



Effects of Visual Brand Identity Elements on Consumer Purchase Behavior: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

The significance of visual brand identity for consumer choice has become one of the primary influences in marketing practice. The systematic review of the literature for this particular brand identity builds on 20 years (2004-2024) of research to analyze the effects of individual components of visual brand identity, such as the logo, color, and layout, on consumer behavior. Following the PRISMA guidelines, of the 577 articles obtained from Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar, 42 empirical studies were selected for final integration. It has been determined that the primary effect of the cited elements on consumers of the identified brand is the processing that stimulates consumers' cognition and affect. This, in turn, has a pronounced effect on the brand attitude, the intention to purchase, and the resulting loyalty toward the brand. It has been determined that consumers prefer logo designs that are simple and symmetrical, that complex logos suggest the brand is a higher-end offering, that color influences psychology, that cultures also affect how color is perceived, and that visual hierarchy organizes layout to shape focus and lower the user's brand-associated cognitive workload. The final proposed model integrates within a stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model the primary findings of the review and the suggested primary influences of culture, product involvement, and channel context as moderating influences. The recommendations for practitioners elaborate upon the key components of a visual brand strategy. This research identifies critical gaps in the literature and proposes a future research agenda focused on neuromarketing methods, omnichannel coherence, and the impact of AI-driven personalization on visual branding.

Keywords: *Visual brand identity; Consumer purchase behavior; Logo design and color psychology; Layout and visual hierarchy; Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model.*

JEL Classification codes: *P46.*

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Introduction

The role of brand visualization in strategically portraying one of the most important aspects of a brand remains crucial. As a representation of the company, visual logos, attractive colors, and website layouts serve as facades to draw in potential customers (Park, Eisingerich, & Park, 2013; Hultén, 2011). Due to the overwhelming amount of information available today, many consumers' attention spans are increasingly fragmented. Successful businesses in today's economy feature

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strong visual branding that identifies the company while also forming a connection with potential customers to promote the product (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). As digital technology has become commonplace, businesses are tasked with creating visual branding that is consistent and adaptable across multiple media, whether in-store or on social media (Schifferstein & Hekkert, 2008; Hynes, 2009). By quickly presenting and communicating brand narratives, visually appealing designs emotionally attract consumers and increase sales (Childers & Jass, 2002; Creusen & Schoormans, 2005). For both consumers and business scholars and practitioners, establishing a branding technique that successfully balances these narratives and design elements has become a priority.

This systematic literature review is based on some literature and an integrated theory framework. The primary theoretical lens is based on the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) model of Mehrabian and Russell (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The model suggests that environmental factors (the stimulus) initiate some form of processing (the organism), leading to a behavioral response. In branding, the visual identity components serve as the stimulus, the consumer's cognitive and affective components as the organism, and the response may be a behavioral response, such as purchase intention, or an attitudinal response, such as brand loyalty. This design establishes a strong basis for understanding the causal chain from visual design to consumer behavior.

Theories of brand equity and brand identity complement the S-O-R model. In influential studies, both Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993) conceptualize brand equity as the additional intangible value ascribed to a good or service, dependent primarily on what consumers know, think, and feel about it. One way to strengthen a brand's equity is through a strong visual brand identity. According to brand identity theory, the visual manifestations of a brand are therefore not ornamental but strategic tools that embody its fundamental essence and attributes and communicate its values. This review integrates principles of visual perception and information processing (Pieters & Warlop, 1999) to describe how consumers scan, process, interpret, and understand a set of visuals. Constructs and theories such as cognitive load, processing fluency, and visual hierarchy are essential for explaining how different logo layouts or designs attract interest, facilitate understanding, and increase overall cognitive processing. In one area of psychology, color psychology studies the effects of various colors on people and the emotions and feelings they evoke (Labrecque & Milne, 2012; Gorn, Chattopadhyay, Yi, & Dahl, 1997). For example, while multiple shades of red evoke feelings of excitement and urgency, blue is typically associated with feelings of trust and competence. These feelings can influence perceptions of brands and the likelihood of making a purchase.

The review also incorporates dual-process theories of decision-making. These theories of decision-making concern the cognitive system and how it operates in two modes: an intuitive, effortless, and automatic mode, often called System 1, and a more conscious, effortful mode, called System 2 (Kahneman, 2011). System 1 processes are triggered for a great deal of consumer reaction to visual branding, which is often driven by emotional and aesthetic appeal. An effective visual identity can create a halo effect, making consumers more likely to evaluate a brand positively before they consider its attributes.

