

TOOLS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS: A POSTCOLONIAL APPROACH

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Abstract. *The purpose* of this paper is to identify the communicative tools used in the postcolonial world for intercultural communication and to outline the potential for their practical implementation. The objectives of the present investigation are as follows: firstly, to highlight the tools used in international communication within business discourse; secondly, to identify the ways in which these tools can be tailored for postcolonial communication practices; thirdly, to provide positive and negative examples of their use and to offer recommendations for their better implementation; and fourthly, to establish how business communication practices, such as branding and advertising, can benefit the revival of the national idea and cultural heritage while unifying the nation ideologically. *The object of the study* is intercultural communication in the postcolonial space, and the subject is the peculiarities of communication tools. The novelty of the research lies in the fact that, despite the existence of many works dedicated to various aspects of intercultural communication, there are no works that establish and classify the exact tools that can be used to promote the national identity of the former colonies in the intercultural business communication. The aforementioned tools encompass branding, marketing, PR and publicity. Furthermore, the article undertakes an examination of the manner in which these instruments can be employed not solely within the context of business communicative discourse but also as a means of constructing and reinforcing a national concept and cultural unity. *The methodology* of the research relied on the following methods: firstly, the method of continuous sampling, which was employed to select language communicative contexts for analysis; secondly, the method of semantic and pragmatic analysis, which was used to identify the meaning of language units used in intercultural communication and their impact on the recipient; and thirdly, the method of interpretative analysis of text from the advertising discourse, which was used to find the hidden meanings and implications in marketing messages. The study established that branding, when employed as a tool in the context of intercultural postcolonial communication, can be either regressive or progressive. While the former seeks to disguise the colonial influence on business, the progressive branding strategy seeks to promote national and cultural identity by using nationally themed brand names, deleting colonial semantics in naming, and emphasising uniqueness and identity through the use of cultural symbols and motifs. Postcolonial advertising should be tailored to each target market and can be used not only for business purposes but also to promote a national idea. The public relations and publicity tools encompass the endorsement of products by figures from the local culture, as well as the utilisation of an accurate decolonised language of reference. This underscores the equality and autonomy of the formerly colonised culture. The findings can be employed by business practices engaged in intercultural communication in postcolonial contexts, as well as by theorists who study the manner in which decolonised societies live and develop.

Keywords: advertising, cultural heritage, decolonisation, public relations, publicity.

JEL Classification: M37, H10

1. Introduction

Intercultural communication has been identified as a pivotal aspect within the domain of international business activities, particularly within the context of

the postcolonial world. There is an increasing presence of companies from decolonised countries in the global market, driven by aspirations to distinguish themselves from former hegemony and to promote their national

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and cultural identities. This influence is evident in the realm of international business etiquette, which can be defined as the set of manners and behaviours that are considered acceptable in international social and business contexts (Chaney & Martin, 2007). In social settings, proper behaviour encompasses cultural differences in making introductions, exchanging business cards, acknowledging position and status, communicating interculturally, dining practices, tipping etiquette, giving gifts, and travelling. In the context of international business, the competence and competitiveness of domestic and international firms, in conjunction with their capacity to effectively communicate with stakeholders, are pivotal in determining their success on the global stage (Washington et al., 2012). In the context of business or marketing interactions with colleagues or counterparts from diverse cultural backgrounds, it is imperative to comprehend their customs to ensure precise communication and avoid any unintended offence (Chaney & Martin, 2007). It is evident that as businesses acknowledge and respect cultural differences, they develop a more profound understanding of how they must act in conjunction with international partners. This, in turn, enables them to justify and accept the partner's behaviour (Washington et al., 2012). Bovee and Thill (2010) posit that cultivating a consciousness of appropriate intercultural etiquette and the acquisition of commensurate communication skills are amongst the most salient prerequisites for growth and success.

