Importance of Architecture in the Branding Process: An Evaluation on a Famous Brand

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Abstract

The term "brand", which is closely associated with the concepts of "branding," signifies the vision and identity surrounding a product during its design phase in the marketing sector. The most effective way to define a brand's identity is through its three-dimensional perception. The architectural space, acting as the storefront of the brand, holds significance in visually presenting the initial perception of the product. This study examines the interaction between the product design that has propelled the branding of a globally renowned handbag company and its spatial design, utilizing the method of observational analysis. The esteemed handbag brand, which has maintained its classical style for years, has been trying to attract attention by incorporating futuristic models since 2019, thereby rejuvenating its image. The study focuses on the examination of architectural design criteria that reflect the corporate identity.

Keywords: Branding, architectural design, futurism, architecture in the branding process.

Markalaşma Sürecinde Mimarinin Önemi: Ünlü Bir Marka Üzerinden Değerlendirme

Öz

Markalaşma kavramı ile yakından ilişkili olan marka kavramı, pazarlama sektöründe bir ürünün tasarım aşamasındaki vizyonunu ve kimliğini ifade etmektedir. Bir markanın kimliğini tanımlamanın en etkili yolu onun üç boyutlu algısından geçer. Markanın vitrini görevini gören mimari mekân, ürünün ilk algılanışını görsel olarak sunması açısından önem taşımaktadır. Bu çalışma, dünyaca ünlü bir çanta firmasının markalaşmasına yön veren ürün tasarımı ile mekânsal tasarımı arasındaki etkileşimi gözlemsel analiz yöntemini kullanarak incelemektedir. Yıllardır klasik çizgisini korumasına rağmen saygın çanta markası, 2019 yılından itibaren fütüristtik modellere de yer vererek dikkatleri üzerine çekmeyi başarmış ve bu sayede imajını tazelemiştir. Çalışma, kurumsal kimliği yansıtan mimari tasarım kriterlerinin incelenmesine odaklanmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Markalaşma, mimari tasarım, fütürizm, markalaşma sürecinde mimarlık.

1. Introduction

The term "brand" has its origins in the act of "branding" to mark with red-hot iron or coral those deemed to be sinners, or to identify animals in animals. In the modern sense, the definition of brand has been made by the American Marketing Association. According to this definition, the brand is the name, term, sign, symbol, or combination of these used to define the goods or services and distinguish them from their competitors (İşcan, 2011).

Etymologically, the word "brand" is used in German as "Marc" meaning borderline, in French as "Marque" meaning product mark, and in Anglo-Saxon languages "Brand" - "Branding" meaning sign - burning. The transition of the "brand" to Turkish as a term came from the Italian "Marca". It has passed into Italian from the English word "Mark", meaning sign (Sağlam, 2019).

According to famous marketing guru Don Schultz, the brand is a summary of who created it, what they want to do, and how they want to do it. It contains the mission, product, goals, values, and promises of the institution that created it in the brand (Additional Booklet Capital Journal, 2004, p. 45). In a sense, the brand is the spirit and meaning that surrounds the product.

1.1. Brand Identity

Brand identity serves as a framework that helps determine the meaning, orientation, and purpose of the brand and encompasses the brand in all its aspects. It is about creating a strong brand and designing and executing an accurate and effective brand identity. The brand identity reflects the brand's spirit, vision, and what it hopes to achieve (Sevil, 2006).

1.2. Brand Personality

The concept of brand personality was expressed by Aaker as "the identification of human characteristics with brand attributes." Brand personality refers to the brand's behavior resembling that of a person and being perceived as possessing specific personality traits. This approach helps brands establish an emotional connection with consumers. Brand personality represents human traits associated with the brand's values, features, tone, communication style, and behavior. Thus, brands can create a unique identity, foster a deeper connection with consumers, and have a positive impact on the target audience (Aaker, 2009, p. 159). In addition, brand personality encompasses elements such as trust, care, excitement, inspiration, and core values, which are also found in human personalities (Ar, 2004, p. 74). In Aaker's work titled "Dimensions of Brand Personality" published in 1997, brand personality dimensions were identified as sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Aaker, 1997, p. 352).

