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ASSESSMENT OF CORPORATE IMAGE IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT OF E-COMMERCE ОЦІНЮВАННЯ ІМІДЖУ ПІДПРИЄМСТВА В ЦИФРОВОМУ СЕРЕДОВИЩІ ЕЛЕКТРОННОЇ КОМЕРЦІЇ

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The article examines the specific features of assessing corporate image in the digital e-commerce environment. It is well established that in the context of e-commerce development, corporate image is a multidimensional construct shaped by online reputation, digital customer experience, user-generated content, platform reliability, customer support quality, and digital brand visibility. The article emphasizes that in e-commerce, companies no longer retain full control over their corporate image, as a substantial part of consumer perceptions is shaped by reviews, ratings, comments, and recommendations. The study clarifies the concept of corporate image in the digital environment as an integrated perception held by target audiences, emerging from the interaction of digital presence, online communications, reputational signals, customer experience quality, and the level of trust in the company. The key characteristics of digital corporate image are identified, and the factors influencing its formation are systematized, including online reputation and trust, digital content and communication, behavioral factors, service and technological factors, and digital visibility. A system of indicators for assessing corporate image is proposed and structured into the following blocks: reputation and trust, communication and content, behavioral, service and technological, and digital visibility. The study demonstrates that the combination of these blocks enables viewing corporate image assessment not as the analysis of isolated digital metrics but as a comprehensive process for measuring multiple dimensions of company perception in e-commerce. An algorithm for assessing corporate image in the digital environment has been developed. Its application enables a consistent assessment process, helps identify problematic areas in digital interactions, reveals gaps between the actual and desired levels of corporate image, and defines directions for further adjustment in the e-commerce environment.

Keywords: corporate image; e-commerce; corporate image assessment; digital transformation; digital marketing; digital communication tools; consumer behavior.

У статті досліджено особливості оцінювання іміджу підприємства в цифровому середовищі електронної комерції. Обґрунтовано, що в умовах розвитку е-комерсу імідж підприємства набуває багатовимірного характеру та формується під впливом онлайн-репутації, цифрового клієнтського досвіду, користувацького контенту, технологічної надійності платформи, якості сервісної підтримки та цифрової видимості бренду. Акцентовано, що в електронній комерції підприємство втрачає повний контроль над формуванням власного іміджу, оскільки значна частина уявлень про нього формується через відгуки, рейтинги, коментарі та рекомендації споживачів. Уточнено зміст іміджу підприємства в цифровому середовищі як цілісного уявлення цільових аудиторій, що виникає внаслідок взаємодії цифрової присутності, онлайн-комунікації, репутаційних сигналів, якості клієнтського досвіду та рівня довіри до підприємства. Виокремлено ключові характеристики цифрового іміджу та систематизовано чинники його формування, зокрема чинники онлайн-репутації та довіри, цифрового контенту й комунікації, поведінкові, сервісно-технологічні та цифрової видимості. Запропоновано систему показників оцінювання іміджу підприємства, структуровану за такими блоками: репутаційно-довірчий, комунікаційно-контентний, поведінковий, сервісно-технологічний, цифрової видимості. Доведено, що поєднання зазначених блоків дає змогу розглядати оцінювання іміджу не як аналіз окремих цифрових метрик, а як комплексний процес вимірювання різних проявів сприйняття підприємства в електронній комерції. Розроблено алгоритм оцінювання іміджу підприємства в цифровому середовищі, застосування якого дає змогу забезпечити послідовність оцінювання, виявити проблемні зони цифрової взаємодії, встановити розриви між фактичним і бажаним рівнем іміджу та визначити напрями його подальшого коригування в умовах електронної комерції.

Ключові слова: імідж підприємства, електронна комерція, оцінювання іміджу, цифрові трансформації, цифровий маркетинг, цифрові комунікаційні інструменти, поведінка споживачів.

