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**Modeling Brand Trust through Social Proof Mechanisms in an Environment
of Information Oversaturation**

Kostandian Ladyk,

Founder & CEO, Ladó Agency,

312 West 43 Street, New York, NY, USA, 10036

03150, Kyiv, st. Antonovycha, 7, Ukraine,

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3299-9159>

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Abstract: The purpose of the article is to analyze the main mechanisms of building trust in a brand in conditions of information overload and to develop an integrated model for overcoming consumer skepticism.

The study is based on theoretical generalization and systematic analysis of the multi-component structure of trust, which covers cognitive, emotional, behavioral, as well as additional value, communicative, and social aspects. The analysis method was used to study the principles of Robert Cialdini's social confirmation theory, which is the basis for effective marketing tools. Based on these data, a proprietary model was developed using the synthesis method, which reflects the relationship between the components of trust and the tools for its formation.

The results show that in today's unstable marketing environment, where consumers are faced with a huge flow of advertising messages every day, traditional promotion channels are losing their effectiveness. Instead, social confirmation mechanisms play a decisive role in this process. The study shows that tools such as



influencer marketing, online reviews, ratings, as well as the psychological effect of “following the crowd” and storytelling are extremely powerful. They allow brands not only to overcome information overload, but also to form lasting relationships with consumers by influencing various aspects of trust. It is emphasized that these mechanisms are a strategic tool for building long-term loyalty.

The conclusions indicate that the developed integrated model demonstrates how the harmonious combination of a multi-component trust structure with social confirmation mechanisms allows brands to build authentic and long-lasting relationships. The proposed model can serve as a practical tool for developing effective strategies focused on the quality of interaction with the audience. Further research may focus on a quantitative analysis of the model’s effectiveness and the study of the impact of new technologies on the formation of consumer trust.

Keywords: marketing, consumer behavior, social proof, influencer marketing, reviews, ratings, digital communications, emotional component.

**Моделювання довіри до бренду через механізми соціального
підтвердження в умовах інформаційної перенасиченості**

Костандян Ладик Вачейович,

засновник та директор (Founder & CEO), Ladó Agency,

312 West 43 Street, New York, NY, USA, 10036;

03150, м. Київ, вул. Антоновича, 74, Україна,

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3299-9159>

Анотація: Метою статті є аналіз основних механізмів формування довіри до бренду в умовах інформаційного перенасичення та розроблення інтегрованої моделі для подолання споживчого скептицизму.

Дослідження ґрунтується на теоретичному узагальненні та системному аналізі багатокомпонентної структури довіри, яка охоплює когнітивний,



емоційний, поведінковий, а також додаткові ціннісний, комунікативний і соціальний аспекти. Застосовано метод аналізу для вивчення принципів теорії соціального підтвердження Роберта Чалдіні, що є основою для ефективних маркетингових інструментів. На основі цих даних за допомогою методу синтезу було розроблено власну модель, яка відображає взаємозв'язок між компонентами довіри та інструментами її формування.

У результатах з'ясовано, що в сучасному нестабільному маркетинговому середовищі, де споживачі щодня стикаються з величезним потоком рекламних повідомлень, традиційні канали просування втрачають свою ефективність. Натомість вирішальну роль у цьому процесі відіграють механізми соціального підтвердження. Дослідження показує, що такі інструменти, як інфлюенсер-маркетинг, онлайн-відгуки, рейтинги, а також психологічний ефект «слідування за натовпом» і сторітелінг є надзвичайно потужними. Вони дозволяють брендам не просто подолати інформаційне перевантаження, а й сформувати стійкі відносини зі споживачами, впливаючи на різні аспекти довіри. Акцентовано, що окреслені механізми є стратегічним інструментом для побудови довготривалої лояльності.

У висновках зазначено, що розроблена інтегрована модель демонструє, як гармонійне поєднання багатокомпонентної структури довіри з механізмами соціального підтвердження дозволяє брендам будувати автентичні та довготривалі відносини. Запропонована модель може слугувати практичним інструментом для розроблення ефективних стратегій, орієнтованих на якість взаємодії з аудиторією. Подальші дослідження можуть бути зосереджені на кількісному аналізі ефективності моделі та вивченні впливу новітніх технологій на формування довіри споживачів.

