easily recognized but not directly linked to a specific product. One of the advantages of a logo is that it may be applied to different product categories and be spread across cultures as it is usually nonverbal. Some companies develop one logo to designate their sub-brands. (Keller K., 2013)

Moreover, in contradistinction to brand names, the logos can easily be changed the time to refresh it up to time. It is a regular practice when companies redesign their logos to stay contemporary. (Keller K., 2013)

Some brands use characters as a kind of brand symbol. It is common and widely spread to use characters in ads and package designs. Characters increase brand awareness because they are usually colourful and attract attention. Brand characters that have human elements contribute to building a relationship with consumers.

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However, some characters may be particular to some cultures, which might cause difficulties in spreading it to other cultures. Animated characters tend to be more timeless than human characters. (Keller K., 2013)

URL stands for uniform resource locators and means the name of the web page or, in other words, the domain name. Once the brand has its website, it should register its URL. It is better to have the same brand name and URL so consumers can easily remember the domain and find the company's website. (Keller K., 2013) In the era of digitalization, URL is a vital brand element because it provides information about the brand and affects brand awareness.

A slogan is the motto of the brand. Slogans are used in commercials, play a considerable role in packaging, and usually relate to the brand archetype and positioning. Slogan helps to recall and identify the brand as it has a piece of descriptive information delivering to consumers what is brand and what special it has. Slogans are usually linked to the brand names and come to mind right after the name. For instance, it is easy to remember the slogan of Nike company: "Just do it". The Nike company uses this slogan everywhere, and it is strongly linked with the name. However, some slogans became so strong that they started to be used as general catchphrases. The threat of such cases is that slogans may be used widely and lose the link to the specific company or product. Sometimes slogans may restrict the brand when it describes the specific product characteristics that the brand does not want longer to translate. In such cases, brands update their slogans or launch a new one. However, the company should carefully analyze the pros and cons of each option concerning overall brand equity and brand awareness and image mainly. (Keller K., 2013)

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Jingle is a short musical phrase written around the brand that plays on a radio or television broadcast. Jingle is used in ads and increases brand awareness. Jingles usually repeat the brand name and have a catchy chorus that stays in consumers' minds and creates a remarkable association. (Keller K., 2013) For example, the jingle of Coca-Cola reminds the Christmas commercial immediately and is associated with the Christmas eve with family and friends.

Packaging is a valuable brand element that evolves by creating and designing the wrappers and containers for products. Packaging should perform several functions like giving convincing and descriptive information about the product, distinguishing the brand, protecting the product, and assisting in product storage. (Keller K., 2013) Packaging is an important brand element as it has functional and aesthetic roles. It should be equally comfortable in usage and be attractive and pleasant. As a functional element, the packaging should be easy to open, convenient, and hold. From the aesthetic point of view, the shape, size, colour, material, font, and graphic images are considered. Packaging hugely affects brand recognition by enhancing the associations it forms in consumers' minds. Innovative and unusual packaging can be a good point of difference, and any change in packaging affects consumer behaviour and product sales. (Keller K., 2013) Innovative packaging may be used as a solid competitive edge on a supermarket shelf by standing out from competitors, especially in the categories where products look alike. Nowadays, with a wide range of products on the shelves, it is essential to attract consumers' attention. Due to the importance of decision making process to buy or not, the packaging is also called the "last five seconds of marketing", "permanent media", or "the last salesman.". (Keller K., 2013)

Nowadays, package design has become one of the vital parts of product development and launch. Some elements such as colour or material were chosen

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randomly in the past. In contrast, today, specialized in package design professionals spend much time analyzing and choosing which element should be the main, how other elements will interrelate with each other, which should remain the same and which should differ across packages. All these procedures are essential to meet the marketing objectives. The packaging design should be noticeable and remarkable because consumers judge the product by its packaging before trying it and assessing its function. The term “shelf impact” says that designers should also count the visual effect of the whole category and compare products concerning the package look on the shelf. In packaging, it is essential to mention that there is also a legal requirement setting some rules on what information brands are obliged to put on packages. (Keller K., 2013)

Colour is considered one of the vital visual elements of packaging. Some experts suppose that specific product categories should have a particular colour as consumers expect it. Strong brands have colours that are associated with them. Colour is also crucial because it increases brand recognition by 80%. (Keller K., 2013)

There are four main reasons when the change of the packaging should be implied:

- when the product price is changed or increases sales through new or modified channels.
- when the product line will gain if it has a familiar look
- to show the product innovation changes to consumers
- when the package is old-fashioned

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Packaging plays a crucial part in brand equity building as it differentiates the product by its functional and aesthetic elements and strengthens the brand awareness and brand image. (Keller K., 2013)

Labels have many functions to identify the brand or product and differ from the regular tags to the sophisticated graphics that are part of the packaging. Labels sometimes have a descriptive function and provide information about the product, such as where it was made, who made it, what it contains, how to use it, and others. Labels might be used as one of the promotion elements, supporting the brand's positioning. (Kotler Ph., 2014)

There is a guideline for choosing brand elements that consist of six criteria: memorability, meaningfulness, likeability, transferability, adaptability, and protectability. Each element is important, and marketers usually mix them to achieve a more significant effect on brand equity. (Keller K., 2013)

Brand identity is the set of all brand elements. The impact of all brand elements influences brand awareness and brand image. The power of brand identity depends on how well brand elements fit together and complement each other. All the elements should support each other and be easily implied to the brand and its marketing strategy. (Keller K., 2013)

Product design is a crucial part of creating and launching the product. It is not only about creativity, but it is the way about thinking. Design thinking is an approach that consists of three stages observation, creating ideas and implementation with the primary purpose of creating a convenient design for consumers. Design thinking is linked to the consumers' study, brainstorming process and teamwork. In a world full of products, the aesthetic is the only way to distinguish the product. Design is essential

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as the brand's positioning and meaning can be transferred through it. (Kotler Ph., 2014)

The dairy industry is a branch of agriculture that covers the breeding, rearing and use of dairy animals to produce milk and various dairy products. (Webb B.H., 2021)

Dairy product – is a food product made from milk and/or its components without the use of non-dairy fat and protein and may contain components functionally necessary for milk processing. (Dairy Union of Kazakhstan, 2019) Products such as milk, cheese, kefir, yoghurt, and butter are considered as dairy products.