Statement of the problem

The development of e-commerce is substantially transforming the conditions under which corporate image is formed. In the digital environment, it is no longer merely the result of advertising or public relations activities but is shaped by online reputation, digital customer experience, user-generated content, the platform's technological usability, and brand visibility across digital channels.

The study's relevance is determined by the increasing scale of digital interaction between companies and consumers. At the beginning of 2025, the number of Internet users worldwide reached 5.56 billion, accounting for 67.9% of the global population [1]. At the same time, global online revenues from the sale of consumer goods exceeded USD 4.12 trillion in 2024 [2]. This confirms that the digital environment is increasingly becoming the space in which consumer trust is formed and purchasing decisions are made.

A distinctive feature of e-commerce is the weakening of a company's full control over its own corporate image. A substantial part of a company's perception is formed by consumer reviews, ratings, comments, product evaluations, and recommendations. According to PowerReviews, 99.75% of online shoppers read reviews at least occasionally, while 98% consider them an important resource for making purchasing decisions [3]. Therefore, user-generated content becomes a significant factor shaping consumer trust and corporate image. In the digital environment, corporate image is dynamic and depends not only on product quality or marketing messages, but also on website performance, ease of navigation, transparency of delivery and return conditions, the security of online payments, mobile responsiveness, and the quality of customer support. The OECD emphasizes that digital transformation is accompanied by the growing importance of trust, digital security, privacy, and data governance [4], which directly affects how companies are perceived in e-commerce.

Despite the development of theories of branding, corporate image, reputation management, and digital marketing, the issue of comprehensive corporate image assessment in e-commerce remains insufficiently elaborated. Existing approaches often focus on individual indicators, such as ratings, reviews, conversion rates, website traffic, or social media activity, but do not integrate them into a coherent assessment system. Thus, the scientific and practical problem lies in the need to develop an approach for assessing corporate image in the context of digital transformation in e-commerce. Such an approach should integrate reputational, communication,



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behavioral, and technological indicators, as well as indicators of the effectiveness of a company's presence on digital platforms. This would make it possible to determine the state of corporate image more objectively, identify its weaknesses, and substantiate managerial decisions aimed at strengthening it.

Recent research and publications analysis. The issue of corporate image assessment amid digital transformation in e-commerce lies at the intersection of several research areas: branding theory, corporate image studies, reputation management, digital marketing, consumer behavior, customer experience management, and digital data analytics. This makes it necessary to consider existing studies not in isolation, but within a broader interdisciplinary framework.

The theoretical foundation of the study is formed by the works of D. Aaker, K. Keller, C. Fombrun, G. Dowling, P. Kotler, and K. Keller. D. Aaker considers the brand as a strategic asset, the value of which is shaped by customer loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and a system of brand associations [5], while K. Keller links brand equity to the effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to a company's marketing activities [6]. In the context of e-commerce, these approaches make it possible to view corporate image as a strategic intangible resource formed through multiple digital touchpoints. Within the reputational approach, C. Fombrun emphasizes that a favorable reputation creates economic value, strengthens trust in the company, and generates competitive advantages [7]. G. Dowling considers corporate image and reputation to be the result of the interaction among corporate identity, communications, and stakeholder experience [8]. This is particularly important for e-commerce, since corporate image is shaped not only by official brand messages but also by digital customer experience, reviews, ratings, and public user reactions. In the works of P. Kotler and K. Keller, corporate image is examined as an element of positioning, differentiation, and customer value creation [9]. At the same time, in the digital environment, this logic requires further expansion, as companies interact with consumers through digital platforms, social media, search engine results, and user-generated content.

