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## The Impact of Graphic Design on Product Branding from the Perspective of Graphic Design Students at Saudi Universities as A Model

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### Abstract

*This study explores the impact of graphic design on product branding from the perspective of graphic design students at Saudi public universities. The primary aim of the research was to assess students' understanding of branding and their perception of graphic design's role in shaping brand identity and influencing consumer behavior. The study targeted 88 male and female graphic design students across six major Saudi universities, including King Saud University, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, and others from different regions. A structured questionnaire was administered to collect data, and descriptive statistical analysis was used to evaluate the results. The findings revealed that a significant majority of students (85.2%) agreed that graphic design plays a crucial role in branding, with logos (79.5%) and color schemes (72.7%) identified as the most influential design elements. While the students expressed moderate to high self-assessed knowledge of branding, 19.3% of respondents were dissatisfied with the branding-related content in their curricula, suggesting gaps in practical training and real-world application. The study concludes that while graphic design students in Saudi Arabia recognize the strategic importance of design in branding, there is a need for curriculum improvements to better prepare students for real-world branding challenges. Based on these findings, the study recommends enhancing branding education in design curricula, integrating practical projects and industry collaborations, offering workshops with industry professionals, and updating teaching tools to reflect current industry standards.*

**Keywords:** Graphic Design, Product Branding, Branding Education, Saudi Universities, Graphic Design Students.

### Introduction

In an increasingly competitive global market, branding has emerged as a crucial factor in shaping consumer perception and driving purchasing behavior. At the heart of effective branding lies graphic design discipline that transcends aesthetics to communicate identity, value, (Aldabbagh, et al., 2024). And emotion. Graphic design not only enhances the visual appeal of a product but also plays a pivotal role in defining how that product is perceived by its target audience. (Sivaram, et al., 2019). This is particularly evident in today's fast-paced, image-driven world where first impressions are often made in seconds. As Saudi Arabia continues to expand its creative industries in alignment with Vision 2030, the role of graphic design in shaping local and global brands has become more significant than ever. (Foroudi et al., 2019) Universities across the Kingdom are nurturing a new generation of designers equipped with the tools, knowledge, and vision to influence the branding landscape. (Evamy, et al., 2016).

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Understanding how these students perceive the relationship between graphic design and product branding offers valuable insights into future industry trends and the evolving expectations of design professionals. (Chadhiq, et al., 2022). This study aims to explore the impact of graphic design on product branding through the lens of graphic design students at Saudi universities. (Bartlett, et al., 2001). By analyzing their perspectives, educational experiences, and creative approaches, the research seeks to establish a model for understanding the role of design in branding within a culturally rich and rapidly transforming society. The Company's logo is the symbol of the brand, but it is not necessarily the brand itself. (Schifferstein, et al., 2022). The brand may appear on printed corporate materials as part of the company's visual identity or logo, but the intended meaning of the brand goes beyond just the logo or even the corporate identity or the product itself. It is, in fact, the perception that people have of a product, service, or organization. (Neumeier, et al., 2003) The concept of branding dates back to the Greco-Roman era, when craftsmen used marks or symbols on their products such as pottery, livestock, or medicine to distinguish them from others. In the 17th and 18th centuries, manufacturers in France and Belgium began to widely use embroidered marks on textiles and furniture. These marks indicated the origin and quality of the products. (Airey, et al., 2014).

Following the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, the use of trademarks spread significantly and began appearing on products such as porcelain, gold, and silver. Some of these famous brands from that era still exist today, such as Coca-Cola (carbonated drinks), Sunlight (soap), Kodak (film), and Heinz (canned goods), among many others. As the use of trademarks became more widespread, companies and consumers began to develop stronger connections to brands. Companies began striving to distinguish themselves by creating unique brand identities that consumers could trust. Brands started to reflect desired characteristics or values, and consumers became more inclined to seek out those that offered specific benefits—whether in a product or service. (Naqrah, et al., 2015) There is a strong commercial brand that significantly influences consumer behavior and decision-making. This influence is closely linked to the company's marketing strategies, which must be followed through specific stages before becoming essential. These strategies help the company create a distinctive identity that makes consumers constantly choose its brand over competitors. It is important to point out that a brand is built on several essential components, including brand identity, brand communications, brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand management, and brand honesty, among others. Each of these components plays a vital role in the brand's success and helps it reach a strong position in global markets. (Alfakrah, et al., 2024) one of the most important tools in achieving brand success is the brand promise, which represents the commitment a brand makes to its consumers. This promise has a deep emotional impact and is often the main reason behind the consumer's connection to the brand. Even though the company may communicate this promise through advertisements that promote a product or service, the brand's success is not solely dependent on it. However, it remains one of the most critical factors to consider when designing an effective strategy. In addition to spreading awareness, (Chadhiq, et al., 2022). Advertising campaigns act as a tool for brand communication, targeting specific segments and conveying the brand's message. These campaigns also highlight the features and services the company offers, helping shape consumer perceptions of the brand through effective brand management (Graciola, et al., 2020).