Shelf life – is the period of time during which food products must fully comply with the safety requirements established for it, established by this technical regulation and (or) technical regulations of the Customs Union for certain types of food products, and also retain their consumer properties stated in the labelling, and after which the food products are not suitable for their intended use. (Dairy Union of Kazakhstan, 2019)

1.1.2. Building strong brands

Building a solid brand consist of four steps that should be implemented gradually. These steps lead to a base of the brand strategy that should be developed to cultivate the brand further. (Keller K., 2013)

- The first step is to ensure brand identification in customers' minds. Hence, they clearly understand the benefit they gain from the product and have a clear association with product class or customer need.
- The second step is to establish in consumers' minds the overall brand meaning by strategically connecting the tangible and intangible brand associations.
- The third step is to identify an appropriate customer response to the brand.

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- The last step is brand resonance creation by transforming brand responses and creating solid and loyal relationships between the brand and customers. (Keller K., 2013)

These four steps can also be presented as four main questions that come to the customers' minds. The first question is "Who are you?" and refers to the brand identity. The second question is "What are you?" and refers to the brand meaning. The third question, "What about you? What do I think or feel about you?" is about what brand responses and the last question "What about you and me? What kind of association and how much of a connection would I like to have with you?" is about the brand relationship. It is essential to notice that question order is crucial. Meaning cannot be established without identity creation, and there are no responses unless the correct meaning is developed, and there is no relationship built without responses evolved. (Keller K., 2013)

The customer-based brand equity model says that building the brand identity leads to brand salience creation, while brand salience determines brand awareness. Brand awareness refers to the ability of customers to identify the brand in different situations and their ability to recognize the brand. (Keller K., 2013) According to Aaker (1996), one of the two keys to building a solid and successful brand is proper brand identity development. In other words, it is crucial to identify what for brand stands for and to communicate it to customers effectively.

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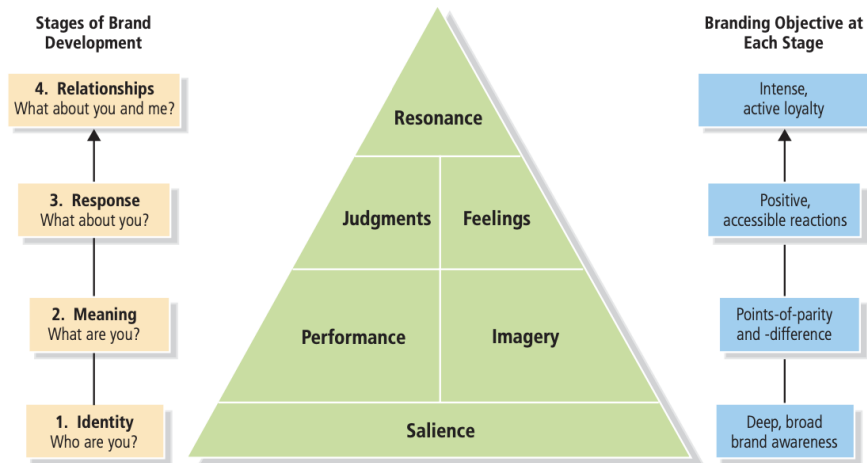


Fig. 1 Brand resonance pyramid

1.1.3. Brand identity

Brand identity is the set of brand associations that reflect what for brand stands for and what promise gives to customers. Brand identity provides the meaning, aim and brand's strategic vision. As brand identity is responsible for associations, one of the dimensions of brand equity is an essential part of building a solid brand. (Aaker, 1996) Brand identity is the combination of the brand's name, design, logo, package, website, visual appearance, and communications that reflect the brand's unique characteristics to customers. Brand identity defines the way the brand communicates with the target audience. There are two parts to brand identity core identity and extended. Core identity is timeless and refers to associations that do not change when a brand enters a new market. To identify the core identity, the following questions should be answered: "What is the soul of the brand?" "What are the beliefs and values of the brand?" "What company behind the brand stands for?" (Aaker, 1996). According to Aaker (1996), the core identity should consist of components that contribute to the brand's value and uniqueness. So, the core identity may be concerned as the basis for the brand's value and credibility. The extended brand identity is used to complete

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the picture and adds elements that describe in detail for what the brand stands, for instance, the visible elements. The brand identity helps the company choose an effective communication strategy. (Aaker, 1996)

Brand identity consists of twelve elements grouped into four dimensions: brand-as-product, brand-as-organization, brand-as-person, and brand-as-symbol. (Aaker, 1996)

Another crucial aspect that brand identity should provide to the consumers is the value proposition. The value proposition is a set of emotional, functional, and self-expressive benefits consumers receive while contacting the brand. A well-developed value proposition refers to the brand-customer relationship and enhances the purchase decision. Identifying and managing the brand identity is the basis for building a strong brand and brand equity. (Aaker, 1996)

One of the leading psychological models - associative network memory - describes the way brands work. This model says that the human mind consists of many connecting links and networks of nodes. Brand awareness is indicated by the strength of the node in the human memory. Brand image is pointed out by the links that come to the mind of the brand name node together with the other informational nodes. (Keller K., 2013)



Fig. 2 The brand identity development plan.

1.1.4. Brand equity

Brand equity is the marketing concept developed in the 1980s and stays one of the most popular and essential concepts. According to Aaker (1996), brand equity is the set of assets that refer to the brand's name and symbol and adds additional value to the company and the company's clients. The brand equity dimensions are brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand associations. (Aaker, 1996) Brand equity is the way customers perceive your brand and what stays in their minds once they think about the brand. (Keller K., 2013)

1.1.5. Consumer behavior

According to Kotler (2003), consumer behaviour studies how people and organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences that meet their needs and desires.