A pivotal cultural facet pertains to national identity, the acknowledgement of which might prove arduous during deliberations concerning the erstwhile colonies. This is due to the historical association of these colonies with the dominant nation, resulting in a limited awareness of their national, ethnic and cultural identities within the global context. Consequently, intercultural communication, where at least one of the parties is a representative of the postcolonial world, requires particular attention since the success of such interactions for business purposes also lies in the understanding of the cultural originality of the partner and how they differ from the former coloniser. The failure of the partner to comprehend and embrace the originality and identity of the postcolonial company may be perceived by the latter not only as incompetence but as a cultural or even personal affront. As O'Rourke (2010) observes, the inability to comprehend and adapt to foreign modes of thinking and behaviour is among the most prevalent factors contributing to the failure of international business endeavours. In the contemporary global context, interculturality is not confined to the perspective of national distinctions between communicators. Instead, it is recognised as a diverse amalgamation of cultural layers encompassing ethnic, linguistic, religious,

age-related, socio-economic class, and occupational groupings (Barker and Gower, 2010).

The issue raised in this paper is of particular pertinence in the context of intercultural communication, which is of significance irrespective of the size, geographical location, or national affiliation of the company in question, provided that it engages in intercultural interactions either internally or with other companies.

The purpose of the article is to identify the communication tools used in the postcolonial world for intercultural communication and their potential for practical application. The objectives of the research are to identify the tools of international communication used in business discourse; to identify the ways in which these tools can be tailored to postcolonial communication practices; to provide positive and negative examples of their use and recommendations for their better implementation; to determine how business communication practices, such as branding and advertising, can serve to revive the national idea and cultural heritage while unifying the nation at the ideological level. The object of the research is intercultural communication in a postcolonial space, while the subject of investigation is the peculiarities of communicative tools.

The novelty of the study is that, despite the existence of many works on various aspects of intercultural communication, which are discussed in detail in the next section, there are no works that would identify and classify the tools used to promote the national identity of former colonies through intercultural business communication, as well as works that would focus on the specifics of using these tools in the context of the problem of decolonisation in Ukraine after the Russia's invasion. The methodology of the research relied on the following methods: firstly, the method of continuous sampling, which was employed to select language communicative contexts for analysis; secondly, the method of semantic and pragmatic analysis, which was used to identify the meaning of language units used in intercultural communication and their impact on the recipient; and thirdly, the method of interpretative analysis of text from the advertising discourse, which was used to find the hidden meanings and implications in marketing messages.

2. Literature Review

The issue of intercultural communication has been extensively discussed in modern science, as the phenomenon itself can be traced back to the time when the notion of "culture" first emerged and representatives of different cultures began to interact with each other. The theoretical underpinnings of intercultural communication, however, represent a more recent intellectual development, emerging in

the mid-20th century as a specialised branch of the broader theoretical framework of communication studies. This theory is a discipline that describes the process of intercultural communication, the conditions for its implementation, possible difficulties, and causes of communication failures (Maharramova, 2022, p. 56). Intercultural communication can thus be defined as the exchange of information by representatives of different cultures. The fact that communicants are carriers of different cultures greatly affects their communication and to some extent determines its course (Maharramova, 2022, p. 57). The term "culture" is understood to encompass not only the scope of things created as a result of human activity, but rather "a set of beliefs, values, norms, customs, traditions and knowledge inherent in a certain society" (Maharramova, 2022, p. 57). It is asserted that the identity and self-affiliation of a particular ethnic group constitute an integral part of culture. A comprehensive understanding of cultural identity and its intricacies serves to bridge cultural gaps and facilitate effective communication (Francis, 1991).

There is a large body of work that examines various aspects of intercultural communication. Tocar (2024) developed a taxonomy of factors that influence the success of intercultural communication, including management, group, individual, cultural and communication-related factors, and provided a detailed description and interrelationship of these factors. Moge's (2023) research examined the dynamics of horizontal and vertical communication within work teams, the management of teams, and external communication between organisations. The study posits that effective intercultural communication is of significant benefit to organisations, facilitating enhanced co-operation and performance (Okoro & Washington, 2012; Okoro, 2013). A significant number of studies have been conducted on the subject of intercultural communication from a theoretical perspective (Varner, 2000). However, certain works have sought to furnish practical solutions for enhancing the management efficiency of multicultural teams. Such works include those by Yevtushenko & Gudz (2022), and Wang & Hu (2022). Recent investigation attempts in this field include those of Backmann et al. (2020), who studied bridging cultural gaps in international teams; Braslauskas (2020); and Platova (2020), who examined strategies and tactics for achieving effective creative intercultural communication in the context of business interaction. Washington, Melvin and Okoro (2012) analysed intercultural communication through the prism of various national etiquettes, including Chinese, Japanese, British, and German.