Many branding specialists work in various fields to shape and develop a commercial brand. Each of them aims to convey a clear and beautiful image of the product or service offered by the brand. One of the key roles these specialists play is delivering the brand's visual image through

graphic design, which helps consumers recognize and remember the brand. (Foroudi 2019) Graphic design plays a role that is just as important as other fields like marketing, business management, or even interior design. (Alahira, et al., 2024) All these professionals work together to build and manage the commercial brand. A brand's identity usually begins with the design of its logo, which may include a symbol, drawing, or name that consistently appears alongside the brand name. Often, the logo includes a “visual representation” and may also be accompanied by a slogan—a memorable phrase that expresses the main features of the product or service. Designers may choose specific colors and keywords that are easy to recall and align with the brand’s overall strategy and advertising campaigns. (Liu, et al., 2020) In these campaigns, graphic designers use impactful storytelling to highlight the company’s services or products. (Al-Waqari, et al., 2015) Many companies spend heavily on developing their commercial brands, aiming to control how they appear to the public across different countries and platforms. To ensure consistent branding across different applications and target audiences, companies often develop brand guidelines summarized documents that explain how the brand should be used and presented. These also help in creating effective branding strategies. (Argyris et al., 2020)

### **Problem Statement**

This study seeks to explore the impact of graphic design on brand building in Saudi Arabia. Brand building has become a key component of corporate success. A strong brand enhances value, increases sales, and leaves a lasting impression on consumers. However, there is still limited understanding of how emerging graphic designers, particularly students, perceive and interpret its role in shaping brand identity and consumer engagement. It is essential to explore the perspectives of graphic design students, who represent the next generation of branding professionals. Yet, little research has been conducted to assess how these students view the relationship between design elements and brand effectiveness. This knowledge gap hinders efforts to align educational outcomes with industry needs and to develop culturally relevant branding strategies. There is a need to acknowledge the general lack of knowledge about brand building, which often leads business owners to rely on graphic design agencies to develop their brands. Designers must also understand the strategic principles necessary to create an effective and influential brand identity.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do graphic design students at Saudi universities perceive the role of graphic design in product branding?
2. What design elements do these students consider most influential in creating effective product branding?
3. How does academic training in graphic design shape students’ understanding of branding strategies?
4. To what extent do cultural and regional factors influence the students' approach to product branding through design?
5. What similarities and differences exist in the perceptions of students from different Saudi universities regarding the impact of graphic design on branding?

## **Research Objectives**

1. To explore how graphic design students at Saudi universities perceive the role and significance of graphic design in product branding.
2. To identify the key design elements that students believe contribute to the effectiveness of product branding.
3. To examine how academic curricula in graphic design influence students' understanding of branding concepts and strategies.
4. To assess the impact of cultural and regional factors on students' approach to product branding through graphic design.
5. To compare and contrast the perceptions of graphic design students from different Saudi universities regard the relationship between graphic design and product branding.

## **Limits of the Study**

### **Objective Limits:**

This study is specifically focused on the perceptions and perspectives of graphic design students in Saudi universities regarding the impact of graphic design on product branding. It aims to explore their understanding of the relationship between graphic design and branding, the design elements they find significant, and how their academic training influences these views. The study does not aim to evaluate the actual effectiveness of branding strategies or the impact of graphic design on the market performance of products. Additionally, it does not investigate the perspectives of industry professionals, graphic designers outside of academic settings, or non-design students.

### **Temporal Limits:**

The research will be conducted during the 2024-2025 academic year. Data collection will take place during the fall and spring semesters, while the analysis and reporting of results will be completed by the end of the academic year. The study does not extend beyond this period and does not include historical data or trends before 2024 or projections for the years following 2025.