Satisfaction of consumer needs means recognizing the variety of consumers and their desires. Market segmentation divides all consumers into subgroups with common

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needs or characteristics. Targeting choose segments which company considers as potential clients and offers supply. Positioning means creating a different image and identity of products, services and brands in consumers' minds. Brand identity should differentiate the company supply from competitors emphasizing the advantages and uniqueness of the product in all communications with the customer and convincing the target audience that the product satisfies their specific needs. (Schiffman L., Wisenblit J., 2019)

1.2. Secondary Data

1.2.1. Dairy industry

The dairy industry is one of the most competitive ones, so companies use marketing tools such as branding, advertising, and promotion to attract new and keep loyal customers. However, the packaging of most dairy products looks like and has the same colours. The differentiation in the dairy industry is poorly expressed. The main expectations from the milk are freshness, benefit, and naturalness. Branding should be developed to deliver these characteristics and explain to consumers the positioning of concrete producers or companies. (Tretyakova A., 2020) Nowadays, the importance of branding is obvious, and even in the dairy industry, companies have started to develop their brands. Millennials are the most solvent audience, looking not only for products but also for the experience. This demand means that companies should develop long-term relationships and support loyalty with their customers through ongoing dialogue. (Adams C., Maluf I.T., Ramirez M., Uchoa de Paula R., 2019)

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According to the Dairy Union of Kazakhstan, the milk dairy market is 5 million tons. There are 164 enterprises engaged in milk processing, and only 35 have their own dairy farms, while the remaining 129 buy raw materials on the open market. (Kovalev G., 2020)

Besides the more traditional dairy industry, companies implement branding elements and update their visual elements, such as logos and packages, to translate their values and differentiation points to consumers. One of the leading dairy companies in Kazakhstan is Food Master. In 1995 "Food Master – Almaty" bought the plant in Yesik city and started to produce yoghurts. In 1998 the cheese factory "Food Master - Shymkent" joined the group. In 1999 the dairy farm "Food Master - Agro" was founded in the Almaty region. Food Maser company became a part of the international dairy group "Lactalis" in 2004 and received international status. In 2009 the company purchased the dairy farm in Pavlodar city. Today, Food Master has three dairy plants and two dairy farms. The company changed its logotype recently. Redesign of the logotype was made to be relevant to the times and have a more modern identity. The new logotype reflects the philosophy and main work principles of the brand. The drop of milk is like the company's heart, reflecting the high quality of produced milk that leads to natural and tasty products. The green leaves reflect the environmental friendliness and naturalness of the products. It also symbolized the respect of the brand for nature. (Food Master, 2022) There is a link between the brand's mission and vision and the logotype and messages they deliver to their customers. So, the brand wants to deliver a clear message of its identity to its clients.

Adal is one of the most significant milk and dairy products producers in Kazakhstan, established in 1999. Adal company has three trademarks such as "Adal", "Molochnyi mir", and "Aya". Adal company recently rebranded the company by

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changing the design of packages and refreshing its logotype. While doing the rebranding, the local branding company “Like” wanted to highlight the main properties of the company, such as quality and production technology. The main slogan used now in all product packages is “products of our farms” indicates that the product is produced on the best farms in Kazakhstan. Moreover, the craft packaging and farm motifs emphasize the naturalness and quality of the product. (Like agency, 2022)

In Kazakhstan, especially in the dairy industry, few companies are paying attention to branding and brand identity. However, the market is becoming more competitive with the entrance of foreign competitors, and it is essential to build long term relationships with customers.

1.2.2. Brand identity influence on consumer behavior

Much research on branding, brand identity and its influence on consumer behaviour proves its relevance and importance. The primary outcomes and conclusions from studies conducted in different countries and reputable professional journals are follows.

The brand is the complex of emotion, representation, and association that comes into the consumer's mind. The brand combines both tangible and intangible. The brand can be applied to people, companies, and countries. It is necessary to understand how the company operates deeply for brand building. Branding can be defined as a backbone of the business that helps define the market's positioning, the position among the competitors, and the vision of the business. (Davis, M., 2007)

According to the statistics, 77% of consumers buy a product because of the brand name, mainly on social media. 86% of consumers prefer an authentic brand

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image and an honest personality. Consumers prefer brands that give them a feeling of worth. (Lein S., 2021)

Branding and brand identity can bring to business many advantages as it simplifies the decision-making process. Once the company identifies its core values and brand strategy, it is clear what actions should be done and which not, how to communicate with the target audience, through which channels, what tone of communication to use and what type of advertisement to create. Strong brand identity also influences brand recognition, helps to build trust and attracts loyal customers. (Jones, K., 2021)

To create a brand identity, the company should analyze its current market situation. Then it is essential to assess the company's economic situation and the assets it has. Next, the current marketing activities should be revised. While conducting the marketing analysis, the product should be compared with competitors, and the target audience should be clarified according to geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural. Then the brand platform, the brand positioning, and identity should be developed. (Ianenkov, M., Stepanov, M. et al., 2020)

Brand identity is crucial in many ways. First, brand identity is vital for the company itself as it helps identify the company. Once the business knows what it is and its values and mission, it can rely on it in decision-making. Knowing own brand identity simplifies the decision-making process for the company, and every decision influences the experience customers interact with the brand. Brands should provide a consistent experience for their consumers on all platforms because consistency ensures credibility and customer loyalty. (Goldstein J., 2021) Brand identity simplifies the purchase decision because it answers the questions of what, how and why. (The logo creative, 2021)

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Consistency and stability are crucial in building a brand identity and brand equity. The brand should always keep the promise it gives to its customers. Once the brand does not meet the promise, it can immediately affect the company's indicators. (Griggs, D., 2018) Moreover, it is essential to control every aspect of the brand strategy. For instance, all the communications should be synchronized and reflect the brand values. All points of contact with the client should remind him of the brand's main idea, so the customer will always recognize what the brand stands for and how it differs from competitors. (Golhar, A., 2019)