While more research has been conducted on this subject, there are still inconsistencies and gaps in this field of study. Research findings tend to be fragmented and focus on single visual elements, without considering interactivity. Also, the moderating influence of essential variables such as cultural context, consumer involvement, and product category has been understudied. For some unknown reason, they didn't do this. The current systematic review seeks to accomplish this by providing evidence synthesis for the previous two decades to examine the outlined gaps. The primary goals of this review are to: 1) examine and explain the impact of consumer behavior caused



by specific visual elements of brand identity such as logo, color, and layout; 2) create an integrated conceptual framework of the findings; 3) examine and explain the consumer-level impacts and how they are measured; and 4) provide direction for future research. This paper aims to provide readers with a better understanding of how visual brand identity shapes the consumer journey by conducting a systematic literature review.

Methodology

This literature review aligns with the PRISMA 2020 statement and its associated principles. Defining your review within the PRISMA framework increases transparency regarding your search, identification, selection, and synthesis methodology. This review aims to empirically map the impact of constituent parts of visual brand identity on consumer purchasing behavior. The methods in this review encompass the articulation of a search strategy, the crafting of specific inclusion and exclusion criteria, the conduct of a multi-stage systematic review of the literature, and the detailing of processes for the extraction, assessment, and quality assessment of the data.

Data Sources and Search Strategy

A systematic search was performed in April 2024 across four major electronic databases known for their extensive coverage of marketing, psychology, and business literature: Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. These databases were chosen to ensure a comprehensive retrieval of relevant peer-reviewed articles. The search strategy was developed to capture a broad range of studies focusing on the intersection of visual branding and consumer behavior. Boolean logic was employed to combine keywords related to visual brand identity elements with terms associated with consumer responses. The core search string was adapted to each database's syntax but generally followed the structure: ("visual brand identity" OR "brand logo" OR "brand color" OR "layout") AND ("consumer behavior" OR "purchase intention" OR "brand attitude"). The search was limited to English-language articles published between January 2004 and April 2024 to capture the last two decades of research, a period marked by the significant rise of digital and omnichannel marketing. Table 1 provides a detailed summary of the search strategy employed for each database, including the exact queries and the number of records retrieved.

Table 1. Search Strategy and Databases

Database	Search String	Records Retrieved
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY("visual brand identity" OR "brand logo" OR "brand color" OR "visual identity elements") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY("consumer behavior" OR "purchase intention" OR "buying behavior" OR "consumer attitude"))	187
Web of Science	TS=((("visual brand identity" OR "logo design" OR "brand color") AND ("consumer purchase" OR "purchase behavior" OR "brand attitude"))	156
PsycINFO	(visual identity OR brand logo OR color psychology) AND (consumer behavior OR purchase intention)	134
Google Scholar	allintitle: "visual brand identity" OR "brand logo" OR "brand color" AND "consumer behavior" OR "purchase intention."	82
Total		559

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

A set of strict exclusion and inclusion criteria must be followed and included in the review. These criteria are shown in Table 2 and include the study timeframe, document type, language, relevance



to the topic at hand, and study design. Only peer-reviewed English journal articles were included in the study. To be included in the study, the authors of the article must have conducted an empirical study about at least one element of visual brand identity (i.e., logo, color, layout, and typography) and at least one outcome of the consumer (i.e., purchase intention, brand attitude, recall, choice). Conceptual studies, studies that are purely focused on the B2B side of the market, or studies that do not take any consumer measurement, were excluded from this study. This ensures that the synthesis comprises empirical studies that directly.

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion Category	Inclusion Rule	Exclusion Rule
Time Period	Published between January 2004 and April 2024	Published before 2004 or after April 2024
Document Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles	Conference proceedings, book chapters, dissertations, theses, and non-peer-reviewed works
Language	English language publications	Non-English publications
Topic Relevance	Must examine at least one visual brand identity element (logo, color, layout, typography)	Focus on non-visual elements (e.g., brand name sound, scent) or corporate identity only.
Consumer Outcomes	Must measure at least one consumer-level outcome (e.g., purchase intention, brand attitude, perception)	Studies without any measured consumer-level dependent variables
Research Design	Empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods) with primary data collection	Purely conceptual, theoretical, or review papers (except for citation searching)

Study Selection and Screening

The study selection process followed a multi-stage approach as illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1). Initially, the search across the four databases yielded 559 records.

An additional 18 relevant articles were identified through a manual search of the reference lists of key review articles, bringing the total to 577 records. After removing duplicates ($n = 156$), 421 unique records remained for screening. The first screening phase involved reviewing titles and abstracts to assess their relevance to the inclusion criteria. Two independent reviewers conducted this process, and any disagreements were resolved through discussion to reach a consensus. This phase led to the exclusion of 312 articles that were clearly not relevant (e.g., wrong context, non-empirical). In the second phase, the full texts of the remaining 109 articles were retrieved and assessed for eligibility. During this detailed review, 67 articles were further excluded for reasons such as focusing solely on corporate identity without a consumer component, failing to measure relevant outcomes, or being non-empirical. This rigorous screening process yielded a final sample of 42 studies that met all inclusion criteria and were included in the qualitative and quantitative syntheses.