### **Spatial Limits:**

The study is geographically limited to Saudi Arabia, specifically targeting graphic design students from a selection of public and private universities across various regions within the Kingdom. This study does not include data from international universities or other higher education institutions outside Saudi Arabia. The sample of universities selected for the study is limited to those with established graphic design programs.

## **Study Specifications**

### **Study Design:**

This research will adopt a descriptive and qualitative approach to explore the perceptions of graphic design students at Saudi universities regarding the role of graphic design in product branding. Data will be collected through surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions to capture a comprehensive understanding of the students' views, insights, and experiences related to branding and design.

### **Target Population:**

The target population of this study includes graphic design students currently enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs at selected universities in Saudi Arabia. The study will focus on students who have completed at least one year of study in graphic design to ensure they have acquired foundational knowledge of design principles and branding concepts.

### **Sampling Method:**

A stratified random sampling method will be used to select participants from different universities across Saudi Arabia, ensuring representation from both public and private institutions. The sample will include students from a variety of academic years and regions to account for potential differences in experience and perspective. The total sample size will be determined based on statistical considerations to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

### **Data Collection Methods:**

**Surveys:** A structured questionnaire will be distributed to a large number of students to gather quantitative data on their perceptions of graphic design's role in branding. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a smaller subset of students to obtain in-depth qualitative insights into their views on the relationship between graphic design and branding, as well as the influence of their academic training. **Focus Groups:** Group discussions will be organized to facilitate collective reflections on the role of design in branding, allowing students to engage with each other's perspectives.

### **Data Analysis:**

The data collected from surveys will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize trends and patterns in student perceptions. Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups will be analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and patterns regarding the impact of graphic design on product branding.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

The study will adhere to ethical guidelines; ensuring informed consent is obtained from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research process, and all data will be stored securely. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without consequence. The study is limited to the perspectives of graphic design students at Saudi universities, and may not fully represent the views of professionals or industry experts in the field of product branding. Additionally, due to the focus on a specific academic year and region, the findings may not be generalizable to other populations or time periods. Furthermore, the subjective nature of the responses may introduce bias in interpreting students' perceptions.

### **Study Terms**

#### **Graphic Design:**

A creative discipline that combines visual elements such as typography, images, and colors to communicate messages and ideas effectively. In the context of this study, graphic design refers specifically to the visual aspects used in creating branding materials such as logos, packaging, advertisements, and promotional materials. The process of creating and managing the identity

of a product. This involves developing a unique name, logo, design, and other visual elements that distinguish a product from competitors and communicate its value to consumers. Branding also encompasses how the product is perceived in the market and the emotional connection it creates with its target audience. (Sander et al., 2021) The visual and sensory elements that make up the public perception of a brand, including its logo, color palette, typography, and overall design style. Brand identity plays a crucial role in creating consumer recognition and loyalty. In the context of this study, perception refers to the way graphic design students interpret and understand the role of design in branding, based on their experiences, education, and cultural background. It also reflects their evaluation of how effectively design influences consumer behavior and brand identity. The set of cultural influences and values that shape how individuals from a particular region or society interpret and engage with branding materials. In this study, cultural context refers to the Saudi cultural, social, and economic environment that may influence how students design for branding and perceive its impact. The formal education and coursework that graphic design students undergo in their university programs. Academic training encompasses the principles, techniques, and theories taught in design programs, including design history, visual communication, color theory, and branding strategy. A comprehensive plan or approach developed by marketers and designers to build, manage, and sustain a brand's identity and presence in the market. Branding strategy involves aligning visual design elements with a brand's message, target audience, and business goals. (Giglio, et al., 2019)

### **Saudi Universities:**

Higher education institutions located within Saudi Arabia that offers academic programs in graphic design and related fields. For the purposes of this study, Saudi universities will include both public and private institutions with established graphic design departments. A sampling technique in which the population is divided into distinct subgroups or strata and participants are randomly selected from each subgroup. (Al-Azzam, et al., 2014). This method ensures that the sample represents various segments of the population and increases the reliability of the results. A qualitative data analysis method used to identify and interpret patterns or themes within data. In this study, thematic analysis will be used to analyze qualitative responses from interviews and focus groups, allowing the researcher to uncover key insights related to the perceptions of graphic design students on branding.