Ключові слова: маркетинг, поведінка споживачів, соціальне підтвердження, інфлюенсер-маркетинг, відгуки, рейтинги, цифрові комунікації, емоційний компонент.



Introduction. In the context of information overload and the crisis of trust observed in today's digital environment, traditional methods of building brand trust based on direct advertising and controlled messages are losing their effectiveness. Consumers who are exposed to a huge amount of advertising material every day are becoming less sensitive to it, developing so-called “skepticism”. This situation poses a significant challenge for marketers. The need to build and maintain audience trust in an environment of declining attention spans and low brand trust requires the use of innovative communication strategies. In view of this, the research and implementation of alternative mechanisms aimed at overcoming information overload and forming sustainable relationships with consumers is becoming particularly relevant.

Literature review. In contemporary scientific discourse, building brand trust is seen as a critical marketing task, especially in conditions of information overload. Scientific research in this area focuses on studying the nature of trust and developing effective mechanisms for its formation that can minimize the manifestations of heightened consumer skepticism. In particular, Y. Salo, K. Tarasova, and G. Novak [1] emphasize the dynamic nature of brand trust, which is constantly being reevaluated by consumers. V. Stamat and A. Sych [2] emphasize the dependence of brand trust on the company's image, its recognition, and consumer loyalty.

Scientists N. Shmygol, V. Birsky, A. Antoniuk [3] note that trust is formed not by words, but through consistent and transparent actions of the brand, as well as its compliance with consumer expectations. In order to comprehensively understand this phenomenon, researchers identify its multi-component structure, which encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects. The cognitive component through the prism of rational assessment and individual "cognitive schemas" is considered by V. Krykun [4]. N. Gorbali and O. Revutska [5] emphasize the emotional component, which is formed through storytelling and sensory influence.



The peculiarities of the formation of the behavioral component under the influence of the marketing environment are studied by V. Shevchenko [6]. Additional components of trust, in particular communicative (transparency and openness) and value-based (compliance with social and environmental initiatives), are considered by N. Butko [7] and A. Brovchenko et al. [8].

The theory of social confirmation formulated by R. Cialdini is analyzed by S. Roy, who notes that it is a powerful tool for overcoming information overload, as people tend to imitate the behavior of others [9]. According to a study by Y. Rybalchenko, this method enables brands to adapt to the modern communication environment by overcoming consumer skepticism about traditional advertising through the use of authentic communication via influencers [10].

Reviews and ratings are one of the most important mechanisms of social confirmation. Researchers S. Favaron, G. Di Stefano, and R. Durand emphasize that high ratings and positive reviews serve as a powerful signal of reliability, while their absence can be an important factor in deciding not to buy [11]. The power of reviews and ratings as tools for social confirmation is emphasized by Ja. Linder [12].

The psychological effect of "following the crowd" is studied by S. Asad, who emphasizes that it manifests itself in people's tendency to imitate the behavior of the majority, based on the assumption that the actions of a large group are correct and justified.

The use of storytelling and case studies to create a deep emotional connection between the brand and the consumer is analyzed by W. Zhang et al. [14].

An analysis of practical data, in particular a 2025 study by Infegy [15], shows that the assessment of trust in modern brands (PayPal, Netflix, Amazon) goes beyond traditional criteria. It includes an analysis of the emotional tone of comments, the volume of discussions, and attitudes toward social issues. This confirms the thesis that brand recognition is a kind of buffer during crises, but that building lasting trust requires a constant active presence of the brand and its alignment with broader value orientations.



Identification of previously unresolved parts of the overall problem.

Despite a significant number of publications, certain aspects of the practical application and evaluation of the effectiveness of these mechanisms remain insufficiently covered. In particular, the role of information flow has been limitedly researched, as it has not been conclusively established how its intensity affects the effectiveness of social confirmation mechanisms such as reviews and ratings. In addition, there is no clear differentiation between the influence of sources of social confirmation: it is still unclear how different participants, including experts, influencers, and ordinary consumers, shape the level of trust in a brand.

The contribution of this work to solving these problems lies in analyzing the impact of information overload on consumer perception, identifying the main mechanisms of social confirmation and their impact on the components of trust, and constructing a conceptual model of the relationship between these factors.