Contemporary studies of the digital economy emphasize the growing importance of trust, digital security, privacy, data governance, and the responsible use of technologies [4; 10]. Accordingly, corporate image in e-commerce increasingly depends not only on product quality and communication but also on the transparency, reliability, ethical conduct, and security of digital interactions. A separate stream of research focuses on digital customer experience. K. Lemon and P. Verhoef note that customer experience is formed throughout the entire customer journey and encompasses multiple touchpoints [11]. In the field of e-commerce, this makes it possible to interpret corporate image as the outcome of a set of digital interactions between the consumer and the brand, ranging from information search to order placement, delivery, customer support, and repeat purchase. An important place in contemporary research is occupied by the analysis of online reviews and ratings. The meta-analysis by K. Qiu and L. Zhang demonstrates that the characteristics of online reviews significantly influence purchase intention, with review valence among the strongest determinants [12]. PowerReviews data also confirms the significance of reviews in purchase decision-making [3], providing grounds for considering them a key indicator of a company's digital corporate image.

Thus, existing studies have established a substantial theoretical foundation for analyzing image, brand, reputation, trust, and customer experience. At the same time, the issue of comprehensive corporate image assessment in e-commerce remains insufficiently developed, as most approaches focus on individual aspects and fail to integrate them into a unified digital corporate image.

The purpose of the research

The purpose of this article is to substantiate a system of indicators for assessing corporate image in the digital e-commerce environment.

Presentation of the main research material

In the field of e-commerce, corporate image cannot be reduced merely to the external representation of a brand or to the level of its awareness. It reflects a combination of rational, emotional, behavioral, and technological evaluations that arise during consumers' digital interaction with a company. Such interaction includes searching for product information, browsing a website or marketplace page, reading reviews, comparing offers, placing an order, making a payment, delivery, customer support, product returns, and subsequent communication with the brand. Thus, corporate image in e-commerce is formed not at a single point of contact, but throughout the entire digital customer journey.

In view of this, corporate image in the digital environment of e-commerce can be defined as an integrated perception of a company formed in the minds of target audiences, arising under the influence of its digital presence, online communications, reputational signals, the quality of customer experience, technological reliability, and the level of trust in interactions with it. This interpretation makes it possible to combine the classical understanding of image as the result of company perception with the contemporary characteristics of the digital economy, in which data, platforms, algorithms, reviews, and consumers' behavioral responses play a significant role.

The specificity of corporate image in e-commerce lies in the fact that it is shaped by factors that are either controlled, partially controlled, or uncontrolled by the company. Controlled factors include brand visual identity, content quality, website structure, communication policy, advertising messages, tone of voice, service standards, and customer interaction policy. Partially controlled or uncontrolled factors include online reviews, customer ratings, social media comments, public complaints, marketplace ratings, opinion leader reviews, organic brand mentions, and the company's position in search engine results.

An important characteristic of digital corporate image is its high sensitivity to changes in customer experience. Even when a product is high quality, a negative impression may arise due to a complicated website interface, slow page load times, non-transparent delivery terms, an inconvenient payment process, a lack of prompt customer support, or failure to respond to negative reviews. Therefore, in e-commerce, corporate image is closely related not only to the brand's marketing appeal but also to the functional quality of digital interaction.

The generalization of theoretical approaches makes it possible to identify the following key characteristics of corporate image in the digital environment of e-commerce [5; 6; 11]:

1. multidimensionality, since corporate image combines reputational, communication, behavioral, technological, service-related, and socio-ethical dimensions;
2. dynamism, since in the digital environment the perception of a company may change rapidly under the influence of new reviews, service failures, information triggers, or competitors' activity;
3. interactivity, since corporate image is shaped not only by the company itself, but also by consumers, digital platforms, marketplaces, social media, and search engines;
4. behavioral embeddedness, since a positive perception of the company is reflected not only in declarative loyalty, but also in specific consumer actions, such as repeat purchases, recommendations, positive reviews, and willingness to engage in long-term interaction;

5. technological dependence, since website speed, ease of navigation, payment security, mobile responsiveness, and the quality of digital service directly influence the perception of the company.

Thus, corporate image assessment in e-commerce should encompass not only reputational or communication characteristics, but also technological, behavioral, and service-related parameters.

