Designing Brand Experience in Interior Space

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Abstract. With fast globalization, comes competitive marketing and brands have begun to use experiential design as a marketing strategy. Experiencing spaces creates a signification in people’s lives, and spaces can have a particular role in originating specialized experiences. Therefore, there is a key role for interior designers, because they design experience through space. Understanding how to design a perceived space for the purpose of brand strategy becomes significant at this point. The research aspires to analyze the role of interior space in experiencing corporate identity. Moreover, it explores how interior space is being shaped by firms who are designing the corporate identity with all design elements together, from graphic design for the logo, to the software design for the website, to interior design for the design of the corporate space. Integrating interior space within the development of corporate identity is a new and effective approach in understanding the experience of the corporate identity. Schmitt’s [1] Experiential Marketing model is used to analyze the works of the design company that uses this approach. The model is adapted to the field of interior design to provide a link with marketing and to eliminate deficiencies between professional life and the existing literature.

1. Introduction
In the twenty-first century, improving a brand is more complex than ever before because of improvement in technology, new innovations, growing competitions and more demanding consumers [2][3][4]. With the help of globalization, marketers and customers are faced with new challenges that increased competitions of brands in the changing the market landscape [5]. In this competition, brands need to find new solutions to stay alive. For this reason, stimulating corporate brand experience will create brand differentiation to gain competitive advantage in the long-term brand differentiation [2][6][7]. Memorable experiences are being created by experiential marketing. The consumers remember what they experience, and share the memories with peers and family. The wants and needs are not the only criteria for experiential marketing. In addition, self-image, dormant emotions, social goals, and values play an important role [5]. In the competitive market, spatial design helps to create differentiation between companies to influence and/or attract customers. The retail environments that include spatial design are unlike traditional a more superficial and two-dimensional use of marketing, such as printed media or advertising [6]. The retail environment aims to stimulate all senses. Experiencing the brand with the senses, and the physical environment of corporate spaces are becoming more important for experiential marketing. The corporate spaces of brands are where people can see or feel the brands. Moreover, this physical environment affects lifestyles as well. The current trend is for design firms to switch to working in the field of experiential design. According to Schmitt [1], “experiential marketing is everywhere”. Experiential design is about connection to tangible and
physical objects. Pine and Gilmore [8], first explained experiential design from the marketing view as, "An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. These firms are combining design, interior architecture, industrial design, graphic design, event production, and digital technology. Recently, there are several examples for firms working with this ideology. These firms are looking to expand the brands they design for, into the physical world. This working approach offers designers new opportunities and new ideologies alongside designers and marketers.

The study concentrates on experiential branding in interior design, and the focus is how designers reflect the customer experiences of brands through the design of the physical corporate spaces. This research will look at how interior design reflects the brand to the space itself or how space helps to experience the brand identity. Specifically, the present study aims to contribute to the existing literature with a multi-disciplinary perspective that connects the fields of interior design and marketing.

2. Experiential design and marketing
Sensory experiences, cognitive experiences, affective experiences and social experiences are four types of customer experiences in the store. Sensory experiences are created through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell which appeal to the five senses. Cognitive experiences attract people creatively. Affective experiences affect inner feelings and emotions. Lastly, interaction with people and culture leads to social experiences [6]. Experiential marketing is developing worldwide and the essential point of success of businesses [9], thus the concepts of customer experience and customer experience management started to take a place increasingly in marketing literature [10]. Experiential marketing can be explained as marketing strategy that involves the physical environment and operational progression designed to deliver certain experiences to customers [9]. The field of experiential marketing is using the nature of the product and applying into tangible, physical, and interactive experiences [11]. This marketing strategy is the underlying relationship between the brand and customer that is significant to personal engagement and trust [5]. This proposes the possibility to execute consumption experience and experiential view of consumer behavior [12].