Problem statement. The **aim of the study** is to develop and empirically substantiate a conceptual model of brand trust formation through social confirmation mechanisms in conditions of information overload.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set:

- 1) to systematize the theoretical foundations of the concepts of “brand trust” and “social confirmation”, as well as to investigate the impact of information overload on consumer perception of marketing communications;
- 2) to identify the main mechanisms of social confirmation (reviews, ratings, number of users) and differentiate their influence on the formation of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components of trust;
- 3) build a model of brand trust that reflects the relationship between its multi-component structure and the main mechanisms of social confirmation in conditions of information overload.

Results. Building brand trust is one of the main tasks of marketing, especially in today's information overload environment, where consumers are exposed to a large number of advertising messages every day. This situation leads to a decrease



in the effectiveness of traditional marketing channels and an increase in consumer skepticism. In this regard, social confirmation mechanisms are becoming not just a tool, but a critically important factor in the decision-making process.

Domestic researchers rightly emphasize that brand trust in a differentiated communication environment is a dynamic mechanism that is constantly reevaluated by consumers in unstable information conditions. The task of a brand is not only to “be heard”, but also to become understandable and relevant to the audience. Effective brand management practices are based on consistency, emotional openness, transparency, and authentic communication, and trust is formed not by words but by the specific actions of the brand. On an emotional level, it manifests itself as a sense of security and is more stable than rational engagement [1].

At the same time, trust in a brand directly depends on the company's image, brand recognition, and consumer loyalty [2, p. 192]. It is formed when consumer expectations regarding products are met, which, accordingly, stimulates growth in demand for the goods of a company that has successfully established itself in the market [3, p. 45].

However, to fully understand the nature of brand trust, it is necessary to consider it as a multi-component structure consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects. The cognitive component is based on a rational assessment of the brand's reliability, competence, and honesty. The emotional component reflects personal feelings, sympathy, and a sense of security in interaction with the brand. This component is especially important in an information overload environment, as emotional attachment can outweigh rational arguments. The behavioral component is a consequence of the first two and manifests itself in consumer actions: willingness to make repeat purchases, loyalty, and recommendations of the brand to others. Successful trust building requires a harmonious combination of all three components.

The cognitive component of trust is based on rational perception and analysis of information. It is a person's ability to learn, which includes memory, attention,



and decision-making. The perception of new information about a brand depends on the past experience and value system of the consumer, who uses their own “cognitive schemas” to filter it [4, p. 37]. Thus, cognitive trust is formed on the basis of a rational assessment, which, however, is subjective and depends on individual beliefs and preferences.

Unlike the rational cognitive component, the emotional component of trust is based on the feelings evoked by the brand. Modern marketing, especially emotional marketing, goes beyond rational arguments about a product, appealing to consumers' emotions, values, and experiences, which helps strengthen brand identity. Emotional trust is formed using tools such as storytelling, sensory influences (colors, sounds), and social responsibility, increasing audience engagement and creating a strong connection. Research confirms that emotional marketing plays an important role in forming long-term relationships between a brand and its audience [5, p. 159].

Finally, the behavioral component of trust is the result of cognitive and emotional processes and is reflected in specific consumer actions. This component is related to consumer behavior, which is shaped by the marketing environment and manifests itself in loyalty, willingness to repurchase, and positive recommendations [6].

Along with the main components (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral), there are additional aspects of brand trust that are becoming increasingly important. These include the value component, which is based on the common values of the consumer and the brand. In today's world, where social and environmental responsibility are becoming increasingly important, consumers are increasingly favouring brands that demonstrate transparent policies and support socially significant initiatives.

In addition, it is worth highlighting the communicative component, which reflects the transparency and honesty of brand communications [7, p. 206]. Trust is formed through open dialogue, the reliable provision of product information, and the brand's ability to acknowledge and correct its mistakes.



At the same time, the social component is also important, as it shows how much the brand complies with social norms and values, as well as its contribution to the development of society. This component relates to corporate social responsibility and ethical production [8]. All of these additional components help brands build stronger, longer-lasting relationships with their audience.