## **Literature Review**

### **Corporate Identity Design**

Corporate identity refers to the set of attributes, features, and characteristics that distinguish an organization from its competitors. It represents the tangible (visual and auditory) elements that form the organization's image in the minds of its audience. Corporate identity is designed to reflect the "personality" of the institution, facilitating the achievement of its intended goals. (Roggeveen, et al 2021) In general, corporate identity evolves into a collection of specifications governed by a set of guiding principles. These principles regulate how the identity is implemented and help maintain its mental image within the framework of these specifications. As a result, any recipient or consumer can identify the organization and recognize it as a brand with specific qualities that, in turn, influence the organization's positioning and brand value. (Sudaryanto et al., 2019).

### **Corporate Behavior:**

Covers internal values, policies, flexibility, and cooperation .The intersection of graphic design and product branding has been a subject of growing interest in both academic and professional fields. Numerous studies have emphasized the crucial role graphic design plays in shaping brand identity, influencing consumer perception, and enhancing market competitiveness (Hamzah et al., ,2021) Visual elements such as color, typography, logo design, and layout are not merely decorative features they serve as powerful tools for communication, differentiation, and emotional connection with the target audience.( Liu, et al., 2019).

### **Graphic Design as a Branding Tool**

Graphic design is increasingly recognized as a strategic component in branding rather than just an aesthetic enhancement. According to Wheeler (2017), the brand is the “visual language” of a product, and design is the medium through which this language is communicated. Logos, packaging, and advertising materials all contribute to the formation of a brand’s personality. Research (Poushneh, et al., 2021) highlights that consistent and professionally designed visual identity enhances consumer trust and brand recognition, key factors in the success of any product.

### **Design Elements and Consumer Behavior**

Design elements such as color psychology, typography, and imagery significantly influence consumer behavior and emotional response. Found that consumers associate certain colors with specific emotions or product qualities, directly impacting their purchasing decisions. (Chang, 2019) argued that typography and logo design contribute to brand memorability and can affect perceptions of quality and credibility.( Syah, et al., 2022).

### **Branding and Design Education**

The role of academic training in shaping designers' understanding of branding has also been a growing area of interest. Studies suggest that design education not only develops technical skills but also fosters strategic thinking about branding (Park, et al., 2022). Students who engage with branding theory and practice in their education are better prepared to address real-world design challenges, suggesting a strong link between academic preparation and industry readiness.

### **Cultural Context in Branding**

Culture plays a vital role in how branding messages are received and interpreted. In the context of Saudi Arabia, branding and design are increasingly being influenced by local cultural aesthetics, values, and language. (Visza, et al., 2021) notes that the rise of local brands in the Gulf region has encouraged designers to integrate traditional motifs and Arabic typography in modern branding efforts. This cultural hybridization presents both a challenge and an opportunity for students navigating global design trends within a local framework.





Figure (1) of the National Day logo is like a dreamy painter's brush, writing its letters with sweetness and fluidity that transcends the limits of the sky and the borders of the land of Saudi Arabia that embraces the dream, with determination and persistence, making it a reality, fixed and firm like mountains. The template consists of identity drawings as a basis for the design with space for texts that can be added and modified, and applications for office products for the logo.





Figure (2) Founding Day logo: “The flag, the date, the council, the Arabian horse, and the market are five essential embodiments that reflect a living heritage harmony and constantly changing patterns of the Founding Day logo symbols. The horizontal template on the opposite side highlights a clear model of how the template should be, and the identity applications for Founding Day.



Figure (3) shows applied models for students of the Graphics and Multimedia Department for the National Day and Founding Day identity products in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in an attempt to integrate traditional decorations and Arabic calligraphy into modern branding efforts.



Figure No. (4) Application models for students of the Graphics and Multimedia Department for the National Day and Founding Day identity products in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as an incentive for designers to integrate traditional decorations and Arabic calligraphy within modern visual identities.

### Students' Perspectives in Branding Research

While much of the existing literature focuses on the consumer or corporate perspective, fewer studies have explored how design students perceive the role of graphic design in branding. However, indicates that students offer fresh, innovative insights shaped by both academic theory and emerging design trends. Their perceptions can serve as a valuable lens for understanding the future direction of branding practices, especially in rapidly developing markets like Saudi Arabia.

### Gap in the Literature

Although the literature provides extensive coverage of the relationship between graphic design and branding, there remains a noticeable gap in research focusing on the perspectives of graphic design students, particularly within the Saudi context. Most existing studies are centered on Western design education and corporate branding practices, leaving out insights from student designers in non-Western, culturally unique environments. This study aims to address this gap

by examining the views of graphic design students at Saudi universities and assessing how their academic experiences, cultural context, and design philosophies influence their understanding of branding.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study adopts a descriptive quantitative research design to explore the perspectives of graphic design students at Saudi universities regarding the impact of graphic design on product branding. A survey-based approach was used to collect data, allowing for the quantification of perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes within the defined population.