Quality Assessment and Data Extraction

A structured data-extraction form was created to document key details for the 42 studies. The data extraction checklist covered the following: authors, year of publication, journal name, research approach, consumer context, sample attributes, visual component(s) reviewed, dependent variables, measurement tools, and a description of the principal findings and the direction and significance of the effect. A checklist was used to evaluate the quality of the studies, and its criteria were grounded in established appraisal tools. Indicators of the research quality included the clarity of the research questions, the research design, the validity and reliability of the measurement tools,



and the data analysis techniques employed. Studies were examined and rated on a low, medium, or high methodological quality scale. This approach allowed the synthesis to be built on the most credible findings and to provide greater flexibility in interpreting them based on research quality. For most included studies (35 of 42), this provided a more than sufficient basis for the review. Medium- or high-quality studies were the most abundant.

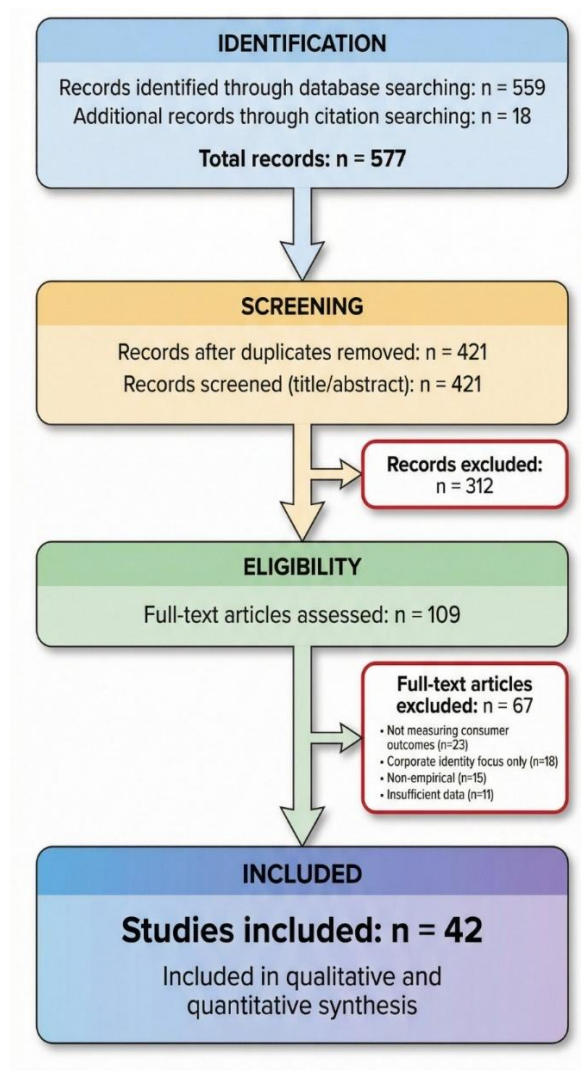


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram

Descriptive Characteristics of the Literature

The studies included in the sample present the most in-depth, two-decade examination of the intersection of visual brand identity and consumer behavior. A focus on the individual descriptive components of the studies provides insight into trends in publication outlets, methods used, study geography, the context of the consumers examined, and more. A gradual increase in publications from 2004 to 2014 and a dramatic increase from 2015 to 2024 (71.4%) indicate a trend in research interest in the area of focus, as shown in Figure 2. The data support the assertion that visual identity (considered by many to be the “identity” of modern marketing) is gaining relevance in research. It is reasonable to assume that the increase in research interest in the area is due to the proliferation of global communication through online and visual social media.



The studies included in the sample were published in several high-quality peer-reviewed journals, with the Journal of Marketing, Journal of Consumer Research, and Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science serving as the primary venues. As such, the area of focus is central to the discipline of marketing. The International Journal of Research in Marketing and the Journal of Product & Brand Management also exemplify the topic's relevance to both marketing strategy and branding research.