Brand identity impacts consumer behaviour with visual identity or visual communication. Visual communication delivers the messages through images and design. Visual identity elements are graphics, typography, colour palette, imagery, and other physical brand assets. The findings say that 94% of content with visual elements gets more views than only text. People perceive visuals 60 times faster than text. (Amarnani K., 2021) Visual branding is like the face of the brand and creates a first impression and represents what for brand stands for. The main goal of visual identity is to differentiate from competitors and desire to buy this product. (The logo creative, 2021) Visual communication is the oldest way of communication people use by transmitting their thoughts through rock paintings. 90% of the information people's brain receives is visual. Nowadays, in the era of digitalization, visual communication in marketing and branding is crucial. Visual communication relates to logotype, brand character, package design, advertising, etc. Many studies confirm that visual elements such as images are faster and better perceived by people than text. For instance, the study by Adobe says that Facebook posts with images have an engagement rate higher by 650% than posts with text only. (Le Ray M., 2021) According to the study

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accomplished by 3M Corporation, the human brain processes images sixty thousand times faster than text. (Pant R., 2015)

Anastasia Leng, the founder and CEO of the company named "CreativeX", shared with Forbes in an interview that nowadays, brand identity is more important than ever, and brands should consider changes in three main directions like messaging, technology and channels. With the increase of social channels such as TikTok, Instagram and technological tools, brand communication is more visual. With the speed and scale with which the photo and video content are created in various channels, advertisers face difficulty controlling the brand identity. The tendency for brands to take social responsibility and create content related to social issues may lead to the spread of user-generated content and move from traditional advertising. Personalization, authentic messaging, and creative channel stay the primary trend that positively affects brand identity and brand communication with customers. (Drenik, G., 2021)

Companies with a strong brand identity can reach a wider audience with fewer resources than unknown brands during product launches. (Trivette H., 2021)

Besides the incredible power of branding and brand identity, the product quality should be good. Well-designed products with high quality and relevant branding and marketing strategy can be legendary for Apple products. Such products should be developed with the implementation of the product design concept. It worth to consider the term of product design.

Product design is the process of problem determination, solution creation and proving that solution in real life. (Lo G., 2020) Product design may refer both to tangible products and to intangible. The importance of product design is undoubtful as it creates a unique experience for customers that may contribute to brand loyalty. Product design

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should be equally functional, provide value and be aesthetic. The concept of product design is closely related to the problem-solving term. In creating product design, the target audience should be observed, consumers' real needs should be considered, and the result should be quickly tested and improved if needed. (Gulpek E., 2022)

An essential asset for companies now is brand equity. The companies with strong brands that keep their promises have loyal customers that regularly buy their products and services. For the business owners, it helps to forecast the future cash flows and expand faster. A strong brand may be considered a vital asset in front of attracting investments. When the company has a pool of loyal customers and a growth dynamic, the investors are more likely to invest and support it even if it is not yet generating profit. (Clifton, R. and Simmons, J., 2003)

1.2.3. Factors influencing Consumer behavior in a Dairy Industry

Nowadays, branding is a crucial factor for building long-term relationships with customers. Therefore, there is much research in different countries on how brands and other factors affect consumer behaviour, especially in the dairy industry. For instance, the cause of brand equity, brand personality and brand identity were considered separately in different research papers.

Four main factors are determined to influence consumer behaviour: cultural, social, personal, and psychological. Cultural factor consists of culture, subculture, and social class of consumer. Groups and social networks, family, roles and status of consumers refer to social factors. Personal is about age, life-cycle stage, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle, personality, and self-concept. Psychological factors are motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, and consumer attitudes. The evolution of needs represented in Maslow's Pyramid directly affects the purchasing decision.

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Personal experience and motivation also determine how the consumer buys or does not buy certain products. According to the research conducted, consumerism is closely correlated with brand purchase. People are more likely to buy branded products than non-branded ones. Price remains the main argument for switching between products. However, some respondents are also interested in quality, price and quality, innovation, and a superior product with better characteristics, brand, etc. Most of the respondents buy products rationally rather than by instinct. $\frac{1}{3}$ of respondents do not follow a financial plan while buying goods. Over 80% buy more than they need. So, according to the study, consumerism is the consequence of globalization that is accompanied by the influence of e-commerce, the power of brand owned corporations and innovation that shortens the life cycle of products. (Adrian Șerban Comănescu, 2020)

There are lots of different methods to model consumer behaviour. The simplest one is the classical or traditional purchase model, consisting of five stages: need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour.

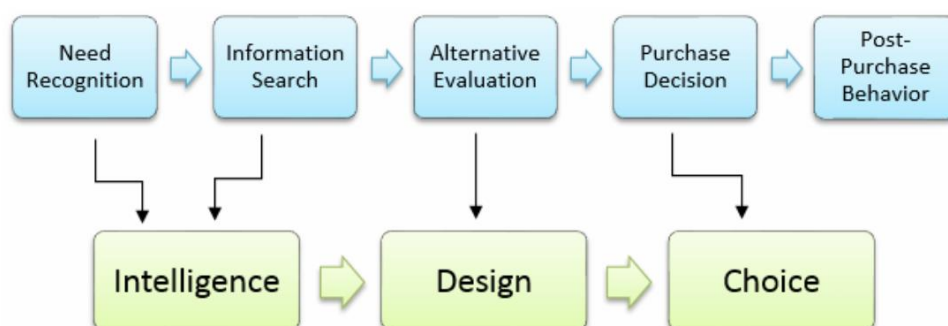


Fig. 3

Easy access to information through the Internet influenced all stages of the decision-making process and increased the percentage of better consumption choices. The study results that social media improved the satisfaction of consumers

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in the first two stages during need recognition and information search. However, for most people, social media did not help increase satisfaction in making the purchase decision and post-decision behaviour. People still enjoy making purchases in traditional shops after searching the information online through social media. Social media gave marketers a considerable advantage by giving access to consumers' opinions about the products. Social media enables us to track and observe consumer behaviour. The companies can use this information and get quick feedback to improve the products and better meet the consumers' needs. (Voramontri, D. 2018)