1.3. Brand Image

According to Turley & Milliman (2000), brand image is defined as "the altered state of the totality of information that consumers derive from their experiences, hearsay, advertisements, packaging, and services related to a brand, influenced by selective perception, prior beliefs, social norms, and forgetting". Based on this definition, brand image is a concept that reflects consumers' perceptions, biases, and experiences related to a brand. Consumers' selective perceptions, prior beliefs, and social norms play a significant role in the formation of the image as they process information about the brand. Additionally, the process of forgetting indicates that brand image can change over time.

Brand identity, as a strategic planning framework, can design and control marketing communication decision mechanisms. In terms of brand management, brand identity is placed before the image. Brand image refers to the result of perceptions in consumers after these practices and decisions (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård, 2004).

2. The Relationship Between Brand and Architectural Space

The brand is an effective marketing tool that symbolizes the current state of a space. For a place to exist with its brand in the future, it should be equipped with visually effective but strategically realistic details. Thus, these spaces become permanent and different for the targeted audience (Allan, 2004).

As a concept, the idea of space emerged in the early 1990s as a joint initiative of branding, interior architecture, and marketing. Interior architecture and marketing professionals have realized the effective role of space on brand perception because space serves to perceive the brand in three dimensions. The three-dimensional brand experience plays a vital role in the perception of customers and spokespersons of the brand. The effect of perception on the customer is long-term (Kemp et al., 2012).

In architecture, the concept of place is positioned in contrast to the objectifiable, measurable, and quantifiable notion of space in modern architecture. Therefore, the place carries a meaning that goes beyond the abstract frameworks of function, geometry, and program associated with space. The place is concerned with the meaningful world that emerges through the direct experiential relationship between individuals and the external environment (Koçyiğit, 2022, p.763).

With the rapid increase in consumer culture, spaces are becoming communication areas where brands can directly convey the messages they want to deliver to their users. Brands can present their products in a more striking and unique way by reflecting their identities in these spaces. The user's perception of a product is shaped by their perception of that product. Design plays a significant role in shaping user perception because visual differentiation is revealed through design (Çatak Oylum, 2014).

Therefore, space design plays a key role in creating customer perception of a product. The design allows the product to communicate with the customer and paves the way for differentiation. Here, space emerges as a visual communication platform.

2.1. Space Design and Brand

Space is an extremely broad concept that encompasses a variety of variables. In the retail sector, space can be understood as a 'commercial space.' The design of commercial spaces holds significant importance in managing customer perception. Given that many customers make purchasing decisions while in the store, the significance of the physical environment increases. Therefore, the store becomes a public space. The perception aspect of the store concept is a crucial topic of discussion when it comes to understanding the branding of the space. The perception of space is shaped through experiences, and the design plays a significant role in this process (Dağlı Curalı, 2019).

The fundamental requirements of branded spaces are listed as follows:

- Determining the needs, preferences, habits, and desires of the target audience.
- Creating a unique experience that aligns with the brand's positioning.
- Considering visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and thermal criteria related to the space.
- Understanding the psychological impact of light and light sources and considering energy efficiency whenever possible.
- Addressing the organization's needs to fulfill the brand objectives.
- Creating a sustainable, durable, easy-to-maintain, and clean space (Wheeler, 2017).

2.2. Space and Perception

The relationship that individuals establish with their surroundings can be regarded as perception. Perception reflects the equilibrium that humans establish with their environment (Aydıntan, 2001).

In its broadest sense, interior perception refers to the communication and interaction between individuals and the space they inhabit. Within the interior, individuals position themselves based on what they see, thereby creating their perception of that space. In the process of shaping interior perception, interior architecture and graphic design play a prominent role. The objective is to shape the customer's perception of the store's identity and image, wherein interior design components significantly influence the user's perception (Dağlı Curalı, 2019).