2.1. The design process in interior design
Designing a space, either exterior or interior, plays a key role in creating a meaning contextual environment in people's lives. The key role could be attributed to people's emotions, sense of belonging, wellbeing and physical comfort. In this definition, interior design is located in being part of defining spaces that people live in and creating spaces that serves to those needs [13]. Butterworth [14] claims that spaces, places and buildings are settle with intensely personal, cultural or traditional meaning, personal histories, and personal worth. The reason of this is designing a spatial space is more than designing environment, it is giving a life to a space that people will interact with it. Nasar[15] states that the perceived quality of spaces prevents worker productivity, consumer behavior, and people's wellbeing. Lefebvre [16], explained the philosophical connotations of space. According to Lefebvre, space cannot be explained only with empty volume that will be filled.

Since the 1980's, big fashion companies like Armani or Gucci began to hire architects to extend their prestige through spatial designs [17]. These spatial designs could be seen as three-dimensional advertisements for the brand name. In general, the store became as brand's appearance and visual identity [18], which shows signs of new experiences, powerful signals and communication way [19]. Brands began to communicate with customers in three-dimensional ways through interior design or spatial design. Kirby and Kent [20] studied retail stores that made use of designed interiors as showcases for their brands. The spatial design becomes part of the marketing strategy that creates visual identity in competitive marketing. Corporate branding and corporate identity literature lacks an elaborate discussion about how spatial design contributes to communication and visual identity. They
also found that, for the brand identity, the most significant communication is through signature-designed spaces. Designing unique and memorable spaces where applied aesthetics activate visual perception of customers [21], helps reflect the identity by spatial design in harmony of design and visual appearance. In many commercial spatial projects, there is a clear influence of corporate identity [22].

2.2. Experiential marketing design process models
Nowadays, the role of visual symbolism has a significant role with the increasing idea of communication corporate strategy [23]. Shee and Abratt [24], Balmer [3], Cutlip, Center and Broom [25], Grunig and Hunt [26], Dowling [27], Olins [28], and many other researchers developed effective corporate identity processes beneficial in decision-making. The common four stages of these plans are [23]: Problem recognition, Evolution of strategies, Imposition of action plan, Implementation.

Schmitt [1] claims it is necessary to shift the attention from the approaches of traditional marketing to customer experiences that marks new concepts and propositions of experiential marketing. The SEEMS (strategic experiential modules) and ExPros (experience providers) experiential marketing models comprise “sensory experiences (SENSE), affective experiences (FEEL), creative cognitive experiences (THINK), physical experiences, behaviors and lifestyles (ACT), and social identity experiences that result from relating to a reference group or culture (RELATE)” (Schmitt, 1999, p. 60). In addition, the experience providers (ExPros) are the application of the experiential modules (SENSE, FEEL, THINK, ACT, and RELATE) that comprehends communication, visual identity, co-branding, spatial environments and people [1]. A brand’s visual appearance and promotion distinguish the attributes and gain of products or services [29]. During the second half of the twentieth century marked a more sophisticated approach to the brand with growing proliferation. Due to competitive threats, a more strategic approach was adopted and this spread from the goods industries to the retail industry [30].

The brand’s design, identity, packaging, communications, and environments come together to create brand related stimuli. Brand related stimuli evokes sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses, which creates the brand experience [31]. The marketing and consumer relationship research shows that, when consumers are looking for products or shopping for them, they receive a specific service and when they consume, experiences occur [32]. Brand-related stimuli can be defined by brand-identifying colors, shapes, typefaces, and slogans [33]. These brand-related stimuli seem as part of identity of brand, brand’s design, marketing communications and environment of brand where the brand is sold or shown. These stimuli create the brand experience [34]. Experience is a significant part of relation between design and the brand. Research studies mostly investigated experience in spatial design, the sub-topics like service design and customer satisfaction. However, there is a huge gap between how brands relate with spatial design, how effects it or most significant part is, and how brands are becoming in three-dimensional ways to experience from people. The literature review showed that, interior design has only been discussed as atmosphere. However, it has not been discussed regarding its relations to experiential design to create brand atmosphere has not been investigated.

