

Identifying visual representation for National brand identity in packaging design

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to determine the affective use of visual representation of Malaysia national identity through visual perception. Researchers use the visual identity of the country as a medium of communication. A total of 160 respondents participated in the study. Participants were tertiary students from Malaysia Public Higher Institutions. This paper administrated a through survey questionnaire which based on 12. Visual stimuli categories. The findings of this study will be used to develop visual styles based on the top three visual representation from each categories and to applied in packaging design.

Keywords: National Identity, Branding, Visual Stimuli, Visual Perception

1. INTRODUCTION

National identity derives from the image of what the citizens represent of their country and how the nation is perceived or actual international image in world opinion (Rinne & Fairweather, 2011). Noticeably, national identity manifests itself in different traditions and challenging ways. One person's "national identity" is another person's stereotype. Every country has its over familiar symbols or images. The overall objective in this study can be seen as threefold : 1) to identify the construct of national identity; 2) to recognise the visual for each construct of national identity and 3) to observe the visual perception for each construct.

2. THE THORETICAL BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

National Identity

Smith (1991) considered national identity as multi-dimensional. 'It involves some sense of political community, history, territory, patria, citizenship, common values and traditions'. Smith listed five fundamental attributes: historic territory or homeland, common myths and historical memories, a common, mass public culture, common legal rights and duties for all members and common economy with territorial mobility for member. However, Guibernau (2004) argued that national identity is a modern phenomenon of a fluid and dynamic nature, one by means of which a community sharing a particular set of characteristics is led to the subjective belief that its members are ancestrally related. For Guibernau, national identity has five dimensions: psychological, cultural, territorial, historical, and political. Characteristics of national identity is also seen as a "set of

meanings belonging to a culture that distinguishes it from other cultures" and stressed the importance of common ground (Keillor, Hult, Erffmeyer, & Babakus, 1996; Keillor & Hult, 1999). Measure of national identity (NATID) scale developed by Keillor and Hult, (1999) is partially formulated on the premise that the elements, which characterize nation's identity, are also the components, which serve to tie sub-cultures together within national boundaries. Ludviga (2012) also described the features of national identity which includes the historic area, common myths and historical memories, a mass of the same culture, the rights of common law and the duties and general economic.

Table 1. National Identity

Author	Constructs
Nagashima(1970)	representative product, national characteristics, economic, political background, history, traditions
Smith (1991)	historic territory or homeland, common myths and historical, memories, a common mass public culture. common legal rights and duties for all, members, common economy with territorial, mobility for members
Keillor et al.(1996)	national heritage, belief system, cultural, homogeneity, consumer ethnocentrism
Guibernau (2004)	Psychological, cultural, territorial, historical, political.
Winit, Gregory & Mascio (2007)	national heritage, belief system, cultural, homogeneity, consumer ethnocentrism, nativist idea, emotional attachment
Prucpairojkul & Triamsiriworakul (2008)	Flower, animal, architecture, location, topography, culture (family, food, architecture, handicraft, sports, festivals, literatures, music and film, world stars,
Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver (2010)	local film, television and media research, regarding, myths, collective values and rituals, psychological characteristics and national, stereotypes, attachment to place, popular symbols
Rinne & Fairweather (2011)	defining history, the arts, sports, mentality and values, symbols and important heritage, elements, science and technology, internationally defining aspects, geography and size, environment, lifestyle
Saka (2011)	Festivals, traditional music and dance, historic, landmarks, art and crafts, cocoa, symbols

The overall definition of national identity by previous researcher have included aspects of economic, social, political and cultural of which are detailed further to specific parts according to a study conducted (Table.1). It is clear that the definition can be seen conceptually or even visually to describe the identity of a nation. However, Bulmer and Buchanan-Oliver (2010) highlighted from the point of marketing that limited number of researchers who discuss national identity in the context of marketing even though national identity also plays a role in the advertising world. Advertising is seen as a key role in conceptualizing country. Therefore, in this study the researchers were observing the national identities from the aspects of visual perception that echoes the national identity. The used of certain visual stimuli are able to introduce a local brand in the market. Based on the literature review related to national identity, researchers have concluded from the definition given, consolidating existing constructs with not much alteration as appropriate in the context of Malaysia. Researchers will then determine which visual stimuli that the best illustrate the affiliation of national identity and later used the knowledge for application in design.