During the interior design process, it is essential to consider several design criteria, such as determining the brand image and its relationship with the user, identifying the brand's identity and image components, and deciding whether the store's design should be lean, mixed, or intensive (Figure 1).
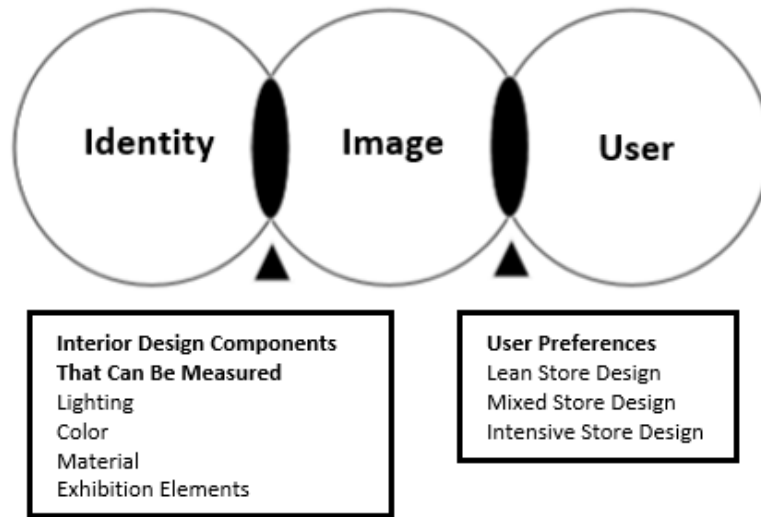
Figure 1. Interior design components (Yıldırım, 2015)

To create a distinct atmosphere in a space, brands leverage various parameters, both interior and exterior, as well as the arrangement of products and furnishings within the store. In the process of designing this experiential narrative, the selection of elements that align with the store's story and the message it intends to convey to users becomes a crucial criterion (Table 2).

The choice of location features that influence the brand image varies depending on whether the store aims to project a prestigious or discount image. This factor causes the selected criteria to differ.

Table 1. Product and furnishing order in the store with internal and external variable parameters (Turley & Milliman, 2000)

External Variable Parameters	Internal Variable Parameters	Product and furnishing orders in the store
Exterior View,	Indoor flooring,	Interior Design,
Entrance Gate,	Indoor Ceiling Material,	Product placement,
Building Size,	Lighting,	Circulation,
Shape of the Store,	Colors,	Full-empty areas,
Color,	Texture,	Case layout,
Windows,	Surface,	Space Composition
Exterior Cladding,	Sound,	Movement,
Location of the Building,	Heat,	Measure,
Form.	Lighting,	Proportion and scale.
	Material.	

Differences can also be observed among diverse types of spaces, which are influenced by factors such as ambiance, design, and social elements (Table 2).

In a study conducted by Yıldırım (2015), "prestigious" stores were categorized as "lean stores," whereas "prestigious (discount) stores" were classified as "busy stores" (Yıldırım, 2015).

Table 2. Space features that affect the brand image (Baker et al., 1994)

Parameters		
Ambiance	**Prestige Stores**	**Discount Stores**
Music	Classical	Top 20
Lighting	Soft	Bright
Design		
Floor Covering	Carpet	Concrete
Wall	Texture	Paint
Exhibition space	Decorated	Clear
Color	Gold, silver, black	Mixed
Ceiling	Gypsum Board and Decorative	Paint
Dressing Rooms	Special	Semi Private / No
Corridor	Large	Narrow
Scheme	Free layout	Angled

When considering the factors that influence the brand image in the categories of prestige and discount stores, it becomes evident that all parameters, including music and lighting, vary to align with the desired ambiance of the space.

In addition to the factors directly related to the brand image, certain elements that contribute to the overall ambiance must be carefully considered. These include aspects of the store's physical environment such as ventilation, temperature-humidity control, and noise management. Furthermore, architectural aesthetics play a significant role, with factors such as color selection, materials, details and accessories, material textures, comfort conditions, and functionality being the most prominent considerations (Baker et al., 1994).

3. Material and Method

The world's luxurious brands, particularly renowned for their iconic bag patterns, have established themselves as leaders in luxury consumption by offering a range of products such as ready-to-wear clothing, shoes, bags, watches, jewelry, and accessories. The present study utilizes an observational analysis method to examine the brand's space design.

The study focuses on the commercial areas where a well-known brand has been highlighting its products since 2019. It examines the impact of renovation and attention-grabbing efforts on the architectural design of the renowned bag brand, which has maintained its classic aesthetic for many years. The objective of this investigation is to identify the design criteria that effectively reflect the brand's corporate identity.

