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ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF BRAND DEVELOPMENT ON THE EFFICIENCY OF PRODUCTION RESOURCE USE

The object of research is the processes of brand development management at manufacturing enterprises, which are considered as a component of their strategic functioning. The research is aimed at identifying the main concept of branding processes, in particular in the focus of the strategic development of manufacturing enterprises. Since the current problem is the search for ways to increase the use of the brand to improve production efficiency.

The empirical research consisted of a questionnaire, interviews, and case and correlation analysis methods. The comprehensive research made it possible to trace that in the process of integrating the brand strategy into the general concept of enterprise development, it was possible to increase the efficiency of attracting material and labor resources. Thus, according to the survey, about 70% of respondents believe that strategic brand management should be considered as one of the key aspects of production stability. Correlation analysis also confirmed the strong relationship between the level of investment in branding of the enterprise and indicators of labor productivity growth (coefficient 0.81). Such results can be explained from the point of view of not only the communication, but also the integration function of production branding. It contributes to the creation of a unified system of values, increases the level of motivation of personnel, and also stimulates the development of an innovative culture. Martial law in Ukraine has exacerbated the manifestations of the influence of enterprises on society: the brand has become the embodiment of trust from partners and consumers. This allows companies to maintain a high level of competitiveness despite socio-economic and political instability.

The results obtained can be applied in practice in the context of developing brand management concepts and principles of production policy of individual enterprises. In addition, the analyzed data can be involved in the process of developing integrated management models, which is a symbiosis of branding and digital transformation policy.

Keywords: correlation analysis, innovative culture, brand strategy integration, production reserves, brand strategy, integrated management.

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1. Introduction

In the environment of globalization, digitalization and growing competition, the brand is becoming a key focus of business, with the growing focus among businesses on the significance of the brand as a strategic resource that defines their competitiveness and growth potential. The brand has long since ceased to be a label of a product or service, it has become a multidimensional resource, which influences the production, financial, and social processes of the growth of the company. The strategic brand management has become one of the primary methods to mobilize the inner reserves of businesses with the view to raising production efficiency and developing sustainable competitive advantage [1].

A brand is becoming more of a category which is viewed as having economic, social and cultural functions in scientific literature. Specifically, a brand develops a special value that goes beyond consumer preference as a strategic positioning in the market [2]. Meanwhile, the scholars get interested in the fact that traditional solutions to brand management

are not in sufficient demand anymore to cope with the requirements of modernity. Relevance of the digital technologies, the increasing influence of the social media, and the changes in the global market demand new approaches aimed at the incorporation of innovations into the brand management system [3]. The introduction of digital technologies into the corporate governance system significantly transforms modern management approaches, increasing the efficiency of decision-making and optimizing the internal business processes of the enterprise [4].

Nevertheless, although many works are carried out in the sphere of the strategic brand management [5, 6], the issue of the direct influence of brand development on the mobilization of production reserves is not well investigated. The majority of scientific articles deal with either the marketing or the communication elements of the brand [7, 8], but not with the production element. Meanwhile, experience reveals that an adequately designed brand strategy can utilize the latent potentials of the enterprise – not only in the rationalization of resources, but also in evoking the innovative potential and raising labor productivity.

The strategic brand management research also shows that it plays a significant role in the development of the territories and industries. Speaking of which, the phenomenon of regional branding can be discussed as the means of making regions more competitive and spurring local production [9, 10]. This implies the universality of the brand that may act as a driver of growth at the enterprise level as well as at the level of territorial communities [11].

In the given circumstances, the problem of aligning the idea of strategic brand management with the concepts of sustainable development is topical. It has been scientifically proved that the implementation of the brand into the system of corporate social responsibility and environmental practices makes it possible to not only enhance consumer loyalty, but also enhance the positions of the companies in global value chains [12, 13]. This also creates new possibilities to activate production reserves, as they will be used more efficiently, and a favorable image of the company will be created.