Branding

The modern definition of branding develops in the 19th century during the industrial revolution when it became increasingly important for manufacturers to create identifiable names and symbols to make their products stand out from their competitors. Today, branding is the process by which a company, a product name, or an image becomes synonymous with a set of value, aspirations, or states, such as 'youth', 'independence', trustworthiness', 'quality', or 'performance' (Vaid, 2003). Kotler (2000) defined a brand as a name, symbol, color, design, or a combination of all words that can distinguish between the manufacturer of a product or service in the market. In reality, it is undeniable that in the competitive world of business today, the brand is seen as a key weapon among competitors. In the world of marketing, the brand made a major instrument and as a tool to show abnormalities

strategies to attract users (Yıldırım, 2014). A strong brand not only gives an advantage to only business but also helps the user. This is because consumers are often face with a variety of brands from a variety of sources in the market and it is difficult to make a choice. Therefore, the brand plays an important role for the express warranties and the quality of a product to assure consumers decide to buy (Keller, 2008).

Besides that, Keller (2008) explained that strategically brand planning initiates with the meaning of brand and brand's position. Brand positioning is a promise that a brand makes and delivers to its consumer's mind. In other words, marketers try to make a balance between brand image and brand personality. While brand positioning focuses on what the brand can do for the consumer, brand personality concentrates on what the brand says about the consumer and how the consumer feel about that. Today, marketing approach represents a brand personality and it be the most useful in positioning strategy (Aaker, 1997). The brand personality is one of the main components of the brand identity, perhaps the closest concept to be more closely with consumers (Elliot & Barth, 2012). Consideration of personality characteristics related with the product, which has become a strategic marketing method to develop the brands. Brand personality makes one brand different and attractive and get consumer's demand greatly to have brand loyalty (Aaker, 1997). Aaker also defined brand personality as "a set of human characteristics and personality dimension" that is associated to brand and product. When describing one brand, words which are used to describe people, can also be used, (Vlachvei, Notta, & Efterpi, 2012; Aaker, 1991). Brand personality can be some characteristics that appear with the perspective of marketers or consumers. Brand personality help consumers to express themselves. In contrast great brand personality can help to strengthen brand loyalty and relationship between consumers. Most of empirical studies determined that personality can be used to find out the relationship between brand perception and consumer behavior.

Aaker (1997) developed brand personality scale based on psychology science and he adapted the scale of human personality that is known as the Big Five Factor. This scale is well cited and being used frequently. Studied on 37 specific brands with 114 specific personality traits to find out the best suitable brand personality traits for products and brands. Thus, Aaker (1997) denoted five basic personality traits for brands that are classified as "sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. Although Aaker's study can be used in every kinds of brand or products, some researchers had pointed out that culture effect can change brand personality perceptions and personality traits (Sung and Tinkham, 2005). Geuens, Weijters, and De Wulf (2009), also criticized Aaker's scale and developed a new brand personality scale, which has dimensions of "activity, aggressiveness, responsibility, simplicity and emotionality" (Geuens et al., 2009). Aksoy and Ozsomer (2007) studied on brand personality scale in Turkey and developed a new scale for Turkish culture which includes dimensions of "competence, excitement, conventionalism and androgenic".