To that end, the study holds particular significance in terms of architectural ethics, as it addresses a fundamental design criterion for constructing commercial spaces with high brand value. It endeavors to create a design guide by exploring various aspects such as color, texture, surface, illumination, materials, occupancy space, space composition, structural location, movement, shape, size, ratio and scale, heat, and sound.

4. Findings and Discussion

Futurism became the first established art movement with defined rules, boundaries, and attitudes through the publication of the "Futurist Manifesto" by F.T. Marinetti in 1909. Additionally, this movement possesses the distinction of being named and recognized on the day it emerged, making it the first of its kind. Its significant characteristic lies in its glorification of modern technology,

mechanization, speed, violence, and destruction, almost deifying them, while simultaneously belittling Western civilization and its art (Akalın, 2019).

Futurism, an art movement that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, embraces new life and technology as its subject. It focuses on movement and dynamism while aiming to challenge traditional rules. Futurism is rooted in a belief in a longing for the future and the continuous advancement of technology (Sant'Elia & Marinetti, 1991).

By placing the concept of speed at the core of their artistic approach, futurists equated modernity with the notion of speed. This association allowed them to develop a more distinct and revolutionary understanding of change and perception compared to many of their contemporaries (Sarıgül, 2008).

Technology holds a significant role in futurism. Futurists advocate for the use of materials such as reinforced concrete, iron, glass, cardboard, woven fibers, and other lightweight derivatives instead of traditional materials like wood and stone. This emphasis on flexibility and lightness is accompanied by a deliberate utilization of technology in their architectural designs (Figure 2).

Futurists place the concept of increasing speed, facilitated by modern technology, at the core of their ideology and artistic approach (Sant'Elia & Marinetti, 1991).

Figure 2. An example of futuristic architecture, Kunsthaus – Graz, Austria (Çay, 2014)

Futurism also extends to fashion design, encompassing predictions and visions of clothing styles that are yet to be adopted. Fashion designers, with their unique perspectives and creative abilities, embody future developments, changes, and inventions through their designs of futuristic clothing (Figure 3) (Öztürk, 2018).

Figure 3. Futuristic fashion examples (Öztürk, 2018)

The brand, analyzed within the scope of the study, ventured beyond its traditional style in 2019 and created a futuristic collection named '2054'. This collection depicted a glimpse of what the fashion house envisioned for the future, imagining the brand's progress 200 years after its foundation. The contemporary collection highlighted futuristic production techniques, prominently featuring 3D fabrics, metallic reflections, and monogram patterns. The brand incorporated the latest innovations in fabrics and materials to bring these elements to life (Altıntaş, 2021).

The brand adopts a futuristic approach in its design, while simultaneously preserving its classic monogram patterns. It began by incorporating this concept into a bag model and subsequently extended the idea across all its products. Importantly, the brand also implemented this futuristic theme throughout its entire commercial space, which serves as a representation of the brand's identity (Figure 4).

(a) The brand's classic bag model (left); **(b)** Bag model designed for futurist current (right)
Figure 4. Classic model and the new model (3d model made by the author)

Until the new collection design in 2019, the brand maintained the same architectural style for almost 200 years. However, it garnered attention with its new architecture, which complemented the collection, in 2019. The study analyzed the brand's longstanding classical architectural examples, which have been in existence for years (Table 3).

Table 3. The classical architectural examples of the brand

Building No	A	B	C	D
Building Photo				
Build Date	2005	2010	2010	2012
Location	Paris, France	Stockholm	Rome	Lugano, Switzerland.
References	(Moveandstay, 2019)	(123RF)	(123RF)	(Abloh and Ghesquiere, 2020)
Building No	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**
Building Photo				
Build Date	2012	2013	2014	2016
Location	Beverly Hills, CA	Barcelona, Spain	Milan	Sydney, Australia
References	(123RF)	(123RF)	(123RF)	(123RF)

As depicted in Table 3, it is evident that the brand's building designs exhibit variations depending on the location, yet they maintain a classical architectural style. The brand tends to utilize plain colors and opts for materials such as stone, brick, and glass. As an architectural style, the brand incorporates elements like columns that accentuate the historical architecture of the region, as well as arched windows and doors.