The research analysed the impact of brand equity on purchase intent resulting in brand loyalty and brand association affecting the purchase intent. In contrast, brand awareness and perceived quality affect less consumer purchase intent. (Rungsisawat, S.; Sirinapatpokin, S., 2019) Some products are bought not only because of their functional benefits but also to support the buyer's self-concept. The people's decision making relates to what degree the brand's identity matches his own identity. Consumers prefer to buy brands with similar personalities to their own. However, some people do not desire to have the same identity as the brand identity they buy, but they seek to have a relationship with that brand. So, they decide to buy a specific brand to extend their personality by the brand's characteristics they do not have. As a result, brand personality affects the decision-making process of consumers, which leads to the enhancement of brand loyalty and brand equity. (Ahmad A.; Thyagaraj K., 2015)

Factors affecting the decision-making process of milk brands can be divided into three categories as company's marketing incentives (4 Ps), consumers' own factors (demographic, psychologic) and environmental (family, social class, and culture). (Adede O., 2016) A company's marketing incentives, in other words, are called the 4

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Ps and stand for the product itself, pricing, promotion, and place factors. Product properties are its quality, taste, colour, package design, and others that characterize the product and influence buying decisions differently for different consumers. Smell, smoothness, and thickness are critical product characteristics in the dairy industry. Also, the perceived quality of milk brands is essential in the purchase decision process. (Adede O., 2016) Price is still one of the critical determinants in a food purchase decision. It affects the choice of milk brand and its package and the type of consumed dairy products. Besides purchasing milk in higher quality packages, people with higher income also buy high-value dairy products like cheese and yoghurts. (Adede O., 2016)

As a place factor, the location, working hours, cleanliness, and range of products available in a supermarket or store influence consumers' decision-making process of milk brands. However, availability is one of the critical factors, as consumers easily switch between milk brands if they do not find their preferred brand in-store. Nevertheless, the loyal consumers postpone the purchase until they find their preferred brand. (Adede O., 2016) The promotion also influences on purchase decision of milk brands as it gives information about the brand's advantages and increases brand awareness. The choice of milk brand is also affected by demographic factors such as the number of children, family size, income, education, and reference group. Families with high income and high education are more likely to purchase processed and packaged milk brands. Also, large households buy more milk at a lower price. Young people with high-income levels prefer to try new milk brands that produce high-value dairy products such as cheese and yoghurts. Older people prefer to buy milk brands they are familiar with. Families where the woman with high education is responsible for buying groceries purchase high-quality brands with the unique package design and are highly-priced. (Adede O., 2016)

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The research provided by Adede O. (2016) among residents of Nairobi City County, Kenya, outlines that factors such as price and brand availability in the store are essential, and marketers should pay more attention to them. The promotion also should continue to be used as it influences brand awareness. However, marketers should not expect direct promotion to affect consumers' choices. The most critical factors in milk choice were considered taste and quality of the milk, followed by price and availability in the store. (Adede O., 2016)

The results of the research held in Kathmandu city revealed that brand name and the quality of the product are the factors that affect most of the purchase of milk. Promotion and availability the factors less affect the decision-making process of milk. However, this may be explained that Nepalese marketing is not developed well, and milk is a fast-moving consumer good that is available everywhere. Hence, availability plays a minor role in the purchase. (Shrestha S.K., 2019)

Another research results that quality, brand name awareness and advertisement are the significant factors influencing purchase preferences of milk in Fiche town. (Regassa D., 2019)

Brands play an essential role in the decision-making process. Customers remember brands and brands' promises by their previous experience with them or by the recommendations. Although consumers buy brands because of emotional connection, people can express themselves by buying a particular brand. (Baba A., 2014)

Brand affects the decision making of consumers by giving information about the product or service and by creating associations and values that arise in consumers' minds during the purchase decision. According to the survey made by Chovanova H.,

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Korshunov A, and Babkanova D. (2015), more than half of respondents buy products or services due to a brand.

Perception is a psychological factor that influences consumer behaviour. Perception includes the accumulation and organization of information to form a picture about something. In the decision-making process, perception is a crucial element. By reaching their consumers through the different marketing channels, brands increase their brand awareness, so the perception of that brand will influence the decision to buy or not that brand. (Baba A., 2014)

Related to dairy products, two factors affect the decision-making processes: brand credibility and brand prestige. (Gilaninia Sh., Ganjinia H., and Moridi A., 2012) The research conducted by Gilaninia Sh., Ganjinia H., and Moridi A. (2012) suggests that the brand owners will benefit from a precise translation of brand credibility and prestige.

According to the research made by IBM Institute for Business Value, delivering the value by correctly using technology to forecast consumer demand patterns is necessary for companies. Moreover, today it is vital to be omnipresent for their target audience, and brands should be present anywhere their target audience may demand the product to meet consumers' expectations. Additionally, the role of the stores should be expanded due to the growing trend of cross-channel orders. (Haller K., Lee J., Cheung J., 2020)

In the Netherlands, the consumption of dairy products is high, and each consumer consumes, on average, one-two glasses of dairy products a day. The research conducted in the Netherlands on the impact of design packages on consumer perception resulted as follows. Consumers tagged the packaging design chosen for the study as "trust", "biological/natural", and "pure/old—fashioned". The consumers

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did not perceive the design package of milk as tasty and pleasant. Color, image, and layout as packaging cues highly influenced consumers' perception. However, the research has limitations as a focus group size, chosen dairy products etc. Besides limitations, there is an influence of packaging design on consumers' perceptions. The research outlines that consumers' perceptions should not directly be used as a design guideline for dairy products because of their subjective tastes. However, it can be used as a recommendation for developing more efficient communication via packaging. Before creating or modifying the packaging design, the company should develop the brand positioning and decide how to position products. (Gelici-Zeko M.M., Lutters D., Klooster R., Weijzen P.L.G., 2012)

Similar research to this paper was conducted in Sweden that analyzed the brand identity and the consumer involvement with two non-dairy brands, Alpro and Oatly. These two companies specialize in producing alternative milk: Alpro produces almond, hazelnut, soya, and coconut milk. Oatly produces different dairy products made of oat milk such as oat drinks, oatgurts, oat cream, etc. The research showed that physique, relationship, and culture influence the consumers' perception of a brand's identity. According to the analysis, physical characteristics, taste and nutrition ingredients were considered the most critical aspects for the two brands. The perceived product quality of both brands was increased due to the cultured aspect as the brands' ethical and sustainability norms aligned with consumers'.