Visual Perception

Visual perception is the ability to process and organize visual information, which plays a major role in identifying and classifying information. Visual perception factors in terms of composite measure, both; cognitive and affective (Chind & Sahachaisaeree, 2012). Packaging must able to catch the consumer's eyes in few seconds. It communicates and indicates information about the product and its condition. As one of the design tools available for manipulation, packaging attributes including color, text, images, and others are very important because of their role in visual perception. Packaging also assists in point of purchase (POP) decision making (Seo, 2010).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Data Collection

Researchers adapted the existing constructs and made appropriate modifications in the context of Malaysia and visual perception (Figure 1). The survey questionnaire was designed according to the constructs identified in the national identity scale (NATID). Furthermore, the categories of items were adapted from different scholars such as Nagashima (1970), Smith (1991), Keillor et al. (1996), Guibernau (2004), Prucpairojkul and Triamsiriworakul (2008), Saka (2011) and Rinne and Fairweather (2011). Discussions were conducted with other researcher for visual stimuli identification to be used as stimulation for each construct.

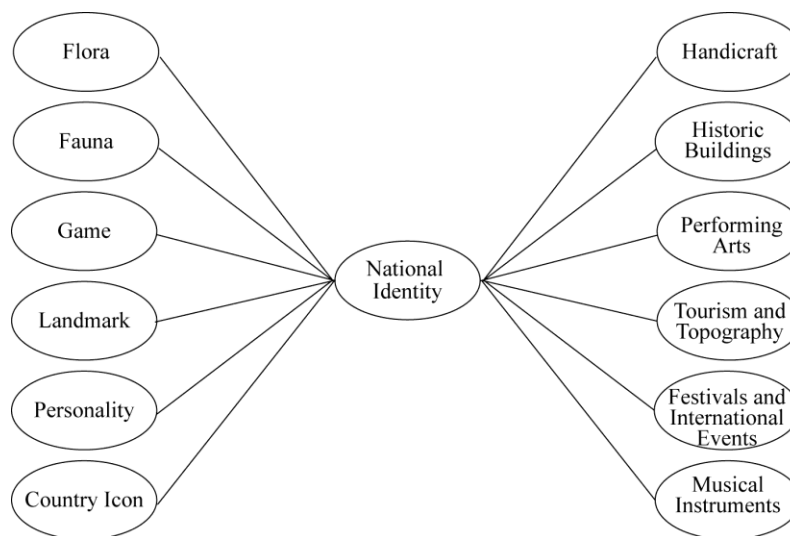


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of National Identity Construct

The final questionnaire consisted of 130 items and the items were grouped in three sections: (A) demographic, (B) psychographic and (C) 12 categories of visual. The categories are flora, fauna, game, landmark, personality, country icon, handicraft, historic buildings, performing arts, tourism and topography, festivals and international events and musical instruments. Each visual category has 10 visual stimuli and the purpose of this study is to observe which of these visuals obtain the highest percentage. For instance, the respondents revealed their experiences in the course by answering the survey items using a 5-level Likert rating scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Data were collected from 12 categories of visual stimuli that represent national identity. The questionnaires were distributed to 160 respondents; 80 art students and 80 non-art students. Respondents were students from local universities and colleges. A total of 160 survey forms were distributed for data collection. The respondents were chosen based on convenience sampling method which involved students that are currently available in the institutions (Piaw, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Idris, 2010). The sample profile is reported in Table 1 and 160 completed questionnaires were obtained. The software program IBM SPSS statistics version 22.0 was used to analyse data for the results.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDING

Descriptive Statistics and Item Analysis

The 130 items involved 160 respondents consisting of female 50% ($n=80$) and 50% ($n=80$) male students. In this study, 31.9% ($n=51$) aged from 18 to 20 years old, 56.3% ($n=90$) were 21 to 23 years old, 11.3% ($n=18$) were 24 to 26 years old and 0.6% ($n=1$) were over 27 years old. The respondent's field of studies are art and design, commerce, engineering, art and design, education and others (see Table 2).

The reliability and validity of a research is required to determine the success of a study. The internal consistency of methods can be used to determine the reliability of measurement instruments. The results indicated that the instruments of this study, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for each category is above 0.7 (Table 3), thus indicated the stability of the instrument (Field, 2013). This shows that the reliability of this instrument is satisfactory and could be used in measuring consumers' visual perception towards the use of appropriate visual stimuli to be a representative for national identity.

