

Factors Favoring the International Positioning of Companies with a Registered Trademark in Colombia

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Abstract: The international positioning of brands is a relevant competitive advantage for organizations with a high market orientation. Therefore, this study used bivariate correlations through Spearman's Rho coefficient to identify the factors that favor international positioning in organizations that have a registered trademark in the city of Bogotá, Colombia. According to the size of the companies, the factors are: the capacity to generate income through licenses of use, the cultural perceptions of the market around the brand and the existence of trademark registrations; with respect to the time in the market that these organizations have, the factors visualized are: the capacity to turn the brand into one of the most valuable assets of the organization, the power to increase market share and finally to obtain trust and support from the market towards the brand.

1 INTRODUCTION


International branding is the activity from which company's position their products using strategies that link the brand to various values that strengthen the bond established with the customer and other stakeholders (Otero Gómez & Giraldo Pérez, 2019). It is the strategy that allows companies to create differentiation through their own image and the association of values with the public. According to Sánchez-Torres, Montoya & Potes-Arce (2018) branding is understood as brand building its management, aiming to support sales and engage in relationships with customers and other stakeholders.


For some organizations the trademark is an element without transcendence in front of the development of its social object, considering it exclusive of large companies, and they observe it as a costly procedure, which involves financial resources that are not invested in an adequate manner (Espinoza & Monar, 2019). This thinking has been generated by ignorance or lack of interest of organizations to create and maintain a solid image that allows the market to


feel an identification with it. It is relevant that the business sector perceives the cost-benefit ratio of the registration of trademarks, being one of the endorsements to the quality that they give to their offers, to the interior of their company and to their employees, who feel the brand as theirs and transmit it to the outside generating an emotional connection with it (Chen, 2010).


Colombia had a total of 317,231 trademark registrations at the end of 2017, while a decade ago about 24,000 trademarks were requested per year, in 2016 there were about 42,000 registrations (Bogotá Chamber of Commerce (2020), a figure that shows that a significant number of entrepreneurs have understood the benefits and importance generated for their organization to register their trademark.

Trademark registration is a highly effective strategy in the positioning of a brand internationally, because it offers guarantee values and quality to the products it represents in the market; as indicated by Herrera, León & Vargas-Ortiz (2018) a positive perception of the brand is visualized in the behavior of consumers towards the goods and services supported by it, thus strengthening the nature of

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positioning from the ability for the products and their brands to be present in the mind of the potential market (Changchenkit, 2018).

From the above, the concern arises to recognize the relevant factors that favor international positioning in organizations that have a registered trademark in the city of Bogota, Colombia. To this end, it is necessary to understand the importance of international branding and its contributions to the commercial development of organizations, to recognize the management of branding and positioning in companies that have a registered trademark and finally to identify elements that enhance the international positioning of organizations with a registered trademark located in the Colombian capital according to their size and time in the market.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Relevance of Branding in Organizations

Branding associates the brand to a set of particular attributes which give an additional value to the product itself, in order to generate different strategies in the brand building process (Castillo-Villar, 2016). For Otero-Gómez & Giraldo-Pérez (2020) the brand is the set of values that represent the product or service of a company, and this is the reason why great marketers spare no expense in its management. Aaker (1996) comments that the brand is based on a set of assets that generate financial value for organizations, each of which has a different impact on the company's corporate identity in the market. Identity is an aspect that other brands cannot copy and that allows to better connect with audiences and exchange values and experiences with them (Yin Wong & Merrilees, 2007); therefore, each brand maintains its own colors, logo and presentation in order not to be cloned and easily reproduced in the market (Barão et al. 2017).

Branding itself is the result of tactics that highlight the attributes that a product or service has, which highlight the ability of these characteristics to convert them into business revenue (Castillo-Villar, 2016). This is why López Rodríguez & Neme Chaves (2020) indicate that in order to have a successful brand, it is necessary to analyze consumers, their motivations, unsatisfied needs and consumption trends. When this identification is achieved in buyers, brands establish their personality and through it transmit what they want within the market and generate key

characteristics for the consumer to clearly identify it at the time of purchase (Baalbaki & Guzmán, 2016). Similarly, for Araya-Castillo and Escobar-Farfán (2015) the brand and its personality are objects that provide a symbolic function or self-expression for the person.