The formation of corporate images in e-commerce is influenced by factors that characterize both the substantive dimension of communication and the quality of digital interactions with consumers. Unlike the traditional environment, where image largely depended on advertising, corporate reputation, and the buyer's personal experience, e-commerce significantly increases the role of online reviews, rating systems, digital service, UX/UI, the company's visibility in search engines, and interaction with platforms.

The first group comprises factors related to *online reputation and trust*. They reflect the level of consumer trust in the company and include the average product rating, the number and valence of reviews, the proportion of positive and negative evaluations, the presence of complaints, the speed of response to negative comments, communication transparency, and the overall perception of brand reliability. This group of factors is among the most important in the digital environment, since consumers often make purchasing decisions based on other users' experiences [3; 12].

The second group comprises factors related to *digital content and digital communication*. They include the quality of website content, the completeness of product descriptions, the clarity of payment and delivery terms, the consistency of tone of voice, social media activity, the quality of visual content, the regularity of communications, and the alignment of messages with the target audience's expectations. Their implementation is ensured through a system of digital communication tools, including the company's website, social media, email newsletters, messengers, chatbots, contextual advertising, and targeted advertising. In the digital environment, content performs not only as an informational but also a trust-building function, since through it consumers assess the company's professionalism, openness, and integrity.

The third group consists of *behavioral* factors, which reflect consumers' actual actions in response to the formed perception of the company. These may include repeat purchase frequency, conversion rate, page depth, duration of website interaction, cart abandonment rate, return frequency, customer retention rate, and willingness to recommend the company to others. These factors are particularly important because they enable assessment not only of consumers' declared attitudes but also of their actual behavioral responses.

The fourth group encompasses *service and technological factors*. These include website loading speed, mobile responsiveness, interface usability, the quality of search and filtering functions, the number of steps required to complete an order, payment security, platform stability, availability of customer support, and the speed of problem resolution. In the field of e-commerce, these factors directly affect corporate image, since technological inconvenience is often perceived by consumers as a sign of the company's lack of professionalism or reliability.

The fifth group is associated with the company's *digital visibility*. It includes the company's positions in search engine results, its presence on marketplaces, the share of branded traffic, the number of organic brand mentions, social media presence, digital audience reach, and the accessibility of company information. Digital visibility is an important prerequisite for corporate image formation, since even a positive company image cannot effectively influence consumers if the brand has low visibility or is insufficiently represented across relevant digital channels.

Considering the identified factors, it is advisable to develop a system of indicators to assess corporate image in the digital e-commerce environment. Its construction should be based on the principles of comprehensiveness, measurability, comparability, dynamism, and managerial relevance. Comprehensiveness implies coverage of different aspects of corporate image; measurability refers to the possibility of quantitatively or qualitatively assessing indicators; comparability denotes the ability to compare results over time or against competitors; dynamism involves considering changes in the digital environment; and managerial relevance means the possibility of using assessment results for practical decision-making.

In the context of e-commerce, the system of indicators for assessing corporate image should include not only traditional image-related characteristics, but also digital metrics that reflect consumers' actual behavior and the quality of their interaction with the company. This approach enables the combination of consumers' subjective evaluations with factual data from digital analytics. This is particularly important because, in e-commerce, image is manifested not only in attitudes towards the brand, but also in specific user actions, such as views, clicks, adding products to the cart, placing orders, repeat purchases, leaving reviews, and making recommendations. The proposed system of indicators should be structured into five analytical assessment blocks: reputation and trust; communication and content; behavioral, service, and technological; and the company's digital visibility. Each of these blocks reflects a distinct dimension of image formation; however, only their combination enables an integrated understanding of how the company is perceived in the digital environment (Table 1).