The majority of studies addressing this subject have concentrated on the distinctive variations between national cultures and countries with regard

to communication approaches and methodologies, incorporating value systems, temporal perspectives, and social context (Kim & Sharkey, 1995; Devjak et al., 2023). However, the issues of intercultural communication in a postcolonial context are poorly researched, although the themes of postcolonialism and decolonisation are quite prominent in modern literature. A comprehensive overview of decolonisation issues and literature is provided by Wilson (2024). A detailed outlook on the literature devoted to the issue of decolonisation processes in Ukraine, which were revived after the Russian invasion, is provided by the Ukrainian Institute (Ukrainian Institute).

"Despite integration and globalisation processes, the diversity of cultures in the world is far from unification; moreover, many ethnic groups are actively trying to counteract these processes." (Hofstede, 2010) It is therefore imperative that the processes of cultural separation from the former dominant country are considered in terms of intercultural communication. The intensification of nationalist sentiments across various nations has been identified as a primary factor in the observed processes of cultural separation. Individuals increasingly prioritise the preservation of their cultural identity, which is defined as opinions about issues or experiences in life (Demir 2019), along with the protection of their heritage and efforts to shield it from the homogenising influences of globalisation and the former hegemon.

3. Results

In the context of modern consumer culture, decolonisation and postcolonial communication can be regarded as both a vital practice and a sustained effort on the part of brands. Contemporary consumers, in contrast to their predecessors, demonstrate a reduced propensity to ignore historical injustices and exploitative business practices. In a values-driven environment, it is imperative for brands to acknowledge historical realities and provide actionable solutions for reparations and equity. This approach stands to benefit both businesses and the individuals who contribute to their success.

A pivotal factor in the success of international business ventures is the ability to align a product with the specific requirements and preferences of potential customers. Consequently, it is imperative to concentrate on the distinct desires and needs of consumers within particular cultural segments of the global market. This approach is exemplified by McDonald's adaptation of its menu, offering pork sandwiches in Europe, vegetarian burgers in India, and beer in its German outlets. In a similar vein, Miele's American advertising campaign, under the slogan "Crafted in Germany, designed for America",

underscores the importance of tailoring products to meet local market demands (Hinner & Rülke, 2002). In accordance with the assertions put forth by Hiebing and Cooper in 1997, the conventional 4 P's of marketing – namely, product, price, place, and promotion – are superseded by an alternative framework comprising the 4 C's: customer demands, cost, convenience, and communication. In the event of customers hailing from a cultural background other than that of the fourth C (communication), an intercultural character is developed. However, in instances where the target market or a partner company comprises individuals representing a culture that has been influenced by colonialism, it is imperative to consider the postcolonial implications in the communication process. This aspect underscores the cultural and national identity of the particular culture liberated from its hegemon, and communication strategies in this case must be carried out employing particular tools. The aforementioned tools of intercultural communication, in which the postcolonial aspect can be salient, are branding, advertising, public relations, and publicity.