The brand is the name with which the consumer is attracted, therefore for Changchenkit (2018) the objective of a brand is to guarantee relationships that create and ensure future benefits through an increase in consumer preference and loyalty. The existing competition in the current market turns the brand into the differentiating element in the consumers' purchase decision process (López-Rodríguez et al. 2020); that is why currently, one of the most valuable elements of a company is the ability to strengthen its brand, as stated by Hoyos (2016) when he highlights that "branding is an integrative process, which seeks to build powerful brands, widely known brands, associated with positive elements, desired and purchased by a broad base of consumers" (p. 42).

2.2 International Positioning of Brands

For organizations with an international profile, entering new markets is a complex process that arises from the need for companies to expand their participation in the external market (López-Rodríguez et al. 2020), a scenario in which the brand plays a strategic role (Erdil, 2013) and in view of this, the leaders of marketing activities in companies must analyze and determine objectively the image they want to reflect in their target market (Fregidou-Malama & Hyder, 2021), as well as the different factors that will enhance positioning as a competitive advantage based on differentiation (Porter, 2008), which will allow strengthening the value proposition for stakeholders, especially consumers (Sukrat & Papisratorn, 2018), and even more, when talking about global brands, positioning faces the challenge of managing benefit statements for audiences with tastes that may not be perfectly homogeneous (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2019).

Positioning can be defined as an organized system for positioning brands in the consumer's mind (Ries & Trout, 1981). Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2006) approach positioning as the process of building brand identity. For Herrera, León & Vargas-Ortiz (2018) positioning is a process aimed at creating an imaginary in reference to a product, of individual and collective acceptance in the market.

Brand positioning refers to the place that goods and services occupy in the mind of the consumer (Ries & Trout, 1981), in this regard, Aaker (1996)

states that a correctly implemented brand positioning brings advantages to the organization, among which stand out an orientation and refinement of the brand strategy, proportion of expansion options, improvement of memorization, granting of meaning and concentration to the organization, generation of competitive advantages, development of a solid position against the competition, ownership over a communication symbol and provision of efficiencies in terms of execution costs.

3 METHODS

Bivariate correlations were used through Spearman's Rho coefficient, which is a measure of linear association that uses the ranks, order numbers, of each group of subjects and compares these ranks (Kumar & Abirami, 2018). For this study, this type of correlation is convenient because the variables do not follow the normal curve (Camacho-Sandoval, 2008). Bivariate correlations determine whether two variables have a relationship with each other, their direction and their intensity, which can be strong, moderate or weak (Yun et al. 2019).

The population investigated were the managers (general managers, marketing managers or commercial managers) of the companies in the city of Bogota that have their trademark registered complying with the total legal requirements for such registration; and according to the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce (2020) the city has a total of 1097 organizations. As for obtaining the sample, probabilistic sampling was used, since it allows distinguishing the probability that each unit of analysis has, this must be integrated to the sample through random selection, thus comprising the simple random sampling procedure (Posso, 2014). From a confidence level of 95%, a margin of error of 5%, and according to the coefficient of positive and negative variation of 50% each, the sample was 285.

The instrument for the collection of information was a survey, which according to Dwivedi et al. (2021) are conversations with a large number of people using a specific questionnaire that serves mainly to obtain information delimited from various points of view and thus obtain a wide variety of trends. This instrument is divided into two parts: the first presents six items that aim to characterize the participating companies by means of nominal questions with a single answer; the second part presents twenty-two items that characterize the trends of the international positioning of brands in organizations that have a registered trademark by

means of Likert-type questions organized in five dimensions: commercial benefits that can be visualized after registering the trademark, knowledge about international treaties related to trademark protection, brand management, elements that drive the success of brands in international markets, and finally the factors to be taken into account for the international expansion of the brand.

The information gathering was carried out in the second quarter of 2021 and the validation of the instrument was developed through a pilot test of 29 surveys, that is, 10% of the sample obtained through the Cronbach's Alpha test which is a coefficient used to evaluate the degree to which the items of an instrument are correlated (Bianchi, 2020), obtaining satisfactory results for each of the five dimensions of the second part of the instrument, as shown in table 1. The statistical package SPSS® 26.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used for this purpose.

Table 1: Reliability statistics for each dimension of the instrument.

Instrument dimensions	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	Number of elements
Commercial benefits that can be visualized after registering the trademark.	0.824	0.825	5
Knowledge of international treaties related to trademark protection.	0.917	0.917	7
Brand management.	0.774	0.771	2
Elements that drive brand success in international markets.	0.801	0.801	4
Factors to take into account for the international expansion of the brand.	0.791	0.796	4

4 RESULTS

Among the organizations that took part in the study, those in the commerce sector stood out with 26%, the

industrial sector with 12%, the services sector with 11% and the construction sector with 10% participation. Of these, 18.6% were microenterprises, 42.1% were small, 30.5% were medium-sized, and the remaining 8.8% corresponded to large companies. Likewise, 13.3% of these organizations have been in the market for less than 3 years, 21.1% have been in the market for more than 3 years and up to 6 years, 29.1% have been in the market for more than 6 years and up to 9 years, 18.6% have been in the market for more than 9 years and up to 12 years, and 17.9% have been in the market for more than 12 years.

