Investigating the Role of Interior Design Elements in Building Brand Identity and User Experience of Commercial Spaces: A Comparative Study of Branded and Local Stationery Shops in Pune

Shruti Mulik
Bachelor of Interior Design (BAIDD), 5th Semester, SRN 31242001, Vishwakarma University, Pune, Maharashtra, India

***Abstract*—This research paper investigates the role of interior design elements in commercial spaces in creating an atmosphere that offers a memorable experience. Commercial spaces are not designed only to look attractive; they must reflect brand personality so that users can feel a connection with the brand. A comparative study of a local and a branded stationery shop in Pune helps to understand how each uses interior elements to create brand identity and user experience. The study explores design elements such as colour, texture, material, lighting and spatial organisation, and how they shape the retail environment. A survey of shop users is supported by two comparative case studies, Crossword (NIBM) and Modern Paper Store (Kesariwada), to examine how design elements influence brand recognition, ease of movement and overall experience. The findings contribute to an understanding of how interior design elements can shape consumer experience and build consumer loyalty, and provide practical insight into how interior design can strengthen brand identity and improve customer satisfaction.**

***Index Terms*—Design elements, Brand identity, User experience, Customer satisfaction, Commercial space.**

I. INTRODUCTION

This research paper investigates the role of interior design elements in commercial spaces in creating an atmosphere that gives users a memorable experience, and also examines the contribution of sustainable materials in enhancing user comfort by creating a pleasant environment. In recent years, commercial spaces have been designed not only to look attractive but also to represent a brand and give users a memorable experience. Design elements such as materials, colours, textures, space planning and lighting can create brand identity and enhance user experience; for example, sustainable materials can be used in a Khadi cloth shop. User experience can be upgraded by making users feel, think, act, relate and sense through design, and enhancing user experience through design helps to build loyalty. Brand logos, colours, slogans and design features allow customers and employees to connect with the brand and feel emotionally connected to it.

A commercial space must reflect the personality and values of the brand. Design elements such as colour, material, logo and lighting help to reflect brand identity. A logo is a symbol that communicates the brand's values and distinguishes a brand from others. As Ali and Fathallah (2019) describe it, a logo is a symbol or sign that carries a philosophical message for the target audience to distinguish the institution, and it is the most important element of the visual representation of identity, since it represents the group of experiences that form the visual perception of the institution in the minds of customers.

Businesses use interior design as a strategy to build a strong connection with customers. Today's customers expect comfortable, attractive spaces that connect them with the brand, and there is an increasing demand for sustainable materials in enhancing the space environment. Academic literature similarly notes a steady increase in sustainability-oriented design efforts from 2013 to 2023, demonstrating a paradigmatic shift toward environmentally conscious interiors (Gitnux, 2025). The choice of material, colour, lighting and space planning can affect the

customer's feelings and the way they interact with a space. Attractive space planning that reflects the brand can give customers a memorable experience and a positive impression.

Research has shown that retail environments significantly influence customer perceptions, emotions and purchasing decisions (Kotler, 1973; Baker et al., 2002). Therefore, interior design elements play a significant role in building brand identity and enhancing user experience. The design of a space can tell customers what a brand represents without using many words. When customers understand a brand through design, they develop a connection with it, which makes interior design an important part of branding.

This paper explains how interior design can influence customer experience, actions and feelings, and help customers to connect with a brand and develop brand loyalty. It compares a branded and a local stationery shop in Pune through a user survey and two comparative case studies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Interior design plays an important role in creating brand identity and enhancing customer experience in commercial spaces. Onem and Hasirci (2020), in IOP Conference Series, explain that interior design can communicate a brand through design elements such as lighting, materials, spatial planning and colours. The study reflects that designing around brand values can enhance user experience and help users to connect with the brand.

Sungur (2025), in the study Building the Relationship Between Store Design and Image Through an Interior Architecture Project, shows how store design reflects brand image. The study highlights the importance of design elements such as colour, lighting, spatial planning and attractive product display. This shows that a store's aesthetics alone are not enoughz

Colour is one of the first things customers notice when they enter a shop. It can create a particular mood and help people recognise the character of a brand. Materials and textures also affect how a space looks and feels. For example, the choice of natural or finished materials can make a shop feel warm, simple, modern or premium. These elements should work together so that the interior gives a clear and consistent message.

Lighting and space planning are also important parts of a retail interior. Good lighting helps customers see products clearly and makes displays easier to explore. A well-planned layout provides enough space to move comfortably, while clear pathways help customers find products without difficulty. The arrangement of shelves and display units can also guide customers through the shop and make the shopping process more convenient. These ideas are in line with the role of store surroundings discussed by Kotler (1973) and Baker et al. (2002).

