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Adapting a Digital Brand for Different Markets: Consumer Behavior in the U.S. and Ukraine – Mobile-First vs. Legacy Systems

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Abstract: *Purpose. The research aims to conduct a comparative analysis of digital consumer behavior in the United States and Ukraine to identify the necessary strategic adjustments for digital brand adaptation. The study focuses on how differences in technological infrastructure, socio-economic contexts, and cultural dimensions dictate the choice of marketing tools and communication channels when a brand operates in these two distinct environments.*

Methods. The study uses a comparative analysis of 2023–2025 statistical data from Statista, the NBU, and global digital reports. The approach integrates G. Hofstede's dimensions with metrics like mobile-to-desktop ratios and e-commerce penetration to identify "technological leapfrogging" in Ukraine versus U.S. "legacy maturity".

Results. The research reveals fundamental divergences: the U.S. market is characterized by a "desktop-significant" consumption model where email marketing remains the primary tool for conversion and long-term loyalty. Conversely, the



Ukrainian market demonstrates a "mobile-only" dominance, where the consumer journey is centered around messenger ecosystems (Telegram, Viber). Statistical processing indicates that while U.S. consumers prioritize data privacy and brand history, Ukrainian consumers exhibit significantly higher fintech- flexibility (over 90% contactless payment adoption) and evaluate brands based on their "civic position" and wartime social responsibility. The study highlights that the U.S. consumer responds better to individualistic, self-service digital experiences, whereas the Ukrainian consumer relies heavily on community-based social proof and real-time interaction with the brand.

Conclusions. Effective brand adaptation between the U.S. and Ukraine requires a total reconfiguration of the digital funnel. For the U.S. market, brands must emphasize official web presence and formal CRM systems. For Ukraine, the strategy must prioritize "messenger-commerce," high-speed mobile interfaces, and a clear socio-political stance. The research concludes that digital adaptation has moved beyond linguistic translation toward a deep alignment with the local consumer's technological lifestyle and ethical expectations.

Keywords: *digital brand, consumer behavior, market adaptation, cultural adaptation, mobile commerce, U.S. market, Ukrainian market, digitalization, marketing strategy.*

Адаптація цифрового бренду для різних ринків: споживча поведінка в США та Україні – мобільно-орієнтовані системи проти застарілих

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Анотація: *Мета.* Дослідження спрямоване на проведення порівняльного аналізу цифрової споживчої поведінки в Сполучених Штатах та Україні для визначення необхідних стратегічних коректив при адаптації цифрового бренду. Робота зосереджена на тому, як відмінності в технологічній інфраструктурі, соціально-економічному контексті та культурних вимірах диктують вибір маркетингових інструментів та каналів комунікації при роботі бренду в цих двох різних середовищах.

Методи. Використано порівняльний аналіз статистичних даних за 2023–2025 рр. (Statista, НБУ, We Are Social). Методологія поєднує культурні виміри Г. Хофстеде з кількісними показниками (mobile/desktop traffic, e-commerce penetration) для ідентифікації «технологічного стрибка» України порівняно зі «зрілістю систем» США.

Результати. Дослідження виявляє фундаментальні розбіжності: цифровий ринок США характеризується моделлю споживання з «вагомою часткою десктопу», де імейл-маркетинг залишається основним інструментом конверсії та довгострокової лояльності. Навпаки, український ринок демонструє домінування моделі «mobile-only», де шлях споживача зосереджений навколо екосистем месенджерів (Telegram, Viber). Статистична обробка вказує на те, що в той час як американські споживачі надають пріоритет конфіденційності даних та історії бренду, українські споживачі виявляють значно вищу фінтех-гнучкість (понад 90% впровадження безконтактних платежів) та оцінюють бренди на основі їхньої «громадянської позиції» та соціальної відповідальності під час війни. Дослідження підкреслює, що споживач у США краще реагує на індивідуалістичний, самостійний цифровий досвід, тоді як український споживач значною мірою покладається на соціальні докази в межах спільнот та взаємодію з брендом у режимі реального часу.