The factors underlying the international positioning of the brands were identified, with which there is a significant level of association with the size of the company and the time in the market of the organizations studied. These factors are: generating revenue through licensing, cultural perceptions of the market around the brand, management of brand registrations, the ability to make the brand one of the most valuable assets of the organization, the ability to increase market share, and finally, the ability to obtain trust and support in the market.

Considering that the significance (bilateral) of Sperman's Rho in the elements of the dimensions found are less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and in turn the alternative hypothesis is accepted, finding significant relationships at a level of 95% reliability and 5% error (Cao et al. 2019). These associations are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Association between the factors favoring the international positioning of brands with respect to the size of the companies studied and their time in the market.

Variables	Factors that underpin the international positioning of brands	Significance (bilateral) Sperman's Rho
Company size	Generate revenue through licensing	0.000
	Cultural perceptions of the market around the brand.	0.011
	Trademark registrations.	0.000
Time on the market	Make the brand one of the organization's most valuable assets.	0.017
	Increase market share.	0.001
	To obtain confidence and support in the market.	0.000

Table 3 shows the bivariate correlations between the factors that favor the international positioning of the brands and the size of the companies studied, for which a statistically significant, weak and directly proportional linear relationship was found between the size of the company, the generation of income through licenses of use ($r_s = 0.286, p < 0.01$), and scarce trademark registrations ($r_s = 0.214, p < 0.01$) and the market's cultural perceptions of the brand ($r_s = 0.150, p < 0.05$). In this sense, there is also a statistically significant, weak and directly proportional linear relationship between revenue generation through licensing and brand registrations ($r_s = 0.264, p < 0.01$).

On the other hand, there is a statistically significant, weak linear relationship with a tendency to moderate and directly proportional between market cultural perceptions of the brand and brand registration ($r_s = 0.467, p < 0.01$). These results suggest that company managers perceive a weak relationship between the size of the company and the perceived benefits of having a registered trademark, not only from the perspective of revenue generation, but also from the perspective of the value perceived by the market; however, this does not mean that it is not relevant. It is worth noting that there is no significant correlation between the generation of income from licenses of use versus the cultural perception of the market, which allows inferring that managers attach greater importance to protecting the trademark than to obtaining income from its use.

Table 4 shows the bivariate correlations between the factors that favor the international positioning of brands and the time on the market of the companies studied. A statistically significant, weak and directly proportional linear relationship was found between time on the market and making the brand one of the most valuable assets ($r_s = 0.141, p < 0.05$), in increasing market share ($r_s = 0.179, p < 0.01$) and obtaining trust and support in the market ($r_s = 0.245, p < 0.01$), in that sense, having a significant relationship, it is not relevant in terms of time on the market.

A statistically significant, weak and directly proportional linear relationship was found between making the brand one of the most valuable assets, versus increasing market share ($r_s = 0.422, p < 0.01$) and gaining trust and support in the market ($r_s = 0.407, p < 0.01$). Therefore, it is consistent that the relationship between increasing market share and obtaining trust and support in the market ($r_s = 0.449, p < 0.01$), being weak, tends to be moderate, and this is because, by increasing market share, the brand will be directly valued, and will be perceived as a trustworthy brand in the market.

Table 3: Bivariate correlations between the factors favoring the international positioning of brands and the size of the companies studied.

Spearman's Rho		Company size	Generate revenue through licenses of use	Cultural perceptions of the market around the brand	Trademark registrations
Company size	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.286**	.150*	.214**
	Sig. (bilateral)		.000	.011	.000
	N		285	285	285
Generate revenue through licenses of use	Correlation coefficient		1.000	.097	.264**
	Sig. (bilateral)			.101	.000
	N			285	285
Cultural perceptions of the market around the brand	Correlation coefficient			1.000	.467**
	Sig. (bilateral)				.000
	N				285
Trademark registrations	Correlation coefficient				1.000
	Sig. (bilateral)				
	N				

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

Table 4: Bivariate correlations between the factors favoring the international positioning of brands and the time on the market of the companies studied.

