



The Role of Authenticity, Storytelling, and Packaging Design in Enhancing Brand Experience and Preference in Srichand Branding: A Proposed Framework

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Abstract

This study explores these branding components in the context of Srichand, a Thai cosmetic brand known for its rich heritage and cultural significance. Through a comprehensive literature review, this study develops a conceptual framework that examines the interrelationships between brand story, perceived brand authenticity, brand package design, brand experience, and brand preference. The study provides practical implications for the cosmetics industry, particularly for heritage brands seeking to modernize while maintaining authenticity. By leveraging storytelling, authentic brand communication, and innovative packaging, brands like Srichand can create immersive experiences that enhance consumer trust and preference. While this study offers a theoretical foundation, future empirical research is recommended to validate the proposed framework and explore the impact of digital branding and sustainability on consumer preferences. The insights contribute to branding literature and provide strategic guidance for marketers looking to build stronger consumer connections and long-term brand success.

Keywords: Brand Story, Perceived Brand Authenticity, Brand Package Design, Brand Experience, Brand Preference

Introduction

The global cosmetics industry has expanded significantly over the past decade, driven by evolving consumer preferences, technological advancements, and a growing emphasis on self-care and personal grooming (Euromonitor International, 2022). In Thailand, this growth is fueled by rising disposable incomes, increased exposure to global beauty trends, and a cultural focus on skincare and beauty (Kasikorn Research Center, 2021). Thai consumers are highly discerning, seeking products that align with their expectations of quality, authenticity, and heritage. Among local brands, Srichand has established itself as a leading name by blending traditional Thai ingredients with modern



formulations to appeal to contemporary consumers. However, the brand faces intense competition from both international giants and emerging local players. Empirical studies indicate that while the Thai cosmetics industry benefits from strong government support and high domestic demand, there are notable gaps in firm strategy, structure, and rivalry, suggesting that the competitive landscape is still evolving and may lack the intensity seen in more mature markets (Jinachai & Anantachoti, 2017). To maintain its competitive edge, Srichand has strategically focused on brand storytelling, perceived authenticity, and packaging design. Effective brand storytelling reinforces the brand's heritage and deepens its emotional connection with consumers (Tiiri, 2024). Perceived authenticity, which fosters trust and loyalty, is a crucial factor in consumer decision-making (Morhart et al., 2015). Additionally, culturally resonant, and distinctive packaging design enhances brand recognition and influences purchase intention (Liu & Zhao, 2024). By integrating these elements, Srichand strengthens its brand identity and market position in the dynamic Thai cosmetics industry.

This study adopts a case study approach, focusing on Srichand, a Thai cosmetic brand with distinct heritage and cultural identity. While the conceptual framework offers valuable insights, its generalizability should be approached with caution, as Srichand's unique characteristics may not reflect those of other brands. Further research is needed to validate the framework in broader contexts.

Gap in Literature and Research Questions

Despite the rising importance of branding in the cosmetic industry, limited research has examined how brand story, perceived brand authenticity, and package design jointly influence brand experience and brand preference, especially in the context of Thai cosmetic brands like Srichand. While prior studies have explored these elements individually, their combined effects and interrelationships remain underexplored particularly in local heritage-driven brands that use cultural storytelling to build trust. This study addresses these gaps by investigating how these branding components shape consumer perceptions and preferences in Thailand's cosmetic market.

RQ1: How does brand story affect perceived authenticity, brand experience, and brand preference for Srichand cosmetics?

RQ2: What is the impact of perceived brand authenticity on brand experience and preference?

RQ3: How does package design influence perceived authenticity, brand experience, and brand preference?

RQ4: Does brand experience mediate the relationships between brand story, authenticity, package design, and brand preference?



Objectives

1. Synthesize existing research on the individual and combined effects of brand storytelling, perceived authenticity, and package design on consumer perceptions.
2. Propose a conceptual framework linking these branding elements to brand experience and preference.
3. Formulate hypotheses based on insights from previous studies to guide future empirical research.

Concept Theory

1. Brand Story

Brand storytelling strengthens consumer connections by combining rational and emotional appeals to convey a brand's origins, mission, and values. It fosters relatability through archetypes, creating deep emotional bonds (Moin, 2024). Engaging narratives capture attention, enhance memory retention, and build loyalty by aligning with individual experiences (Ahmed et al., 2024). A well-structured story with clear settings, characters, and conflicts simplifies brand messaging and reinforces long-term commitment (Huang & Guo, 2021).