Висновки. Ефективна адаптація бренду між США та Україною вимагає повної реконфігурації цифрової воронки. Для ринку США бренди повинні наголошувати на офіційній веб-присутності та формальних системах CRM. Для України стратегія має надавати пріоритет «месенджер-комерції», високошвидкісним мобільним інтерфейсам та чіткій соціально-політичній позиції. Дослідження підсумовує, що цифрова адаптація вийшла за межі лінгвістичного перекладу в бік глибокого узгодження з технологічним стилем життя та етичними очікуваннями місцевого споживача.

Ключові слова: *цифровий бренд, споживча поведінка, адаптація до ринку, культурна адаптація, мобільна комерція, ринок США, ринок України, цифровізація (або діджиталізація), маркетингова стратегія.*

Introduction. Formulation of the problem. The global expansion of digital commerce has necessitated a sophisticated approach to brand localization that transcends simple linguistic translation. While digital platforms offer a unified technical infrastructure, the cognitive and behavioral responses of consumers remain deeply rooted in local socio-economic environments [1]. The United States and Ukraine represent two distinct models of digital evolution. The U.S. market is a mature environment characterized by legacy financial systems, whereas the Ukrainian market has demonstrated "technological leapfrogging" through rapid fintech adoption [2]. The problem addressed in this study is the significant divergence in digital engagement patterns which renders standardized marketing funnels ineffective across these two regions [3]. This necessitates a multidisciplinary reflection on digital transformation to understand regional specifics [4]. To achieve this goal, the following practical objectives were addressed:

- A. To analyze the cultural and behavioral dimensions of digital interaction in the context of individualism and communication strategies.



- B. To evaluate the institutional framework of consumer trust and its role in brand perception across different markets.
- C. To investigate the impact of market transformation and wartime social context on strategic digital adaptation.
- D. To assess the phenomenon of "technological leapfrogging" and its influence on the reconfiguration of the marketing funnel.

The central research question of this study is: how do the fundamental divergences between the mature, desktop-oriented infrastructure of the U.S. and the 'technological leapfrogging' of Ukraine's mobile-centric ecosystem necessitate a total reconfiguration of the digital marketing funnel for effective brand adaptation? The goal of the article is to identify core differences in digital consumer behavior and propose a strategic framework for adaptation.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the conceptualization of a comparative model that synchronizes G. Hofstede's cultural dimensions with the 'technological leapfrogging' effect, specifically identifying the transition from traditional email-driven funnels to messenger-based ecosystems as a mandatory requirement for brand survival in emerging mobile-first markets.

Literature review. The adaptation of digital brands is fundamentally influenced by the cultural and technological context of the host country. To provide a systematic analysis, the existing research can be categorized into three key dimensions.

A. Cultural and Behavioral Dimensions of Digital Interaction. According to the cultural dimensions theory, the U.S. exhibits a high degree of individualism which dictates a preference for personalized, self-service digital experiences where the user maintains total control over the navigation process [5]. Recent studies by Y. Hrushko emphasize that the effectiveness of modern communication strategies is determined not merely by the choice of digital tools but by the accuracy of "cultural tuning" and the consistency of messages with local perceptual features [6]. This



suggests that for European and emerging markets like Ukraine, careful consideration of digital habits and consumers' ethical expectations is mandatory for developing sustainable interaction models [6]. Furthermore, theoretical aspects of economic interest alignment in systems must be considered to achieve synergy between the brand and the local market.

B. Trust and Institutional Frameworks in Digital Branding. The institutional framework of consumer trust also plays a decisive role in brand perception. N. Yaloveha and L. Teliuk argue that building consumer trust in a company's brand requires a stable institutional foundation, which is particularly sensitive to market shifts [7]. In the U.S. context, this trust is often mediated through data privacy standards and corporate history [8], whereas in Ukraine, it is increasingly being redefined through innovative digital branding approaches.