3. Method: The case study
The study aims to explore the significance of brand identity based interior design in experiential marketing. The existing research is limited in terms of understanding how interior design being used in the brands or how it is help to experience. Another aim is to understand the importance of brand identity based on interior design. In order to comprehend and operationalize the role of the field, comprehending the influential points of brand design and experiencing brand as marketing strategy is important. The international experience designing company is a London based firm established in 1997 and today, this firm exists in London, Istanbul, Mumbai, and Dubai. They are a team of 120
people. In their team, there are the design, interior design, graphic design, marketing, and digital departments. Their ideology is creating experiences through spaces to create brand identity. The international experience designing company in Istanbul, Turkey was chosen as a case study as it is a firm that works with all design disciplines, bringing interior design, experiential design and corporate identity disciplines together. The study investigated the experience of brands in spatial design. The method for the case study consists of two parts that are; interview with a company designing interior spaces for brand identity with using of experiential marketing, and project analysis based on Schmitt’s [1] experiential marketing model, SEEEMS.

3.1. Interview
Interviews were made with the group partner of the international experience designing company and Client Services Director. The interview method was used to explore their ideology, how they approach design and the design process. The interview was based on the following issues that helped to understand the processes and their perspective; starting point of designing a space for a corporate identity, the facility of interior design in design process, the significant design phases of interior design for corporate identity, design phases, integration of design phases, experiencing corporate identity in a space, conceptualizing corporate identity to space, and the senses they use to create experiences for customers.

3.2. Archetypes and customer journeys as a method of the international experience designing company
The interviews showed that the company used experiential design, experiential marketing, and psychology while they are designing a brand identity based interior space. Archetypes and customer journeys are used to help to identify their client or brand and as a workshop at the beginning of the project. The results guide the design of the interiors that give the atmosphere of the brand. Archetypes refer to the essential attributes of something. People take in different archetypes such as lover, hero, warrior etc. through their life. In other words, the archetype can be explained with the intuitive force that is exhibited into behavior, feeling, and/ or thoughts [35]. Understanding the archetypes enables an understanding of consumers’ demands [36]. Archetypes can be described as factors of the collective unconscious that give a direction to people’s actions and thoughts about personas [37]. A customer journey map is basic scheme that exemplifies the steps of customers experience the brand, this could be product, social media experience, service of the company or the space.

3.3. Project analyses
After comprehending their professional life ideology and their connection to clients and customers, investigating previous works helped to comprehend how they applied for a project in real life with a critical perspective. Investigating of the previous works have been made with the ideology of the literature model of Schmitt’s [1] five strategic experiential modules for the experiential design. In order to approach this study both with a critical thinking approach, as well as a professional one, Schmitt’s model was used. Previous projects of the international experience designing company were chosen from the spaces that served various purposes. Four interior spaces were chosen according to their specific different functions; the bank branch design for banking services, the telecommunication company design for communication services, the restaurant design for hospitality, and the estate agency design for real estate services. In order to combine the literature and the professional life to fill the gaps between each other, each project was investigated through the ideology of Schmitt’s [1] experiential model. The analyses were based on were four sub-topics; intensity, breadth, depth, and linkage.

4. Findings
The results have been discussed as two topics; interview results and project analyses. The interview results show the findings of the interview with the international experience designing company. The aim of the interview is; understanding of how the experience designing company is designing spaces
for the brands and which methods that they are using for the design processes. Afterwards, the project analyses are analyzed according to Schmitt’s [1] experiential model. First, four interior design projects that the international experience designing company designed have been discussed to analyze the design elements that they used for to create brand identity with using experiential design logic. Afterwards, the project criticized with the ideology of SEEMS model. The results helped to comprehend the design disciplines of the international experience designing company and applying an experiential marketing model to interior design.