In summary, it can be said that brand trust is a multifaceted phenomenon that goes beyond simple commercial relationships. An analysis of the structure of trust allows us to identify not only the main components (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral), but also additional aspects—value, communication, and social. The main components of brand trust are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Components of brand trust

Component	Basis	Method of formation	Examples
Cognitive	Rational assessment, facts	Based on reliable information about the reliability, competence, and honesty of the brand	Reviews, ratings, technical specifications, quality certificates
Emotional	Feelings and emotions	Through positive associations, personal experience, storytelling, emotional resonance and shared values	Emotional marketing, support for initiatives, connection with the community
Behavioral	Specific consumer actions	As a result of cognitive and emotional trust, manifested in loyalty and willingness to act	Repeat purchases, brand recommendations, participation in loyalty programs
Value	Shared values	Based on the alignment of the brand's ethical, social, and environmental values with consumer values	Social



Communicative	Transparency and honesty	Through open dialogue, reliable information, acknowledgment and correction of mistakes	Responding to comments on social media, honest product descriptions
Social	Compliance with social norms	Based on the brand's contribution to society, its ethical stance, and support for universal values	Charitable projects, support for social movements, ethical policies

Source: author's own development

Understanding the structure of trust is particularly important in today's information-saturated environment, which is one of the main challenges for marketing. In this context, Robert Cialdini's social confirmation theory is of key importance, according to which people tend to trust and imitate the actions of others, perceiving them as correct [9, p. 239]. This cognitive tendency is an effective mechanism for overcoming information overload, avoiding “advertising blindness”, and building trust in a brand based on the experience of others.

This principle is the basis for one of the most effective tools of social confirmation – influencer marketing. This approach allows small businesses to adapt to new realities, avoiding mistrust of traditional advertising thanks to authentic communication from influencers. It is strategically important to choose the right influencer, taking into account audience parameters and engagement levels, which helps build trust and long-term relationships with customers by focusing on the quality of communication rather than its quantity [10].

In addition to influencer marketing, one of the important mechanisms of social confirmation is the use of reviews and ratings. In today's digital environment, consumers are increasingly guided by collective opinion, expressed in the form of positive reviews or high ratings on online platforms [11, p. 10]. This phenomenon is



based on the psychological principle that people perceive the behavior of others as correct and safe, especially when they have no personal experience with the product.

A high rating (e.g., 4.5 or 5 stars) serves as a powerful visual signal of reliability and quality, significantly reducing risk in the consumer's mind. Reviews provide more detailed information that reinforces the rational component of trust. Successful brands actively encourage customers to leave reviews, understanding that such "voices" are more convincing than direct advertising.

The effectiveness of reviews as a mechanism of social confirmation has been confirmed by numerous studies. According to foreign researchers, 85% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations, making them one of the most influential factors in the decision-making process. In addition, 40% of consumers refuse to make a purchase if there are no reviews on the website, which turns them from an additional tool into a critical condition for successful sales. Trust is formed not only by the presence of reviews, but also by their quality: user-generated content is 2.4 times more likely to be perceived as authentic, and details and visual materials significantly increase its credibility. Interaction also plays an important role: 91% of consumers are more likely to trust brands that respond to reviews, emphasizing the importance of transparent communication [12].

Along with personalized influence, there is another, equally powerful mechanism of social confirmation: the psychological effect of "following the crowd." It manifests itself in the fact that people tend to imitate the behavior of the majority, assuming that the actions of a large number of people are correct and justified. This effect is particularly noticeable in the digital environment [13, p. 18]. A large number of followers on social media, high app download rates, or activity in communities create the impression of a successful and sought-after brand. Consumers who observe such collective choices feel less uncertainty and more motivation to join, perceiving the trust of a large audience as strong evidence of reliability.



Studying the nature of brand trust requires a more detailed approach that involves the use of case studies, success stories, and recommendations. This mechanism relies on the power of storytelling, which, as research shows, forms a deep emotional connection between the brand and the consumer. Unlike rational arguments, real success stories allow potential consumers to imagine themselves in these situations, which helps overcome skepticism and form emotional attachment [14, pp. 292–293]. Thus, case studies are a powerful tool that not only informs but also helps build lasting trust through emotional empathy.