C. Market Transformation and Strategic Adaptation. N. Dubovyk highlights that the Ukrainian market has undergone a significant transformation during the war, forcing brands to adopt innovative digital strategies to maintain relevance under extreme conditions. Furthermore, the implementation of euromarketing strategies provides a framework for Ukrainian enterprises to align their digital operations with international standards while addressing local market specificities [9].

D. Technological "Leapfrogging" and Economic Alignment. The concept of "leapfrogging" provides a critical explanation for the technological differences observed between these two markets. While the U.S. consumer remains integrated into a legacy banking and communication infrastructure, Ukraine has moved directly to advanced mobile-first solutions [10]. Furthermore, the role of trust in digital branding has shifted from purely commercial to socio-political, requiring specific strategic marketing adaptations during wartime and the post-war recovery period [11]. Furthermore, the role of trust in digital branding has shifted from purely commercial to socio-political. In Ukraine, digital trust is increasingly linked to a brand's civic position and its ability to provide real-time support via messengers



rather than traditional email channels [12]. Modern research suggests that theoretical aspects of economic interest alignment in systems must be considered to achieve synergy between the brand and the local market [13].

Methods. The study employs a multi-methodological approach to analyze the divergence in digital consumer behavior between the United States and Ukraine. The primary method is a comparative statistical analysis based on secondary data from the period of 2023–2025. Data sources include global digital reports from DataReportal, Statista consumer market insights, and official reports from the National Bank of Ukraine. To ensure the reliability of the comparison, the research utilizes the Digital Evolution Index (DEI) framework, adapted for consumer digital maturity analysis, focusing on three key parameters: the mobile-to-desktop traffic ratio, the adoption rate of contactless payment systems, and communication channel preferences. The research utilizes a framework focused on digital transformation and productivity in developing economies, analyzing how artificial intelligence and mobile-first infrastructures act as catalysts for economic growth [14].

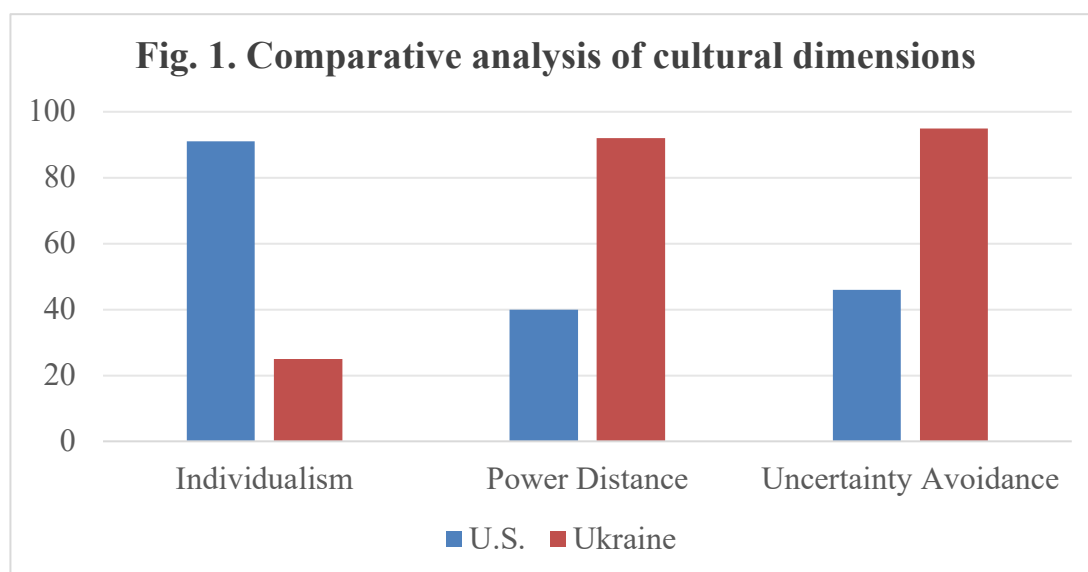
The statistical significance of these interactions is further validated through processed global reports by We Are Social and Meltwater [15]. Additionally, a quantitative perspective using data envelopment analysis is applied to evaluate the efficiency of brand engagement [16]. The synthesis of these quantitative and qualitative data points provides a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of digital brand localization strategies.