Table 1. System of indicators for assessing corporate image in the digital environment of e-commerce

Assessment block	Key indicators	Analytical purpose	Data sources
Reputation and trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • average rating; • share of positive / negative reviews; • sentiment of mentions; • number of complaints; • response time to negative comments 	identification of reputational risks, assessment of the level of trust, and the quality of interaction with the audience	Review platforms, marketplaces, social media, mention monitoring services
Communication and content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completeness of product descriptions; • quality of visual content; • regularity of communications; • social media engagement 	assessment of the quality of informational support provided to consumers and the ability of communications to shape positive brand perception	Website, social media, email newsletters, advertising accounts, and content audit
Behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conversion rate; • repeat purchase rate; • retention rate; • average order value; • cart abandonment rate 	determination of the extent to which positive perception of the company is transformed into purchase, repeated interaction, and loyalty	Google Analytics, CRM, CMS, e-commerce systems
Service and technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • website loading speed; • mobile responsiveness; • ease of navigation; • payment security; • customer support response time 	identification of technical and service-related barriers that may reduce trust and worsen customer experience	PageSpeed Insights, CRM, HelpDesk systems, website technical analytics, UX / UI audit
Company's digital visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEO rankings; • share of branded traffic; • number of organic mentions; • marketplace presence 	assessment of the company's ability to be visible to the target audience and form a sustainable digital presence	SEO tools, search analytics, marketplaces, social media, and social listening services

Source: compiled by the authors based on [3; 4; 11–14].

The proposed system of indicators enables assessment of corporate image not only as a perceptual outcome but also as a multi-level analytical category. The reputation and trust block characterizes the extent to which the company is perceived as reliable, transparent, and customer-oriented. The communication and content block enables assessment of the quality of informational support during interactions with consumers. The behavioral block reflects how the formed image is transformed into specific buyer actions. The service and technological block shows the extent to which the company's digital infrastructure supports positive brand perception. The digital visibility block helps determine how accessible and visible the company is to the target audience in the digital space.

It is important to note that individual indicators cannot fully reflect the actual state of a company's corporate image. For example, high website traffic does not necessarily indicate a positive image if it is accompanied by a low conversion rate or a high cart abandonment rate. Similarly, many social media followers do not guarantee high trust in the company if its communications are characterized by low engagement or negative sentiment in comments. Therefore, corporate image assessment should be based on a combination of quantitative, qualitative, and behavioral indicators.

Assessment of corporate image in the digital e-commerce environment should be conducted as a logically structured sequence of analytical actions to identify the current state of the image, detect problem areas, interpret the results, and formulate appropriate managerial decisions. Unlike a fragmented analysis of individual indicators, a sequential assessment integrates heterogeneous analytical data into a unified research logic, ensuring the validity of subsequent conclusions.

The need for a specifically sequential assessment arises from the fact that corporate image in e-commerce is a multidimensional construct shaped by various groups of factors. In this regard, assessment cannot be limited merely to recording individual digital metrics; rather, it should encompass the stages of developing an information base, selecting relevant indicators, analyzing them, generalizing the results, and verifying the correspondence between the actual state of corporate image and the company's target benchmarks.

The sequence of corporate image assessment in the digital e-commerce environment should be presented as an algorithm. Such an algorithm reflects a logically connected set of stages, starting from defining the purpose of assessment and forming the information base to interpreting the results, making managerial decisions, and conducting reassessment (Fig. 1).