While all the examined samples reflect the classical period, different architectural designs are evident in various regions. For instance, the store facade in Stockholm, constructed in 2010, features an arched design with brick as the chosen material. On the other hand, the store building facade in Rome, also built in 2010, showcases a columnar style using stone material. Examining the example in Beverly Hills from 2012, it is apparent that the facade reflects the historical architecture of the region, incorporating glass elements. The choice of materials and architectural features vary depending on the location, while still adhering to a classical architectural style.

The interiors of the examined classical architectural examples are designed to complement the facades. Predominantly using brown and white colors, the interiors adopt classical interior architecture. The selection of materials is in line with the classical style.

The brand analyzed in the scope of the analysis took a significant departure from its classical style in 2019 by introducing a futuristic collection called '2054'. Consequently, the brand embraced a futuristic architectural approach, demonstrating an innovative pursuit by completely replacing the classical architecture that had been employed in its buildings for nearly 200 years. This futuristic approach, adopted in 2019, not only manifested in the building facades but also extended to the store interiors. By designing a cohesive composition across its commercial venues, the brand aimed to narrate its story and draw attention to the futuristic approach showcased in its new collection. Table 4 examines the examples illustrating the futuristic approach embraced by the brand in 2019.

Table 4. The brand's 2019 futuristic examples

Building No	1	2	3	4
Building Outdoor Photo				
Build Date	2019	2019	2019	2019
Location	Paris, France	London	Chicago	NYC
References	(Astbury, 2019)	(Levy, 2019)	(Miller, 2019)	(123RF)
Building Interior Photo				
References	(Astbury, 2019)	(Levy, 2019)	(Miller, 2019)	(123RF)

Building No	5	6	7	8
Building Outdoor Photo				
Build Date	2019	2019	2019	2019
Location	Beverly Hills - United States	London, U.K	Taipei, Taiwan	Soho, NYC
References	(Başaran, 2019)	(123RF)	(Maison)	(Miller, 2019a)
Building Interior Photo				
References	(Başaran, 2019)	(Stock Editorial Ph., 2018)	(Louis Vuitton, 2019)	(Miller, 2019b)

As observed from the examples presented in Table 5, each store was meticulously designed, creating a harmonious composition between the interior and exterior spaces. When analyzing the architectural designs of the stores, it is apparent that they maintain the architectural style portrayed on the facades within their interiors. However, it is noteworthy that the architectural style may vary from region to region, reflecting the local context and influences.

The futuristic architectural approach adopted in 2019 established a set of fundamental design criteria that are crucial when creating commercial spaces with high brand value. These design criteria encompass aspects such as color, texture, surface, lighting, composition, shape, material, movement, ratio, and spatial fullness. The purpose of individually evaluating these criteria through the examined examples is to create a design guide for future studies. To achieve this, the structures listed in Table 4 were cross-referenced with Table 5 to assess whether the design criteria, which are essential for each building, were met.

Table 5. Evaluation of the design criteria of the examined samples

Building No	Design	Color	Texture	Surface	Lighting	Composition	Form	Material	Movement	Ratio	Full-Empty
1	Interior		√	√		√					
	Exterior					√	√	√	√	√	
2	Interior	√			√	√		√	√		
	Exterior	√				√			√		√
3	Interior	√				√		√		√	√
	Exterior	√				√		√		√	√
4	Interior	√				√		√			
	Exterior	√				√		√			
5	Interior	√		√	√	√					
	Exterior	√				√			√	√	√
6	Interior	√		√		√		√			
	Exterior	√		√		√	√	√			
7	Interior				√			√			
	Exterior	√		√			√		√	√	
8	Interior	√		√	√	√		√	√		
	Exterior		√	√	√	√					√

Upon examining the numbered sample structures in relation to the design criteria, it becomes evident that the color criterion plays a prominent role in the perception of the brand's stores, reflecting the futuristic approach. However, in example one, the color criterion did not stand out as much compared to the other examples. This can be attributed to the store's location in Paris, as well as the architectural design of the building by Frank Gehry. In this case, the architect's signature, and integration of the space with the architect's brand took precedence over highlighting the brand's commercial space. The brand's strategy was to emphasize the commercial space by enlisting the services of a renowned architect for the design.