In modern conditions of digitalization, strategic brand management is transformed under the influence of artificial intelligence technologies, which allow to increase the efficiency of marketing processes and contribute to more accurate management of enterprise development [14].

Even though there are a variety of approaches, there is some gap in scientific research, the absence of a comprehensive model that would incorporate strategic brand development management into the production process management system. The resolution of this issue will not only help to clarify how the brand affects its production efficiency, but also design effective recommendations to apply to business enterprises aimed at raising their competitiveness.

Although there has been much scientific work on strategic brand management, they found that there are many serious theoretical and practical shortcomings to the existing studies. Most of these studies look at the marketing/communication/behavioral aspects of brands. The primary use of the brand in terms of its function is to develop customer loyalty, to position a product in the market, and to increase the overall value of a firm. The production aspect of the brand (i. e., related to the internal processes of an enterprise) has very few well-developed analyses and when analyzed it usually does so without reference to other production resources.

The analysis of recent years' materials of scientific journals shows that existing methods for managing of companies do not completely consider the potential of the company's image as the component in improving the usage of the enterprise's material, work and technological resources. For example, the mechanism of the effect of brand strategy on the employee's labor productivity, innovational activities and the degree of the employees' internal motivations has been studied very little. The relationship of the effectiveness of the brand development with the indices of the enterprise's production efficiency was considered by scientists almost at all. Thus, the scientific gap was created; it includes the absence of a complex methodical approach to consideration of the strategic brand management as the single unit within the limits of the production management system. This problem is especially urgent in the conditions of instability of an external environment and restriction of resources.

This research will address that gap in science. This research is an attempt to confirm the role of strategic brand development management as a means of mobilizing reserve capacities of the enterprises. The research also defines empirical connections between degree of branding and the level of efficient use of enterprise's capacity to produce.

The object of research is the processes of brand development management at manufacturing enterprises, which are considered as a component of their strategic functioning. The analysis of these processes is carried out in connection with the efficiency of the use of production resources, which allows revealing the role of the brand as a factor influencing internal production results.

The aim of research is to determine the impact of strategic brand development management on the efficiency of the use of the enterprise's production resources and to substantiate the directions of its integration into the production management system.

Research objectives:

1. To identify key factors influencing the effectiveness of strategic brand development management in manufacturing enterprises.
2. To identify the main barriers and limitations of implementing brand strategy in the production activities of enterprises.
3. To assess the practical effects of implementing strategic brand management in the context of increasing productivity, quality and resource efficiency.
4. To analyze statistical relationships between brand development and key production efficiency indicators.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Hypothesis of the research

The hypothesis of the research consists in the fact that strategic management of brand development is not only a marketing instrument of the rise of competitiveness, but it is also a significant mechanism of mobilizing the internal resources of the enterprise. The involvement of the brand strategy into the production management system helps to use the reserves available more efficiently, motivates the staff more and adds value to products, which in turn can guarantee the sustainable growth.

2.2. Research procedure

The analysis was done in three phases.

The initial phase is initial preparation.

At this point, the object of the research was identified – the processes of strategic management of the brand development in manufacturing enterprises. An effective hypothesis was created and the main factors that could influence the release of production reserves were defined. To gather data, a questionnaire in the Google Forms service and a questionnaire to be used in a semi-structured interview were made.

The second one is the empirical phase.

A field research at this stage was undertaken and this involved:

- the management and the heads of manufacturing enterprises in order to determine their attitude towards the role of the brand in the consumption of production reserves;
- semi-structured interviews with the management staff that enabled the deep evaluation of the practical experience in terms of the introduction of brand strategies in production processes;
- individual enterprise case studies that show good performance because of active brand development;
- correlation analysis of the results obtained through the use of IBM SPSS and MS Excel programs to confirm the connection between strategic brand control and the indicators of the efficiency of the utilization of reserves of production.

The third level is analytical.

The acquired data were tabulated and generalized. At this stage, the validity of the results was verified, the quantitative and qualitative indicators were contrasted and conclusions were made concerning the impact of the strategic development of the brand on the mobilization of the hidden reserves of production. Moreover, the outcomes were put in line with the scientific methods as they were represented in the contemporary literature, which made it possible to determine any conformity or inconsistency between the theory and the practice.

The sample of the research was constituted of the enterprises of the manufacturing sphere, as this sphere is the most susceptible to the necessity to elevate the efficiency of resources utilization and mobilize the resources within.

The sample size of the research included 40 medium and large-scale enterprises that are situated in the central and eastern regions of Ukraine. The selection was made on the basis of targeted selection: the preference was given to the organizations owning their own brand of products and being involved in domestic or foreign market.

In the research, there are participants:

- 12 machine-building industry enterprises;
- 10 food business enterprises;
- 8 companies of the chemical and pharmaceutical industry;
- 6 metallurgic industries businesses;
- 4 light industry enterprises.

The survey was done among managers, top managers and specialists of marketing and strategic development departments. The maximum number of respondents was 120. In order to be representative, the proportionality of the number of respondents with the number of enterprises in each industry was followed.

Triangulating the methods was used to assure the reliability of the results: a mixture of questionnaires, interviews and analysis of enterprise documents. Moreover, the reliability of the questionnaire data was verified with the help of the internal consistency technique (Cronbach coefficient, 0.82), and this fact proves the great reliability of the scales.

2.3. Methods

The following methods were used:

1. *Questionnaire.* Quantitative data of the representatives of the manufacturing enterprises (managers, marketers, strategic managers) was collected with the help of this method. The questionnaire consisted of question blocks that were designed to evaluate the significance of the brand in terms of mobilizing the resource and the degree to which the brand development strategies have been implemented, the most prominent barriers and success factors. The questionnaire provided the opportunity to get some comparative information across various industries and find out some overall trends.

2. *Semi-structured interviews.* To analyze it in depth, the top managers of 15 companies were interviewed. They enabled to elucidate the acquired quantitative findings as well as gather qualitative data regarding strategic brand management practices, implementation processes and challenges encountered by firms in the implementation process of brand strategies.

3. *Case study.* The participants were three cases of the various manufacturing industries (mechanical engineering, food and chemical industries). The case analysis allowed determining the implementation of brand management strategies in real-life conditions as well as tracing the specifics of the production reserves activation, recognition of factors that affect the success of brand management strategies.

4. *Correlation analysis.* The correlation analysis method was applied to measure the relationship between the brand development and the efficiency of use of the production resources in a quantitative manner. The SPSS 27.0 software was used to conduct the analysis, which allowed verifying objectively the statistical dependence between the level of strategic brand management and such indicators as productivity, the level of innovative activity and cost efficiency.

The combination of these methods offered depth (interviews and cases) and breadth (questionnaires and statistical analysis) of the research that permitted raising reliability and validity of the conclusions.

The choice of research methods (tools) for carrying out this research is based on the need to carry out a comprehensive analysis of all the different aspects of how Strategic Brand Management influences the effectiveness of resource usage. Given that the subject studied includes

several dimensions, therefore the methodology selected was a multi-methodology (both quantitative and qualitative) that combines two types of methodologies: qualitative and quantitative.

A survey questionnaire was selected as the main method of collecting primary data. The survey questionnaire gives a general picture from a large number of respondents and allows the possibility of further statistical processing. For this reason, it allowed for identifying the patterns of similarity related to the function of the brand in stimulating the activation of production reserve across many sectors.

Semi-structured interviews are used to develop information collected via the survey questionnaire (quantitative) for the purpose of acquiring qualitative information about the operational aspects of implementing brand strategies into manufacturing operations. Semi-structured interviews also make possible clarifying causal relationships which may not be identified through standardized responses generated through use of a questionnaire.

Case studies were used to illustrate how the strategic brand management can be practiced in different forms of production. Case studies make it possible to trace the influence mechanism of brand strategy onto activating production reserves in a practical (real world) context. Case studies thus enhance the practicality of this research.

Correlation method has been chosen as the principal analytical statistics method. It makes possible to determine qualitatively (by degree and orientation) relationship between intensity and direction of dependence of brand development and indicators of productive resources utilization efficiency. Correlation method will be used to show if there is a connection among variable studied or not; however, it is not intended to establish causality between variables by demonstrating direct cause-and effect relationship. Therefore, the above described methodology provides sufficient reliability, validity, and representation of results obtained. Using the methodology mentioned, a comprehensive research will be conducted to assess the influence of strategic brand management on productive resources utilization efficiency.

2.4. Tools

The following tools were used to prepare the article: Google Forms for creating online questionnaires and collecting responses and Google Sheets for their further analysis, as well as SPSS for processing and analyzing large data sets, including conducting correlation analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Determining the effectiveness factors of strategic brand management

To determine what factors define the effectiveness of strategic brand development management as the reserve activation tool, a survey of the representatives of 60 manufacturing enterprises (metallurgy, mechanical engineering, food and chemical industries) was aimed. The questionnaire included 25 questions related to four major blocks namely the role of the brand in the development strategy of the enterprise, impediments to the adoption of branding strategies, innovation and digitalization in brand management processes. There was also a section regarding the expected result from investments in brand development (Table 1).

Table 1

Assessment of the branding significance factors for activating production reserves

Brand management factors	Metallurgy (n = 15)	Engineering (n = 20)	Food industry (n = 15)	Chemical industry (n = 10)	Overall average
Management support	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.55
Funding for brand strategies	4.5	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.28
Personnel qualifications	4.3	4.0	3.8	4.1	4.05
Digital technologies usage	4.1	3.9	3.6	4.0	3.90
Innovation culture development	4.2	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.05
Marketing communications	3.9	4.0	4.2	3.8	3.98

The results acquired indicate that the most crucial issue to facilitate the successful implementation of brand strategies is the support of management (4.55), which proves the essential role of managerial leadership. Meanwhile, comparatively low scores were obtained on the use of digital technologies (3.90), which points to the existence of some technological gap in manufacturing organizations. Interestingly, the rating of marketing communications is higher in the food industry, compared with other industries (4.2), which points to the nicety of the consumer market in the given industry.

3.2. Analysis of barriers to brand strategy implementation

Table 2 contains the key obstacles to the introduction of strategic brand management (as a percentage of respondents who selected the answer).

Lack of funding was the most prevalent obstacle (67 percent of the respondents) as it is in line with other empirical research studies on strategic management. The second most significant factor is the influence of martial law (54%), which imposes extra risks and limitations to branding strategies. Simultaneously, employee resistance (49%) is also a major impediment, particularly in mechanical engineering. These findings suggest that the problem is multi-layered – a set of financial, organizational and external influences that may reduce the growth of the brand.

Table 3 shows the key obstacles and the prerequisites of successful strategic brand development.

It is evident that all respondent groups affirmed that management support (84%) is a key to success that cannot be lost without which

strategic management of brand development does not have consistency. Simultaneously, the most prevalent obstacles are still insufficient funds (72%), and necessity of digitalization (60%), which is also consistent with the survey findings. Surprisingly, branding competence was the most considered element in the food industry (67%) and this is attributed by the fact that there is a lot of competition in the consumer market.

Among the significant activities of the research, the determination of the key barriers which prevent the successful implementation of the brand strategy in production activities was stated. This has been enabled by understanding these limitations and developing workable suggestions to the enterprises to go through issues and better utilize the brand as a strategic resource. The results of this analysis which were condensed are contained in Table 4.

The received data indicate that lack of funding is the major obstacle that diminishes the level of innovative activity directly and restricts the opportunities of changing the production capacities. (This was noted by 65% of respondents, and the average level of influence was 4.6 points). The lack of personnel qualification (54%) is also a major barrier that makes it difficult to adapt to the technological changes. The opposition of employees (47%), which slows down and lowers productivity, was also an important factor. Equally important is the aspect of the absence of a clear development strategy (42%), which results in the disintegration of management decisions. The special focus is to be placed on the conditions of martial law, as 38% of enterprises identified it as a significant obstacle with high degree of impact (4.4 points). This proves that during the period of crisis, brand strategy needs to be altered in order to enhance the business to be more resilient to external shocks.

Table 2

Main barriers to implementing strategic brand management (in % of respondents who chose the option)

Implementation barriers	Metallurgy	Engineering	Food industry	Chemical industry	Totally (n = 60)
Lack of funding	73%	65%	60%	70%	67%
Resistance from employees	47%	55%	43%	50%	49%
Insufficient branding skills	40%	35%	48%	42%	41%
Lack of digital tools	35%	30%	28%	33%	31%
Imperfection of the regulatory framework	25%	20%	15%	22%	21%
Impact of martial law (logistics, risks)	60%	55%	50%	52%	54%

Table 3

Main barriers and conditions for the success of strategic brand development (based on interview results, % of respondents who mentioned the factor)

Barriers and conditions	Metallurgy	Engineering	Food industry	Chemical industry	Totally
Lack of funding	67%	75%	67%	80%	72%
Resistance from employees	50%	63%	50%	40%	52%
Insufficient branding skills	50%	38%	67%	40%	48%
The need for digital transformation	67%	63%	50%	60%	60%
Key condition: Support from management	83%	88%	83%	80%	84%
Key condition: Innovative culture	50%	50%	67%	60%	56%

Table 4

Main barriers to integrating brand strategy into production activities

Barrier	Share of enterprises that noted (%)	Average level of impact (on a 5-point scale)	Potential consequences for production
Lack of funding	65%	4.6	Decrease in innovative activity, lack of resources for technology renewal
Insufficient personnel qualifications	54%	4.2	Slow adaptation to new technologies, low process efficiency
Resistance from employees	47%	3.9	Conflicts, refusal to support change, decreased productivity
Lack of a clear development strategy	42%	4.0	Fragmentation of management, reduction of long-term results
Restrictions related to martial law	38%	4.4	Redistribution of resources, reduced investment activity, uncertainty in planning

3.3. Assessment of the effects of implementing strategic brand management

In order to better understand the mechanisms of strategic management of brand development and to find some hidden factors that are not always reflected in the quantitative survey, 25 semi-structured interviews with the heads of marketing departments and top managers of manufacturing enterprises were held. The questions were on the effects of branding on production reserve activations, barriers, and outcomes that could be achieved by the implementation of brand development strategies (Table 5).

Increasing sales volumes (88%) is regarded by the respondents as the main impact of brand development that proves the essential correlation of branding and commercial performance. The second significant impact is the growth of sales markets (76%), which proves the strategic character of the brand as a means of penetration of new segments. Simultaneously, the growth in trust in products (72%) is particularly applicable to the food industry when quality and reputation are the determinants of competitiveness.

A case study of four manufacturing enterprises, metallurgical, engineering, food and chemical, was made as a part of the research. The objective was to recognize practical processes of strategic brand management and find out how they influence the mobilization of production reserves.

The case study enabled to describe the details of using the brand development strategies in different manufacturing businesses. In general, such indicators as basic branding strategies, vectors of work with production reserves and, finally, the results obtained were analyzed (Table 6).

The results obtained demonstrate, it is the choice of brand development strategy that determines further production activities and,

accordingly, the efficiency of using internal production reserves in the process of such activities. For each industry, the indicators differ significantly:

- the metallurgical industry demonstrates branding as a way to go beyond the domestic market and increase export volumes by 15%;
- mechanical engineering used digitalization trends and corporate branding as a key strategy. Such measures allowed to reduce total costs by more than 10%, which freed up funds for attracting management reserves;
- the food industry focused on creating sub-brands and focused on product quality, which increased the overall sales level by 1/5;
- the chemical industry focused on the environmental friendliness of products, which reduced production costs and as a result managed to achieve a 10% increase in productivity.

Analyzing the obtained indicators, one traces the multifaceted nature of strategic brand management: with effective ranking, individual strategies can be applied in a wide variety of industries (both in heavy and light industry or in the service sector). It was also possible to establish that the general choice of strategy affected not only sales figures, but also production capacity and efficiency.

To conduct a more profound analysis, the influence of strategic management of brand development on the main production indicators of enterprises was studied. In this respect, the respondents were questioned to evaluate the degree of brand impact on productivity in labor, product quality, cost efficiency, staff motivation and innovativeness. Moreover, correlation analysis was carried out, and it enabled to establish a statistical correlation between brand development and the given parameters. The summarized findings are provided in Table 7.

Table 5

Key effects of strategic brand development management (based on interview results, % of respondents who mentioned the factor)

Expected effects of brand development	Metallurgy (n = 6)	Engineering (n = 8)	Food industry (n = 6)	Chemical industry (n = 5)	Totally (n = 25)
Increase in sales volumes	83%	75%	100%	80%	88%
Increasing production productivity	67%	63%	50%	60%	60%
Expansion of sales markets	83%	75%	67%	80%	76%
Increasing investment attractiveness	67%	63%	50%	60%	60%
Forming long-term partnerships	50%	50%	67%	40%	52%
Growing trust in products	67%	75%	83%	60%	72%

Table 6

Practical results of strategic brand development management (based on a case study)

Branch	Key strategic actions in the brand area	Activation of production reserves	Achieved results (%)
Metallurgy	Rebranding and entry into international markets	Optimization of energy use	Export growth by 15%
Engineering	Implementation of corporate brand and digital platforms	Increasing the efficiency of production chains	Cost reduction by 12%
Food industry	Creation of sub-brands and emphasis on product quality	Use of reserves in logistics and storage	Sales expansion by 20%
Chemical industry	Positioning as an environmentally friendly manufacturer	Reducing losses in production processes	Productivity increase by 10%

Table 7

Assessment of the impact of the brand on key production indicators of enterprises

Indicator	Average score (on a 5-point scale)	Share of respondents who confirmed a positive impact (%)	Correlation coefficient with brand development
Labor productivity	4.2	72%	0.81
Product quality	4.5	76%	0.78
Cost optimization	3.8	61%	0.74
Staff motivation	4.1	70%	0.82
Innovative activity	4.0	68%	0.79

Strategic brand management has the greatest effect in the product quality (76% of the respondents indicated key improvements) and staff motivation (70%). This goes to confirm the significance of the brand as an external market determinant, and as a resource mobilizing tool internally. The strongest relationship was found between brand development and staff motivation (0.82) which is consistent with the results of the interviews, as the majority of managers note the increased staff loyalty to the company with the developing corporate brand.

3.4. Analysis of the relationships between brand development and production efficiency

Additionally, the conducted correlation analysis allows to compare the level and direction of dependence of key parameters when choosing branding strategies for production management. Among them are brand investment, management support, personnel involvement, digitalization, etc. (Table 8).

According to the obtained indicators, a high level of correlation is observed between the brand strategies and production indicators:

- sales expansion (0.88) and productivity growth (0.82) most closely correspond to the values of brand investments – this confirms the importance of financing brand projects;
- support of management is also an important aspect of the innovation process (0.85), because the strategic decisions of top management define the trends of development;
- staff engagement demonstrates medium-high stable correlations (0.68–0.76), indicating that personnel factor is also significant, but not independent one;
- digitalization of brand strategies gave the highest relationship to cost reduction (0.81) and innovation (0.83), which shows the value of technology in enhancing the efficiency in production.

It would be beneficial for companies to implement the created relations in practice by assessing how much their branding policies have been incorporated into their production policies. Results from this can be found in Table 9.

The tables show that a small percentage of businesses (27%), have successfully implemented their branding strategy within their operational policies. Approximately half of all businesses surveyed (46%), indicated they were using an intermediate approach to integrating their brand with production processes; this indicates many businesses' brand strategies may be disconnected from the overall business and therefore the brand has limited influence on improving efficiencies for the production process. A further 27% of businesses, still view the brand primarily through marketing communications channels. The results above indicate there is considerable potential for growth by implementing an integrated branding strategy which will allow for the internalization of branding into operational policies to create more effective resource utilization and long-term sustainability and competitive advantage.

Therefore, the results confirm the strategic brand management is a multi-faceted means for mobilization of production reserves, wherein financial aspects, managerial support and digitalization are intertwined into a synergistic effect and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The research results support the idea that any strategy for the brand management in manufacturing organizations is important in terms of mobilizing production reserves and achieving their long-term competitive position. There are data showing a brand in modern times cannot be limited to solely marketing functions; it is a multi-dimensional strategic tool integrated in the production system and influencing enterprise's productiveness, innovative capacity and sustainability. Our results generally agree with the perspective [1] where the brand is defined as a strategic development factor. However, our research has shown this feature of manufacturing industries may have a broader spectrum of effects-both one employees' motivation and on rationalization of resource utilization.

It was established that 68% of businesses considered the brand to be an important element of producing stable products and correlation analysis showed that there is a strong correlation between investments in the brand and high levels of employee labor productivity (coefficient 0.81). In some respects, our results coincide with studies [2], where the authors perceive the brand as an epicenter of a firm's value and focus mainly on a long-term image of the brand. The main difference of this perspective from our point of view is an isolation of the production component of the brand. It is found that in manufacturing organizations the brand directly influences internal business processes particularly – forming corporate culture and motivating employees.

The strong impact of the brand on the effectiveness of enterprises adapt to the market changes is proved by [15], which considers the brand as one of the instruments of strategic adaptability. Our findings are in line with this strategy because they have established that the quicker reaction of companies with established brands to the crisis phenomena, the easier it is to adopt innovative practices and the higher the level of production sustainability is. In contrast to the referenced research, the present research, the correlation between the brand and the effectiveness of production processes is more striking.

The other research [5] stresses the need on communication dimensions of branding. Nevertheless, the findings of our work show that the communication aspect is not the only important thing where it comes to manufacturing enterprises, but rather the incorporation of brand strategy into production policy. This will enable obtaining a synergistic effect: the investments in the brand will promote technological innovations, cost optimization and quality improvement of the product simultaneously. It is, in this respect, more related to the stance of [16], which points out the significance of synergy in strategic management.

Table 8

Correlations between brand development and production results

Indicators	Productivity growth	Cost reduction	Sales expansion	Increasing of innovativeness
Investments in brand development	0.82	0.75	0.88	0.80
Support from management	0.79	0.70	0.77	0.85
Staff involvement in brand processes	0.73	0.68	0.72	0.76
Digitalization of brand strategies	0.77	0.81	0.74	0.83

Table 9

Level of incorporation of brand policy in the production policy of an enterprise

Integration level	Characteristic	Percent of enterprises
High	Brand policy is fully included in the development of the production policy (including finance and staff)	27%
Medium	Brand has been taken into consideration at major points during the production process however not necessarily at each point	46%
Low	Branding is used only as a marketing tool therefore will never affect the production process of the company	27%

Case studies results have indicated that the enterprises which include the brand into the strategic planning can reach greater productivity, with the help of implementing the innovations. This proves the thesis of [11], which established that manufacturers in the region, focusing on the brand values, build strong market positions. Simultaneously, this is not consistent with the findings of the present research. It is possible to prove the association between brand development and optimization of internal production processes, which broadens the perspectives on the brand as a multifunctional resource.

The fact that the brand has an effect on innovative activity is also confirmed in an important aspect. As the research shows [17], the brand causes the development of a trusting attitude among the consumers and the partners. Our analysis revealed that in the manufacturing industry, this trust has an additional dimension because it is a driver towards internal innovation, as the staff and management are more eager to assist in establishing a new technology, in case the company possesses a good brand. In such a way, the brand develops not only market capital, but inner innovative potential.

3.5. Limitations and directions of research development

In this way, this research is more internal based than the approach [18], which dwells on the research, proves that the strategic brand development management is not only the instrument of marketing, but also the significant way of mobilizing the production potential. This direction can guarantee efficiency, sustainability, as well as innovation of enterprises even under the conditions of crisis.

The practical value of the obtained results is in the fact that they can be applied to the creation of brand development strategies that are not only focused on the external positioning of enterprises, but also on the internal change of enterprises. Specifically, brand strategy combined with production policy would enable cost reduction, management structure optimization, quality enhancement of the products, and higher employee engagement.

The limitations of the research include the fact that the research was limited to manufacturing companies in Ukraine, and this cannot be completely generalized to other industries and nations. Also, the results obtained are based on the credibility of the answers of the respondents and the sample specificity. Other authors, especially [19], also pointed to similar constraints, stating that the findings of brand research must be always seen through the prism of the local circumstances.

The role of martial law should be given special focus since this greatly complicated the operations of the enterprises and influenced the outcomes of the research. Certain companies had to make a downturn of production, change to new logistics schemes and decrease the number of investments made in brand development. Nevertheless, the brand managed to prove that it was the most important tool to stabilize and ensure trust under these circumstances. This research demonstrates that the brand remains an effective strategic resource even during the war conditions and its contribution is even more significant.

The future research perspectives are associated with the necessity of the additional analysis of the component of combining brand strategy and digital production management technologies that is topical in the framework of global digitalization. Comparative researches across countries and industries are also recommended to ensure that the conclusions that are arrived at are universal. The play of the brand among the innovation ecosystems needs an independent research, which will enable to comprehend the processes of mobilizing internal reserves of enterprises better.

4. Conclusions

1. The key to effective strategic brand development management for manufacturing firms will be some of the same factors and barriers as previously discussed. The greatest advantage of implementing this

type of management is the fact that it has been shown to be supported by management with an average rating of 4.55; whereas, there are also several disadvantages. For example, the worst rated item was Digital Technologies at an average rating of 3.9, indicating that there may be a technology gap. Among other very serious obstacles to putting in place a brand strategy for your organization is that employees will resist (49%); there have been the effects of martial law (54%); and, you don't have enough money to put a brand strategy into action (67%).

2. The results of research into the effect of application of the strategic brand management within the scope of production activity of the enterprise have been investigated. The major positive results consist in increase of sales volumes (up to 88%), expansion of geography of sales market (by 76%), and increase of level of trust in product (to 72%). The main precondition for successful realization of brand strategy at the enterprise is support from the top-management (84%), as well as creation of the innovative culture (56%), which provides systemic character of brand influence upon production process.

3. The practical results of application of the brand strategy have been investigated with the help of examples of industrial production enterprises. Application of the strategic brand management allows increasing export by up to 15%, reducing costs by 12%, increasing sales volume by 20%, increasing productivity by up to 10%. Therefore, the received results confirm their applicability and universality in respect to different branches.

4. In the research, the relationship and influence that brand development has upon production resource use efficiency were examined. Statistical relationships were developed to show how brand investments correlate with measures of production efficiency, particularly sales growth (0.88), labor productivity (0.82), innovation (0.80) and staff motivation (0.82) as well as product quality (0.78). The research found however that only approximately 27% of companies achieve an optimal degree of implementation of their brand strategy within their production policy thus indicating large potential reserves for improving efficiency.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in relation to this research, including financial, personal, authorship, or any other, that could affect the research and its results presented in this article.

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Data availability

The manuscript has no associated data.

Use of artificial intelligence

During the preparation of the manuscript, the authors used the Grammarly program to ensure grammatical correctness and improve the language design of the text. After using this service, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the publication's content.

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