### **Study Population and Sample**

The study population consists of 88 male and female graphic design students enrolled in various Saudi universities. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting students who are currently studying or have completed coursework related to branding, visual identity, or marketing design. This ensures that all participants have a foundational understanding of the subject matter.

### **Data Collection Tool**

A structured questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire was designed in both Arabic and English to ensure clarity and accessibility for all participants. It included both closed-ended questions using a Likert scale (ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree") and multiple-choice items to measure perceptions, awareness, and attitudes regarding the role of graphic design in product branding. The questionnaire covered the following key areas: Students' understanding of branding concepts. Perceptions of the effectiveness of specific graphic design elements (color, typography, logo design). Evaluation of real-world branding examples. Reflections on the sufficiency of their academic training in branding-related topics.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The questionnaire was distributed electronically via university platforms, email, and social media channels commonly used by students. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation.

### **Data Analysis**

Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The data were processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to identify patterns and trends in student perceptions. Graphs and tables were used to present the findings in a clear and organized manner. While the study provides valuable insights, it is limited to a specific sample of 88 students and may not fully represent the views of all graphic design students across Saudi Arabia. Additionally, as the data are based on self-reported perceptions, there is a possibility of response bias.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	36	40.9%
Female	52	59.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Participants

Out of the 88 participants, 59.1% are female and 40.9% are male, suggesting a greater representation of female students in public university graphic design programs. This trend may reflect the increasing participation of women in the creative industries in Saudi Arabia, encouraged by national reforms and educational expansion.

University (Region)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
King Saud University (Riyadh)	20	22.7%
King Abdul-Aziz University (Jeddah)	18	20.5%
Imam Abdurrahman Bin Faisal Univ. (Dammam)	15	17.0%
Umm Al-Qura University (Makkah)	12	13.6%
Taibah University (Medina)	11	12.5%
King Khalid University (Abha)	12	13.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2: University Distribution of Respondents

Participants are well-distributed across major public universities in various regions of Saudi Arabia, with the highest concentration from King Saud University and King Abdul-Aziz University. This broad regional coverage enhances the representativeness of the findings.

Level of Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	22	25.0%
High	30	34.1%
Moderate	25	28.4%
Low	9	10.2%
Very Low	2	2.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3: Students' Self-Assessment of Branding Knowledge

Approximately 59.1% of students rated their knowledge of branding as "High" or "Very High," indicating strong confidence in their understanding. However, about 12.5% still perceive their knowledge as "Low" or "Very Low," revealing an opportunity to enhance branding-related content in academic curricula.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	47	53.4%
Agree	28	31.8%
Neutral	8	9.1%
Disagree	4	4.5%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4: Perception of Graphic Design's Role in Branding Success

Over 85% of students agree or strongly agree that graphic design plays a key role in product branding success. This consensus demonstrates awareness among students of their future responsibilities as contributors to visual identity and brand communication.

Graphic Design Element	Frequency (Selected)	Percentage (%) of Students (n=88)
Logo	70	79.5%
Color Scheme	64	72.7%
Typography	48	54.5%
Packaging Design	52	59.1%
Layout & Composition	45	51.1%

Table 5: Most Influential Design Element in Branding (Multiple Response Allowed)

Logos and color schemes were identified by the majority of students as the most powerful elements in branding. This aligns with global branding principles that emphasize logo and color in establishing identity, recognition, and emotional response.

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Satisfied	16	18.2%
Satisfied	30	34.1%
Neutral	25	28.4%
Dissatisfied	12	13.6%
Very Dissatisfied	5	5.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6: Satisfaction with Branding-Related Courses in the Curriculum

While 52.3% of students are satisfied or very satisfied with branding education, a significant 19.3% expressed dissatisfaction. This reflects a potential need for universities to strengthen curriculum content related to strategic branding and real-world application.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	44	50.0%
Agree	32	36.4%
Neutral	8	9.1%
Disagree	3	3.4%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 7: Effectiveness of Graphic Design in Attracting Consumers

A total of 86.4% of students believe that graphic design is effective in attracting consumers to a product, affirming the belief that design significantly influences consumer behavior and purchase decisions.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Interested	39	44.3%
Interested	27	30.7%
Neutral	12	13.6%
Not Interested	7	8.0%
Strongly Not Interested	3	3.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 8: Interest in Pursuing Branding as a Career Path