Moreover, the packaging was considered an essential part of the physique, and respondents said they considered the brand product and purchased Oatly because of its informal packaging style with graphical images. At the same time, Alpro has a contemporary clean design that emphasizes its functional aspects and ingredients. Symbolic value identified with reflection and self-image was considered vital, and it

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differs between the two brands. Consumers said that they feel pride buying Oatly products feeling their involvement in environmental issues. Consumers consider the Alpro as a more functional brand, and consumers perceive the reflection and self-image as using functional food and caring about their health. As for the relationship aspect, respondents highlighted that they feel an emotional link to Oatly products as Oatly communicates with their consumers, mainly hipsters and vegans, by creating a culture and ideology around the brand. However, respondents did not mention that they feel the same about the Alpro brand. The authors supposed that Oatly's strong relationship with customers is due to the brand communicating the brand's core culture and showing the benefits of using alternative milk, which is contrary to the dairy industry. As Alpro is part of Danone, a large producer of dairy products, it may not be able to have a strong position against the dairy industry. The main outline of research is that in the example of Oatly, culture is a vital facet of brand identity that increases the consumers' involvement. (Naderi R., Pine E., O'Riordan W., and Constantin C., 2019)

1.3. Methodology

As the research method, the quantitative and qualitative methods were chosen for this paper. As for the quantitative method, the survey consisted of twenty questions exploring the consumer behaviour, preferences and the impact of brand identity on decision-making in the purchase of milk. One hundred and three respondents living in Kazakhstan took part in the survey. The research topic is related to consumer products, so the respondents who took part in the survey live in different cities and have different income levels, ages, occupations, family sizes, etc.

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As for the qualitative method, in-depth interviews were chosen. Two experts working in the marketing and branding spheres were chosen to give their feedback on the influence of brand identity on overall consumer behaviour, especially in the dairy industry. Both experts have experience in marketing and branding and work with local and external middle and large companies. Having the experience working with dairy companies and overall in the dairy industry is a non-obligatory criterion, but considering the additional value to this paper. Experts gave an in-depth interview consisting of five questions related to this topic.

Using these two research methods will help to make this paper more objective and to test the hypothesis better.

II. Research Findings and Analysis

2.1. Survey and Sample characteristics

A questionnaire was developed with general twenty obligatory questions. A survey was conducted online on the Internet to reach a wider audience. One hundred and three respondents answered all questions, mostly living in Nur-Sultan, Almaty, and Karaganda cities. 82,5% of respondents were women. 62,1% were aged 25-34 year, 19,4% - 35-44 aged. Most of the respondents were employed and had more than 550 000 tenge monthly income. Of the respondents, 60,2% were married, and 58,3% of respondents had children. 19,4% of respondents buy milk every day, 32% buy 2-3 times a week and 26,2% once a week.

| Sample characteristics | | N | % |
|------------------------|------------|----|-------|
| Location | Almaty | 29 | 28,2% |
| | Nur-Sultan | 54 | 52,4% |

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| | | | |
|----------------------|---|----|-------|
| | Karaganda | 14 | 13,6% |
| | Shymkent | 2 | 1,9% |
| | Other | 6 | 3,9% |
| Gender | Female | 85 | 82,5% |
| | Male | 18 | 17,5% |
| Age | 18-24 | 8 | 7,8% |
| | 25-34 | 64 | 62,1% |
| | 35-44 | 20 | 19,4% |
| | 45-54 | 8 | 7,8% |
| | 55-62 | 3 | 2,9% |
| | 63+ | | |
| Monthly income level | 150-250K | 21 | 20,4% |
| | 251-300K | 11 | 10,7% |
| | 301-350K | 11 | 10,7% |
| | 351-400K | 8 | 7,8% |
| | 401-450K | 7 | 6,8% |
| | 451-550K | 6 | 5,8% |
| | 550K+ | 39 | 37,9% |
| Occupation | Student | 4 | 3,9% |
| | Employee in Company (manager/specialist) | 66 | 64,1% |
| | Entrepreneur | 12 | 11,7% |

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| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|----|-------|
| | Retired | 4 | 3,9% |
| | Freelancer | 17 | 16,5% |
| Marital status | Married | 62 | 60,2% |
| | In a relationship | 13 | 12,6% |
| | Single | 23 | 22,3% |
| | Divorced | 5 | 4,9% |
| Children | No | 43 | 41,7% |
| | Yes, 1 child | 25 | 24,3% |
| | Yes, 2-3 children | 25 | 24,3% |
| | Yes, more than 3 children | 10 | 9,7% |
| Buying frequency of milk | Every day | 20 | 19,4% |
| | 2-3 times a week | 33 | 32,0% |
| | Once a week | 27 | 26,2% |
| | 2-3 times a month | 18 | 17,5% |
| | Don't buy | 5 | 4,9% |

Table -1. Characteristics of Sample

2.2. Data analysis

Findings and the result analysis from the qualitative method – survey gave the following outcomes.

First, the research results that the milk is a frequently bought product as 32% of respondents buy a milk 2-3 times a week, 26,2% buy milk once a week, and 19,4% of respondents buy milk every day.

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The top three milk brands mentioned are Rodina, Lactel and Moe.

Almost 80 % of respondents are likely to recommend the milk brand they are purchasing, resulting in them being satisfied with their choice. Tetra pack and fin pack (soft package) are the most popular among consumers; 52,4% and 40,8% chose milk in that package. The taste was considered the most essential factor in the decision-making process of milk. Shelf life is the second important indicator in milk purchase with a small gap.