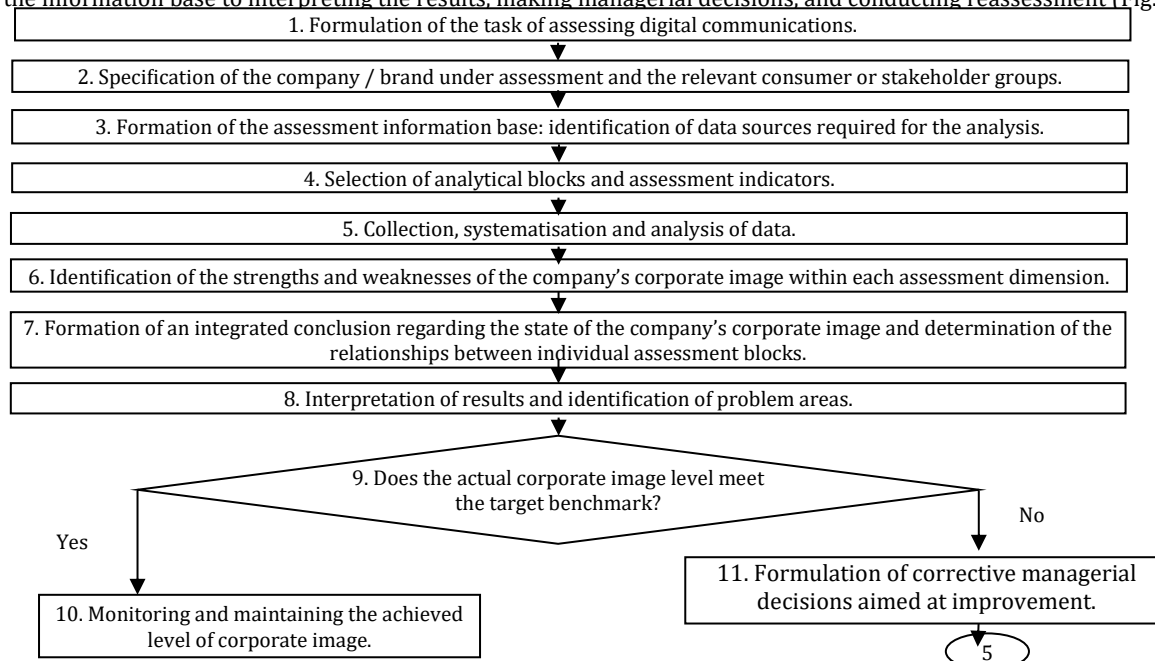


Fig. 1. Algorithm for assessing corporate image in the digital environment of e-commerce. Source: compiled by the authors.

The proposed algorithm demonstrates that the assessment of corporate image in the digital e-commerce environment is not linear but cyclical. This means that the analytical process does not end at the stage of recording the results but proceeds to comparing the actual state of corporate image with the desired benchmarks, subsequent adjustment of managerial actions, and repeated measurement of the changes achieved. It is precisely this logic that ensures not only the analytical, but also the applied value of assessment.

The first stage of the algorithm is to define the purpose of the assessment. At this stage, it is necessary to clarify the specific analytical or managerial purpose for which the assessment is being carried out: general diagnosis of the state of corporate image, identification of problem areas, comparison with competitors, evaluation of the effectiveness of digital communications, analysis of reputational risks, or justification of changes in the marketing strategy. The clarity of the assessment purpose determines the subsequent selection of information sources, indicators, and methods for interpreting the results.

The second stage involves defining the assessment's object and target audience. In this case, it is important not only to determine which specific company or brand image is being analyzed, but also to specify from whose perspective it is assessed. These may include existing customers, potential consumers, marketplace users, social media followers, partners, or other stakeholders. Such specification is necessary because different audiences form different perceptions of the company and respond differently to its communication, service-related, or technological behavior. The third stage involves the formation of the assessment information base. In the digital environment, data sources are numerous and heterogeneous; therefore, it is important to ensure their relevance and analytical sufficiency. Such sources include web analytics systems, CRM systems, marketplace analytics, review platforms, social media, SEO tools, consumer survey results, and expert assessments. It is the combination of these sources that enables a more comprehensive picture of corporate image, as it considers both subjective perceptions and users' actual behavioral responses.

The fourth stage consists of selecting the analytical blocks and assessment indicators. At this stage, the assessment is structured around the main analytical blocks: reputation and trust; communication and content; behavioral, service, and technological; and the company's digital presence. Within each block, specific quantitative and qualitative indicators are

defined, enabling assessment of the corresponding aspect of corporate image. Such structuring ensures the assessment is comprehensive and helps avoid an excessive focus on individual digital metrics.

The fifth stage includes data collection, systematization, and analysis. At this stage, information from various sources is aggregated, checked for completeness, compared, grouped, and preliminarily generalized. The analysis enables the identification of general trends, deviations, problem signals, and anomalies that subsequently require deeper interpretative analysis.

