

ROLE OF BRANDS IN CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

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Abstract

The broad objective of this paper is to examine, how nations accrue global recognition through efficient proliferation of national brands. Meticulously prepared advertisements and well thought out media campaigns often shape the branded products into successful marketing propositions. A fine linkage can be traced between the country of origin of a particular brand, the national identity, impact of brand towards enhancing the national image and consumer ethno-centrism. While the use of brands in influencing the national image has become a marketing norm, products of multi-national origins still remain in great demand.

The author intends to highlight the use of brands and national identity as valued soft power tools. While the principles and practice of nation branding may have varied implications, embedding of national identity in brand campaigns enhances consumers' understanding as national citizens and global subjects. Intelligent nation branding supplements the commitment of citizens to the terms of political self-determination and ideals of public communication. The consumers' lived experiences of 'brand and national identity' represent a gap in the literature, which is worthy of investigation. In a humble attempt to fill in the gap, this paper adopts an interpretive narrative approach to establish the fact that brands as experiential entities can be used in national identity projects. It also investigates the role, which brand experiences can play towards strengthening the national identity. The conceptual, strategic and practically relevant aspects of this association dovetailed with managerial implications will be analyzed in this document, in a purely academic and research based construct.

Besides reference to international brands of developed countries, special emphasis will be laid on the significance of investing into brand formation of developing countries like Azerbaijan. Salient aspects are as under:-

- Impact of brands on the construction of national identity is a valid phenomenon.
- It is an overarching trend, which is applicable equally in the spheres of diplomacy and defence, economy and trade, fashion and industry.
- Developing countries can effectively use brands to enhance respective national identities.

Key Words: Brand formulation, National Identity, Nation Branding, Azerbaijan.