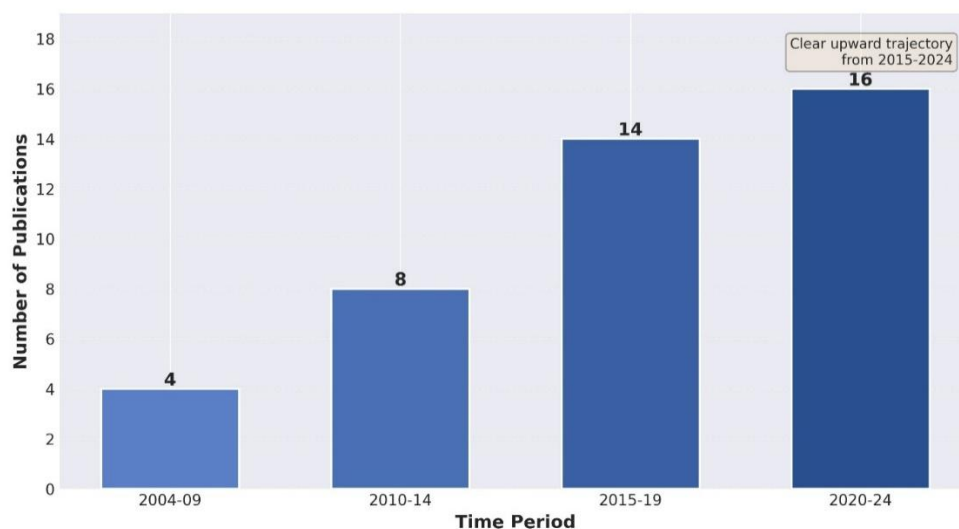


Figure 2. Publication Trends Over Time (2004-2024)

Research employing experimental design constituted a plurality of the studies, comprising 42.9% of the total (Table 3). This choice of method likely reflects the ability to establish, with a high degree of internal validity, cause-and-effect relationships between particular visual elements and consumer behaviors. Also common, but to a lesser extent, was survey research (33.3%), which aims to capture behavioral research at the individual level, focusing on attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intentions. Among the more recent studies, a distinguishing feature has been the adoption of more advanced techniques, such as eye-tracking (14.3%) and neuromarketing (2.4%), which seek to capture implicit and physiological consumer reactions and, in turn, provide a deeper understanding of the relevant cognitive and affective dimensions.

Research on consumer markets is mainly located in Western regions, specifically North America, which accounts for 35.7% of the studies, and Europe, which accounts for 28.6% of the the total research. A decent chunk of the studies done, that is 23.8%, is also from Asia. This shows that is critical. There is also South America and Africa, which have little to no research. It is pretty shocking to observe the lack of studies in these regions, and thus, a gap in the literature exists. In the context of the consumers, the studies mainly focused on digital commerce, online, and electronic commerce, with studies done 38.1% of the time, while the traditional commerce in retail and commerce in stores and physically structured retail environments also remained relevant in the literature, with a total of 26.2% of the studies focused on these areas. A bias toward context and geography can be inferred from the studies, which are restricted in terms of culture and markets.

Table 3. Descriptive Profile of Included Studies (n=42)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Research Method	Experimental design	18	42.90%
	Survey/questionnaire	14	33.30%



Consumer Context	Eye-tracking study	6	14.30%
	Mixed methods	3	7.10%
	Neuromarketing (fMRI/EEG)	1	2.40%
	Online/e-commerce	16	38.10%
	In-store retail	11	26.20%
	Mobile commerce	8	19.00%
	Social media	5	11.90%
	Omnichannel	2	4.80%
Geographic Region	North America	15	35.70%
	Europe	12	28.60%
	Asia	10	23.80%
	Multi-country	5	11.90%

Effects of Visual Brand Identity Elements

The visual elements of a brand—primarily its logo, color palette, and layout—are the fundamental building blocks of its identity. They function as stimuli that trigger a cascade of cognitive and affective responses in consumers. This section synthesizes the empirical findings from the 42 included studies to examine the specific effects of each core visual element on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. The analysis is structured into three subsections: logo design, color, and layout/visual hierarchy. A summary of the key empirical findings for each element is presented in Table 4.

Logo Design Effects

A logo is typically the most identifiable part of a brand's visual identity. Research shows that specific design features of a logo can affect how consumers respond to it. One of the most common dimensions is the degree of simplicity and complexity. While some of the earlier studies conclude that simple logos are easier to recognize and process, and therefore lead to more favorable perceptions of the brand (Walsh, Winterich, & Mittal, 2010), more recent studies show that the relationship is more complex. For example, Machado et al. (2019) suggest that more complex logos, under certain circumstances, can signal higher value or premium quality, thereby positively affecting consumers' purchase intentions in these categories. This means the ideal logo complexity is likely dependent on the brand and its primary consumers. Research Luffarelli, Stamatogiannakis, & Yang, (2019) shows that the digital age and the prevalence of modern, minimalist design have fueled consumption, in part due to greater ease of information processing.

To add to the complexity, the logo's shape and symmetry are essential considerations. Research Henderson & Cote, (1998) supports the notion that symmetry is more aesthetically pleasing and can improve attitudes towards the brand, therefore supporting the logo's visual design principles. Still, the other side of the equation is that asymmetrical logos can be advantageous. Cian et al. Research shows that dynamic, asymmetrical logos can be used for brands with an energetic personality (e.g., evoking feelings of excitement and movement) (Cian, Krishna, & Elder, 2014). The distinction between rounded and angular shapes in the logo is essential. Park's research shows that for consumers with some level of brand commitment, changing an angular logo to a more rounded one changes their attitude about the brand. This demonstrates the opportunities and the risks accompanying logo changes.