The sixth stage is directly related to the assessment of indicators within individual analytical blocks. Its essence lies in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the company's corporate image within each assessment dimension. For example, a company may demonstrate strong digital presence indicators but low consumer trust; alternatively, it may have a positive reputation among existing customers but insufficiently effective communication. It is precisely such an element-by-element assessment that enables one to avoid superficial conclusions and move towards a more accurate analytical interpretation of the state of corporate image.

The seventh stage involves generalizing the assessment results. At this stage, an overall conclusion about the state of the company's corporate image is drawn by comparing the results across the individual analytical blocks.

The eighth stage consists of interpreting results and identifying problem areas. Its task is to determine the reasons behind positive or negative perceptions of the company and to identify barriers to trust, communication gaps, service deficiencies, technological limitations, or problems related to digital visibility. This stage ensures the transition from recording numerical indicator values to formulating a meaningful analytical conclusion.

At the ninth stage, the results obtained are compared with the desired or normatively defined state of the company's corporate image. If the actual values correspond to the expected level, the company moves to the stage of maintaining and monitoring the achieved state. If deviations from the target benchmarks are identified, there arises a need to develop and implement corrective managerial decisions.

In the case of a positive response, the algorithm proceeds to the tenth stage: monitoring and maintaining the achieved level of corporate image. This involves the systematic tracking of key indicators, control over changes in consumer behavior, the sentiment of mentions, service quality, communication effectiveness, and other parameters that may affect the sustainability of the achieved image-related outcome.

If the actual level of corporate image does not correspond to the target level, the eleventh stage is activated. It involves formulating corrective managerial decisions to improve online reputation, enhance digital content, strengthen customer support, increase communication transparency, optimize UX/UI, reduce barriers in the order-placement process, improve digital presence, and develop other components of corporate image.

After the corrective decisions have been formulated and implemented, the company returns to the stage of collecting, systematizing, and analyzing updated data. This makes it possible to verify the effectiveness of the measures undertaken and to ensure the continuous improvement of corporate image in the digital environment.

Thus, the proposed approach ensures a link between analytical results and practical decisions, thereby increasing consumer trust, improving the digital customer experience, and strengthening the company's competitive position in e-commerce. The results of corporate image assessment in e-commerce can be used in several analytical areas. First, they provide a basis for reputation monitoring, enabling timely identification of increases in negative reviews and complaints, declines in ratings, or deterioration in the sentiment of mentions. Second, they can be used to improve the digital customer experience by optimizing the website, mobile version, order-placement process, payment system, and customer support. Third, the assessment results enable more effective marketing communications by providing a better understanding of which messages, channels, and interaction formats contribute to a positive perception of the company.

Conclusions and prospects for further research

The conducted study has shown that, in the context of e-commerce, corporate image ceases to be a static characteristic of a company's market representation and becomes a dynamic perception system that changes under the influence of interactions among the company, consumers, and digital platforms. This necessitates a shift from the episodic analysis of individual reputational manifestations to the systematic assessment of corporate image based on interrelated digital, behavioral, communication, and service-related indicators. It has been established that corporate image assessment in e-commerce should focus not only on determining the level of brand awareness or trust, but also on identifying specific digital touchpoints where positive perceptions of the company are formed or weakened. Therefore, it is important to combine indicators of online reputation, content quality, consumer behavioral responses, platform usability, customer support, and digital visibility. The developed system of indicators provides an analytical basis for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a company's digital corporate image and for determining which specific components of digital interaction require adjustment. The proposed assessment algorithm gives this process a sequential and cyclical character, as it involves comparing the actual level of corporate image with the target level and formulating appropriate managerial decisions.

Future research prospects are associated with the practical validation of the proposed system of indicators using data from companies operating in different segments of e-commerce, the refinement of the relative weight of individual indicators depending on the specific features of the business model, and the development of an integrated toolkit for the quantitative assessment of a company's digital corporate image.

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