It is apparent that the texture criterion, as one of the design criteria, is evident in two examples. The reason for this is that these examples aim to convey a specific narrative by multiple colors, materials, lighting, and other criteria. It is observed that suitable interior and exterior compositions were designed for all examples except the seventh building. The absence of this composition in the seventh building is attributed to its location within a shopping center, where the interior reflects the old classical architecture while the exterior is designed in accordance with the intended fiction.

The variation in the occupancy-void ratios on the building facades or in examples where the color criterion is most prominent can be attributed to the specific location of each building. While the brand aimed to rebrand the buildings with an innovative style, the regional architecture was also deemed significant. For instance, in the fifth example, the differentiation in lighting and surface selection on the facade is primarily influenced by the building's location in Beverly Hills. It was intended to create a desired composition that also harmonizes with the surrounding buildings.

Examples 3 and 4 demonstrate the differentiation of stores reflecting the brand due to their specific building locations. Located in Chicago and New York, respectively, these examples highlight the

exaggeration of the color criterion both indoors and outdoors. The emphasis on the brand's new collection is achieved by accentuating the color criterion and selecting materials that align with this criterion in the commercial space.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

The globalization of the world economy, driven by unstoppable market forces, has led to the emergence of new and inevitable concepts in spatial design. One such concept, introduced in architectural literature, is the branding of space. In the pursuit of economic development and competitiveness, the branding of spaces has become crucial, as it transforms spaces into venues that capture attention with their distinct qualities and specializations. In order to thrive in a competitive environment and enhance performance and competitiveness, brands have adopted the concept of "branding of spaces," which has been adapted from the business jargon and integrated into the architectural discourse.

A brand is a distinctive combination of elements such as a name, word, symbol, design, sign, shape, color, or their combinations, utilized to identify and differentiate goods and services offered by a seller or group of sellers in the market. When it comes to space, it comprises both tangible aspects (such as the interior, facade, etc.) and intangible elements (such as values, image, identity, etc.) as a product. The target audience can positively or negatively perceive these components.

In the process of branding space, there are multiple stakeholders involved, including various institutions, and it encompasses the diverse perceptions of different target groups. Compared to marketing products or services, location branding is considerably more intricate. This complexity underscores the need to adhere to the principles of corporate branding rather than product or service branding within the realm of space branding literature.

The brand, which has maintained its classical architectural style for years, has embarked on a renovation to highlight its new futuristic models with the designs created in 2019. The examples of the futuristic architectural approach in the stores, reflecting the brand's corporate identity, are assessed based on fundamental design parameters.

When branding a space, key design criteria in architectural design include color, texture, surface, illumination, composition, shape, material, motion, ratio, and occupancy space. These parameters may vary depending on the location of the building. While ensuring that the samples align with the surrounding context, the planned composition is kept within defined boundaries.

From the examples, it is evident that the most important criterion in space branding is to achieve the desired composition in the design, both indoors and outdoors, which effectively communicates the intended message to the users.

Indeed, the relationship between branding and architecture is a significant topic that warrants further study and development. It is directly intertwined with the realms of marketing and architecture, with implications for both disciplines. Understanding and exploring this relationship can provide valuable insights into how brands can effectively communicate their identity and values through architectural design, as well as how architecture can contribute to the overall branding strategy.

Branding plays a crucial role in the marketing world, helping to differentiate products, services, and organizations from competitors. Architecture, on the other hand, provides the physical framework and spatial experience in which brands exist and interact with their target audience. The design of spaces, buildings, and environments can contribute to brand recognition, evoke specific emotions and associations, and create a unique and memorable brand experience.

By studying the relationship between branding and architecture, researchers and practitioners can uncover innovative approaches and strategies for creating cohesive and impactful brand identities. This may involve examining how architectural design elements can reflect brand values and personality, exploring the role of spatial experiences in shaping brand perceptions and investigating the influence of branding on architectural decision-making processes.

Overall, the study and development of the relationship between branding and architecture hold exciting potential for enhancing both fields and fostering innovative and effective approaches to brand communication and spatial design.

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Author Contribution and Conflict of Interest Declaration Information

All authors contributed equally to the article. We hereby declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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