Logos are composed of various elements, and while the typography has received less emphasis than the shapes and colors, the text still shapes the customer's brand perception. A serif font may be viewed as sophisticated, while a sans serif font is viewed as strong and pleasant (Kumar & Garg, 2010). Customers perceive different personality traits from the brand for each. Aligning logo typography to the brand's industry creates a trustworthy brand image.



Color Effects

The psychological effects of powerful visual elements are noticeable and automatic. The literature shows that consumer perceptions and reactions vary depending on the color palettes used in branding. One of the first dimensions of color psychology in branding is the analysis of warm and cool color effects. Warm colors like red, orange, and yellow are known to draw attention and stimulate purchase intent, while cool colors like blue, green, and purple convey trust and calmness, fostering a perception of competence (Park & Stoel, 2005). Based on the study by Labrecque and Milne, various brand personality dimensions are correlated with specific colors, and different psychological propositions derived from branding are dominant in the field of study, color psychology (Labrecque & Milne, 2012).

The brightness and saturation of a color are other vital considerations. More saturated and brighter colors stimulate perception to a greater extent and often correlate with higher perceptions of quality and higher levels of associated positive energy (Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014; Garber, Burke, & Jones, 2000). Regardless of the field, color brightness and saturation should not be overemphasized. The appropriateness of saturation use in a given context usually varies greatly by cultural context and product category. Creative color use that is perceived in one culture to be vibrant and exciting may be viewed in another culture as overly bright or inappropriately stimulating. The study of color psychology considers cultural background as one of the dominant variables, and the use of creative color in branding and product design to manipulate behavior is often even more dominant, according to the research of Madden et al (2000). Analyzing the varying meanings and preferences of color across numerous countries shows that a global color strategy is ineffective when applied uniformly. It states that while white is associated with purity and weddings in Western cultures, in many Eastern cultures, white is associated with mourning.

The emotional reactions different colors elicit can directly affect consumers' outcomes. Purchase intention can be heightened, and the perceived quality of the product can be elevated when it is paired with an appropriate color (Reimann, et al., 2010). Strong, distinct brand recognition with consumers can be achieved through effective color selection that aligns the brand's colors with its strategy.

Layout and Visual Hierarchy Effects

In addition to logos and color, the layout, overall arrangement, and composition of visual information also direct and shape consumer experience. Visual hierarchies are designed so that consumers receive information in the best possible order, such as brand identifiers, product attributes, and actionable items (Wedel & Pieters, 2008). A focal point of several studies is the visual hierarchy of elements and the relationship to brand element recall, advertisement evaluation, and processing fluency (Milosavljevic, et al., 2012).

To understand the effects of layout, the concept of cognitive load must be considered. Layouts that are jumbled and poorly organized, or that have high information density, can lead to feelings of overwhelm and cognitive overload (Pieters & Warlop, 1999). On the other hand, reducing and strategically utilizing space improves mental processing and is overall more enjoyable to the user (Deng & Kahn, 2009). This is especially applicable to digital settings, where there is less time and more cognitive demand. In website and mobile app design optimization studies, user satisfaction and conversion rates are higher when the layout is clean and intuitive.

Lastly, the arrangement of individual elements in a layout also impacts consumer choice. Studies on shelf placement in stores show that items placed in the middle of the display are more likely to be selected, a phenomenon known as the horizontal centrality effect (Atalay, Bodur, & Rasolofoarison, 2012). In the same way, studies that track where people look confirm that the items in the upper-left section of a screen or page receive the closest attention first, in line with



conventional reading patterns in Western countries. Thus, the optimized arrangement of the logo, product picture, and essential text within a design is a dense tactic to shape consumer thought and action.