A combined 75% of participants expressed interest or strong interest in specializing in branding after graduation. This suggests a high level of motivation to apply their design skills in the branding industry and highlights the relevance of branding in students' career planning

## Discussion

This study aimed to explore the impact of graphic design on product branding from the perspective of graphic design students at Saudi public universities. The findings offer meaningful insights into how future professionals perceive the relationship between visual design and brand identity, while also highlighting strengths and gaps in their academic preparation. The results clearly demonstrate that graphic design is seen by students as a core component of successful branding. Over 85% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that design plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perception and brand success (Table 4). This high level of agreement reinforces the well-established view in literature that visual elements logos, colors, typography, and packaging are central to brand recognition and emotional Among the design elements evaluated, logos and color schemes emerged as the most influential tools, as selected by 79.5% and 72.7% of students respectively (Table 5). This finding aligns with global research indicating that consistent visual symbols and emotionally charged color palettes significantly affect consumer trust and recall (Henderson et al., 2004). Typography and packaging design were also valued, reflecting students' understanding of both functional and aesthetic design in consumer contexts. Interestingly, the majority of students rated their

knowledge of branding as moderate to high (Table 3), suggesting confidence in their theoretical grounding. However, this self-assessment contrasts slightly with the responses on academic preparation. Only 52.3% of students were satisfied with the branding-related courses in their curriculum (Table 6), and nearly 20% expressed dissatisfaction. These points to a potential gap between students' conceptual understanding and their readiness for real-world branding challenges. It suggests a need for curriculum enhancements that include hands-on branding projects, interdisciplinary collaboration with marketing departments, and industry-led workshops or internships. The distribution of participants across diverse public universities (Table 2) and the relatively even gender mix (Table 1) indicate a representative sample of the broader student population, strengthening the generalizability of these findings. Moreover, the high percentage of students who expressed interest in pursuing branding as a career (Table 8) signals a growing ambition among Saudi design students to become more involved in commercial and strategic design roles a direction aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 initiative to foster local talent in the creative economy. Additionally, the strong agreement that graphic design effectively attracts consumers (Table 7) confirms that students not only value aesthetics but also understand the psychological and commercial impact of their work. This reflects a shift from viewing design as purely artistic to recognizing it as a strategic business tool an important mindset for modern branding professionals. The discussion of the results confirms that graphic design students in Saudi public universities possess a solid awareness of the importance of design in branding, while also revealing key areas for pedagogical improvement. These findings may guide educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in strengthening design education in a way that aligns with both market demands and national development goals.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the impact of graphic design on product branding from the perspective of graphic design students at Saudi public universities. Through the analysis of survey data from 88 male and female students across various regions, the findings provide valuable insight into how future designers perceive their role in shaping brand identity and influencing consumer perception. The results revealed a strong consensus among students that graphic design is an essential component of successful branding. Elements such as logo design, color schemes, typography, and packaging were recognized as having significant influence over how consumers perceive and engage with products. The majority of students also expressed confidence in their understanding of branding principles and a clear interest in pursuing careers in this field. However, the study also identified gaps in students' satisfaction with the branding-related content of their academic programs. While more than half of the participants felt adequately prepared, a notable portion expressed neutrality or dissatisfaction, indicating the need for improvements in curriculum design and practical learning opportunities. Overall, the study underscores the importance of aligning design education with market demands and industry standards. It also highlights the potential of Saudi Arabia's emerging generation of designers to contribute meaningfully to the country's growing creative economy. Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed for academic institutions, curriculum developers, and policymakers: Increase the number and depth of courses focused specifically on product branding, visual identity, and marketing design. Incorporate interdisciplinary approaches that connect design with business and marketing principles. Include real-world branding projects, case studies, and industry critiques to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Foster partnerships with local companies and design agencies to provide internships



and collaborative branding challenges. Invite experienced branding professionals and alumni to share practical insights and current industry trends. Offer extracurricular workshops on advanced tools, branding strategy, and consumer psychology. Ensure that design labs and course content remain aligned with the latest design software, tools, and industry practices. Encourage students to develop branding portfolios that showcase their applied skills. Promote student-led research and innovation in branding, especially in the context of Saudi markets and cultural identity. Encourage participation in national and international design competitions focused on branding.

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