Taste and the shelf life relate to the product quality indicators and form together 61,2% of answers, 34% and 27,2%, respectively. Package design with the price both took the third place with 7,8%. Availability and brand name are considered in fourth place with 5,8%. Naturalness, fat percentage and list of ingredients were also mentioned by respondents as factors influencing their purchase decision and may be referred to as the product quality characteristics.

79,6% of respondents stated that they do not switch between milk brands. However, if they do not find their preferred milk brand in the store, almost half of the respondents (48,5%) will buy another milk brand. Only 13,6% of consumers are unlikely to buy another milk brand in such a case. The willingness of consumers to switch between milk brands if they do not find a preferred one in the store shows that the availability of brands on shelves is an essential factor in a purchase decision.

36,9% of consumers said they tend to try a new milk brand, and only 13,6% of respondents said they are not likely to try a new milk brand.

A primary factor influencing to switch between milk brands is quality (35,9%) and recommendations of friends/relatives (29,1%). Price and promotion were chosen as less essential factors affecting switching between brands.

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As a fast-consuming consumer, good milk is mainly purchased in supermarkets (56,3%) and stores near home (35%), while market and online both took less than 10%.

41,7% of respondents pay attention to the overall design in milk purchase, 13,6% care about material quality and tactile feelings in contact with the package, 11,7% pay attention to packaging design, and 28,2% answered that they do not care about the product design at all.

More than half of respondents (62,1%) stated that they prefer buying milk in a package with standard category colours.

53,4% answered that if they see a specially branded fridge with milk in the store, they tend to buy it as it will attract their attention. 25,2% of respondents answered that it would attract their attention, but they will not buy that milk, and 20,4% of respondents said it would not attract their attention as they buy milk in a regular fridge where all brands are put together.

The survey analysis showed that Generation Y, especially consumers aged 25-34, is more likely to try milk brands with unusual new package colours. However, the price does not affect whether the consumer is more likely to try milk in unusual category colour or not.

There is also a correlation that consumers with high income-level prefer to buy milk in the tetra-pack package, while people with the lower-income level buy milk in a soft package fin pack. Glass bottle was chosen only by people with high-income level.

Package design as an essential factor in milk purchase was mostly chosen among people aged 25-34 with a higher income level.

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Despite the level of income, the specialized branded zones attract consumers' attention. However, people with higher income levels are more willing to buy the milk in specialized branded fridges than consumers with the lower-income of level.

Price is considered a minor factor affecting consumer behaviour in the dairy industry, while taste and shelf life are considered the most valuable factors. Price as the main factor affecting the decision-making process of milk purchase was primarily chosen by people aged 35-44 with low and middle-income levels.

2.3. *Experts*

In order to reach the more objective results of this paper, the industry experts were interviewed. Two experts were asked five questions about the importance of brand identity on consumer behaviour.

Andrey Khalov is a founder and CEO of the branding company "RoyalKusto" with clients in Kazakhstan and Russia, a speaker of scientific and practical conferences at Turan University and a guest lecturer for the masters' program at university AlmaU with an overall experience in the marketing and branding of seventeen years. Seven, Grondard, Bacchus, Avon, 3 Zhelaniya, Kompetenz are the clients of "RoyalKusto" company.

Yuriy Vlasenko is a partner of the consulting company "Best practices" in Russia and Kazakhstan. Yuriy Vlasenko has a thirty-years of experience in marketing, especially in the dairy industry and worked with big brands such as Wimm-Bill-Dann, Molochnaya legenda and PiR, Group of Companies.

Andrey Khalov considers package design as the main marketing communication at the point of purchase. Through the package, the consumer receives the product characteristics and finally decides to buy or not the product. The package is considered

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the endpoint of the conversion in consuming goods. Customers find or do not find the crucial meanings for him through the package. The package is the product's attribute carrier. Attributes mean signs that the consumers compare in their head, make up an integral image, form consumer expectations, and conclude the product's perceived quality. All these refer to the communication with the customer in the moment of choice. Moreover, the package performs the role of product identifier and should make a desire to buy this product.

Yuriy Vlasenko said that package design and price factors are essential and influence customers significantly when these factors are correlated and match each other. For instance, the premium price comes with the premium package and the economy format store with a simple package and affordable price.

Yuriy Vlasenko stated that it is evident that consumers form their preferences for long-time shopping in the dairy industry. It considers a traditional industry that may be affected by religion and regional factors. Yuriy Vlasenko highlighted the difference in taste preferences of dairy products regarding the regions, and companies should take it into account and not impose other tastes.

Experts both confirmed that the influence of packaging and price should be defined first by the brand positioning. For example, suppose the brand operates in middle and middle plus segments. In that case, it should add additional value to the product by its package design that will be functional and pleasant for consumers. So, the package design is perceived as a communication tool to deliver the product's value, properties, and functions, explaining its price.

According to the experts, there is a certain standard in package design in the dairy industry. If the company changes this standard, it should explain to customers why it differs from the industry standards and spends many budgets to retrain the

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consumers. There is a specific colour identification in the dairy industry. Furthermore, for instance, the red colour is for high-fat content, dark blue is for average fat content, and blue is for low-fat content. Both experts agreed that changing the colour out of the category does not make sense for mass products. However, a significant change in category is possible only for the premium segment. With the Internet rise, consumers are more informative nowadays than before, and they are interested in the quality of purchased products, so brands should give and translate their values and the product quality in a delicate way, for example, by showing the cow breeds through QR code on the package.

Both experts said that the factors affecting the purchase decision of dairy products should be analyzed concerning segmentation and brand positioning. The price will not be a critical factor in the middle and middle plus segment, unlike convenience. Building brand values in the economy segment are more complicated because the price is a relative term; values are constant and should be built on constant terms. According to Andrey Khalov, in the economy segment, the shelf life and brand awareness as a familiar brand are essential factors affecting consumer decisions on milk purchases. The package should transmit the ordinary meaning, such as naturalness. In the middle and middle plus segment, the usability and convenient package design is more critical and should be different from the economy class. Also, the package should have additional meaning that will transmit the additional value to the customers. For example, the contents of vitamin D or the production involve innovations.