Product display can influence how customers interact with a shop. When products are arranged neatly and grouped in a simple way, customers can understand the choices available and find what they need more easily. A well-organised display can also encourage customers to look at more products. The overall arrangement, along with colours, materials and lighting, helps create an identity that customers can recognise and remember.

The reviewed studies also show that a good retail space should consider both appearance and comfort. A shop may look attractive, but it should also be easy to use. Customers are more likely to enjoy a space when they can move freely, see products clearly and feel comfortable. Emotional design, as discussed by Rui and Firzan (2025), connects the visual quality of a space with the way people feel while using it.

Sustainable materials are another area to consider in interior design. Materials such as bamboo, certified wood and recycled materials can support more responsible design choices. They can also add texture and character to an interior when selected carefully. This means that designers need to think about the appearance, function and environmental impact of materials while creating a comfortable space.

Overall, the reviewed studies show that interior design elements create an impact on users' experience and bring loyalty towards the brand.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative methodology with the goal of understanding people's experiences and behaviours in their own words. It investigates the role of interior design elements in building brand identity and enhancing user experience in commercial spaces. The study compares two stationery shops in Pune: a local stationery shop (Modern Paper Store,

Kesariwada) and a branded shop (Crossword, NIBM), shown in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2. The same aspects of interior design and user experience are considered for both shops for a better understanding of the difference in users' perceptions.

The comparison focuses on movement in space, user engagement, brand identity and overall experience. This helps to observe how the interior affects the brand's identity, how design affects users' movement, and how users interact with the space. The two shops are first examined as comparative case studies, and an online questionnaire for users of stationery shops is then analysed.



Fig. 1. Crossword. Source: crossword.in



Fig. 2. Modern Paper Store. Source: Google Business Profile

IV. COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES: ROLE OF DESIGN ELEMENTS IN BUILDING BRAND IDENTITY AND USER EXPERIENCE

Two stationery shops in Pune are examined as case studies: Crossword at NIBM, representing a branded retail environment, and Modern Paper Store at Kesariwada, representing a local retail environment. Survey results quoted in the cases are reported in full in the Data Analysis section that follows. Each case is described through the same lens: colour and materials, product display and arrangement, space planning and circulation, lighting, brand identity, and user experience.



Fig. 3. Case study 1: Crosswordat NIBM



Fig. 4. Case study 1: Modern Paper Store, Kesariwada, Pune

Introduction. Modern Paper Store is a local stationery shop in Kesariwada, Pune. It provides a comparison with Crossword and helps explore how a local retail space presents its products and how its interior relates to customer experience.

Interior design elements. Colour and materials: the colours and materials contribute to the shop's visual appearance, and their role in creating a recognisable identity can be understood by observing how they are used throughout the store. Product display and arrangement: the arrangement of stationery products affects how easily customers can identify, compare and select items; clear product grouping makes shopping more convenient. Space planning and circulation: the placement of shelves, counters and displays affects customer movement and shows how

effectively the available space is used. Lighting and visibility: lighting affects how clearly products can be seen and how customers experience the store. Brand identity: the shop's name, product presentation, colours and overall interior appearance contribute to how customers understand and remember the store.

User experience. The survey findings showed an average experience rating of 3.41 out of 5 for local stationery shops. In comparison, 16.3% of respondents selected the local shop as the place where they would prefer to spend more time, while 10.2% considered it easier to move around than Crossword. These results indicate that respondents rated the branded environment more positively overall. However, they do not mean that every local shop has a poor interior or that every customer will prefer a branded store.

Key observation. The local shop provides a useful comparison for understanding how product arrangement, space planning, materials and colours contribute to customer experience. It also highlights the opportunity for local stationery shops to develop a clearer visual identity through thoughtful product displays and interior planning.

4.1. Comparative Analysis of the Two Cases

Table 1 compares the two shops on the aspects examined in the survey and the case studies.

Table 1. Comparison of Crossword (NIBM) and Modern Paper Store (Kesariwada)

Design aspect	Crossword, NIBM	Modern Paper Store, Kesariwada
Brand identity	Branded retail environment	Local shop identity expressed through its name and store environment
Product display	Organised grouping of books and stationery supports browsing	Grouping of stationery supports identifying and selecting items
Ease of movement	89.8% found Crossword easier to move around	10.2% selected the local shop as easier to move around
Longer stay	83.7% preferred Crossword for spending more time	16.3% preferred the local shop
Average experience rating	3.97/5 for branded shops	3.41/5 for local shops
Design aspect	Crossword, NIBM	Modern Paper Store, Kesariwada
Research focus	How the branded environment supports identity and experience	How the local environment presents products and supports customer needs

Note: The survey percentages represent respondents' opinions about branded and local stationery shops. They are not measurements of the two specific stores' physical design features.