Spearman's Rho		Time on the market	Make your brand one of your most valuable assets	Increase market share	Get confidence and support in the market
Time on the market	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.141*	.179**	.245**
	Sig. (bilateral)		.017	.002	.000
	N		285	285	285
Make the brand one of your most valuable assets	Correlation coefficient		1.000	.422**	.407**
	Sig. (bilateral)			.000	.000
	N			285	285
Increase market share	Correlation coefficient			1.000	.449**
	Sig. (bilateral)				.000
	N				285
Get confidence and support in the market	Correlation coefficient				1.000
	Sig. (bilateral)				
	N				

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

From a theoretical point of view, positioning is a fundamental part in the process of brand management in an organization, and is part of a process that starts from the conception of a business idea until it is perceived through products as necessary in a group of consumers not only for its intrinsic value (Sharma & Klein, 2020; De Ruyter et al. 1997) but also for its symbolic value (Baudrillard, 2009; Hernández-Gil et al. 2018). Every entrepreneur must strive not only to create a brand, but also to express in a product, an idea, a feeling, a value, which allows it to be perceived, identified and possibly accepted by a market, which is usually influenced by various offers generated by the same communication actions of companies in the same economic sector (Neme-Chaves & López-Rodríguez, 2021). This makes it difficult to manage brand positioning oriented to the long term, given that the expected results are pressing in an environment increasingly focused on obtaining market share and revenue growth.

The relevance of brand positioning from an international perspective is relevant, since the high competitive intensity present in developing countries, not only for national brands, but also for the entry of foreign brands, makes this economic environment an opportunity for a brand to develop internationalization exercises, where the perceived value generated by a positioning exercise with a strategic sense and leveraged by a registered trademark favors its acceptance in those markets, favoring the increase of its income, its market share, job creation, and thus contributing to the economic development not only of an organization but also of a society.

It is increasingly relevant to understand the relationship perceived by the managers of the companies in terms that favor the registration of a trademark in international markets, for which factors related to the size of the company in reference to increasing the positioning of the trademark, in relation to variables such as generating income through licenses of use, cultural perceptions and trademark registrations have an acceptance which is evidenced by a significance of less than 0.05 generated by the Spearman correlation coefficient, which implies that there is a relationship. However, when interpreting the perception by the managers of the companies regarding the relationship of the size of the company with the generation of income through licenses of use, they relate it positively, and allow inferring, that being a large company allows

having many registered trademarks and that the use of such trademarks in a different scenario can have an impact on the organization's income; however, this depends largely on the companies that allow doing co-branding (Newmeyer et al. 2018) or co-promotion exercises (Aaker & Keller, 1990).

The relationship between the size of the company, cultural perceptions and brand registrations, although they are positively related at a statistical level, their significance is weak, given that it is possible that for managers these variables do not represent a factor that potentiates international positioning and this can be understood from the degree of consumer ethnocentrism (Solomon, 2006; Shiffman & Kanuk, 2010) and on the other hand from the perspective of perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988; Sharma & Klein, 2020; Konuk, 2019) by the potential consumer, who does not assign much value to the size of the manufacturer of such product but to its functional and symbolic benefit, which favor the reputation of the brand (Keller, 2009).

Regarding the relationship between time in the market with variables such as the ability to turn the brand into one of the most valuable assets, increasing market share and obtaining trust and support in the market, the result generated by Spearman's correlation coefficient is a significance level of less than 0.05 for which it is interpreted that there is a degree of relationship between the variables; however, among these aspects, the most relevant for businessmen is the ability to obtain trust and support in the market, since it is possible that the market interprets that if a brand has lasted over time it is because its promise of value is adequate, and therefore, it is part of a set of elements associated with credibility and can be used as a positioning strategy by attributes (Ries & Trout, 1981).

The relationship between the time in the market of the companies with the brand as one of the most valuable assets and the capacity to increase market share is scarce, with a tendency to be null, which implies that businessmen do not necessarily relate it as a fundamental factor to obtain a greater participation in the international market.

To conclude, it can be inferred that the organizations with registered trademarks located in the Colombian capital recognize the relationship given by their size and their time in the market with the capacity to generate income through licenses of use, with the advantage granted by trademark registrations and with the obtaining of trust and support in the market that potentiate their international positioning; nevertheless, it is important to emphasize in further studies to go deeper into

factors such as brand personality (Aaker, 1997) and its relationship between cultural perception, acceptance and trust in the market in an international context. Therefore, studies of brand positioning and personality based on models developed for a Latin American context acquire importance from the academic and business perspective as a development axis that allows understanding the dynamics of these relationships.

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