Due to possible biases in the art and design and non-art and design respondents, a test for differences among fields of study was applied in all constructs. An analysis for independent samples t-test has been conducted to understand whether there is a difference in the mean scores for art and design and non-art and design students. The analysis using SPSS indicated that the sample means for art and design ($M = 532.61$, $SD = 47.50$) and non-art and design students are ($M = 533.72$, $SD = 52.10$). The Levene's test for equality of variances indicated that this assumption is not violated, since the p -value is higher than 0.05 ($p=0.888$). The output demonstrated that the mean difference obtained is -1.11250 ($SE=7.88382$), with 95% confidence interval in between -16.68377 and 14.45877. The statistics test was specified as t (158), and the p -value was noted as $p = 0.888$. Since the p -value is larger than 5% significance level,

there was not a sufficient evidence to determine that the mean scores for art and design and non-art and design students groups are significantly different. Thus, it can be concluded that field of study is not an issue of bias for the study findings.

Table 2. Demographic Profile Of The Sample (n=160)

Demographic characteristic	Sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (n=160)		
Male	80	50
Female	80	50
Total	160	100.0
Age (n=160)		
18-20 years	51	31.9
21-23 years	90	56.3
24-26 years	18	11.3
27 years or more	1	.6
Total	160	100.0
Field of study (n=160)		
Commerce	1	.6
Engineering	33	20.6
Art and Design	80	50.0
Education	29	18.1
Other	17	10.6
Total	160	100.0

Table 3. Reliability Test

Category	Cronbach's Alpha
Flora	.827
Fauna	.822
Game	.874
Landmark	.826
Personality	.794
Country Icon	.842
Handicraft	.839
Historic Buildings	.844
Performing Arts	.853
Tourism and Topography	.851
Festivals and International Events	.852
Musical Instruments	.875

Percentage of Visual Category

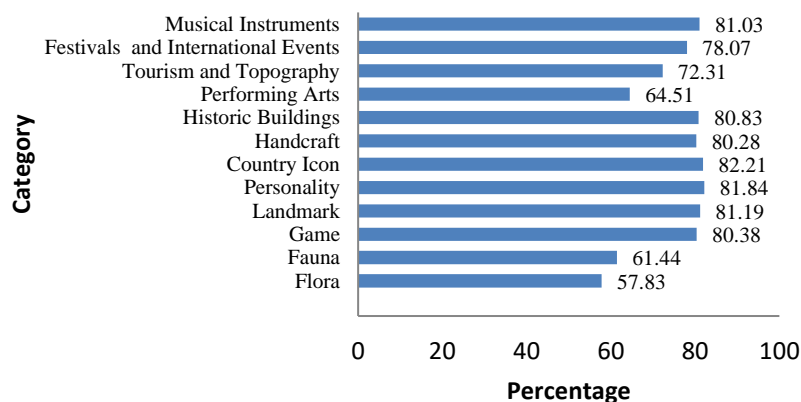


Figure 2. Imagery Representing the National Identities by Categories

The next stage of the analysis tested for differences in visual perceptions. The Figure 2 shows the 12 visual stimuli categories used in the study. According to the results, it can be said that the highest percentage category is country icon (82.21%). Country icon is not merely a symbol, but a means which a country to portray itself to the rest of the world. These flags and the colors for example are then made into national icons for each country around the world. Flags also can be portraits of a country's historical

past and pride of its people. Furthermore flag are used to represent nations at global events. Followed by the personality (81.84%), musical instruments (81.03%), landmark (81.19%), historical building (80.83%), game (80.38%), handicraft (80.28%) and tourism and topography (72.31%). Performing arts (64.51%), fauna (61.44%) and flora (57.83%). (80.38%), handicraft (80.28%) and tourism and topography (72.31%). Performing arts (64.51%), fauna (61.44%) and flora (57.83%).

