



Review of the Role of Brand Identity in Consumer Decision Making

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Abstract. A large body of empirical research has examined separately how typographic, graphic, and color elements influence consumer perception and preference, yet a systematic integration of their joint effects and underlying mechanisms remains lacking. This review systematically maps out the mechanisms by which brand identity affects consumer decision responses, synthesizing domestic and international findings on the design elements of brand identity (typography, graphics, color). Its goal is to furnish a theoretical foundation for firms seeking to optimize brand identity design and to devise differentiated marketing strategies. The evidence shows that, among typographic elements, letter case, typeface design, and the use of numerals influence brand-image perception and trust through conversational norms and cultural symbolism, among graphic elements, angular shapes convey innovation traits, circles enhance trust, and symmetry bolsters cognitive stability of the brand, and color triggers emotional and cultural associations (e.g., red stimulates impulsivity, blue conveys calm) via hue, saturation, and value. Future research should address cross-cultural differences and the impact of dynamic identities on consumer psychology to refine global brand strategies.

Keywords: Brand identity, Identity function, Symbolic association.

1 Introduction

As digital transformation and globalization accelerate, the modern consumer market is undergoing profound structural change. It is evolving from a product-centric “buy–sell” model toward an experience-oriented “co-creation–sharing” ecosystem. Consumers no longer seek mere material satisfaction, they demand personalization, customization, and emotional resonance, and they hold higher expectations for the culture, values, and social responsibility that brands convey. In this highly fragmented and fiercely competitive environment, brand homogeneity is increasingly pronounced emerging brands rise rapidly, while established ones continually reinvent their images to capture consumer mindshare.

To stand out, firms must deploy a clear, meaningful brand identity -not merely a visual symbol, but a system of codes carrying core values, cultural heritage, and emotional bonds -to enhance consumer recognition and trust. As consumer-behavior and marketing scholarship has deepened, scholars recognize that brand identity not only

directly shapes brand cognition, attitudes, and purchase decisions but also plays a pivotal role in loyalty and word-of-mouth. Thus, systematically reviewing and evaluating the mechanisms through which brand identity influences consumer decision making enriches brand-management theory and offers practical guidance for crafting differentiated marketing strategies and long-term competitive advantage.

This review focuses on valuable perspectives and empirical findings from both domestic and international studies, distilling how different brand-identity elements (e.g., graphics, color, typography) affect consumer psychology and behavior. The insights aim to help firms design more attractive and distinctive brand identities, target marketing strategies more precisely, boost brand awareness, and ultimately cultivate strong brands.

2 Definition and Function of Brand Identity

When a powerful, successful firm emerges, it invariably possesses a unique and striking brand identity. Take Nike's "Swoosh," as shown in figure 1, dynamic check mark evokes the brand spirit of "speed," "strength," and "breakthrough" while powerfully reinforcing associations with athletic passion and self-transcendence.



Fig. 1. Nike's Logo

Similarly, as shown in figure 2, McDonald's "Golden Arches" use bright color and smooth curves to evoke warmth, friendliness, and joy, instantly signaling "fast food," "family gathering," and "casual comfort" across cultures [1].



Fig. 2. McDonald's Logo

From a cognitive-psychology standpoint, such highly recognizable marks create “mental shortcuts” that capture attention amidst information overload and reduce decision costs. From a brand-management perspective, they serve as “emotional anchors,” forging deep emotional connections through color, shape, and motion, thereby enhancing loyalty and word-of-mouth. Thus, a successful brand identity transcends mere visual symbolism to become a key driver of consumer cognition, behavior, and brand equity.

3 Major Types of Brand Identity Elements

Literature shows that research on brand-identity design has focused primarily on typography and graphics, with relatively fewer studies on color [2]. This section examines the impact of typography, graphics, and color on consumer decision making.

3.1 Typography

Letter Case. The choice of letter case in logotypes shapes a brand’s differentiated image. Conversational-norm theory holds that breaking an established norm prompts consumers to infer underlying reasons. Since lowercase is typical in everyday text and uppercase reserved for proper nouns or emphasis, uppercase lettering commands attention and conveys formality, whereas lowercase feels informal and fosters emotional resonance [3]. For example, Amazon’s logo arrow extends from the “A” to the “Z,” as shown in figure 3, which suggesting full-range service while subtly forming a smile - communicating comprehensive service commitment and a pleasant shopping experience. Lowercase text feels energetic and friendly -ideal for apparel or F&B brands - while uppercase implies authority and formality -better suited to high-credence products like medical devices.