3.1 Branding

In the context of business-customer communication, branding emerges as a pivotal tool. However, when viewed through the lens of postcolonial studies, the implementation of this tool is characterised by specific nuances. The term "*brand*" is defined by the American Marketing Association as "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or service as distinct from those of other sellers". Consequently, *branding* can be defined as the process of endowing products and services with the power of a brand (Kotler & Keller, 2015). The distinguishing feature of a brand is its name, which evokes a certain idea or image of the product in both practical and emotional terms. The practical aspect of the product can be copied by competitors; for example, Adidas and Nike trainers can both be light, comfortable, durable and have a similar visual design. However, there are still customers who are loyal to one brand or the other. It is evident that a brand invariably possesses a distinctive "atmosphere", which engenders specific emotions in consumers. This dimension assumes particular significance when analysing branding from a postcolonial perspective. As branding involves the process of giving meaning to an organisation, company, product or service by strategically creating and shaping its identity in the minds of consumers, it appears to be a powerful tool either to promote the national identity of formerly colonised and oppressed ethnic groups, nations and cultures, or to deny cultural independence, thereby violating the right to national and cultural self-identification. The choice between

the former and the latter can influence the market position and success of a particular company operating in a post-colonial space.

In the context of intercultural postcolonial communication, branding can be conceptualised as both regressive and progressive. The regressive approach entails the concealment of colonial origins and influence on the product or the company. This strategy culminates in what Tuck and Yang (2012) term the "settler moves to innocence", a term employed in their seminal work on decolonisation. In this seminal work, the scholars underscore the extensive history of non-native individuals endeavouring to mitigate the effects of colonisation. However, these efforts often prioritise assuaging settler guilt over genuinely dismantling colonial frameworks. The other way is to disguise the colonial origins of the product. For example, jewellery brands position themselves as something that can unite hearts, and a diamond is a symbol of solid and everlasting love. This, of course, does not mention that many of them were mined in South Africa using the free labour of black slaves. This is because diamond brands want to be associated with romance and love, not with severed hands, intolerable inhumane working conditions and slave executions (Eckhardt et al., 2021, p. 4).

Conversely, a progressive strategy, as opposed to a concealed approach, seeks to unveil the colonial past and disassemble its contemporary influence, thereby fostering national and cultural identity. In the context of branding, this strategy is primarily manifested through the infusion of national and local cultural elements into brand names. This tendency is especially salient with brands that have changed their brand name, in an attempt to disassociate themselves from their colonial past. For instance, the "Burma Oil Company" became the "Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise" after Burma changed its name, imposed by foreigners, to its indigenous name, Myanmar. Similarly, "Rhodesian Railways" was renamed "National Railways of Zimbabwe" following the country's independence. The "Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board" became the "Ghana Cocoa Board" after the Gold Coast gained independence as the Republic of Ghana in 1960. The "Ceylon Tobacco Company" changed its name to the Sri Lanka Tobacco Company after Ceylon ceased to be a British dominion.

However, the question of dismantling the world's colonial edifice is not limited to the colonial empires built in the 15th-19th centuries by Britain, Spain, France, Portugal, etc. in African countries, the Americas and remote islands. This question is also relevant to the Russian Empire, which became the Soviet Union in 1922. After 1991, when the former republics gained independence, the question of national identity and uniqueness arose, influencing many aspects of social life, including the economy and business.

Consequently, an increasing number of companies have begun to utilise branding as a means of communicating their position to customers and other companies, both domestically and internationally. This phenomenon can be illustrated by examining the development of Ukrainian companies since the colonial period of the Soviet Union, when they first emerged and subsequently evolved to establish a distinct national and cultural identity. As previously stated, the brand name is the primary feature of a brand. A study of the nomenclature of the 200 largest Ukrainian companies (Forbes) reveals that changes in brand names are predominantly associated with an endeavour to disassociate from the communist and Russian past, thereby accentuating national identity. In terms of Ukrainian brand name alterations, several tendencies were noticed:

1. Removing colonial connotations from names. For example, the machine factory Red Excavator changed its name to ATEK, where the abbreviation partly stands for the name of the equipment it produces, removing the implication of the Soviet symbol – the red colour. This includes the removal of communist names from the names of companies. For example, the Dnipropetrovsk Metallurgical Plant, named after Petrovsky, became the Dnipro Metallurgical Plant.