For a deeper analysis of the practical impact of these mechanisms, let us turn to the annual study by Infegy, which evaluates online conversations to identify the brands with the highest level of trust. In 2025, the ranking included such giants as PayPal, Netflix, and Amazon. The main criteria for this ranking were not only sales volumes, but also the “Trust Score” — an assessment based on the ratio of positive to negative reviews, the emotional tone of comments, and the total volume of discussions on social media [15]. This approach confirms that modern trust is not formed in offices, but in real time through consumer communication. The rating of the most trusted brands of 2025 is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Rating of the most trusted brands in 2025

Rank	Brand	Trust Score	Positive Sentiment	Negative Sentiment
1	PayPal	1,757,631	0.796	0.2031
2	Netflix	1,274,379	0.7078	0.292
3	Amazon	1,096,015	0.7051	0.2949
4	Nintendo	1,057,071	0.7812	0.218
5	Sony	917,999	0.7572	0.2428
6	Microsoft	873,166	0.5848	0.4152
7	Samsung	735,905	0.6521	0.3479
8	Honda	732,311	0.7519	0.2481
9	BMW	731,476	0.7809	0.2191



10	Intel	596,600	0.6876	0.3124
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Source: compiled by the author based on analysis [13]

As we can see, in 2025, PayPal regained its top spot as the world's most trusted brand with a trust rating of over 1.7 million, confirming its reputation for security and reliability. At the same time, overall trust scores declined compared to 2024. Even giants such as Amazon and Nintendo experienced a noticeable decline, which was associated with a decrease in the volume of publications — the main factor in trust calculations. This fact proves that a constant active presence in the media space is critically important. The brands analyzed demonstrated high resilience during crises, with Microsoft quickly recovering from significant system disruptions and Amazon overcoming negative reactions to its return-to-work policy. This confirms that strong brand recognition acts as a buffer against short-term challenges.

Therefore, based on the conducted research and taking into account the multi-component structure of trust, we can propose a model for building brand trust that integrates the main components of trust with social confirmation mechanisms. The developed model demonstrates that the presented mechanisms are in fact interdependent and influence the formation of trust at different levels (Fig. 1).

In general, the study and the schematic model outlined above identify two levels of components that form brand trust. First, there are three main components of trust: cognitive, based on a rational assessment of the brand and its products and reinforced by reviews and ratings; emotional, which is formed through personalized connections with consumers created through influencer marketing and storytelling; and behavioral, which is the result of the interaction of cognitive and emotional components and manifests itself in the consumer's readiness to take specific actions, reinforced by the “herd effect”.