Fig. 3. Amazon's Logo

Typeface. Typeface design -through letterform structure, stroke weight, proportion, and rhythm -elicits consumer associations and conveys brand emotion [4]. For instance, bold sans-serif fonts suggest strength, clerical script evokes tradition, serif fonts convey formality. Heavy typefaces project masculinity, thin ones suggest femininity, upright forms impart reliability, slanted types imply innovation and dynamism [5]. Disney's handwritten logo, as shown in figure 4, which suggests magic and fantasy, linking consumers to childhood wonder.



Fig. 4. Disney's Logo

Numerals. Numerals in logos often convey functional information -founding year or model number -to bolster brand heritage and trust. Early research showed that identity marks elicit emotional responses prior to cognitive processing. Certain numerals carry cultural symbolism -for example, "8" in Chinese sounds like "prosper," as used in Bama Tea Co.'s name to imply blessing when gifted.

3.2 Graphics

Angular vs. Rounded Shapes. Angular or multi-angled designs convey innovation, avant-garde character, and uniqueness, appealing to consumers seeking novelty and

self-expression -often stimulating impulse or premium purchases [5]. As shown in figure 5, Adidas's three-stripe mark uses sharp lines to underscore athletic vitality and innovation. In contrast, softened, rounded edges evoke stability, gentleness, and safety.



Fig. 5. Adidas's Logo

Circular Forms. Circular designs, with their continuous curves, signal harmony, stability, and trustworthiness. Many brands adopt circles or curves to soften their image and enhance coherence [5]. In cluttered brand environments, circular marks quickly convey security, reducing perceived risk and encouraging trial and repeat purchase. BMW's roundel, with its blue-and-white quadrants, reflects regional heritage while communicating precision and premium quality -psychologically conveying expertise and technical prowess.

Symmetry vs. Asymmetry. Symmetry denotes aesthetic balance and harmony, providing easy visual processing and signaling reliability and tradition [5]. Asymmetry breaks convention, offering freshness and energy -suited for innovative brands -but may increase cognitive load and processing time [6,7].

3.3 Color

Hue. Warm hues (red, orange) evoke excitement and impulsivity, common in FMCG branding, cool hues (blue, green) convey calm and trust, favored by tech and financial services [8]. Starbucks's deep green strengthens associations with nature and health, while value contrast boosts visual impact.

Saturation. High saturation (bright red, deep blue) heightens arousal and perceptions of "energetic" or "innovative" personality, low saturation (muted gray, pastel pink) communicates "calm" or "subdued," fostering positive attitudes among audiences seeking tranquility [9]. As shown in figure 6, Google's multicolored logo signals creativity and diversity. However, overly vivid colors can trigger perceptions of cheapness if misapplied [10].



Fig. 6. Google's Logo

Value (Lightness). High-value (light) colors attract attention through contrast, guiding visual focus.

4 Conclusion

In sum, brand identity functions as a symbolic system linking brands and consumers. Textual, graphical, and color elements of brand identity operate via distinct psychological pathways to shape cognition, emotion, and behavior.

Based on this review, five design guidelines are purposed.

Distinctiveness & Clarity Ensure high differentiation and visual legibility to facilitate rapid brand recognition and lasting impressions.

Simplicity in Form & Color Pair graphic shapes with clear, bright colors to accelerate processing and minimize distraction.

Elements of brand values and consumer psychographics -angular designed by Alignment with Core Values & Audience Match high-contrast designs for innovation-seeking audiences, rounded, neutral palettes for reliability-focused segments.

Typeface Readability & Emotional Tone Balance legibility with emotional conveyance, leveraging weight and slant to signal gendered or functional attributes.

Multi-Context adaptability was tested across touchpoints (social avatars, packaging, outdoor advertising) to ensure scalability, material adaptability and cultural appropriateness while maintaining recognition and emotional resonance.

Although current research has illuminated many mechanisms, future work should explore dynamic identities (e.g., animated logos, interactive design) using eye-tracking and neuroscience methods to clarify their effects on brand attitudes in digital media environments.

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