4.1. Interview
An interview made with the company helped explain their steps for the stages of the design process. The international experience designing company has a layout to understand their clients’ needs and requests. Their layouts are based on experiential design and the workshops are used to create a “soul” for a brand, communicating it to the client. Space is the most significant perception in the projects. If a design wants to give a message to their customer about brand itself, space should be utilized carefully.

The target user is the value of the brand. All of the design phases develop together. The design stages are as such; Workshops, Finding a name for the brand, Logo design, and Spatial design. All of the design groups work together at the company. They use mood boards in the presentations, in a particular order. They believe that each design discipline has same importance. If a discipline is missing from the equation, it means that the design will fail, and the experience can only exist when all come together. All workshops answer to a single definition created by the design team. The design team uses the customer journey. Simply, the customer journey are the touch points that start with the facade the customer will see first, and goes wherever the customer will make the payment. After the workshop, there are visualizations of the outcomes of the meetings. They make use of interior and graphic design in this process. All of the components that make up the brand should speak the same language. The effective way to realize this is to create belongingness to a brand without any logo or posters, by using color, form, graphic type or materials in the space. Brand discourse and brand language must match. If a brand already exists, the insight team in the company investigates the existing space to understand where the customers are facing first, after where they are going and which the problems the customers are going through. This map is used in the customer journey to create a map of the scenario experience that the brands want to reflect to customers.

4.2. Project analyses according to schmitt’s (1999) model
The international experience designing company is a prominent company that creates spaces integrated with the brand identity. They work with well-known companies in Turkey and have several familiar companies in different industry types.

4.2.1. The bank branch project. One of the well-known companies the international experience designing company is working with is one of the bank company, established in 1946. The bank company is a well-established company that they have several institutions in almost every city, all over Turkey (Figures 1 and 2).

Their logo has a green four-leaf clover. Their logo reminds one of luck, creating a positive effect on people. Therefore, green was used in various spatial elements, such as the facades and interiors. It is a well-known company and they already have a corporate color that people know. The same tone of the green was used as the corporate identity color in the design, which resulted in a dull and cold space. Because the bank company wished to give a dynamic atmosphere to customers, the international experience designing company redesigned their company image considering their needs and expectations of the customers from the brand. Among new features was a new branch-office concept for the changing dynamics of banking and to better serve the clients. They aimed to make more effective the consumer flows and direct them to digital platforms when it is necessary. According to
Schmitt’s (1999) five modules of SEEMs, in the bank branch project one can observe SENSE and THINK. SENSE appears from the sensory experiences through sight. Thanks to using the known color of the brand, a familiar environment was created and customers perceive this environment through the sense of sight. Afterwards, THINK appears with the introduction of the smart screen and the ATM’s designed next to the counters. THINK is cognitive and solution oriented. Thus, the international experience designing company invites the customers to use the smart screen and to direct them to the most suitable service. The ATM’s located next to the counters encourage customers to use them to reduce the amount of time they spend for simple transactions.

4.2.2. The telecommunication company project. Another project is the well-known telecommunications company. The brand sought to redesign their stores to update the brand to appeal to a wider group of customers. The brand’s impression in the public eye was that it was expensive to use, which prevented a close bond between the brand and the customer. The telecommunication company wanted an inspiring and attractive store design concept where they could exhibit more products. The international experience designing company created the concept for the telecommunication company as “The brand of our neighborhood” and designed a visual language with interior design to create an experience based store for customers to easily interact with products (Figures 3 and 4).