4.2. Summary of the Case Studies

The two case studies help explain how interior design can contribute to brand identity and user experience in stationery retail spaces. The survey found that materials and colours were among the first elements noticed by customers, while product arrangement was important for making shopping easier. Respondents generally rated the branded shop environment more positively, found Crossword easier to move around, and showed a greater willingness to spend time there. The findings suggest that product presentation, spatial planning, materials and colours can help create a more memorable shopping experience.

However, a local stationery shop can also build a strong identity through clear product displays, effective use of space and a consistent visual appearance. The case studies highlight the importance of designing retail interiors around both brand identity and customer needs, rather than relying only on the shop's name or logo.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

5.1. Survey Method

The survey was conducted through an online questionnaire for users of stationery shops. Respondents answered questions on their perception of interior design elements, brand identity and user experience in a branded shop (Crossword) compared with the local shop (Modern Paper Store). Responses are reported as percentages of respondents, and the overall experience questions used a five-point rating scale. The questions focused on how people notice and experience the interior design and how design affects their understanding of the brand and their shopping experience.

5.2. Interior Element Noticed First

Materials were the most noticeable element when respondents entered a shop (44.9%), followed by colours (30.6%) and furniture (9.2%); the remaining respondents noticed the logo and lighting first (Fig. 3). This shows that materials and colours have a stronger impact on the first impression of a shop interior.

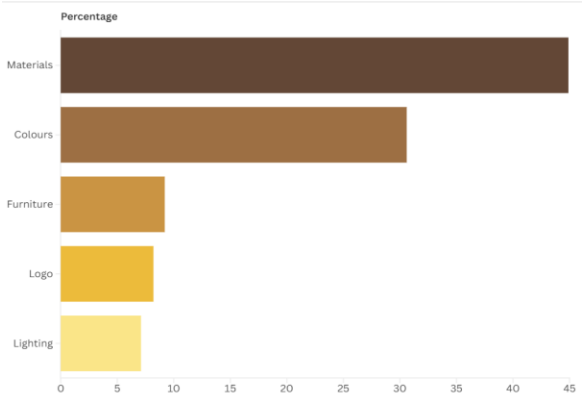


Fig. 5. Interior element noticed first on entering a shop. Source: Author

5.3. Comparative Analysis: Branded and Local Stationery Shops

The comparison shows that respondents generally preferred the branded shop, Crossword, over the local Modern Paper Store (Fig. 4). Crossword was selected by 89.8% as easier to move around and by 83.7% as the shop where they would like to spend more time. Crossword also received an overall experience rating of 3.97/5, compared with 3.41/5 for the local shop. Overall, 81.4% of respondents preferred Crossword, while 18.6% preferred the local shop.

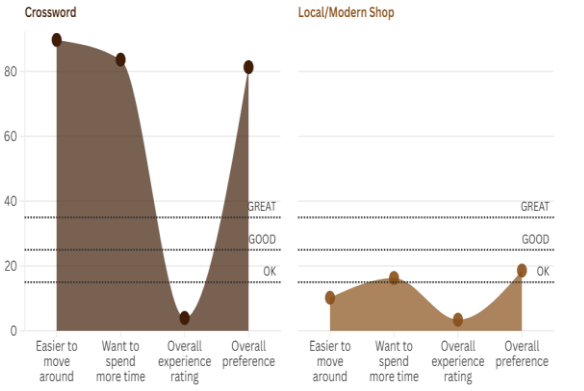


Fig. 6. Comparison of Crossword (branded) and the local/modern shop on four measures. Source: Author

5.4. Interior as a Cue for Brand Identity

A large majority (87.8%) stated that the interior of a shop gives them an idea of what the brand represents, while 12.2% of respondents did not agree (Fig. 5). This shows that most people understand a brand through its interior design; colours, lighting and materials help to communicate the brand's identity.