Table 4. Visual Stimuli Representing The National Identity By Categories

Category	Frequency	Percentage	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Flora			Handicraft		
Hibiscus	132	82.5	<i>Keris</i>	107	66.9
Rafflesia	100	62.5	<i>Batik</i>	104	65
Bougainvillea	65	40.6	<i>Songket</i>	95	59.4
Fauna			Historic Buildings		
Hornbill	82	51.2	A Famosa	110	68.8
Tiger	79	49.4	Sultan Abdul	92	57.5
Leatherback Sea	61	38.1	Samad Building		
Turtle			Kuala Lumpur	75	46.9
Game			Railway Station		
<i>Wau</i>	130	81.3	Performing Arts		
<i>Congkak</i>	111	69.4	<i>Zapin</i>	101	63.1
<i>Gasing</i>	97	60.6	<i>Dikir Barat</i>	95	59.4
Landmark			<i>Ghazal</i>	71	44.4
Kuala Lumpur	134	83.8	Tourism and		
Convention Centre (KLCC)			Topography		
Kuala Lumpur	113	70.6	Kinabalu Mount	128	80
Tower			Cameron Highlands	105	65.6
Putrajaya	102	63.7	Redang Island	104	65
Personality			Festivals and		
Tun Dr Mahathir	142	88.8	International Events		
Muhammad			World Kite Festival	101	63.1
Tan Sri P. Ramlee	125	78.1	Le Tour de	96	60
Datuk Nicol Ann	117	73.1	Langkawi		
David			Formula1Malaysia	86	53.8
Country Icon			Grandprix		
Flag	148	92.5	Musical Instruments		
<i>Jata Negara</i>	148	92.5	<i>Kompang</i>	120	75
National Monument	115	71.9	<i>Gong</i>	91	56.9
			<i>Gambus</i>	78	48.8

There are 12 visual stimuli categories displayed in the above figure 2 and the researcher chose top three visual stimuli that have the highest percentage for each category as showed in table 4. The results of the analysis showed that Hibiscus, Rafflesia, and Bougainvillea are the highest percentage for the flora category. Meanwhile, the three highest percentages for fauna category were Hornbill, Tiger dan Leatherback Sea Turtle. In addition to Game category, *Wau*, *Congkak* and *Gasing* represent the highest percentages. Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC), Kuala Lumpur Tower and Putrajaya have the highest percentage for the Landmark category. In addition, the portrait of the fourth Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the portrait of Tan Sri P. Ramlee, national artist and well-known athletes, Datuk Nicol Ann David have been chosen as the three highest in the list of categories of personality. In the category of Country or National Icon the visual of Malaysian Flag, State Emblem and National Monument have the highest percentage. Other than that, Keris, Batik and Songket are the highest in the category of handicrafts. The results of this study have shown that the A Famosa, Sultan Abdul Samad Building and Kuala Lumpur Railway Station have the highest percentage in the category of Historic Buildings. Similarly, the visual perception of the Performing Arts category for which *Zapin*, *Dikir Barat* and *Ghazal* have the highest percentage. In the category of Tourism and Topography; Mount Kinabalu, Cameron

Highlands and Redang Island have the highest percentage. Formula 1 Grandprix, World Kite Festival and Le Tour de Langkawi have the highest percentages in the category Festivals and International Events. Finally for Musical Instruments category, *Kompang*, *Gong* and *Gambus* are the three highest in its category.

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The results from this study have suggested that the 12 constructs of national identity could be applied in regards to the Malaysia's perspective. This modified national identity construct will provide researchers with significant understanding on visuals stimuli represent the national identity. The top three visuals stimuli that have the highest percentage for each category will be further tested using different visual styles for the future research in relation to a broad area of creative industries such as advertising, animation, broadcasting and film.

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Conflicts of interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interests.

Data and materials availability

All data associated with this study are present in the paper.

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