Table 4. Summary of Empirical Findings by Visual Element

Study	Visual Element	Key Variable	Consumer Outcome	Direction of Effect
Walsh et al. (2010)	Logo design	Simplicity	Brand recognition	Positive (+)
Henderson & Cote (1998)	Logo shape	Symmetry	Brand attitude	Positive (+)
Machado et al. (2019)	Logo complexity	Perceived luxury	Purchase intention	Positive (+) for luxury
Park et al. (2013)	Logo redesign	Angular to rounded	Brand attitude	Mixed (depends on commitment)
Cian et al. (2014)	Logo shape	Asymmetry	Brand excitement	Positive (+)
Labrecque & Milne (2012)	Color	Warm vs. cool	Brand personality	Positive (+) differential
Bottomley & Doyle (2006).	Color	Cross-cultural	Brand perception	Mixed (cultural variation)
Kauppinen-Räsänen (2014)	Packaging color	Saturation/brightness	Perceived quality	Positive (+)
Madden et al. (2000)	Color meaning	Cultural differences	Brand attitude	Mixed (culture-dependent)
Wedel & Pieters (2008)	Visual hierarchy	Attention allocation	Brand recall	Positive (+)
Pieters & Warlop (1999)	Layout complexity	Information density	Processing fluency	Negative (–) for high complexity
Chandon et al. (2009).	Package design	Visual salience	Purchase likelihood	Positive (+)
Atalay et al. (2012)	Shelf position	Horizontal centrality	Choice probability	Positive (+)
Milosavljevic et al. (2012)	Visual features	Saliency	Choice behavior	Positive (+)
Reimann et al. (2010)	Aesthetic design	Visual appeal	Willingness to pay	Positive (+)
Hynes (2009)	Visual consistency	Cross-channel	Brand trust	Positive (+)
Kumar & Garg (2010)	Typography	Font style	Brand perception	Positive (+) differential
Janssen et al. (2014)	Color-logo interaction	Synergy	Brand recognition	Positive (+)

Integrated and Interaction Effects

The previous section reviewed the individual impact of specific visual elements, whereas this section will cover their synergistic and holistic effects. A brand's visual identity will always have a greater impact than the isolated impact of any individual visual element. The literature reviewed in this section exemplifies the effects of congruence and consistency, as well as the moderating role of specific contextual influences. This section integrates literature on synergistic effects and congruence, and proposes a conceptual framework to illustrate the interdependent relationships among the variables.

Brand perception largely depends on the synergistic effect of multiple visual elements—a strong, congruous visual identity brand (Janssen, et al., 2014). Imagine a logo with rounded shapes; it would be more harmonious with a color palette of soft, comforting hues. Meanwhile, an angular logo



would be better suited to bold, high-contrast colors. When the design elements across a brand's identity are congruous, the brand's attributes and values are also synergistically reinforced. The reverse, or incongruence, creates consumer cognitive dissonance, confusion, and a negatively branded attitude.

Having a congruous visual identity across all brand touchpoints is also a factor. Omnichannel and cross-channel are terms in modern retailing and marketing that refer to a user engaging with a business across multiple platforms. Customers today have access to brand communication through countless channels, including direct interactions in physical retail, on social media, and via mobile applications. The consistent application of design, including visual design and brand equity symbols, is one of the most effective ways to build brand trust through recognition (Van Rompay, Pruyn, & Tieke, 2009). Hynes (2009) describes a direct correlation between brand trust and cross-channel visual consistency, driven by signals of competence and consistency. The brand reputation and equity derived from visual consistency across multiple channels is referred to as omnichannel coherence. This is certainly right, but it is probably also too simplistic. Actual omnichannel coherence is derived from the contextual application of brand elements that are maintained across the varying design resources and constraints of communications across different channels (Pelet & Papadopoulou, 2012).

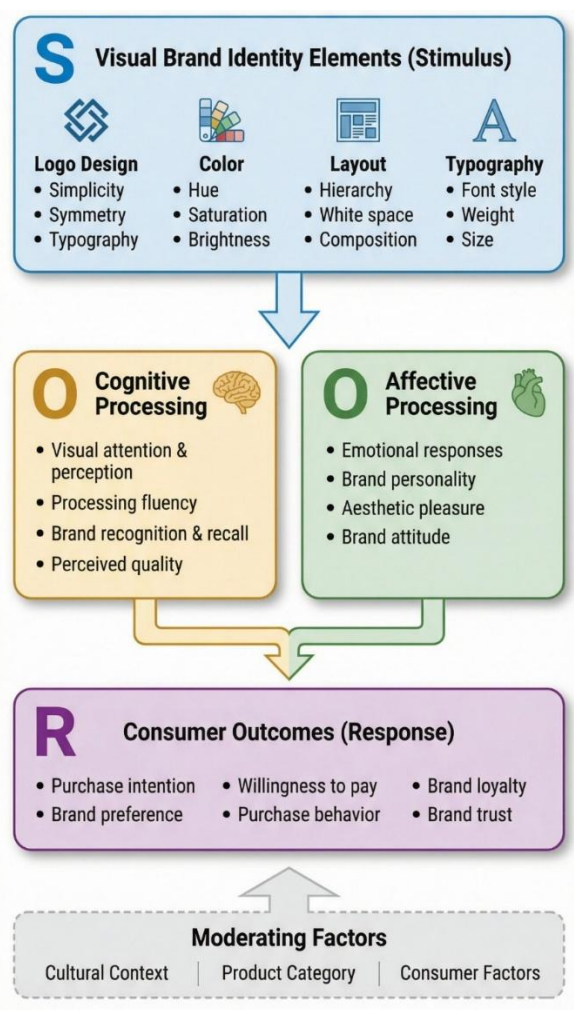


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of Visual Branding Effects



Various other potential factors may influence the consumer outcomes related to visual components. One of the most relevant factors is the consumer's cultural background, which can shape how people perceive and give meaning to visual elements such as colors, shapes, and signs (Madden, Hewett, & Roth, 2000). Consumer involvement is also significant. For example, highly involved consumers tend to process visual components more systematically, while low-participation consumers tend to rely more on peripheral cues and aesthetics. In addition, the product category must be considered a key moderating factor. For example, complex logos, as mentioned before, might be more appropriate for luxury brands, whereas fast-moving consumer goods might demand a friendly, straightforward logo (Machado, de Oliveira, & de Medeiros, 2019).