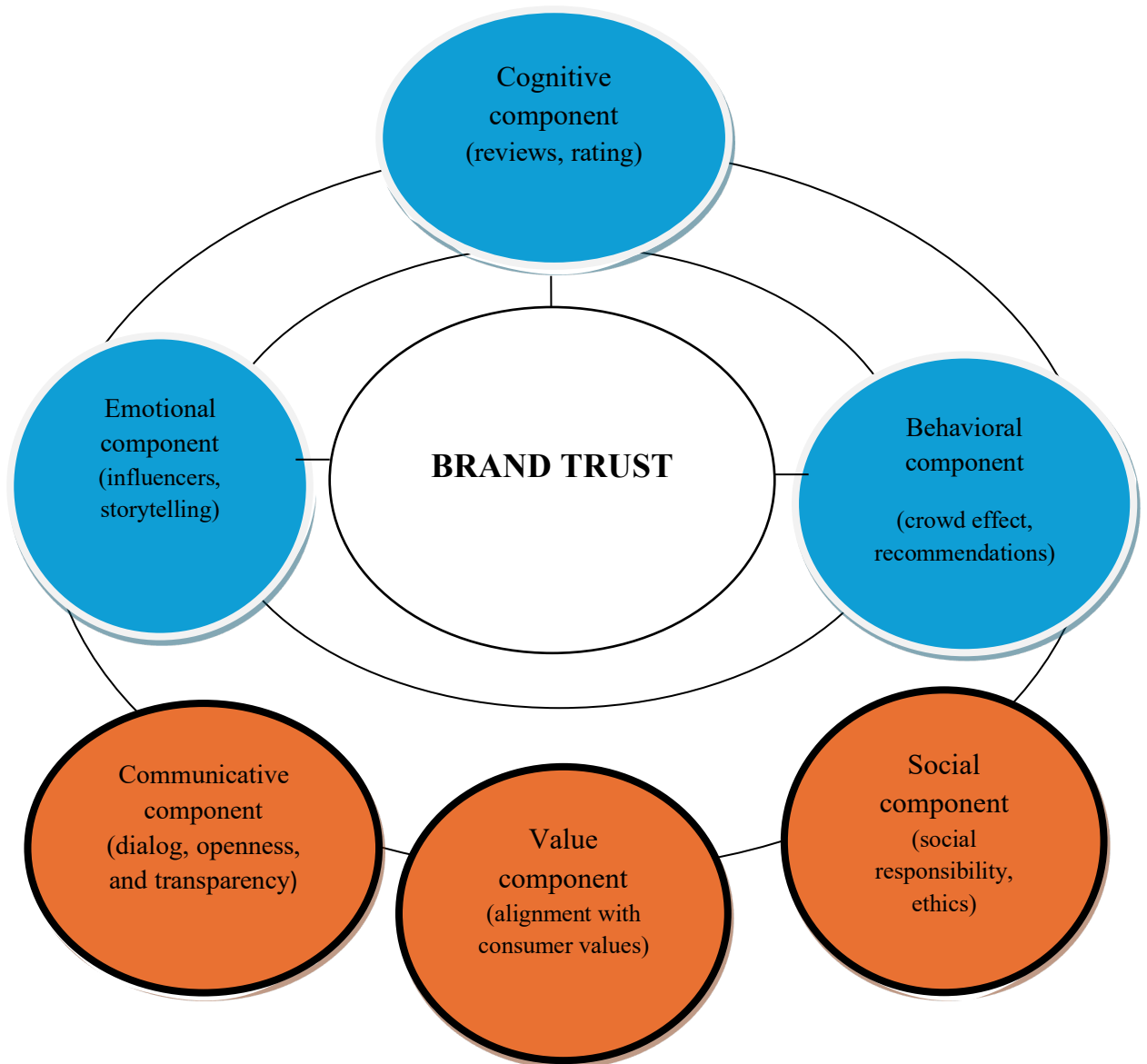


Fig. 1. Brand trust model

Source: author's own development

In addition to the main components, the model also covers additional, but no less important components of trust: value-based, which is based on consistency with the consumer's personal values; communicative, which involves open dialogue and transparency of interaction; and social, which reflects the brand's responsibility and contribution to the development of society.

The elements of the model represent the core components of trust, while the mechanisms of their formation function as tools of social validation. The stages of



implementation involve the step-by-step introduction of these mechanisms, beginning with the development of rational evaluation at the initial stage and culminating in the stimulation of behavioral response at the final stage. The anticipated outcome of applying this model is an increase in brand trust, which fosters greater consumer loyalty, higher sales, and the establishment of long-term audience relationships. This approach enables the brand to overcome consumer skepticism in an environment of information overload by ensuring the authenticity and transparency of its communications.

Thus, a high-quality brand trust model is complex and requires a harmonious combination of all these components. It emphasizes that an effective trust-building strategy is based not only on product quality but also on the brand's ability to be understandable, relevant, and transparent in its communication with its audience.

Conclusions. The study analyzed the key mechanisms of brand trust formation under conditions of information overload. The findings showed that brand trust is a complex system that integrates cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, along with additional components such as value, communication, and social factors. It was established that in the modern information environment, traditional advertising is losing effectiveness, while mechanisms of social validation, particularly influencer marketing, reviews, and ratings, are becoming crucial in overcoming consumer skepticism. The analysis demonstrated that these mechanisms shape various dimensions of trust, enabling brands to build authentic and enduring relationships with their audiences. Based on the analysis, an integrated model of brand trust is proposed, illustrating the relationship between its core and additional components and the mechanisms of their formation. The model emphasizes that reviews and ratings, influencer marketing, and storytelling are key tools that foster the development of cognitive, emotional, behavioral, value-based, and social dimensions of trust. Prospects for further research include the quantitative assessment of the proposed model in different industries and the examination of the influence of individual mechanisms of social validation on trust levels. Another



promising direction is the study of the role of new technologies, particularly virtual and augmented reality, in shaping consumer trust, which may contribute to the development of practical recommendations for brands in the context of information overload.

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