Yuriy Vlasenko said that the brands need to change their packages to stay contemporary from time to time because of new design trends arise as minimalism, new fonts, and others. However, it should be done gradually and by keeping continuity.

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Andrey Khalov added that the redesign is a risky step and should be implemented only if there is a significant internal change translated through redesign or if the brand meets problems like a decrease in market share etc.

Andrey Khalov said the brand identity works equally for consumers with different income levels as people have the same nervous system. Therefore, a strong brand identity will be recognized in all population segments. However, the perception of values and meanings differs according to the income level. Moreover, the brand identity should look differently regarding the segmentation.

Yuriy Vlasenko said that consumers with a high-income level are usually broad-minded. As a result, they value product properties and overall brand identity more, and the price is less critical.

Both experts emphasized the importance of brand identity development as one of the steps of brand building and its influence on consumer behaviour through the brand's perception.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to assess the influence of brand identity on consumers' decision-making process in milk purchase and the impact of package design on the purchase of milk.

The primary and secondary data related to this topic were reviewed for this study. In addition, a survey and in-depth interviews with industry experts were provided. Finally, the received data was analyzed to consider the topic from different perspectives and achieve objective results.

Both theoretical and practical parts confirmed that branding is an important concept that influences many aspects of human living. Brand identity is essential in brand building and should reflect the brand values and mission. Moreover, the brand identity helps in the decision-making of strategic aspects. The impact of brand identity on consumer behaviour is noticeable. Brand identity influences the decision-making process in many industries, and the milk industry is not an exception. Product quality, such as taste and shelf life, is the most critical milk purchase factor. However, consumers pay great attention to the visual elements, and the quality of the product should be correctly transmitted through the packaging design and marketing tools. Combining all the brand elements well leads to a strong brand identity that impacts brand awareness. Therefore, brand identity should be developed regarding brand positioning.

Hypothesis 1 that a clear brand identity directly affects the consumer's decision-making by inducing a desire to buy the product is confirmed by this paper. Both survey and experts confirm that the clear brand identity with solid positioning and clear messages of products with high-quality properties is increasing the desire to buy the product and to recommend it.

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Hypothesis 2, that package design is an essential factor influencing the purchase decision of milk, is not confirmed. According to the survey, factors such as taste and shelf life, referring to the product quality, were chosen as the most influencing factors affecting the decision-making process of milk purchase.

This research should help marketers, brand managers and owners of dairy companies. It is crucial to differentiate between the entrance of foreign competitors and the overall rise of competition in the dairy industry. Clear brand identity creation based on the positioning of a brand with a high-quality product will positively affect consumer behaviour by increasing the desire to buy the product and brand loyalty. Future research that will be done on this topic should expand the sample size by covering more consumers to come up with better results. Moreover, in future research, the milk can be categorized as cow milk, plant milk, and goat milk to deeper understand the preferences of consumers and the influence of brand identity on different milk types.

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Survey questions

- 1) What city do you live in?
 - Almaty
 - Nur-Sultan
 - Shymkent
 - Aktobe
 - Other _____

- 2) What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female

- 3) How old are you?
 - 18-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55-62
 - 63+

- 4) What is your monthly income level?
 - 150-250K
 - 251-300K
 - 301-350K
 - 351-400K
 - 401-450K
 - 451-550K
 - 550K+

- 5) What do you do?
 - Student
 - Employee in Company (manager/specialist)
 - Entrepreneur
 - Retired
 - Freelancer

- 6) What is your marital status?
 - Married
 - In a relationship
 - Single
 - Divorced

- 7) Do you have children?
 - No
 - Yes, 1 child
 - Yes, 2-3 children
 - Yes, more than 3 children

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8) How often do you buy milk?

- Every day
- 2-3 times a week
- Once a week
- 2-3 times a month
- Don't buy

9) Which milk brand do you usually buy?

10) To what extent you would recommend that brand?

- 1 (unlikely recommend)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (highly recommend)

11) In what package do you usually buy a milk?

- Glass bottle
- Plastic bottle
- Tetra pack
- Soft packaging

12) Which of the following factors is the most important for you in milk purchase?

- Brand name
- Package design
- Price
- Availability in store
- Shelf life
- Taste
- Other _____

13) How frequently do you switch between milk brands?

- 1 (unlikely to switch)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (more likely to switch)

14) How likely you will switch to another milk brand if your preferred milk brand will not be available in store?

- 1 (unlikely to switch)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (more likely to switch)

15) To what extent you will try a new milk brand?

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- 1(unlikely to try)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (more likely to try)

16) What may influence on switching between milk brands?

- Quality
- Taste
- Price
- Availability
- Recommendations of friends/relatives
- Advertising

17) Where do you usually buy milk?

- Supermarkets
- Store near home
- Market
- Online

18) Do you care about package design while making a purchase, if yes what do you prefer?

- Overall Design
- Package Design
- Color
- Font
- Size
- Quality of material (tactile feelings)
- I don't care to non of them, I don't care in general about Product Design, just I want milk product and for affordable price.

19) If you see milk in a package with an unusual color, would you like to try it?

- yes, I like trying brands with unusual new package color
- no, I prefer to buy a milk in a package with familiar colors

20) If you see in the store a special branded fridge with milk:

- it will attract my attention, but I will not buy it
- it will attract my attention and I will buy it
- I won't pay attention, I buy milk in a regular fridge
- other

Questions for in-depth interview with industry experts

- 1) Do customers prefer brands based on package design or price, and other related factors?
- 2) Are there specific category colors brands should stick to or it is better to choose different color from category to distinguish from competitors?
- 3) How brand identity change in redesign of logotype or package influence on consumer behavior?
- 4) Do you invest into Creation of overall Brand Identity and work on Product Development and provide the Focus Groups before launch of new or current products?
- 5) Is there any correlation between level of income of consumers and their perception of brand identity on their decision-making process?