The design strategy was to design experience zones to create a unique store for the telecommunication company. The zones are; dance experience zone, move experience zone, and discover zone. The dance experience zone enables to try music products in soundproof boxes. The move experience area is and adaptable stand where the customer experiences sports related
productions. From the five modules of Schmitt (1999), SENSE, FEEL, and ACT can be observed. In the SENSE module, the senses being used are sight, touch, and sound. Observing the space takes place through sight, the customer touches the products to experience them freely, and the Dance box to experience the volumes of the products through sound. The new concept originated from creating a friendly environment that goes into FEEL because, this module is about the awakening of inner feelings, and therefore, the changing archetype of the brand should be done through feeling of people for the brand. The international experience designing company aimed to change the perception of customers by creating friendly environment that gives the message that it is “your neighborhood”. Moreover, ACT is shown with the adaptable stand where sports related products are exhibited. ACT occurs if there are physical experiences that refer to different lifestyles. Changing the adaptable stand is to change the concept that may relate to different lifestyles that provides customer to interact with the products physically.

4.2.3. The restaurant project. The restaurant is an Indian brand, in the UK. The restaurant’s owner was inspired by his sister, who was the “world’s best cook” for him. He wanted to share these home-cooked Indian flavors with the modern city community. They present customizable dishes for anyone who wants to taste Indian flavors. The owner of the restaurant contacted the international experience designing company to create an Indian “fast-casual brand”. The restaurant is located in the center of London and the concept attracts people with Indian flavors and an inspiring and creative lunchtime menu. The international experience designing company’s inspiration was to reflect the authentic amicability of India to the restaurant. They represented the community of India, using their heritage and showcasing it within the restaurant through food (Figures 5 and 6).

Rather than a traditional Indian restaurant, the restaurant project represented a dining experience that served multi-course fast casual food. The international experience designing company defined the restaurant as “serving real Indian flavors fast” that led to the related visual identity and customer experience that was able to adapt to the needs of the future. They worked on an exhaustive approach considering several customer touchpoints. The visual identity is a combination of the West and East. Customers are being included into the simplified ordering process with menus that provide personalization. The food is prepared in front of the customers, like a food theatre. The international experience designing company designed the brand name, brand identity, interior design, environmental design, website design, and art direction for the restaurant project. The colored tiles, wooden surfaces on the walls, floors, and colorful lights came together to represent the Indian culture. According to Schmitt’s [1] model, the restaurant project involves the modules SENSE and RELATE. SENSE occurs through sight, taste, and smell. The Indian ambience that was created by the international experience designing company presented to the modern community through sight, serving Indian flavors creates an experience through taste, and an open kitchen where foods are prepared in front of the customers creates attractive smells. The RELATE module represents personal
feelings, social systems, or target groups. The personal feelings of the owner to his sister led to create a contemporary Indian restaurant with a Western approach.

4.2.4. The estate agency project. The estate agency is a well-known real estate brand that has 50 branches across England and Scotland. They worked with the international experience designing company for their flagship agency in London’s Fulham road. The international experience designing company designed a new guest experience for their flagship agency that brought interior design and visual elements together in harmony. While designing, the international experience designing company considered the future renovations and new sites for the brand as well. The design of interior is attractive, and contemporary (Figures 7 and 8).

![Figure 7. Rest area.](image)
![Figure 8. Façade of the estate agency.](image)

The interior design inspirations came from the rural and urban to achieve humorous British design that brings together the old and the new. The brand identity was used in interior design to reflect a sense of national heritage with a smile. The result of interior design is combination of British visual themes and contemporary design. The feedback from customers and the workers regarding interior design are quite favorable. Thanks to the positive results, the design of the office is still being developed by the international experience designing company to apply to the other offices of the estate agency. The manager of the estate agency says, “The brand statement the international experience designing company has given us in the form of our memorable, sophisticated and quirky offices, grabs attention and helps us secure important target audiences.”. The international experience designing company worked with the estate agency for the brand application, interior design, retail strategy, pilot sites, and roll-out. In the estate agency project, from the Schmitt’s [1] five modules, there are SENSE and RELATE. Through the sense of sight, the interior design creates attractive environment. Moreover, RELATE demonstrates the target group, which the customer is expected to be associated with.