2. The addition of national meaning to the name is primarily accomplished through the incorporation of the noun "Ukraine" or the adjective "Ukrainian" (or its abridged form in compound nominations) into the nomenclature of the companies. Here are some examples: *Ukrzaliznytsia* (*Ukrainian Railways*), *Naftogaz of Ukraine*, *Ukrtelecom*, *Ukrposhta* (*Ukrainian Postal Service*), *Ukrspyrnt*, *Ukrinterenergo*, etc. The tendency to make the companies' brand names nationally salient is observed not only in renaming the companies from the Ukrainian colonial past but also in giving names to the ones that appeared after 1991, when Ukraine gained independence.

National identity in the brand names is also emphasised by local toponymy, deployed in the names, such as *Naftokhimik Prykarpattya*, *KARPATNAFTOCHIM*, *Halychyna Oil Refinery Complex*, *Kyivstar mobile company*.

In addition to the 'decolonisation' of brand names, other postcolonial branding tools include logos and product packaging. Businesses endeavour to cultivate a national sentiment, a strategy that has the potential to foster an increase in loyal customers by promoting cultural distinctiveness and accentuating traits that are characteristic of the liberated ethnos. This phenomenon can be exemplified by a number of Ukrainian companies, which utilise the colours of the national flag in their logos, including *Kyivstar*, *Ukravtodor* (*the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine*), and *Ukrhydroenergo*. The logo feature of branding is inextricably linked to packaging,

which is itself a sub-tool of branding. Numerous enterprises endeavour to accentuate their national affiliation by incorporating national symbols on the packaging of their products. For instance, companies like AVK ('ABK' in Ukrainian), Kyiv BKK (*Kyiv Bakery and Confectionery Plant*), *Molokia*, etc. have been known to utilise Ukrainian national motifs in the packaging of their products, thereby underlining cultural identity and heritage. This phenomenon also pertains to international companies, which adapt their products to suit local markets. For instance, *Sandora* employs national motifs on the bottle labels.

Branding as a communication tool can be used not only for business interactions between companies, but also as a governmental and political tool. The concept of nation branding emerged in the early 21st century, using advertising, public relations and marketing techniques to enhance the global reputation of countries. The strategic timing of these campaigns is often such that they coincide with significant sporting, cultural, or political events, including the Olympics. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the formerly communist nations of Eastern Europe were particularly keen on rebranding themselves in order to develop a refreshed international image (Kaneva, 2022). When Estonian musicians triumphed at the 2001 Eurovision Song Contest, Estonia became the first post-Soviet nation to win the title. In anticipation of hosting Eurovision the following year, the Estonian government hired an international advertising firm to create a contemporary national brand for the country. Studies suggest that nation branding efforts in former communist countries have not been aimed solely at an international audience. These initiatives also provided a novel framework for discussing national identities domestically, reimagining national values and goals through the lens of marketing (Kaneva, 2022). Moreover, as Ukraine has demonstrated, national branding can also be used to wage war. After the Russia's attack, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on April 7, 2022, in a video address, endorsed the wartime branding campaign "Be Brave Like Ukraine" (Zelenskyy, 2022). This case shows that branding can be a powerful tool to promote a national idea, sovereignty and cultural heritage both domestically and globally.

3.2 Advertising

In addition to branding, another pivotal communication instrument is advertising, which ought to be employed judiciously for postcolonial target markets. While branding aspires to engender a distinct ambience or ethos, advertising aims to instil this ambience in the minds of consumers. The overarching objectives of an advertising campaign encompass the stimulation of demand or desire for

the product, the edification of customers regarding product features, and the persuasion of their preference for the superiority of the goods or services offered by the company (American Marketing Association). However, it should be noted that the term "advertising" can encompass dual meanings (Jones, 2015). The overt message is intended for the consumer audience, while underlying messages can perpetuate colonial ideologies relating to race, class, and gender (Jones 2018).