Brand storytelling influences consumer preferences by evoking emotional responses through underdog and top dog narratives. It strengthens self-brand connections via transmedia storytelling (Granitz & Forman, 2015) and enhances recall and decision-making through narrative frameworks (Ben et al., 2019). Story-driven word-of-mouth is more impactful than factual lists, shaping lasting impressions and purchase decisions (Mucundorfeanu, 2018).

Brand storytelling shapes consumer perceptions by fulfilling psychological needs like self-identity and belonging (Tiiri, 2024). It offers symbolic benefits such as security and nostalgia, strengthening brand connections. Experiential benefits outweigh functional ones in building consumer-brand relationships (Ben et al., 2019). Narratives enhance memory retention and emotional engagement (Richardson et al., 2018), with emotional assessments driving brand experiences.

Brand storytelling shapes consumer perceptions of authenticity by offering meaningful narratives that emphasize self-transcendence, nostalgia, heritage, and cultural relevance, enhancing emotional connections and brand credibility (Fitri et al., 2023). Elements like humor, personal narratives from celebrities, and alignment with brand identity further strengthen authenticity, while inauthentic stories can erode trust (Eng, 2020). Based on the studies mentioned, the hypothesis of the research is as follows:



H1: Brand stories positively influence brand preference.

H2: Brand stories positively influence brand experience.

H3: Brand story positively influences perceived brand authenticity.

2. Perceived Brand Authenticity

Perceived Brand Authenticity (PBA) is crucial in shaping consumer-brand relationships, as it reflects a brand's perceived genuineness and truthfulness. It is not solely about factual accuracy but rather alignment with consumer expectations of authenticity (Nunes et al., 2021). PBA strengthens trust and emotional connections by resonating with consumers' self-concept (Morhart et al., 2015). It is viewed through constructivism (trust and expectations), objectivism (tangible qualities), and existentialism (deep personal connection) (Morhart et al., 2015). Key drivers include heritage, culture, sincerity, ethical actions, and moral values (Hamby et al., 2019).

Perceived brand authenticity builds trust and emotional connections, shaping consumer engagement (Rosado-Pinto et al., 2021). It depends on a brand's believability and alignment with consumer values. Genuine brand experiences enhance credibility, while misaligned narratives weaken trust (Huang & Guo, 2021). Historical continuity, cultural heritage, and craftsmanship reinforce authenticity, especially in luxury branding (Morhart & Malär, 2020). Thus, the research proposes:

H4: Perceived brand authenticity positively influences brand experience.

3. Brand Package Design

Brand package design shapes consumer perception through color, typography, and graphics, positioning and differentiating brands (Hussain, 2015). It enhances user experience, influences purchase decisions, and fosters brand recognition (Wang et al., 2024). Serving both functional and symbolic roles, packaging strengthens brand identity, engagement, and loyalty (Krishna et al., 2017).

Brand package design enhances consumer experiences through sensory, cognitive, and emotional engagement (Waheed et al., 2018). Visual elements influence trust and purchase intentions, while packaging strengthens brand identity and loyalty in the cosmetics industry. It also improves recognition and recall, reinforcing emotional connections and trust (Ghorbani & Westermann, 2025).

Brand package design influences consumer perception by attracting attention and conveying trust and identity. Size and shape impact appeal, with larger packaging seen as better value, while misleading designs deter purchases (Zhang, 2014). Visual imagery, processed faster than text, shapes brand beliefs and low-involvement decisions. Realistic images reinforce preference, strengthening brand identity and consumer trust (Zhang, 2014).



Packaging shapes consumer perceptions, reinforces authenticity, and builds trust, especially in low-involvement goods (Wang et al., 2024). Neo-retro designs evoke nostalgia, while biomorphic designs enhance sustainability perceptions (Vinitha et al., 2021). In the food industry, Front of Package (FOP) labeling boosts trust and quality perception (Moazzam et al., 2024). Digital branding, such as NFTs, faces authenticity challenges, with consumers valuing physical products more, especially in luxury brands (Kim et al., 2024). Taken together, these findings support the hypotheses that:

H6: Brand package design positively influences brand preference.

H5: Brand package design positively influences brand experience.

H7: Brand package design positively influences perceived brand authenticity.

4. