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**Adresa redakcie *(Editorial office)***

Obchodná fakulta
Dolnozemská cesta 1
852 35 Bratislava
Tel.: 00421 2 672 91 130
Fax: 00421 2 672 91 149
E-mail: redakcia.scb@euba.sk

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## Obsah Contents

# The battle of the home vs. the foreign: Analysis of consumer ethnocentrism in the context of the country of origin effect[1]

Marián Čvirik[2] – Simona Burzová[3]

***Abstract***

*The article focuses on investigating two concepts, namely the country of origin effect and consumer ethnocentrism. The main goal of the article is 1) to investigate the current state of the level of consumer ethnocentrism in the cohort of young Slovaks; 2) to investigate the current state of the perceived preference of Slovaks or of foreign products in the youth cohort; and 3) to investigate the relationship between elements of country of origin effects on food products and the level of consumer ethnocentrism. As part of the methodological procedure, we demonstrate the feasibility and validity of the tool. In the paper, we use several elements of descriptive statistics, based on which we evaluate a primary survey. The results indicate a below-average level of consumer ethnocentrism. We identify preferences in the context of the country of origin. It is also possible to establish a link between the country of origin effect and consumer ethnocentrism, albeit at a lower level.*

***Key words***

*consumer ethnocentrism, country of origin, country of origin effect, consumer behaviour.*

**JEL Classification:** M31, D91, D12

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## Introduction

Marketing scholars and practitioners have been studying the impact of globalisation on consumer behaviour in different countries for decades. There are rapid changes in the needs and demands of consumers. Although the globalisation of markets has made it easier to enter foreign markets, it has simultaneously emphasised the fundamental importance of understanding consumer attitudes towards foreign and domestic products (Arslandere & Er, 2020). Understanding consumer needs and satisfying them is key not only in the creation of the products themselves but also in the field of marketing (Cilingir & Basfirinci, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the influence of individual cultural elements on consumer behavior. Consumer ethnocentrism and the country of origin effect are currently important concepts that should be emphasized when determining international marketing strategies.

The origin of the concept of ethnocentrism dates back to 1906, when the sociologist Sumner first discussed this idea. He describes this concept as the tendency of people to see their own group as the center of action, with everything else being judged relative to that

[1] The article is an output from the projects **I-24-105-00** "Strategic, intervention, and adaptation possibilities of consumer ethnocentrism in the context of digital and international marketing management" and **VEGA 1/0505/22** „Implementácia inovatívnych výskumných metód a techník pri skúmaní nákupného správania spotrebiteľov v podmienkach slovenského trhu výskumných agentúr a zadávateľov výskumu".

[2] Dipl. Ing. Marián Čvirik, PhD., University of Economics, Faculty of Commerce, Department of Marketing, Dolnozemská cesta 1, 852 35 Bratislava, email: marian.cvirik@euba.sk.

[3] Dipl. Ing. Simona Burzová, University of Economics, Faculty of Commerce, Department of Marketing, Dolnozemská cesta 1, 852 35 Bratislava, email: simona.burzova@euba.sk.

group. However, when we focus on ethnocentrism in connection with the consumer, we understand it as the consumer's preference for domestic products over foreign ones, while at the same time closing themselves off to foreign products in order to support the domestic economy of the country and trying to avoid its damage due to the purchase of foreign products (Sharma et al., 1995; Altintas & Tokol, 2007; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). Thus, there is an opinion that by purchasing foreign products, the consumer damages or creates negative effects on employment and domestic production. Promoting the purchase of domestic products is also promoting consumer ethnocentrism (Saffu et al., 2010). Ethnocentrically oriented consumers may prefer domestic products but do not necessarily reject foreign ones (Balabanis & Diamantopolulos, 2004; Evanschitzkym et al., 2008). Consumer ethnocentrism refers to consumers' opinions about how appropriate or moral it is to buy foreign products (Sharma et al., 1995). Although ethnocentrism varies across products and countries, in general, consumers from developed countries have a higher intention to purchase domestic products than consumers from developing countries (McCann, 2015).

The authors Shimp and Sharma (1987) also made a significant contribution to the research on consumer ethnocentrism. They created a quantitative tool for measuring consumer ethnocentrism known as CETSCALE (the Consumer Ethnocentric Tendency Scale), which determines the proportion of consumers who prefer to buy domestic products compared to foreign ones. It evaluates the loyalty of consumers when buying domestic products and, at the same time, their willingness to refuse the purchase or import of foreign products. Currently, it is one of the most widely used tools for measuring consumer ethnocentrism.

For several years, in the field of international trade and marketing, researches have been concerned not only with whether consumers prefer domestic products to foreign ones for nationalistic reasons, but also with how the country of origin of the product is perceived, and explore elements of the connection between these two lines of thought (Cilingir & Basfirinci, 2014). The country of origin effect is the influence of the country of origin, its image, on how the customer evaluates the quality of products and brands originating from that country (Chryssochoidis et al., 2007). The country of origin can be understood as the country in which the product was made or manufactured, but it can also be perceived as the country where the main seat of the company is, since nowadays individual parts of the product can often be made in different countries (Camacho et al., 2022). The attitude towards the given country can be influenced by the traditions and specialization of the country in the production of a certain product. Thus, country of origin can be perceived as a strength or weakness in the evaluation and purchase of a given product, depending on the country from which the product originates (Rezvani et al., 2012).

In theory, the country-of-origin effect is also seen as a form of country stereotyping that consumers use when other product specificities and features are not available (Bilkey & Nes, 1982). However, other attributes such as price, quality, type of product and others that change the final perception and choice of the product can also interfere with the country of origin effect when evaluating products. For this reason, several authors agree that the country of origin effect should not be generalized (Yong et al., 2010; Unahanandh & Assarut, 2013; Gómez-Díaz, 2021).

Consumer ethnocentrism can sometimes be confused with the country of origin effect (Arslandere & Er, 2020). Although they are two separate concepts, at the same time they can be very closely related. For example, consumers who are sensitive to the country of origin and it is important in their decision-making may not necessarily be ethnocentrically oriented, but the opposite is not true - ethnocentrically oriented consumers are sensitive to the country of origin of the purchased products (Ha, 1998). The author Lee (2020) also offers an interesting view of the connection between these two schools of thought, according to which the ethnocentric emotions of customers are amplified by the effect of the country of origin. In his study, he says that consumers' perception of imported products is influenced by the economic growth of the country of origin, with goods from developed countries often receiving better ratings than those from developing countries.

Although the concept of consumer ethnocentrism and the country of origin effect are widely studied, the number of studies that examine these two directions together is quite limited.

The main goal of the article is 1) to investigate the current state of the level of consumer ethnocentrism in the cohort of young Slovaks, 2) to investigate the current state of the perceived preference of Slovaks or of foreign products in the youth cohort and 3) investigating the relationship between elements of country of origin effects on food products and the level of consumer ethnocentrism.

## 1 Methods and methodology

Based on the main goal, we created research questions and hypotheses that will help us fulfil it comprehensively. Since the main objective consists of three parts, we developed research questions and hypotheses in the context of these parts. It is also necessary, in connection with the mentioned goal, to conceive a methodological basis with the help of which the research question will be answered.

Objective 1: Investigating the current state of consumer ethnocentrism in a cohort of young Slovaks.

RQ1: What is the current level of consumer ethnocentrism in the cohort of young Slovaks?

We use the CETSCALE tool (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) to measure the level of consumer ethnocentrism. This tool in its original version contains seventeen statements, but the authors themselves recommend and use its shortened ten-item version. New studies (Čvirik, 2022, 2023) show that the ten-item version achieves almost identical reliability and can be considered a substitute in Slovak conditions. Considering the above, we will use the ten-item CETSCALE version for measurement in the paper. CETSCALE is an adaptation of the tool, so it is advisable to check its reliability first. We set the depth of the Likert scale to five points, which guarantees sufficient sensitivity of the data (1 = strong disagreement; 5 = strong agreement). For reliability checks, we used reliability estimation coefficients, namely McDonald's ω and Cronbach's α (Feiss, 2019). Both coefficients have certain advantages and disadvantages; therefore, the interpretation of both coefficients is appropriate. We recorded the results of the reliability estimation and reliability estimation method "if item dropped" in Tab. 1.

**Tab. 1** Estimate of the degree of reliability used by CETSCALE

| Items | Code* | If item dropped** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | McDonald's ω | Cronbach's α |
| Only those products that are unavailable in the Slovak Republic should be imported. | CET_2 | 0.729 | 0.738 |
| Slovak products, first, last, and foremost. | CET_4 | 0.780 | 0.768 |
| Purchasing foreign-made products is un-Slovakian. | CET_5 | 0.765 | 0.765 |
| It is not right to purchase foreign products, because it puts Slovaks out of jobs. | CET_6 | 0.755 | 0.747 |
| A real Slovak should always buy Slovak - made products. | CET_7 | 0.760 | 0.757 |
| We should purchase products manufactured in Slovak Republic instead of letting other countries get rich off us. | CET_8 | 0.751 | 0.746 |
| Slovaks should not buy foreign products, because this hurts Slovaks business and causes unemployment. | CET_11 | 0.759 | 0.751 |
| It may cost me in the long-run but I prefer to support Slovak products. | CET_13 | 0.793 | 0.786 |
| We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country. | CET_16 | 0.726 | 0.736 |
| Slovak consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Slovaks out of work. | CET_17 | 0.768 | 0.762 |

Note: * The code consists of the abbreviation CET (Consumer Ethnocentrism Tendencies) and the number under which the item is in the original 17 item version.
** Total McDonald's ω for the tool = 0.778 (CI 95% = <0.740 - 0.815>); Total Cronbach's α for the tool = 0.775 (CI 95% = <0.735 - 0.810>).

Source: own calculation in R.

As Tab. 1 follows, the estimation of the degree of reliability with the help of both coefficients points to an acceptable degree of reliability, which means that the tool can be considered reliable and continue to work with it. Given the fact that we also used the if item dropped method, it can be stated in the context of both coefficients that if the statement CET_13 (It may cost me in the long run, but I prefer to support Slovak products.) was discarded, we would have obtained a higher rate reliability estimation. Considering that this difference is in the CI interval of 95%, we decided to keep the statement. The main motivation is the use of the tool in a standardised ten-statement form for international comparison.

Objective 2: Researching the current state of the perceived preference for Slovak or foreign products in the youth cohort.

RQ2: How can one characterise the preference of selected (key) elements of perception and the preference of Slovak or foreign attributes of food products?

As part of the investigation of the preferences of the Slovak (domestic) or foreigners, we examined key areas such as price and quality (Čvirik, 2023), but also secondary elements of consumer purchasing decisions for food products such as packaging (Silayoi and Speece, 2007), composition (Banovic et al., 2019), and perceived taste (Klockner et al., 2010). We identify all the mentioned elements of the purchase decision in the context of preferences, whether domestic or foreign.

Objective 3: Investigating the relationship between elements of country of origin effects and the degree of consumer ethnocentrism.

RQ3: How can the relationship between selected elements of perception and preferences of domestic or foreign attributes of food products and the degree of consumer ethnocentrism be understood?

In the last part, we examine the relationship between the degree of consumer ethnocentrism measured with the help of the shortened version of the CETSCALE and the elements of purchasing decisions in terms of country of origin effects.

## 1.1 Data acquisition and research processing

The article is supported by a primary survey, the basis of which was 301 respondents. The population from which the respondents were selected can be defined as "young Slovaks". We characterize the term young as respondents in the age range of 15 to 26 years. We defined the criterion "Slovak" on the basis of the national identification of the respondents. The sample has the character of a convenience sample. Considering the size and nature of the sample, it can be expected that the maximum statistical error (with a 95% confidence probability) is around 5.6%.

When processing the obtained data, we use a number of statistical methods. First of all, we use the reliability estimation measures of the research instrument (with the help of McDonald's ω and Cronbach's α). For the processing of basic reports, we use elements of descriptive statistics (Čvirik & Ölveczká, 2022). To investigate relationships, we use correlation analysis, namely Spearman's rho correlation coefficient (Hair, 2010). The choice of this type of correlation coefficient results from the nature of the data, while we work on the principle of lower quality of the variable. The possibility of generalizing the correlation coefficient to the population was also investigated, with the help of inductive statistics as well as a confidence interval (based on 1000 bootstrap replicates). Paper also contains visual aids such as tables and graphs for easier understanding of the textu.

## 2 Results and discussion

In the following section, we present and discuss the main results of the research investigation. Considering the logic of the set goals and research questions, we will proceed systematically.

**RQ1: What is the current level of consumer ethnocentrism in the cohort of young Slovaks?**

To measure consumer ethnocentrism, we used a modified (shortened) CETSCALE, which appears to be a suitable means for measuring consumer ethnocentrism in the conditions we investigated. We recorded generic results for individual statements in the context of descriptive statistics in Tab. 2.

**Tab. 2** Description of individual CETSCALE statements

| Item* | Valid | Missing | Mode | Median | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CET_2 | 301 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 3.1 | 1.2 | 1 | 5 |
| CET_4 | 301 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3.1 | 1.0 | 1 | 5 |
| CET_5 | 301 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1.6 | 0.8 | 1 | 4 |
| CET_6 | 301 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2.2 | 0.9 | 1 | 5 |
| CET_7 | 301 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1.7 | 0.8 | 1 | 5 |
| CET_8 | 301 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3.1 | 1.1 | 1 | 5 |
| CET_11 | 301 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2.3 | 0.9 | 1 | 5 |
| CET_13 | 301 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 3.3 | 1.0 | 1 | 5 |
| CET_16 | 301 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2.8 | 1.2 | 1 | 5 |
| CET_17 | 301 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2.0 | 0.8 | 1 | 5 |

Note: A five-point Likert scale was used (1- strong disagreement; 5 strong agreement).
Source: own calculation in R.

Tab. 2 captures generic results for individual statements, while it can be concluded that all respondents (301) responded to all statements (0 missing). As part of the results, we also present the average in connection with the standard deviation, but it should be noted that due to the nature of the data, it has only an indicative interpretation. In general, however, the results indicate that the lowest approval was given to the statement CET_5, "Purchasing foreign-made products is un-Slovakian". The low values found for this statement may indicate that young consumers do not show patriotic tendencies, and thus their ethnocentric tendencies are rather marked by other complementary effects such as the economic situation in the country. The statement CET_13, "It may cost me in the long run, but I prefer to support Slovak products," received the highest level of approval. The result indicates a low level of price sensitivity among young consumers in the context of the effect of ethnocentric tendencies.

By summarising individual statements (parts of the model), it is possible to evaluate the current state of consumer ethnocentrism in the studied segment on the basis of describing the centre of distribution and variability. Since the modified CETSCALE tool contains ten statements and the scale used is at the level of five points (1 to 5), the values within the model will range from 10 to 50 points. The average measured value was at the level of 25.1 points with a standard deviation of 5.6 points. Modus was at the level of 28 points. The median was at the level of 25 points. The minimum measured value was at the level of the minimum interval of possible results (10 points). The maximum measured value was at the level of 45 points. In the context of the mentioned values, it can be stated that young Slovaks achieve an average to locally below-average level of consumer ethnocentrism. When recalculating, the average level of consumer ethnocentrism in the studied segment can be considered at roughly 44.67%.

**RQ2: How can one characterise the preference of selected (key) elements of perception and the preference of Slovak or foreign attributes of food products?**

In the following part, we focused on the investigation of selected elements of perception and preference for Slovak and foreign attributes of food products. These elements represent the decision-making factors of consumers when purchasing. We examined the attitude towards individual elements on the basis of a 7-point bipolar scale, where 1 represented the maximum preference for foreign products in the given decision-making element and 7 represented the maximum domestic preference in the given decision-making element. At the same time, we also investigated the "buy_from" element, which represents the degree of interest in buying domestic or foreign food products. We recorded the basic elements of descriptive statistics in Tab. 3.

**Tab. 3** Assessment of decision-making elements

| Decision-making element | Valid | Missing | Mode | Median | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| better/prettier_packaging | 301 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3.7 | 1.2 | 1 | 7 |
| more_expensive | 301 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 4.1 | 1.5 | 1 | 7 |
| better_quality | 301 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3.5 | 1.5 | 1 | 7 |
| better_composition | 301 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3.7 | 1.3 | 1 | 7 |
| better_taste | 301 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 3.8 | 1.4 | 1 | 7 |
| Buy_from | 301 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 4.8 | 1.3 | 1 | 7 |

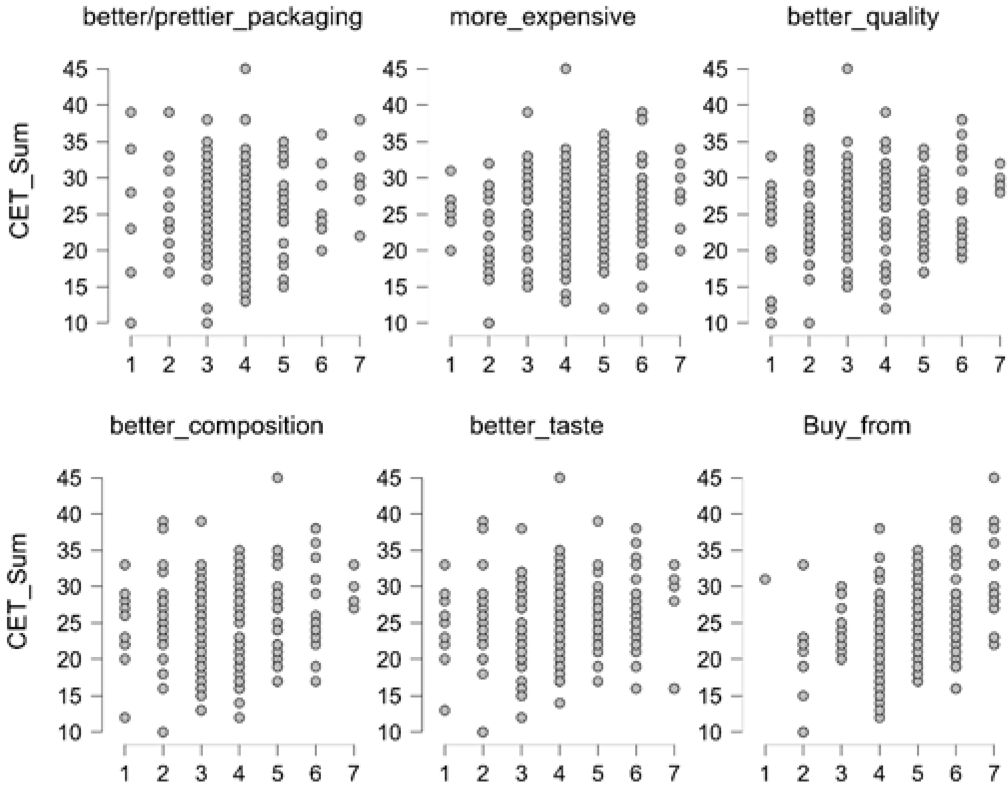
Source: own calculation in R.

Results from Tab. 3 point to the situation of the five investigated decision-making elements and within them the preference of domestic or foreign, as well as one behavioural element, which examines the degree of determination to buy domestic or foreign food products. The results from Table 3 indicate that foreign food products are perceived as products with better or prettier packaging (than domestic), better quality than domestic, and better composition and taste. In terms of perceived price, Slovak products are perceived as slightly more expensive.

**RQ3: How can the relationship between selected elements of perception and preferences of domestic or foreign attributes of food products and the degree of consumer ethnocentrism be understood?**

To investigate the relationship between the CET score and individual components, we first of all used graphic visualisation with the help of a scatter plot (Graph 1).

**Graph 1** Scatter plot




Source: own processing in R.

However, it must be noted that due to the nature of the examined properties of food products, the graphic output (Graph 1) is distorted. Therefore, in the paper we use the quantification of the relationship with the help of Spearman's rho. We also verified the existence of the relationship using inductive statistics.

The results show that there is no significant connection between the level of consumer ethnocentrism and the perceived packaging of products in the context of domestic or foreign ($r_s$ = 0.095; p-value 0.101); between the degree of consumer ethnocentrism and perceived better composition in the context of preference for domestic or foreign ($r_s$ =0.113; p-value = 0.051); nor between the degree of consumer ethnocentrism and the perceived better taste of food products at home or abroad ($r_s$ = 0.098; p-value = 0.09).

These results are not surprising. It is necessary to realize that consumer ethnocentrism represents a concept that is related to the preference for domestic production, but not in the context of product properties, but in the context of the prosperity of the home country. It is therefore logical that the effect of consumer ethnocentrism does not have a significant influence on the perceived properties of food products. The influence of these characteristics could be called the country of origin effect.

The connection between consumer ethnocentrism and the perceived price of products ($r_s$ = 0.143; p-value = 0.013) indicates a low positive relationship, which can be expected in populations. In other words, there are certain tendencies in that consumers with a higher degree of ethnocentric tendencies perceive the prices of Slovak products as higher. The connection between consumer ethnocentrism and perceived product quality (rs = 0.128; p-value = 0.026) indicates a weak positive relationship. In other words, consumers with a higher degree of ethnocentric tendencies tend to perceive domestic products as higher quality. These results confirm the study by Čvirik (2023), when it was shown that the perceived price and quality are to a certain extent influenced by the degree of consumer ethnocentrism, but only in the home country (the effect of consumer ethnocentrism on the perceived price and quality of foreign products could not be demonstrated).

In the paper, we also examine one behavioral component of attitudes towards domestic or foreign food product. This is the willingness to buy products from home or foreign country. In this context, we observed a weak positive dependence, which can also be expected in populations ($r_s = 0.273$; p-value = $1.461\times10^{-6}$). It can therefore be concluded that consumers with a higher degree of consumer ethnocentrism will tend to buy products from their home country rather than foreign ones. To estimate the relationship in the populations, we used confidence intervals, which we calculated using the bootstrap replicates method (specifically, 1000 bootstraps). The results indicate an estimated interval (95%CI) of the Spearman correlation coefficient from 0.155 to 0.383.

## Conclusion

The presented article sets a threefold goal, namely: 1) researching the current state of consumer ethnocentrism in the cohort of young Slovaks; 2) researching the current state of the perceived preference of Slovaks or of foreign products in the youth cohort; and 3) investigating the relationship between elements of country of origin effects on food products and the level of consumer ethnocentrism. This goal can be considered fulfilled.

First of all, we identified the level of consumer ethnocentrism in the studied cohort, which can be interpreted as below average to average. The examination of preferences within Slovak products points to certain differences. From the point of view of perception, it can be stated that some factors in consumer decision-making point to a preference for a domestic and some for a foreign food product. The results also indicate that there is only some connection between the level of consumer ethnocentrism and the factors of consumer behaviour when choosing food products. It is mainly about price and quality; while this relationship can be considered weak, it also exists in populations. We have also shown that consumers with a higher level of consumer ethnocentrism tend to buy more domestic products.

The results fill a theoretical gap in academic knowledge. They also bring knowledge that can be applied in marketing practice, for example, when preparing campaigns focused on domestic production. From the point of view of foreign companies, consumer ethnocentrism represents a barrier, and therefore the results represent an important source of information for both national and international marketing.

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# The importance and effectiveness of audio and visual aspects of brands in strategic management[1]

Marián Čvirik [2] – Zuzana Kukučková[3]

***Abstract***

*The aim of this paper is to identify and analyse the cognitive and affective reactions of consumers in relation to audio-visual elements of selected brands. In the first chapter, we theoretically explained the concepts of audio and visual branding and their basic elements. Subsequently, we also characterized the cognitive affective model of consumer behaviour. The second chapter was devoted to the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey. We visualized the results on a so-called position map, which allowed us to identify the relationship between the audio-visual elements and the surveyed sample to the brands.*

***Key words***

*branding, audio, visual, brand, cognitive and affective aspect*

**JEL Classification: M31, D91.**

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## Introduction

More companies realise that sound is one of the main strategies by which they can strengthen their brand identity and image. Various audio expressions, such as jingles, voice, and music, bring opportunities to create a customer experience and are used, for example, to create brand and product advertising or to reinforce a chosen theme. (Hultén et al., 2009)

Audio branding, also known as sonic branding, represents the strategic use of sound as a key part of brand identity. It's not just a simple soundtrack; it's a complex set of rhythms, tones, songs, and voices. Successful audio branding uses combinations of audio elements to attract attention, thereby offering the brand opportunities to build relationships and connections through the power of sound. In today's saturated world, it's important for a brand to stand out, and music is one of the most effective ways to reach existing and potential customers. The right choice of music has the ability to strengthen the message that the brand communicates to us. (Wix Blog, 2022). Melodies, rhythm, tempo of music, dynamics, singing, and colour of the voice—all this has a great use in audio branding in the creation of an audio branding strategy.

"Sight is considered the strongest of all five senses, as up to 80% of information is obtained through it. The connection between the brain and the eyes is indeed very fast. Allegedly, only 45 milliseconds are enough for people to identify a given object by sight." (Pollák, Fašianková, 2017). As in creating interpersonal relationships, a great first impression

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[2] Dipl. Ing. Marián Čvirik, PhD., University of Economics, Faculty of Commerce, Department of Marketing, Dolnozemská cesta 1, 852 35 Bratislava, email: marian.cvirik@euba.sk.

[3] Bc. Zuzana Kukučková, University of Economics, Faculty of Commerce, Department of Marketing, Dolnozemská cesta 1, 852 35 Bratislava.

is important in creating relationships between a consumer and a brand, which is key to the consumer's next decision to find out more about the brand.

For marketers, visual marketing can be crucial, as consumers encounter many explicit advertisements on various platforms in their daily lives. Consumer responses are influenced by the visual context in which products and advertisements are presented. (Wedel, Pieters, 2008). Within the framework of practice, elements of visual branding can include more or less everything that the consumer sees and that can lead to a potential purchase and, subsequently, his loyalty to the brand.

When it comes to brand perception, we can say that sight and hearing are the most influential senses with which we can achieve the desired effect. Visual elements such as logos, colours, packaging, or spaces play a key role in evoking emotional reactions. Similarly, auditory stimuli, including jingles, sound logos, or music in the background of the space, can evoke specific feelings and associations with the brand, which also increases brand recognition and memorability.

The main goal of the work was to investigate the audiovisual elements of selected brands from the cognitive and affective points of view of the respondents.

Various research on sensory marketing has shown that consumers react to sensory marketing practices in two ways (Čvirik-Krošláková, 2022):

- Cognitive,
- Emotional.

Cognitive model

Consumers use their senses to form a first impression of a product or brand. This model mainly affects their perception, attitudes, and evaluation of quality. For example, if a customer enters a restaurant with a pleasant interior, he may develop a positive attitude towards restaurants and, at the same time, perceive the food to be of higher quality. However, to a certain extent, cognitive behavior is also taken as superficial, and consumers can also be influenced by their own negative experiences or someone else's negative experiences, which are often not directly related to the brand or the product. (Cousins, 2018)

Affective model

Emotions have the ability to help brands build a relationship with customers that can lead to repeat purchases and loyalty. In the example of a restaurant, sensory marketing can be used to induce a feeling of comfort and satisfaction, for example by creating a pleasant atmosphere and smell, using appropriate images and sound, or creating good personal relationships with customers. (Erenkol, 2015)

## 1 Methodology

The main goal of the paper is the investigation and analysis of the cognitive and affective aspects of consumers attitudes towards audiovisual elements of selected brands.

The first criterion for choosing brands was their categorization into three specific areas. The first area consisted of brands belonging to world film studios, namely Walt Disney and Sony Pictures. The second area was automobiles, where we chose the brands BMW and Hyundai, and the third area falls into technology, where we chose the brands Intel and Samsung. Another key factor in the selection of brands was the fact that each one has a characteristic visual or sound element, which is an important part of their strategy in building the brand and their identity. In our work, we made sure that the selected brands were undisputedly known to the general public and that their advertising activities occurred on various communication channels, such as television, radio, websites, social networks, and other forms of online and offline communication.

The National Institute of Education and Youth considers a young person to be "every person who has reached the age of 30 at most" (NIVAM, 2022). Based on this fact, we cleaned the given sample. After taking into account the age category, which in our case are young people between the ages of 15 and 30, our sample was narrowed down to 205 participants. However, it is important to note that the results are based on the subjective answers of the respondents, so we cannot consider the studied sample to be completely representative.

From the demographic information, we first ascertained the gender of the respondents. The representation of female participants was significantly higher. A total of 123 women and 82 men took part in the survey. This fact can also be supported by the fact that participation in the online questionnaire survey is higher among women than among men. Several studies have shown that women are more likely to answer and participate in online or postal surveys than men. (Becker, 2017).

Another important aspect for us was to find out the age of the respondents. As we mentioned earlier in the chapter, in order to focus on the relevant target segment, we narrowed the number of total respondents in the survey to respondents in the age category from 15 to 30 years (median 21; modus 18).

## 2 Results and discussion

As we already mentioned in the theoretical part of the work, consumers react to sensory marketing tactics in several ways, cognitively and affectively. The cognitive mode of brand perception indicates how people generally perceive brand elements in terms of conscious knowledge, and the affective mode in terms of emotions. We elaborated on the cognitive attitude through questions from the questionnaire survey, which dealt with the degree of certainty of knowledge of the brand, and we obtained the affective attitude of the respondents from questions that were formulated to determine the degree of brand appeal, in other words, from the emotional reactions of the examined sample. Subsequently, we averaged the results from the given questions. We have shown the average results in the following table 3

**Table 3** Average results of audio and visual samples of selected brands

| Ukážka | Kognitívny aspekt | Afektívny aspekt |
|---|---|---|
| Disney_A | 1.8 | 1.96 |
| Disney_V | 1.43 | 2.3 |

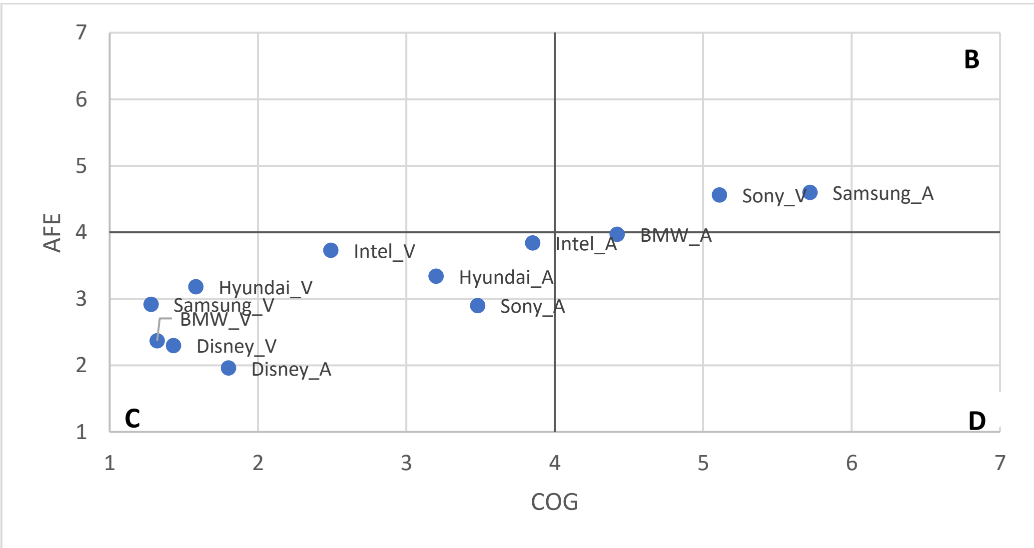
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| BMW_A | 4.42 | 3.97 |
| BMW_V | 1.32 | 2.37 |
| Intel_A | 3.85 | 3.84 |
| Intel_V | 2.49 | 3.73 |
| Hyundai_A | 3.2 | 3.34 |
| Hyundai_V | 1.58 | 3.18 |
| Samsung_A | 5.72 | 4.6 |
| Samsung_V | 1.28 | 2.92 |
| Sony_A | 3.48 | 2.9 |
| Sony_V | 5.11 | 4.56 |

Note: A-audio. V-visual.

Source: Own processing.

To solve the research questions we set, we developed the so-called positional map, which provides an overview of respondents' attitudes towards the given brands. For a better interpretation and visualization of the given data, we created a dot chart using MS Excel in which the positional map is displayed. This view is shown in chart 1.

**Chart 1** Positional map of audiovisual elements




Note: AFE – affective aspect, COG – cognitive aspect.
Source: Own processing.

The positional map consists of two axes: the x-axis (cognitive aspect) and the y-axis (affective aspect). On the x-axis are values from 1 to 7, where 1 means that the respondent definitely knows the sample, while a value of 7 indicates the opposite, thus saying that the respondent definitely does not know the sample. The y-axis also contains values from 1 to

7, with 1 indicating that he likes the sample very much and 7 indicating that he does not like the sample at all. The positional map is evenly divided into four quadrants, which we have labeled A, B, C, and D, each of which represents a different piece of information. Quadrant A contains those examples that the respondents know, but at the same time they do not like the examples. Quadrant B shows examples that respondents do not know and do not like. Samples that respondents know and like are located in quadrant C, and quadrant D shows samples that respondents do not know but like. The points on the map represent the audio (A) and visual (V) elements of the signs. Due to the fact that there is a thematic connection between the research questions, we decided to answer them simultaneously while analysing each brand individually.

**Walt Disney Pictures**

As shown in the graph, the Walt Disney Pictures brand sound sample is located in quadrant C, which means that the research sample knows and can identify the sound sample and at the same time finds its wording to be engaging. The average of the results from the survey questions regarding the detection of the cognitive component is 1.8, and the affective component is 1.96. The visual representation of the brand is also equally located in quadrant C, with average results of 1.43 (cognitive view) and 2.3 (affective view). Based on the given facts, we can definitely say that the Walt Disney Pictures brand has strong audio and visual branding. As we have already discussed in the individual graph analyses, regarding both displays of the brand, Walt Disney Pictures is an iconic brand that respondents associate with positive emotions and stories, evoking nostalgic memories of childhood. Audio and visual branding are a big part of the brand's identity and continue to support the building of this company's prosperity.

**BMW**

Based on the data that came to us, the audio and visual preview of the BMW brand are located in two different quadrants. The audio sample with average values of 4.42 (cognitive aspect) and 3.97 (affective aspect) is located right in quadrant D, together with the border with quadrant B. Even though the point is already at neutral values, we can still say that the respondents don't know the sample, but they like it more than they don't like it. On the other hand, the visual logo of the company, with an average of 1.32 (cognitive aspect) and 2.37 (affective aspect), is located in quadrant C. In accordance with the results, we can deduce that the studied sample has a stronger relationship with the visual logo of the brand. Possible reasons for not recognizing the audio preview could be that audio is used less often than visuals as part of branding. Also, the sound of the engine included in the wording may not be clearly recognizable to the general public, as it is considered an element that is often part of other similar brands. The sound expression is therefore not as consistent and does not increase the value of the brand, as the combined brand logo perfectly fulfills this task.

**Intel**

The audio and visual samples are also both displayed in quadrant C. The average of the cognition and emotional reaction scores of the audio sample are similar, with values of 3.85 and 3.84. The position on the map falls in quadrant C, which means that the sample is recognisable and attractive to the respondent, but they are located close to the centre point on the position map. On the other hand, respondents' cognitive view of the logo visual display with a value of 2.49 is slightly better than their affective view with a value of 3.73. Regarding the audio and visual branding of the Intel brand, the respondents were more neutral.

### Hyundai

The audio and visual demos of this brand are also in quadrant C. The audio demo shows average values of cognition (3.2) and emotional response (3.34). Based on this point of view, we can say that the cognitive and active view of respondents on the sample is rather milder, since the given averaged values on the positional map are located rather near the centre point on the map, expressing a neutral approach. Compared to the car brand BMW, however, the sample is more recognisable, and the wording is also evaluated more positively. We can believe that the sound seems more modern and original, considering that the sound of the engine is not included in its melody, which may also be a factor in why this particular sound interpretation of the Hyundai brand can appeal to a wider audience. As for the visual or design side of the example—the company logo—it is also in quadrant C in the preferences, even though the affective view is closer to the centre point. The visual sample of the Hyundai brand with averages of 1.58 (cognitive view) and 3.18 (affective view) only indicates that the logo is easily identifiable, even if the design is only mildly liked by the respondents.

### Samsung

Based on the averaged results of the perception of the Samsung audio sample, we know that the sample is located in quadrant B and thus has a low cognitive (5.72) and affective score (4.6). This fact means that Samsung's audio jingle is not recognisable, and the respondents did not like it either. The brand is known for its frequent innovations, which include changes to the brand's sound identifier. Based on the current information available on the official website of the company, the brand has up to 11 versions of audio jingles. This fact can be confusing for respondents. On the contrary, the visual representation of the Samsung brand is located in quadrant C, while the cognitive aspect (1.28) indicates that the visual logo is easier to identify and the emotional bond of the redpondnets is also stronger, which may be the result of more stable and less frequent changes compared to the audio logo. The mean value of the affective aspect of Samsung's visual preview is 1.28.

### Sony Pictures

Based on the averaged results of the conscious and emotional perception of the Sony Pictures brand, we can say that the samples are located in two opposite quadrants, specifically the audio sample in quadrant C and the visual sample in quadrant B. In the opening audio intro of the company, the respondents rather know what he is talking about (average 3.48). From the emotional side, the examined sample evaluated the wording of the sample also positively, with an average value of 2.9. On the other hand, the visualisation of the logo was not so successful, and with its average, it is located in quadrant B. The combined company logo had low recognition among the respondents, and the design was also not very attractive. When characterizing the object of the audio and visual branding of the brand, Sony has not publicly commented on the identity of its brand, which it admits. In this view, the second film company we chose is completely different, having a precisely defined role and what it wants to give to its customers. It has a better definition of not only identity but also the meaning behind creating an audio and visual branding strategy. As we already wrote in the description of the object in the Sony Pictures subsection, the company has not officially published any characteristics of the brand identity in relation to audiovisual branding. On the contrary, the film production company Walt Disney Pictures has a clearly defined mission and brand identity, which are also reflected in the audiovisual expression of the brand.

## Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to investigate and analyze selected brands from the point of view of the use of audiovisual elements.

The first part of the work was focused on secondary research, where we got acquainted with key terms such as audio-visual elements or cognitive and affective models of consumer behaviour. It was important to follow this procedure because the primary research was based on it.

Through a questionnaire survey, we examined the cognitive and affective views of the examined sample on the audio-visual elements of the selected brands. Subsequently, we recorded the audio and visual samples of each brand separately on the position map and gradually analysed them according to their position in the quadrants.

Based on the given results, we can conclude that the cognitive and affective aspects play a key role in creating the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of customers towards the brand. In order for a brand to reach its maximum potential in this area, it is necessary to create complex audio-visual experiences for a better chance of retaining the attention of consumers and building a loyal customer base.

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# Effective use of the GSP+ preferences system in increasing the export potential of Uzbekistan

Elshod Khojiev[1] – Jurabek Shakarov[2]

**Abstract**

*The article reveals ways to increase the type and volume of products exported to EU countries within the framework of the "GSP+" system of preferences, to increase the export potential of local products, to adapt products to international requirements and norms, and to implement them. The role and importance of the effective use of the "GSP+" system of benefits in export activities has been highlighted by the authors.*

**Key words**

*"GSP+" preferential system, export potential, local products, food and non-food products, export volume, international requirements.*

**JEL Classification:** *F13, L00, M16*

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## Introduction

Developing the national economy in Uzbekistan, ensuring its growth rate at the level of modern requirements, forming a competitive economy, taking local products to foreign markets and promoting the brand of Uzbek products on the world market, rapidly continuing reforms, raising them to a new modern level, and comprehensive socio-economic development of the regions are today's priorities. is one of the most urgent issues.

In the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 11, 2023 No. PF-158 on the strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030" "doubling export volume and its value to 45 billion dollars, to increase the number of export enterprises from 6.5 thousand to 15 thousand, to increase the volume of finished and semi-finished products in export by 3.3 times, to expand the export of finished and technological products to European countries within the framework of GSP+ and other systems, to increase the number of enterprises with international standards by 10 times and their number to 5 thousand delivery, organization of special economic zones with 50 prestigious brands of the world, exporters who bring national brands to foreign markets based on the idea of "New Uzbekistan - a country of competitive products" and other comprehensive supports are marked.

Also, on January 18, 2024, under the chairmanship of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, "Achieved tasks that should be implemented in export, investment and industry in 2024" the need to launch 309 large projects, which will enable the production of import-substituting and export-oriented products, to ensure quality guaranteed products delivery of 4 thousand to 7.5 thousand are highlighted.

[1] Elshod Khojiev, Associate Professor, PhD., Tashkent state university of economics, Faculty of Marketing and Logistics, Department Marketing, Islom Karimov 49, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, e-mail: e.xojiyev@tsue.uz

[2] Jurabek Shakarov, Vice director in Uzbek center for scientific testing and quality control, Bogishamol 210, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, e-mail: info@uztest.uz

For this reason, it is necessary to implement some of the tasks indicated above in this article, i.e., first of all, to produce local products based on international standard requirements, to ensure their competitiveness, to increase the level of recognition, and secondly, to comprehensively support and encourage exports, to ensure a stable increase in their volumes. ensuring success in export markets due to the diverse and unique environments in foreign markets is one of the urgent tasks.

## 1 Methodology

This scientific article was researched using general and special research methods. In particular, the methods of analysis-synthesis, induction and deduction, scientific comparison, statistical analysis, as well as expert evaluation were used during the preparation of the scientific article.

## 2 Result and discussion

As we know, on April 9, 2021, the European side adopted a regulatory document on granting Uzbekistan the status of a beneficiary country under the General System of Preferences ("GSP+"). Based on this normative document, the system of special preferences of the European Union for sustainable development and effective management ("GSP+") came into force for Uzbekistan from April 10, 2021.

Before receiving the status of a beneficiary country of the "GSP+" system, Uzbekistan used benefits within the framework of the General System of Preferences ("GSP"). Within the framework of these privileges, the country had the opportunity to export 3,000 goods without customs duties and 3,200 goods at reduced customs duty rates to the markets of EU member countries.

As part of the European Union's system of special preferences for sustainable development and effective management ("GSP+") provided to the republic, Uzbekistan had the opportunity to export more than 6,200 items of goods to the European market without customs duties.

In particular, a wide range of textile products, footwear, agricultural products, vehicles, mineral fertilizers, oil and chemical industry products, construction materials, ceramic and metal products, and technological equipment, which have the main export potential of the republic, are exempt from customs duty.

If we give clear examples, within the framework of the "GSP+" system, in contrast to the "GSP" system, apple and tomato juices - 13.3-25.5%, peaches and apricots - 14.1-16.5%, frozen vegetables (potatoes , olives, tomatoes, etc.) – 10.9%, vehicles for cargo transportation – 15.4%, offal products – 11.9%, canned vegetables – 14.1%, fish meat and fillets – 14.5 %, fruit juices - 14.5%, children's clothes - 8.4% and t-shirts - 9.6% customs duties were canceled. [9]

According to recent statictics which the President of Uzbekistan pointed out in his speech that 50 percent of the export falls on 4 markets - Russia, China, Kazakhstan and Turkey, and, since 20 types of products, which make up the main part of exports, remain dependent on only one market in the foreign export geography of Uzbekistan.

It should be noted that the use of benefits within the framework of the "GSP+" by manufacturers, trade unions and other enterpreneurs which deal with export operations will significantly increase their export potential to the member countries of the European Union while ensuring the competitiveness of their local products on the European markets.

Having analyzed the Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of The European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 732/2008, and Regulation (EU) 2023/2663 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences we are able to illustrate product sectors and number of products included in the list of GSP+ benefits which are manufactured in systematically deliver to foreign markets.

**Tab. 1** Analysis of product sectors under GSP+ benefits

| No. | Product sectors under GSP+ benefits | Number of products included in the list of GSP+ benefits |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Food and agriculture | 1 097 |
| 2 | Textile and light industry | 1 324 |
| 3 | Chemistry, oil and gas | 969 |
| 4 | Electrical engineering | 653 |
| 5 | Metallurgy | 467 |
| 6 | Leather industry | 105 |
| 7 | Mechanical engineering | 148 |
| 8 | Construction | 111 |
| 9 | Others* | 1 326 |
| | **Total:** | **6 200** |

* live animals, plants and their roots, jewelry, furniture, toys and other products.

Source: developed by the author (E.Khojiev)

As can be seen from the above table, there are 6,200 types, including food and agriculture - 1097 types, textile and light industry - 1324 types, chemical and oil and gas - 969 types, electrical engineering - 653 types, metallurgy - 467 types. leather industry - 105 types, machinery - 148 types, construction - 111 types, etc. - 1326 types of products can be exported to EU countries without customs duties.

As can be seen from the above table, there are 6,200 types, including food and agriculture - 1097 types, textile and light industry - 1324 types, chemical and oil and gas - 969 types, electrical engineering - 653 types, metallurgy - 467 types. leather industry - 105 types, machinery - 148 types, construction - 111 types, etc. - 1326 types of products can be exported to EU countries without customs duties.

We consider the analysis of exports to the European Union and other countries within the scope of GSP+ benefits in terms of the types of products produced in Uzbekistan (Table 2).

**Tab. 2** Analysis of products supplied to foreign markets within the framework of GSP+ during 2022

| No. | Name of Sectors | Number of products | Analysis of products destined for export to the European Union under GSP+ | | | Analysis of products destined for export to other countries on the scope GSP+ | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | product type | number of enterprises | export quantity (mln. doll.) | product type | number of enterprises | export quantity (mln. doll.) |
| 1 | Food and agriculture | 1 097 | 81 | 158 | 29,8 | 291 | 1 824 | 1 140,5 |
| 2 | Textile and light industry | 1 324 | 226 | 204 | 177,8 | 604 | 1 529 | 3 100,8 |
| 3 | Chemistry, oil and gas | 969 | 30 | 47 | 45,6 | 242 | 546 | 1 138,7 |
| 4 | Electrical engineering | 653 | 58 | 28 | 6,9 | 275 | 308 | 148,7 |
| 5 | Metallurgy | 467 | 61 | 45 | 33,0 | 218 | 428 | 1 179,0 |
| 6 | Leather industry | 105 | 6 | 6 | 0,59 | 64 | 213 | 59,4 |
| 7 | Mechanical engineering | 148 | 1 | 2 | 0,002 | 35 | 96 | 30,3 |
| 8 | Construction | 111 | 15 | 17 | 0,1 | 84 | 333 | 63,0 |
| 9 | Others* | 1 326 | 112 | 68 | 3,8 | 622 | 916 | 475,5 |
| | **Total:** | **6 200** | **590** | **575** | **297,6** | **2 435** | **6 193** | **7 335,9** |

Source: own processing based on data of Statistics Agency of Uzbekistan, 2022

In 2022, within the framework of GSP+ benefits, 590 types of products have been shipped to EU countries by the Republic of Uzbekistan, equivalent to 300 million US dollars. Also, 2,435 types of products were delivered to the countries that do not provide GSP+ benefits with a value equal to 7.3 billion US dollars, and 24 times more exports were made than to the countries that provide the benefits.

Even though more than 6 thousand products are manufactured in Uzbekistan it is obvious from the table 2 we only export almost 10 percent of total manufactured items to EU markets.

Through the table below, we will consider the export analysis of other countries that have established exports to the European Union based on the benefits of the GSP status.

**Table 3** Analysis of GSP beneficiaries with the largest share of EU imports

| No. | GSP beneficiary country | Imports from the European Union under the GSP (billion euros) | Total imports of the European Union (billion euros) | GSP imports total % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bangladesh | 16,766 | 17,401 | 96,4 |
| 2 | India | 16,378 | 43,601 | 37,6 |
| 3 | Vietnam | 8,994 | 37,531 | 24,0 |
| 4 | Indonesia | 6,616 | 15,557 | 42,5 |
| 5 | Pakistan | 5,885 | 6,74 | 87,3 |
| 6 | Cambodia | 4,987 | 5,255 | 94,9 |
| 7 | Myanmar | 1,926 | 2,189 | 88,0 |
| 8 | Philippines | 1,915 | 7,49 | 25,6 |
| 9 | Sri Lanka | 1,365 | 2,755 | 49,5 |
| 10 | Mozambique | 1,219 | 1,84 | 66,3 |

Source: own processing based on data 11. The European Commission released its third biennial report on the Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP). (2020). 4.

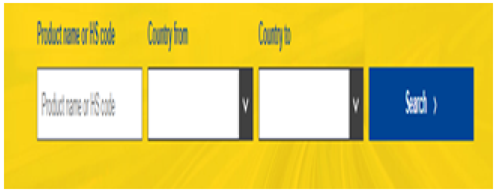
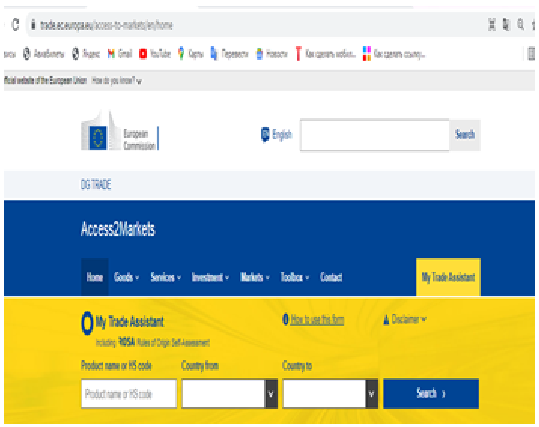
From the data of Table 3, it can be seen that Bangladesh and India from a number of countries with the GSP system of benefits delivered more than 16 billion Euro worth of products to the EU under these incentives. Also, the value of the products supplied by Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia to EU countries is 5-9 billion. The Philippines and Sri Lanka delivered products equal to 1-2 billion Euro to the markets of EU countries.

Figure 1 was developed by the author so that local business entities can get information about which products and the amount of customs duties are applied to the benefits within this system.

As you can see from this figure, the exporting organization goes to https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/home to get information about the GSP+ status of its product. From this link platform, customs tariff numbers (HS code) of the exported product or the name of the product, as well as the exporting country and one of the EU countries to which the product is sent, are selected and the "search" button is clicked.

**Figure 1** Chart for information on which products the GSP+ benefit is applied to and how many are exempted from customs duties

To determine which types of goods are covered by the GSP+, please refer to the following procedure

| Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|
| To find out which types of goods are covered by the GSP+, you should go to the link below. https://trade.Ec.Europa.Eu/access-to-markets/en/home |  | You will see a list of products like below. You can find out from it which products are covered by GSP+. |
|  | You should enter the HS code of the exported products or the name of the product, as well as the country of export and the country to be sent to the blank fields above, and press the SEARCH button. |  |







Source: own processing based on data of the official website: https://trade.Ec.Europa.Eu/access-to-markets/en/home

As a result, it is possible to see the origin of the information on customs duties for products imported from third countries and "0" customs duty for countries that have obtained the "GSP+".

Figure 1 was developed by the author so that local business entities can get information about which products and the amount of customs duties are applied to the benefits within this system.

As you can see from this figure, the exporting organization goes to https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/home to get information about the GSP+ status of its product. From this link platform, customs tariff numbers (HS code) of the exported product or the name of the product, as well as the exporting country and one of the EU countries to which the product is sent, are selected and the "search" button is clicked. As a result, it is possible to see the origin of the information on customs duties for products imported from third countries and "0" customs duty for countries that have obtained the "GSP+".

## Conclusion

According to the results of the research and analysis, we believe that it is necessary to further develop marketing research in order to diversify the finished local products delivered from Uzbekistan to the European Union market. After Uzbekistan acquires the right to GSP+, it will be appropriate to conduct diplomatic negotiations on the establishment of "green corridors" at the borders of these countries in order to significantly increase the volume of agricultural products exports to the EU countries.

Establishing an agreement on the bilateral recognition of national certificates with the countries in Europe with the largest export share.

Implementing standards of management systems, Global GAP, Oeko Tex 100, CE marking and others which open a way for the markets of EU.

Establishing the activity of centers that include services specialized in supplying the results of marketing research to the requirements of food, fruit and vegetable and industrial products in the markets of importing countries, the world market situation of products and the results of marketing research.

Taking measures to hold exhibitions and fairs in foreign markets considered promising for products within the scope of GSP+ benefits.

Further improvement of the work of introducing international standards and technical regulations to the activities of producers of products within the framework of GSP+ privileges by studying advanced foreign experience.

We believe that it is necessary to find promising buyers through the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad with farmers and peasant farms and other manufacturing enterprises that grow and process products with international quality and safety certificates.

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# Možnosti cenotvorby a kooperácie značky a obsahového tvorcu z UGC perspektívy[1]

Monika Stanková – Mária Hasprová – Martin Kuchta[2]

## *Possibilities of pricing and cooperation between the brand and the content creator from a UGC perspective*

### *Abstract*

*The main goal of the article is the identification, summarization and analysis of current possibilities for cooperation and pricing of UGC content and the proposal of a taxonomy in the subject area. In order to effectively fulfil the identified goal, a search was carried out of domestic and foreign sources of authors relevant to the investigated issue. In order to achieve the main goal, empirical research was carried out in the form of identification and detailed analysis of nine Internet tools that digitize and platformism the management of UGC content. The analysis will primarily focus on identifying the possibilities of cooperation between brands and content creators, on the forms of created content, on the placement of created content, on the forms of remuneration of content creators and on pricing in the case of paid collaborations. The findings and recommendations from the article are the basis for better decision-making processes in the field of digital marketing and UGC content management.*

### *Key words*

*internet content, platformization, social networks, UGC.*

**JEL Classification: M31**

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## Úvod

Internet sa od svojho vzniku neustále vyvíja a s neustálym príchodom nových technológií diverzifikuje svoje platformy stále o nové riešenia. Od pôvodných textových stránok sa postupne vyvinuli interaktívne platformy, medzi ktoré možno zaradiť sociálne siete, internetové katalógy, internetové porovnávače, internetové vyhľadávače, a mnoho ďalších, ktoré zmenili spôsob, akým ľudia komunikujú, zdieľajú informácie a vyhľadávajú a konzumujú obsah na internete. Platformizácia internetových služieb a vznik stále nových platforiem sa stal rozhodujúcim faktorom pre exponenciálny nárast penetrácie internetu po celom svete. V súčasnej dobe sa internet pravidelne využíva na vzdelávanie, obchodovanie a vzájomnú interakciu. Internet, jeho subkategórie a vzniknuté platformy sa stali neoddeliteľnou súčasťou osobných aj pracovných životov väčšiny globálnej populácie.

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[2] Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave, Obchodná fakulta, Katedra marketingu, Bratislava, Slovensko, monika.stankova@euba.sk, maria.hasprova@euba.sk, martin.kuchta@euba.sk.

Okrem podpory vzájomnej interakcie a digitalizácie ďalších bežných aktivít ľudí internet zásadne ovplyvnil aj formy a formáty obsahu. Potreba digitalizácie rozšírila možnosti vytvárania, uverejňovania, zdieľania a šírenia obsahu naprieč dostupnými internetovými kanálmi. Internet rozšíril formy obsahu o nové interaktívne formáty, ktoré efektívne rozširujú tradičné formy médií, za ktoré možno označiť text, audio, statické obrázky a video. Za nové formy médií, ktorých vznik umožnil internet možno označiť emotikony, interaktívne formáty, ktoré kombinujú text, audio, obrázky alebo video, interaktívne infografiky, podcasty, livestream, a pod.. Najnovšie trendy vďaka digitalizácii obsahu pracujú aj s rozšírenou a virtuálnou realitou, ktoré dokážu dopĺňať informácie do existujúcej reality alebo vytvárať úplne novú (Kuchta et al., 2023).

Internet a jeho digitálne platformy významne menia obsahové preferencie internetových používateľov a vyvíjajú tlak na značky, aby produkovaný a publikovaný obsah týmto preferenciám prispôsobovali. Tieto preferencie sú často vytvárané vývojom a implementáciou nových funkcionalít na sociálnych sieťach. Príkladom môžu byť funkcionality ako stories, ktoré priniesli rýchly po 24 hodinách miznúci obsah, alebo reels, ktoré umožňujú na vybrané sociálne siete pridávať krátke videá, ktoré sú obohatené o ďalšie vizuálne alebo zvukové efekty (Kuchta & Stankova, 2019). Miznúci a rýchly obsah núti značky, ktoré sociálne siete využívajú pre distribúciu svojho obsahu pridávať neustále nový a ideálne autentický obsah, ktorý korešponduje s značkou a nasleduje obsahové trendy sociálnej siete, na ktorej je uverejňovaný.

Obsah generovaný používateľmi (z anglického User Generated Content, ďalej označovaný len ako UGC) predstavuje originálny obsah špecifický pre značku, ktorý vytvorili zákazníci a zverejnili ho na sociálnych sieťach alebo iných kanáloch. Má mnoho foriem vrátane obrázkov, videí, recenzií a pod. (Oladipo, 2022). Keď spotrebitelia píšu o značke na sociálnych sieťach, môžu ovplyvniť nákupné rozhodnutia svojich sledovateľov. 85 % ľudí tvrdí, že UGC má väčší vplyv na ich nákupné rozhodovanie ako obsah vytvorený priamo značkami (Morrison, 2016). Internetové platformy sa čoraz viac sústreďujú na potenciál tvorby obsahu používateľmi a na hodnotu UGC obsahu (Zaidi, 2024). V princípe je pre väčšinu sociálnych sietí UGC hlavným a neoddeliteľným zdrojom obsahu. Súčasné trendy odhaľujú v UGC obsahu aj komerčnú hodnotu a zatraktívňujú tento typ obsahu aj v perspektíve firiem, ktoré sú nútené vytvárať vysokú kvantitu autentického obsahu, aby uživili trend rýchleho obsahu na sociálnych sieťach (Jingdong & Mo, 2017). UGC obsah má potenciál vytvoriť informačnú hodnotu, spokojnosť internetových používateľov a ovplyvňovať budúci rozhodovací nákupný proces (Jin & Phua, 2016). Najpopulárnejšie spracovanie UGC obsahu má formu videa, ktoré je uverejňované na sociálnych sieťach ako Youtube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok a im podobné (Liu et al., 2012).

UGC obsah má pre firmu a jej značky hneď niekoľko pridaných hodnôt, ktorými sú:

– funkčná hodnota – umožňuje značkám vytvárať autentickú a dôveryhodnú komunikáciu so zákazníkmi, využívajúcu diverzitu prostredníctvom autentického prostredia obsahu a rôznych tvorcov,

– emocionálna hodnota – vytvára emocionálnu väzbu medzi zákazníkmi a značkou prostredníctvom zrkadlenia osobných skúseností s používaním produktu vyobrazenom v UGC obsahu,

– sociálna hodnota – autentickosť a diverzita obsahu podporuje interakciu používateľov s obsahom značky (Kim et al., 2012).

Na získavanie UGC obsahu je obsahových tvorcov nevyhnutné motivovať. Medzi najsilnejšie motívy UGC tvorby patria:

– sebarealizácia – umožňuje jednotlivcom vyjadriť svoju kreativitu, zdieľať svoje záujmy a vášne, a byť uznaní alebo ocenení inými,

– sebavyjadrenie – umožňuje jednotlivcom komunikovať svoju identitu, názory, emócie a príbehy s ostatnými,

– odmena – motivuje tvorcov generovať obsah za vidinou odmeny, ktorá môže mať formu finančnú alebo barterovú (Park & Lee, 2021).

Použitie UGC prináša značkám množstvo výhod, avšak je spojené aj s niekoľkými významnými nevýhodami.

– Medzi najväčšie výhody UGC obsahu možno zaradiť dôveryhodnosť a autenticitu, budovanie eWOM, zvýšenie interakcií a angažovanosti so značkou, nízke alebo úplne absentujúce náklady potrebné na produkciu takéhoto obsahu, blahodárny vplyv na indexáciu vo výsledkoch vyhľadávania v internetových vyhľadávačoch, potenciál vytvorenia komunity, zvyšovanie dosahu príspevkov na sociálnych sieťach a pod. (Duke, 2023).

– Medzi najväčšie nevýhody UGC obsahu možno zaradiť negatívny obsah, ktorý môže poškodiť reputáciu firmy a jej produktov (Qi et al., 2014). Ďalšími negatívami môžu byť nevhodne spracovaný obsah používateľmi, nekorešpondencia obsahu s hodnotami firmy, neprofesionálne spracovaný obsah, vyobrazenie značky v nevhodnom prostredí a pod. (Fedorenko, 2023).

UGC prináša nesporné výhody pre značky a pôsobí blahodárne aj na ďalšie celospoločenské a hospodárske aspekty, avšak je nevyhnutné ustriehnuť právne, morálne a etické aspekty produkcie, publikovania a distribúcie takéhoto obsahu (Huang & Chen, 2024). V súčasnej dobe dochádza k platfomizácii UGC obsahu. UGC paltformy majú za úlohu vytvoriť nástroj na manažment vytvárania dopytu po UGC obsahu a nástroj pre uspokojovanie tohto dopytu (Schirmer, 2023).

# 1 Metodika a metodológia

Hlavným cieľom článku je identifikácia, sumarizácia a analýza súčasných možností kooperácie a cenotvorby UGC obsahu a návrh taxonómie v predmetnej oblasti.

Pre efektívne dosiahnutie hlavného cieľa článku bol realizovaný rešerš teoretických domácich a zahraničných zdrojov relevantných autorov dostupných v knižných, časopiseckých, zborníkových a internetových zdrojoch. Rešerš teoretických zdrojov vytvoril dostatočnú poznatkovú bázu pre efektívnu identifikáciu hlavného cieľa článku a pre identifikáciu výskumných metód, ktoré naplnili identifikovaný hlavný cieľ článku.

V empirickom výskume boli identifikované súčasné platformy digitalizujúce manažment UGC obsahu z perspektívny značky a tvorcu. Medzi identifikované platformy patria:

- Trend.io,
- Hashtagpaid,
- Brandmeetcreators,
- Aspire.io,
- InsenseCollabstr,
- Popular Pays,

- Join Brands,
- Cohely,
- Upwork / Fiverr.

Uvedených deväť platforiem bolo navštívených a analyzovaných kolektívom autorov článku. Počas analýzy boli v tabuľkovom procesore MS Excel zaznamenané nasledujúce informácie:

- forma obsahu,
- umiestnenie obsahu,
- forma odmeny a
- cenotvorba kooperácie značky a obsahového tvorcu.

Zaznamenané dáta a ich spracovanie v logickej postupnosti vytvára taxonómiu predmetnej oblasti a predmetných skúmaných aspektov, ktorá je neskôr v záveroch článku sumarizovaná. Zistenia vyskúmané v tomto článku zároveň poskytli dostatočnú poznatkovú bázu pre formuláciu záverečných odporúčaní využiteľnú pre poskytovateľov a prevádzkovateľov UGC platforiem, značky využívajúce UGC obsah a pre tvorcov obsahu.

## 2 Výsledky a diskusia

UGC sa stáva stále dôležitejším aspektom digitálno-marketingových stratégií firiem. V rámci tejto kategórie obsahu sú využívané rôzne formy obsahu, ktoré sú zamerané na prezentáciu značiek a ich produktov, a ktoré umožňujú značkám využívať autentický obsah z používania ich produktov. Autentickosť vytvoreného a zdieľaného obsahu umožňuje zvyšovať angažovanosť používateľov a budovať autentickejšie a trvácnejšie vzťahy. Vytvára sa tak priestor pre interakciu, identifikáciu s produktom a kultiváciu komunity značky. Medzi najčastejšie využívané formy obsahu v rámci UGC tvorby patria:

- portrétové fotografie produktu – predstavujú fotografie zamerané na konkrétne detaily a vlastnosti produktu, pričom pôsobia esteticky a príťažlivo. Tento typ obsahu je spravidla statický a zahŕňa vyobrazenie produktu z rôznych uhlov a v rôznych prostrediach. Dôraz je kladený na konkrétne vlastnosti a funkcie produktu, ktorý je predmetom fotografie.

- lifestyle fotografie produktu – zobrazujú produkt reálnom živote v reálnom použití. Cieľom tohto typu fotografie je ukázať výhody pravidelného použitia produktu v kontexte reálneho sveta. Tento typ fotografie spravidla zachytáva ľudí pri použití produktu, čím sa vytvára emocionálna väzba so zákazníkmi. Tento typ fotografie podporuje predstavivosť zákazníka, ktorý si dokáže zosobniť použitie produktu na vlastných aktivitách a podľa vlastných potrieb.

- unboxing videá – predstavujú videá, ktoré zachytávajú proces vybaľovania nového zakúpeného alebo obdržaného produktu. V týchto videách spravidla účinkuje anonymná alebo priznaná osoba, ktorá produkt rozbaľuje a ukazuje jeho rôzne časti a funkcie. Súčasťou unboxing videí je aj poskytnutie prvotných dojmov a recenzií. Cieľom týchto videí je zdieľať prvotné zážitky s produktom a poskytnúť divákom informácie, ktoré môžu ovplyvniť ich nákupné rozhodnutie.

- video recenzie produktov – predstavujú audiovizuálnu formu prezentácie produktu, v ktorých tvorca poskytuje hodnotenie predstaveného produktu. Cieľom týchto videí je informovať o vlastnostiach, výhodách a nevýhodách produktu a o pocitoch z jeho používania. Video recenzie poskytujú divákom často subjektívnu informáciu z používania produktu a ovplyvňujú tak nákupné rozhodovanie ďalších potenciálnych zákazníkov.

- používanie produktu – ide prevažne o videá, ktoré zobrazujú praktické využitie produktu v reálnom prostredí. Tieto videá demonštrujú funkcionality a vlastnosti produktu prostredníctvom praktického použitia. Cieľom je poskytnúť divákom informáciu, ako produkt funguje v praxi.

- moodové videá – tieto videá sa zameriavajú na vytvorenie atmosféry alebo nálady vyvolenej použitím produktu produktu alebo korešpondujúcej so značkou produktu. Tieto videá zdôrazňujú emócie, estetiku a životný štýl, ktorý je spojený s produktom, a môžu obsahovať scény z rôznych situácií, ktoré zobrazujú jeho použitie. Moodové videá majú potenciál vytvoriť emocionálnu väzbu medzi produktom a divákom a vytvoriť tak potrebu produkt vlastniť.