In this regard, this study developed a conceptual model based on the S-O-R model (Figure 3). In this model, visual brand identity components (stimulus) and consumer outcomes (response) are mediated by the consumer (organism) at the cognitive and emotional levels. Additionally, this model is the first in this field to include these critical moderating factors, thereby providing a more detailed explanation of how visual branding influences consumer behavior.

Consumer-Level Outcomes

The ability of business branding on a visual level to result in a change among consumers, regardless of what that change may be, is a measure of how successful that branding was. This study used various dependent variables to measure consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. The following section summarizes several of these studies to provide an overview of the measurement methodologies commonly employed, and is presented in Table 5. This is important both for understanding past studies and for identifying future studies that need to be conducted.

The most frequently studied of these results is purchase intention, which operationalizes the actual purchase. This is explored by examining consumers' responses to Likert-type surveys (1-5) and asking how likely they are to purchase the good or service in question (34). Though purchase intention is a pretty good indicator of future purchases, and in some other studies, purchase behavior is measured through various means, such as a decision-making (choice) experiment or through sales, which are tracked, in order to provide a more tangible means of evidence of a visual identity's impact on revenue.

Another important construct is brand attitude, which reflects consumers' average evaluation of a particular brand. Semantic differential scales (good/bad, favorable/unfavorable) are commonly used to measure the dimensions of a brand's attitude (Clement, 2007). An affirmative brand attitude is instrumental in mediating the impact of visual stimuli and subsequent behaviors, including purchasing and loyalty. Equally pertinent are the cognitive aspects of the outcomes, e.g., the ability to recognize and recall the brand. Recognition is measured as the correct identification of a brand when a logo is shown. On the other hand, recall is measured as the ability to recall the brand when a cue to the product's category is provided (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). These metrics are critical to assessing visual identity and its capacity to generate brand awareness.

Outcomes derived from perceptions are frequently examined. Perceived quality and perceived value are critical to consumer preference and consumer willingness to pay. Most of these are assessed using scales that measure consumer perceptions of the brand's superiority, reliability, and value for money (Reimann, et al., 2010). A visual identity's aesthetic quality can serve as an essential heuristic for product quality in low-involvement purchase situations.

Lastly, the literature increasingly appreciates the role of affective and relational outcomes. The deeper engagement and attachment consumers may have with a brand are captured as emotional. These are frequently assessed using the scales that measure brand love, connection, and passion



(Chandon, et al., 2009). Consistency and professionalism in brand visual identity are, in great measure, the key drivers of brand trust, as measured by the scales of reliability and dependability. These relational variables are essential for long-term brand loyalty, as measured by attitudinal commitment and repeat purchase behavior.

Table 5. Consumer Outcomes and Measurement Approaches

Outcome Variable	Common Scales/Measures	Representative Studies
Purchase Intention	7-point Likert scale: "How likely are you to purchase this product?" (1=very unlikely, 7=very likely)	Pelet & Papadopoulou, (2012); Machado, de Oliveira, & de Medeiros, (2019)
Brand Attitude	Semantic differential scales: good-bad, favorable-unfavorable, pleasant-unpleasant (7-point)	Henderson & Cote, (1998); Park & Stoel, (2005)
Brand Recognition	Aided/unaided recall tasks; recognition accuracy percentage; response time (ms)	Walsh, Winterich, & Mittal, (2010); Janssen, et al., (2014)
Brand Recall	Free recall tasks; cued recall; top-of-mind awareness	Clement, (2007); Chandon, et al, (2009)
Perceived Quality	Multi-item scale: "This brand is of high quality," "This brand offers superior products" (1-7)	Kauppinen-Räsänen, (2014); Reimann, et al., (2010)
Brand Trust	Trust scale: reliability, dependability, honesty dimensions (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001)	Hynes, (2009); Bettels & Wiedmann, (2019)
Brand Personality	Aaker's Brand Personality Scale: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness	Labrecque & Milne, (2012); Orth & Malkewitz, (2008)
Visual Attention	Eye-tracking metrics: fixation duration, fixation count, time to first fixation, heat maps	Clement, (2007); Wedel & Pieters, (2008)
Brand Loyalty	Repeat purchase intention; commitment scale; behavioral loyalty metrics	Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, (2009)

Managerial Implications

The actionable implications of systematic literature review findings for brand managers and marketers seeking to leverage visual identity strategically are as follows. The findings confirm that any brand visual identity component (logo, color, layout) constitutes an external look component and affects the evaluative dimension of the target audience's brand-related behavior and brand equity. Thus, the elements of visual identity design should contribute to achieving organizational and brand objectives.