Results. The research results presented below were obtained through a systematic comparative analysis of statistical data from 2023–2025, including reports from Statista, the National Bank of Ukraine, and global digital monitoring services. The analytical framework integrates quantitative metrics (mobile-to-desktop ratios, e-commerce penetration rates) with a qualitative assessment of G. Hofstede's cultural dimensions. This methodology allows for a cross-country evaluation of consumer habits and the identification of structural differences



between the 'mobile-first' and 'legacy' digital ecosystems. The statistical processing of consumer data reveals fundamental structural differences between the digital ecosystems of the U.S. and Ukraine. These differences are primarily driven by the "technological leapfrogging" observed in the Ukrainian market, where mobile-centric behaviors have bypassed traditional desktop-based commerce.

Regarding culture, successful brand adaptation requires moving beyond translation to "cultural tuning," accounting for the U.S. preference for individual control versus the Ukrainian need for conversational engagement. To visualize the cultural gap between the analyzed markets, a comparative profile based on Hofstede's key dimensions was constructed (see Fig. 1). This visualization highlights the stark contrast in values that dictate digital consumer preferences in the U.S. and Ukraine.



Source: created by the author based on [5]

The research demonstrates that the U.S. digital brand funnel is heavily reliant on a multi-device journey. American consumers typically use mobile devices for discovery and social media engagement, but a significant portion of final transactions (approx. 44%) still occurs on desktop interfaces, which provides an opportunity for long-form brand storytelling and detailed product descriptions. In



contrast, the Ukrainian consumer journey is almost entirely confined to mobile devices. This "mobile-only" dominance is supported by the massive adoption of advanced banking apps and the integration of e-commerce into social platforms.

Furthermore, the data shows a significant gap in communication preferences. Regarding trust, brands must diversify their trust-building strategies, focusing on technical security for American users and socio-ethical integrity for Ukrainian consumers. While U.S. consumers perceive email as a professional and trusted channel for brand updates [8], Ukrainian consumers exhibit a strong preference for instant messaging. According to processed statistics, brand-related interactions in Telegram channels in Ukraine show engagement rates that are 4 to 5 times higher than traditional email campaigns. This shift is also influenced by the need for real-time information during the war [12]. The factor of social trust also varies significantly. In the U.S., digital trust is built through institutional guarantees and data security compliance. In Ukraine, trust has become increasingly "personalized" and "civic". A digital brand's reputation in Ukraine is now directly correlated with its visible support for the national economy and social initiatives, a factor that is less prominent but increasingly relevant in the U.S. context under the umbrella of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) standards.

The structural divergence in digital branding is driven by psychological patterns, identifiable through a comparative analysis of mature and emerging ecosystems. In the U.S. market, which represents a mature brand environment, there is a trend of declining loyalty even among global leaders. Research into generational cohort theory indicates that American consumers are increasingly reassessing their relationships with established "legacy" brands, demanding deeper emotional justification, as negative experiences can lead to brand hate and damaging consumer behaviors [18]. This necessitates that U.S. digital brands focus on sophisticated retention strategies beyond simple rewards.



Conversely, the Ukrainian market exhibits strong consumer ethnocentrism, amplified by the current socio-economic context. Regarding transformation, the Ukrainian context proves that in volatile environments, "digital patriotism" and civic responsibility become stronger drivers of loyalty than traditional UX/UI metrics. Applying the framework of homegrown brand satisfaction, one can observe that for Ukrainian consumers, loyalty is deeply rooted in the desire to support the national economy, while a failure to maintain a positive consumer-brand relationship can trigger intense negative reactions [19]. This creates a unique environment where "digital patriotism" becomes a stronger driver of engagement than technical UX/UI. Brands failing to acknowledge these ethnocentric values struggle to gain traction, regardless of their global status.