Portrétové fotografie produktu, lifestyle fotografie, unboxing videá, video recenzie, videá z používania produktu a moodové videá predstavujú široké spektrum možností, ktoré značka môže využívať ako obsah na rôznych digitálnych platformách. Najčastejšie využívané platformy, na ktorých je UGC obsah publikovaný a zdieľaný sú:

- Webstránka – použitie UGC obsahu na webstránke má potenciál zvyšovať dôveryhodnosť značky a jej produktov, interakciu so zákazníkmi a zlepšenie SEO. UGC obsah môže byť použité na recenzovanie produktov, foto alebo video galérie produktové galérie, obrázkové promo boxy a mnoho ďalšieho.

- Sociálne siete – profily značiek na sociálny sieťach sú v súčasnej dobe presýtené profesionálnym generickým obsahom. Súčasné trendy konzumácie obsahu na sociálnych sieťach a nové funkcionality sociálnych sietí navyše tlačia značky do každodenného generovania nového obsahu, ktorý uživí miznúce príspevky vo forme stories alebo krátke videá v forme reels. Tlak sociálnych sietí na vysokú kvantitu obsahu a preferencie používateľov po autentickom obsahu vytvárajú priestor pre UGC tvorcov, ktorých obsahom dokážu značky živiť nasledujúce formy obsahu:

  - Facebook posty – ide o príspevok alebo zverejnenie obsahu na sociálnej platforme Facebook, ktorý môže obsahovať text, obrázky, videá alebo odkazy a slúži na zdieľanie informácií, komunikáciu s publikom a interakciu so sledujúcimi.

  - Facebook stories – ide o krátky video alebo obrázkový obsah, ktorý je zverejnený 24 hodín, a ktorý je určený pre zdieľanie aktuálnych informácií alebo aktivít používateľov.

  - Instagram posty – predstavujú fotografie alebo videá doplnené o textový popis alebo komentár, ktoré sú na profile značky dostupné permanentne až do prípadného zmazania ich tvorcom.

  - Instagram stories – podobne ako na Facebooku aj na Instagrame predstavujú stories krátky multimediálny obsah, ktorý môže obsahovať fotografie, videá alebo text zverejnený po dobu 24 hodín. Je určený pre zdieľanie aktuálnych informácií alebo aktuálne vykonávaných aktivít.

  - Instagram reels – ide o relatívne novú funkcionalitu, ktorá umožňuje vytvárať a zdieľať krátke videá s hudbou, efektmi a ďalšími kreatívnymi nástrojmi. Reels spravidla dosahujú vysokú mieru interakcie divákmi.

- TikTok – relatívne nová sociálna sieť, ktorá umožňuje používateľom vytvárať, zdieľať a prezerať krátke videá s rôznymi efektmi, hudbou a vtipným obsahom Práve TikTok je sociálna sieť, ktorá z krátkym formátom videí prišla ako prvá a vzhľadom na popularitu tohto formátu ho prebrali aj ďalšie sociálne siete.

- Offline materiály – niektorý UGC obsah je možné použiť aj v offline komunikácii. Pre takéto použitie musí obsah spĺňať vysoké nároky na formátovú ale aj obsahovú kvalitu, ktorá je definovaná v technických špecifikáciách vybraných offline materiálov. UGC obsah značky môžu využiť predovšetkým v reklamách, ktoré sú uverejňované napríklad v časopisoch a magazínoch, televízii, na billboardoch a ďalších vonkajších reklamných plochách a pod..

Okrem formy obsahu a jeho umiestnenia je pre využitie UGC obsahu kľúčové jeho nacenenie. Cenotvorba predstavuje kritický aspekt v procese vytvárania potreby po používateľskom obsahu a v procese naplnenia tejto potreby. Pri tvorbe UGC obsahu môže spolupráca prebiehať dvoma spôsobmi:

- Barter – predstavuje ochotu a súhlas obsahového tvorcu poskytnúť obsah výmenou za tovar, službu alebo iné nefinančné výhody od značky, pre ktorú je vytvorený obsah určený.

- Platené plnenie – predstavuje spravidla formálnu dohodu medzi značkou a tvorcom obsahu, kde tvorca za vyprodukovaný a značkou použitý obsah dostáva vopred dohodnutú finančnú odmenu.

Značka v procese UGC nevytvára vzťahy iba s konzumentami tohto obsahu ale aj s jeho tvorcami. Cenotvorba pri vytváraní týchto vzťahov hrá kľúčovú úlohu. Na základe analýzy existujúcich platforiem digitalizujúcich UGC obsah bolo identifikovaných päť modelov cenotvorby UGC obsahu, ktorými sú:

- Balíky – predstavujú jednorazovú platbu za balík obsahu, ktorý má vopred identifikovaný a kvantifikovaný objem obsahu, ktorý si značka môže stiahnuť. Platformy dedikované manažmentu UGC obsahu využívajúce balíkovú cenotvorbu spravidla ponúkajú hneď niekoľko balíkov v rôznych cenových reláciách aby vyhoveli finančným možnostiam a preferenciám značiek.

- Kredity – ide azda o najštandardnejšiu formu cenotvorby UGC obsahu, kde značka, ktorá chce benefitovať z UGC tvorby si nahráva na UGC platformu určenú na manažment tohto obsahu kredit, ktorý následne míňa na obsah, ktorý je vopred nacenený.

- Subscription – tento model cenotvorby pracuje s pravidelnými mesačnými alebo ročnými poplatkami, ktoré značka pravidelne platí. Pri aktívnom členstve má značka prístup k obsahu vytvorenom obsahovými tvorcami. UGC platforma spravidla v závislosti od výšky poplatku limituje objem stiahnutého obsahu značkou.

- Neviditeľná ruka tvorcu – cenotvorba je výhradne v kompetencii obsahového tvorcu. Značka vytvorí inzerát s dopytom po UGC obsahu a tvorcovia následne nahrajú obsah na digitalizovanú platformu a sami si stanovia cenu za stiahnutie obsahu. Značka si obsah prezerá a vyberá na základe kvality a ceny. V prípade, že tento balanc vyhovuje značka si obsah zakúpi. V prípade, že si značka obsah nezakúpi je to signál pre tvorcu, že obsah je nekonkurencieschopný. Dôvody môžu byť nasledovné:

  - vysoká cena,
  - nízka kvalita,
  - nenaplnenie zadania,

- obsah nekorešponduje s identitou značky.

- Neviditeľná ruka značky – cenotvorba je výhradne v kompetencii značky, ktorá pri vytvorení dopytu po UGC obsahu definuje cenu, ktorú je za stiahnutie obsahu ochotná zaplatiť. Inzerát s dopytom po obsahu spolu s cenou sú uverejnené na internetovej platforme, kde

  - Pribúda veľa obsahu – cena je nastavená príliš vysoko, čo spôsobuje vysokú atraktivitu pre tvorcov obsahu.
  - Pribúda málo obsahu – cena je nastavená príliš nízko, čo spôsobuje nezáujem tvorcov obsahu.

Možností cenotvorby pri UGC obsahu je hneď niekoľko. Nastavenie správnej cenotvorby umožňuje identifikovať hodnotu vytváraného obsahu a vypočítať jeho efekt v prípade použitia na reklamné a marketingové účely. Ide o kľúčový proces, ktorý má priamy vplyv na motiváciu obsahových tvorcov uspokojovať dopyt po UGC obsahu značiek.

## Záver

UGC je v súčasnej dobe neoddeliteľnou súčasťou marketingovej komunikácie značného množstva značiek. Jeho význam rastie nielen kvôli vyššej dôveryhodnosti a autenticite obsahu, ale aj kvôli organickej podpore angažovanosti cieľového publika a budovaniu vzťahov s existujúcimi a potenciálnymi zákazníkmi. Značky, ktoré aktívne využívajú UGC, sa tak stávajú nielen pozorovateľmi, ale aj širiteľmi príbehov, ktoré ich produkty vytvárajú. Portrétové a lifestyle fotografie, unboxing a video recenzie, ale aj praktické demonštračné videá predstavujú len niektoré z mnohých foriem, ktoré môžu značky v rámci UGC obsahu využiť. Ide o cenný obsah, ktorý dokáže produkt prezentovať v najlepšom svetle a zároveň ponúka zákazníkom autentický pohľad na to, čo môžu od produktu a značky očakávať. Prítomnosť UGC na webstránkach a sociálnych sieťach zvyšuje dôveryhodnosť značky a interakciu s obsahom a posilňuje SEO a umožňuje budovanie online komunity. UGC tvorba umožňuje zákazníkom viesť dialóg s firmou aj formou statického alebo dynamického obrazu vo forme fotografií alebo videí. Pri UGC využití UGC obsahu je kľúčová spolupráca značky a obsahového tvorcu. Táto spolupráca sa často nezaobíde bez cenotvorby. Či už ide o barterové spolupráce alebo platené plnenia, je dôležité, aby bola hodnota obsahu ocenená a odzrkadľovala úsilie a kreativitu tvorcov. V tejto oblasti sa objavujú rôzne modely cenotvorby, od balíkov a kreditov až po pravidelné predplatné alebo systémy stanovujúce ceny na základe ponuky a dopytu. Každý z týchto modelov ponúka unikátne výhody a je na značkách, aby vybrali ten, ktorý najlepšie zodpovedá ich potrebám a cieľom. V konečnom dôsledku je UGC viac než len marketingový nástroj. Je to spôsob, ako značky môžu komunikovať svoje hodnoty, zdieľať príbehy a spolupracovať so svojimi zákazníkmi na tvorbe obsahu, ktorý je pravdivý, originálny a rezonuje s ich denným životom. Využitím potenciálu UGC môžu značky vytvoriť nielen hlbšie väzby so súčasnými zákazníkmi, ale aj prilákať nové publikum a zároveň neustále inovovať a prispôsobovať svoje produkty aktuálnym trendom a potrebám trhu.

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