4.3. Discussion

The application of Schmitt’s [1] SEEMS model to interior design showed how separate disciplines were integrated to create brand identity. The results show the significance of the interior design using experiential design to create brand identity. The designs of the spaces exemplified above all represented the brand identity by creating new experiences for customers. In the four projects that the international experience designing company designed, the distribution of SEEMS model use is; 44.4% SENSE experience, 22.2% RELATE experience, 11.1% THINK experience, 11.1% FEEL experience, and 11.1% ACT experience. In all interior design projects in this case study, the SENSE experience is being used. Only the content of the SENSE experience changes through senses depends on the project type. All of the spaces in the case study serve the sense of sight. However, in the restaurant project, taste and smell senses are also being used to attract people to flavors. An open kitchen leads to experiencing the smell of the Indian flavors. People are attracted through the experience of the smell
sense. In the telecommunication company project, due to being a communication company that sells technological products, customers are experiencing products through touch and sound. In order to increase the quality of experience, the soundproof Dance box is being used to listen to the sound quality of the products more clearly. Thanks to open stands, all customers can experience the products through touch sense. Thus, the SENSE experience is common point of the four interior design projects.

The questionnaire reflected the influence of interior design in the SEEMS experiential marketing model to reflect a brand identity. The result of questionnaire shows the importance of interior design on the brand identity. These key points in the design could be the base points to design experiential spaces that are brand oriented. The atmosphere of the spaces, designing areas to make people focus on one sense such as the dance zone, the soundproofed box to focus on one single sound and to experience the product with senses help create SENSE experiences. The RELATE experience is observed in the projects that were designed with cultural heritage effects. Using cultural elements in the interior design like in the example of the estate agency project, representing British heritage enhances the experience of the target group. Moreover, the decision for the materials is powerful to create the RELATE experience like the example of the restaurant project where wood, colored tiles, and colorful lights were used to represent the Indian heritage. The THINK experience occurred in the bank branch project with the use of smart screen and ATMs to direct people to services. In the interior design, color was used to direct people to use the technological devices, and the light color of the ceiling and the ground combined with the dark color of smart screen or colorful ATMs helped to attract people. Therefore, the use of color or material has significance on creating the THINK experience. The FEEL experience was represented with the archetype of the brand in the telecommunication company project, especially with the amphitheater reflecting the warm atmosphere of the neighborhood character. In the interior design, the designed space connected with the character of the brand creates the FEEL experience. The ACT experience occurred in the telecommunication project through the design of adaptable and changeable areas depending on the needs. The aforementioned structure and results of the questionnaire may provide interior design guidelines to create interior spaces that effectively enables customers to experience brand identity.

5. Conclusion

Experiencing spaces helps to create a sense of belonging and spatial design creates an emotional impact on human beings [38][39]. This special sense can be used in many ways to create a connection between people and space. Philosopher John Dewey [40] claims that experiences engage the relationship between people and their environments. The role of interior designers is to design this relationship through space and well-designed interactions between brand and the space is created when handled as a whole. The outcomes of the study present a link between existing literature and the interior design profession in enabling the experience of brand identity. The possible contribution of the research findings to existing literature might be in being a representative example creating a unique connection between experiential design, brand identity, and spatial design. The results of applying the SEEMS experiential marketing model of Schmitt [1] to analyze interiors that were designed by the international experience designing company, show that designed experiences can strongly reflect the brand identity in these spaces. The spatial experiences that are designed for customers reflect the significance of interior design in experiential marketing. In interiors, experiential marketing is important to reflect the brand identity to customers. The study shows that interior design is one of the crucial fields in reflecting brand identity in experiential marketing. Regarding further studies, interior spaces can be investigated concerning each interior design element to analyze the relationship between experiential marketing and design elements. Another path to develop this field might be to look at the designs from the customers’ perspectives in order to investigate the success of the use of experiential marketing on interior design reflecting brand identity. Further research may also include, focusing on archetypes and customer journeys to understand the relationship between brand identity and
experiential design. It is clear that there is still much to do regarding this field, as interior spaces are defined and redefined with customer experiential marketing.

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