From a postcolonial perspective, certain advertisements are perceived as being ethically questionable, as they promote racial or national discrimination and the superiority of one nation over another. A case in point is a poster created by the soap manufacturer N. K. Fairbank Company in the early 20th century (23 Vintage Ads), which features a white girl querying a black boy as to why his mother does not wash him with fairy soap. The body language of the two children serves to underscore the discomfort of the conversation, while highlighting the dominant role of the white child in the interaction. A review of McDonald's TV advertisements from agencies worldwide reveals a recurrent theme of cultural and racial stereotypes in the marketing of themed hamburgers. For instance, the agency for McDonald's Germany employed the racial stereotype of a moustachioed Mexican male wearing a sombrero and poncho to promote a TexMex-themed burger. A similar phenomenon was observed in Australia in 2010, when the introduction of a Mexican burger was accompanied by the use of a cartoonish stereotype. This conventional imagery was also adopted in advertisements created in London for the UK release of a Mexican hamburger (Jones, 2015).

A further egregious illustration of the problematic utilisation of marketing instruments in the postcolonial context is exemplified by a 2013 advertisement conceived by General Motors, which served to perpetuate racial stereotypes. The advertisement in question featured the 1938 song entitled "Oriental Swing", and employed a mocking tone towards geisha girls by suggesting an inaccuracy in their pronunciation of the letter "r", instead producing the word "Amelicans" in its place. Following considerable public disapproval, the advertisement was promptly withdrawn, and both the client and the agency issued standard apologies, pledging to enhance their approval process (Bowling, 2019). It is evident that this incident had a detrimental effect on the company's market reputation.

Consequently, advertising can be regarded as a tool utilised by the ruling class for the purposes of colonisation (Jones, 2022). For over a century, Western advertising agencies have been present in developing nations, propagating their clients' brands through the appropriation and reinterpretation of

cultural codes and symbols to establish authenticity with both consumers and what Marx termed "the ruling class". The spectacle of advertising has been identified as an integral component of mass media, which, as Debord (1995) noted, promotes consumerism.

Following a comprehensive review of the literature on the subject, it can be concluded that the success of an advertising campaign, when considered in conjunction with other factors, is contingent upon the adoption of an effective approach to the promotion of cultural heritage and the affirmation of national identity and independence. This assertion is further substantiated by the utilisation of national symbols and motifs, and the deployment of representatives from the formerly colonised society to feature in promotional videos or photographs. It is evident that advertising campaigns employed by prominent international corporations are meticulously customised to address the distinct characteristics of each target market, particularly within the context of a postcolonial market. Evidence suggests that businesses which choose to acquit colonialism and justify racism by shooting the non-indigenous population in their advertisements tend to have less local support, which results in reduced sales in the local market (Jones, 2022).

This is particularly acute in the Ukrainian market, as Ukrainians are currently fighting for their independence and shedding blood on their own land. In such conditions, no advertising message can be accepted by the public that has any trace of imperialism or colonialism. On the contrary, the core of all advertising campaigns is the national idea and liberation. Furthermore, advertising campaigns that promote national values through both verbal and practical means, namely through the allocation of a percentage of profits to defence and liberation initiatives, have been observed to result in an increase in customer acquisition. This phenomenon occurs even in instances where the product in question is not inherently competitive in its market segment. This suggests that the endorsement of national ideals takes precedence over mere consumption. It is therefore incumbent upon companies engaged in business communication in postcolonial areas to deploy advertising tools with a view to increasing their turnover, as well as to promoting national rights for liberty and justice. This assertion is not limited to commercial enterprises but extends also to governmental national idea promotion campaigns. Since the commencement of the "Being brave is our brand" campaign in the aftermath of the Russia's invasion, national messages have been displayed on a diverse range of media, including juice bottles and billboards, in numerous cities across the globe. The campaign has also been implemented in the US, the United Kingdom, Canada

and 17 European countries, including Germany, Spain and Sweden (Kaneva, 2022).

3.3 PR and Publicity

The remaining communicative instruments pertinent to the postcolonial and decolonisation contexts are public relations and publicity. The objective of public relations as a means of communication is to establish mutually beneficial relations between the business and the public.