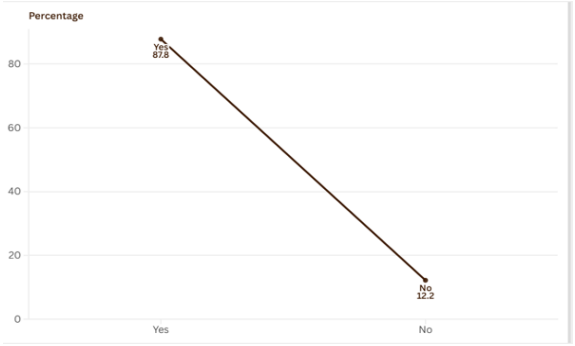


Fig. 7. Respondents who feel a shop interior communicates what the brand represents. Source: Author

5.5. Ease of Movement

The survey shows that 89.8% of respondents found Crossword easy to move around, while 10.2% selected Modern Paper Store (Fig. 6). This indicates that respondents found movement more convenient in the branded shop. Clear pathways and well-arranged products make shopping easier.

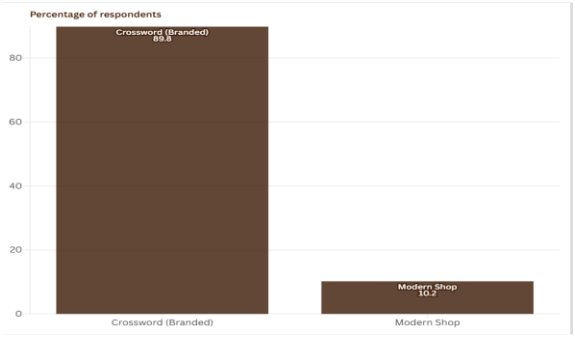


Fig. 8. Ease of movement: Crossword versus Modern Paper Store. Source: Author

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings show three things. First, interior design helps people to understand and remember the brand; around 87.8% recognise a brand through its interior. Second, materials, colours, product arrangement and

space planning create a good impression, make shopping easier and provide a good user experience. Third, respondents selected Crossword over the local stationery shop, giving it a higher rating and showing more interest in spending time there. The case studies show the same pattern for the two shops.

6.1. Interpreting the Findings Against the Literature

Experiential design and experience over the logo. Onem and Hasirci (2020) explained that interior design helps people to understand a brand. In the conducted survey, 78.6% of respondents preferred to spend more time in the space, 82.5% wanted to visit again, and 89.8% found the branded shop easier to move around. This shows that good design can make shopping easier and more enjoyable.

Emotional design. Rui and Firzan (2025) explained that emotional design includes functionality and personal connection. The survey supports these ideas. Materials and colours created the first impression, while 86.7% of respondents preferred product arrangement, which made shopping easier. This shows that an aesthetic and well-arranged space can improve user experience.

6.2. Key Insight: Brand Recall Comes from the Spatial Experience, Not Only the Logo

The main finding is that most people remember the product and the interior. Only 10.3% of people remember the logo, while 68% remember the brand's product and 9.3% remember the colours. This shows that the logo is not the only factor; design elements and user experience are equally important. Therefore, designers should focus on making the space an attractive and comfortable interior with good spatial planning.

6.3. Answers to the Research Questions

Q1. How can interior design create a brand identity for a commercial space? Interior design can create a brand identity by using design elements such as materials, colours, lighting and spatial planning. In the survey, 87.8% of respondents identified the brand through its interior. Materials (44.9%) and colours (30.6%) were noticed more than the logo (8.2%). This shows that people remember interior design more than the logo.

Q2. How can design enhance user experience in the space? Good space planning and product arrangement make shopping easier. In the survey, 89.8% found the branded shop easier to move around. The branded shop also received a higher rating of 3.97, compared with 3.41 for the local shop, which reflects that well-arranged products and easy movement improve user experience.

Q3. How can an emotional connection with the user be created through design? An emotional connection can be created through organised products and a comfortable user experience. In the survey, 78.6% wanted to spend more time in the shop and 82.5% intended to revisit. This shows that a good shopping experience can make a space more memorable.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study examined how interior design creates brand identity and enhances user experience. The survey and the two comparative case studies compared a branded and a local stationery shop; more respondents preferred the branded shop (Crossword) for its interior and product arrangement, which help them to remember the space and have a good, memorable experience.

For designers: focusing on interior design elements such as materials, colours, spatial planning and lighting will support the overall design. For brand owners: a good interior can strengthen brand identity and improve customer experience, but providing good service will also enhance user experience. Local shops, too, can build a clearer identity through product displays and interior planning.

The study has some limitations. It focuses only on stationery shops in Pune, which may not apply to all commercial spaces, and the case studies draw on survey opinions about branded and local shops rather than measured design features of the two stores. Every person has their own taste and opinion of design, which makes it difficult to study and compare experiences accurately, and different people may react differently to the same design. Future studies could include more shops and measured site observations of materials, lighting and layout.

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