To begin with, the managers must develop a strategy for logo design. Once the brand's market position is determined, the choice between complex and straightforward logos should be made. Undoubtedly, a simple logo enhances recognition and processing, whereas a complex logo is associated with luxury/premium. Additionally, the decision on the logo's complexity (symmetrical vs. asymmetrical shapes) should be guided by the brand personality. Symmetrical shapes tend to be more trusted, while unstable/asymmetrical logos are perceived as more exciting. Before a logo



redesign, the brand equity and customer loyalty (existing) should be weighed to avoid negative equity consequences.

Next, the color strategy must be culturally and psychologically driven. As part of brand personality management, managers can employ psychological associations with colors, such as using blue for competence and red for excitement. However, such management strategies must be informed by the target market's culture. Culturally determined meanings of colors can vary widely, and a color with positive attributes in one culture can have negative characteristics in another. Consequently, the global color strategy must be adaptable to the brand identity.

Third, layout and visual hierarchy should be optimized to guide consumer attention and reduce cognitive load. In digital environments, where attention is scarce, a clean, intuitive layout is paramount. Managers should use principles of visual hierarchy to draw attention to the most critical information, such as value propositions and calls to action. Eye-tracking and other user experience (UX) research methods should be employed to test and refine layouts for websites, mobile apps, and digital advertisements to ensure they are visually compelling.

Finally, the principle of omnichannel coherence is essential in today's fragmented media landscape. Brand managers must ensure that the visual identity is consistently applied across all consumer touchpoints, from packaging and in-store displays to social media profiles and e-commerce platforms. This consistency builds trust and facilitates seamless brand recognition. However, this does not mean a rigid, one-size-fits-all application. The visual identity should be tailored to each channel's specific context, creating a coherent yet flexible brand experience that feels native to each platform. Investing in a robust digital asset management system and clear brand guidelines is crucial for achieving this balance.

Conclusion and Future Research Directions

This systematic literature review focuses on 20 years of empirical research. It aims to establish what is known about the components of visual brand identity and their impact on consumer behavior. The study reveals that brand attributes such as logo, color, and spatial arrangement. The review findings, anchored within an S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) framework, yield a consistent model that depicts a hierarchy of effect from a visual stimulus to a consumer response, identifying the primary role of cognitive and emotional (affective) processes, the contextual encapsulation of the impact, and the overall value of the model. The review contributes to the theory of branding by the S-O-R framework and bridges the theory of visual identity within the broader S-O-R consolidated theory. The main contribution of the work remains the empirical and theoretical analysis, which provides a synthesized, coherent construct of the previously disorganized literature within the field. The review serves managerial practice by providing a set of empirically based prescriptions for formulating a brand's visual identity as a strategic resource for brand equity growth and for enhancing the firm's value.

While the review shows some objectives have been achieved, it also identifies shortcomings and gaps in the existing literature, suggesting a distinct pathway for future studies. First, more studies are needed on the interrelated effects of the various components. Most studies focus on a single element, yet in practice, consumers perceive a brand's visual identity as a whole. Future studies should aim for more complex experimental setups to explore the combined, synergistic, and interdependent effects of logos, colors, and layouts.

There is a second notable gap in the literature: a lack of methodological diversity. While experiments and surveys are common, there is a strong case for using neuromarketing and biometric methods. For example, fMRI, EEG, and facial coding methodologies can objectively



and robustly assess consumers' emotional and psychological responses to stimuli. The incorporation of eye-tracking with fMRI, EEG, and facial coding can enhance the understanding of the relationship between emotions and attention.

The final gap these authors focus on is the relationship between visual branding, personalization, and AI, and the implications of this for future research. As brands implement AI to personalize content and user interfaces in real time, there is a critical need for research on adaptive visual identity elements and the real-time contextual personalization of visual branding. There is a gap in research on the implications, opportunities, and challenges of this type of visual branding.

In closing, subsequent studies should examine the ramifications of the coherence of multiple channels and the dispersion of culture. Given the intricacy and globalization of consumer pathways, maintaining a coherent, culturally adaptable visual identity across touchpoints remains a challenge. There is a need for cross-cultural research beyond the elementary comparisons of color preferences to include advanced studies in visual syntax. The suggested research endeavors will sustain and propel the discipline forward, offering more sophisticated and practical manifestations of the influence that visual identity exerts on a brand.

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