"Public relations ensure the presence of multiple and competing voices advocating in the public sphere, which is necessary to provide a fair and effective debate of public issues." (Edgett, 2001)

Consequently, from a postcolonial perspective, a PR strategy must consider the voices of the subaltern, which have been, or still are, muted (Anwer, 2016, p. 68). In the context of product promotion, businesses must align with the national aspirations of a decolonised society, emphasising and promoting their cultural heritage and independence. A practical way to implement this is to involve local national representatives in various public events aimed at promoting and supporting cultural heritage. The presence of representatives of postcolonial culture is mandatory, as otherwise the result may be the opposite of what is expected. A striking example is given in Jones (2015), where a company whose target market was Mexicans used only white Caucasians in its promotional campaigns and advertising. This alienated potential local customers, who made up 95% of the population, as the product was perceived as targeting 5% of "white Europeans".

At the linguistic level, a national group should not be referred to as someone's property, but rather as a self-sufficient unit. For example, by referring to indigenous peoples as "Canada's Indigenous Peoples", communicators imply that they are owned by the federation. However, possessive language should be avoided as these ethnic and cultural groups are sovereign peoples. First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities are not Canadian. Their relationship with Canada is nation-to-nation (Decolonizing media and public relations). Language is of paramount importance in PR. If a company wants to reach out to a particular national community, it is essential to use their language, because it fosters a sense of respect and care for the decolonised community.

Another effective promotional tool is the endorsement of the product by celebrities who are indigenous representatives of a post-colonial society, in line with the principle of "nothing about us without us". This is an effective tool not only for business communication, but also for strengthening the national idea and uniting the national community. This is demonstrated by a number of Ukrainian examples,

where companies that publicly declare their national position and take part in fund-raising campaigns, organise donations and charities to support Ukrainian citizens and the Ukrainian armed forces tend to increase the number of loyal customers. Since Russia's invasion, businesses that support the resistance and promote Ukrainian cultural heritage have been growing despite martial law and challenging logistics and supply chains.

4. Conclusions

Postcolonial studies remain a critical and highly relevant topic in contemporary society, especially in the realm of intercultural business communication. As Dirlík (2002) contends, the historical progression of humanity is inextricably intertwined with the phenomenon of colonialism, exemplifying the pervasive dynamics of settlement and civilisation as manifestations of colonisation. It can be argued that historical instances of colonisation have played a role in facilitating advancements across a range of domains, including medicine, technology, and cultural exchange. However, in the contemporary globalised world, where the principle of equality is increasingly recognised as a fundamental tenet, the colonial paradigm for engaging with cultures is no longer tenable. Rather than necessitating the suppression of cultural expression or the imposition of a hegemon's values, it has become increasingly evident that access to cutting-edge technologies and global opportunities can now be aligned with the preservation of national identities and sovereignty.

This paradigm shift carries profound implications for the business world, particularly for organisations seeking to thrive in postcolonial markets. The voices of decolonised nations are gaining prominence in the global arena, underscoring the importance of recognising and respecting cultural identities. Companies need to adapt their communication strategies to these evolving expectations and develop tools and practices that reinforce national sovereignty and celebrate cultural diversity. This will not only increase acceptance of companies and their products, but also build trust and foster long-term relationships with stakeholders in these societies.

It is therefore incumbent upon businesses to develop training programmes that focus on cultural sensitivity and the principles of postcolonial engagement for their employees, particularly those involved in international operations. These programmes should emphasise the importance of tailoring communication to reflect local values, traditions, and languages.

The integration of these insights into strategic frameworks is poised to engender enhanced acceptance within postcolonial societies, thereby fostering a global environment characterised by the respect and

appreciation of cultural diversity. This, in turn, is expected to serve as a fundamental cornerstone of equitable and sustainable development.

Perspectives. It is recommended that future research explore the practical frameworks that businesses can adopt to foster decolonial approaches in their operations. Studies could explore the influence of specific communication tools and strategies on perceptions of cultural respect and inclusivity across

diverse postcolonial contexts. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to investigate the influence of digital transformation and global interconnectedness on the dynamics of postcolonial business communication. For instance, an analysis of the role of social media platforms in amplifying decolonial narratives, or the utilisation of artificial intelligence to personalise culturally sensitive business messages, would represent a valuable contribution to the field.

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