Regarding technology, the "technological leapfrogging" in Ukraine necessitates a total reconfiguration of the marketing funnel, shifting from email-centric legacy systems to high-engagement messenger-based ecosystems. This divergence is further quantified by the disparity in mobile commerce penetration, which we have incorporated based on the latest digital infrastructure reports [15, 16]. According to these data, the share of mobile traffic in Ukraine's e-commerce sector has reached 82–85% in 2024, significantly exceeding the 53–56% observed in the U.S. market.

Furthermore, the high efficiency of contactless payments in Ukraine, supported by a 90% NFC-terminal saturation (based on NBU statistics [15]), reduces digital checkout friction by an estimated 25% compared to traditional card-entry methods prevalent in certain U.S. retail segments. These systemic differences necessitate a unique approach to the sales funnel for each region. As shown in Table 1, digital brand adaptation requires a fundamental reconfiguration of the marketing tools to align with these local consumer expectations. Thus, the comparative analysis of the U.S. and Ukrainian markets demonstrates that digital brand adaptation is not



merely a technical localization of content, but a strategic alignment with deep-seated cultural values and specific technological infrastructures.

Table 1

Comparative indicators of digital consumer behavior
(Estimated data for 2024-2025)

Indicator	United States	Ukraine	Strategic implication
Mobile E-commerce Traffic Share	56%	79%	Ukraine requires "Mobile-Only" design
Email Marketing Open Rate (Average)	21.3%	7.4%	Email is ineffective for Ukrainian retail
Messenger Marketing Usage (Active)	Low (primarily SMS)	High (Telegram/Viber)	Communication must be conversational in Ukraine
Contactless Payment Penetration	48% (growing)	92% (market-wide)	Immediate mobile checkout is critical in Ukraine
Average Online Shopping Order Value	\$120.00	\$42.00	Differing pricing and bundling strategies

Source: created by the author based on [2; 14; 15]

The synthesis of these factors allows brands to mitigate the risks of "brand hate" and build long-term loyalty through high ethical accountability and fintech-driven convenience.

Furthermore, corporate social responsibility (CSR) evaluation differs fundamentally between regions. In the U.S., consumers typically evaluate corporate irresponsibility based on domain congruence. In Ukraine, however, social responsibility has transitioned from a voluntary gesture to a mandatory ethical requirement for market presence, where effective complaint handling is crucial to mitigate potential brand hate in a "cancel culture" environment [14]. A brand's "civic position" is now the primary filter for evaluating corporate integrity, making social accountability a prerequisite for any digital transaction.



Conclusions. The comparative analysis confirms that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to digital branding is no longer viable. Regarding culture: for the U.S. market, this means respecting individualistic preferences for self-service and control, while for Ukraine, it necessitates high-engagement conversational strategies. Regarding trust: American consumers prioritize institutional guarantees and data privacy, whereas Ukrainian consumers build trust through a brand's visible civic position and real-time interaction. Regarding transformation: in the volatile Ukrainian environment, social responsibility and "digital patriotism" have become primary drivers of engagement, outweighing traditional technical metrics. Regarding technology: the "technological leapfrogging" in Ukraine necessitates a shift from the U.S. "desktop-significant" model to a "messenger-first" architecture.

The U.S. market remains a territory of "multi-channel balance," while Ukraine has emerged as a "mobile-dominant" ecosystem. The practical significance of this study for global decision-makers lies in the transition from a 'standardized localization' approach to a 'structural adaptation' strategy: for brands entering mobile-first markets like Ukraine, success depends not on translating content, but on migrating the entire customer journey from web-based interfaces to high-engagement messenger ecosystems that function as primary trust-building platforms. Effective adaptation for Ukraine requires "messenger-first" strategies and a clear civic position. Future research should focus on the impact of generative AI on localized consumer journeys.

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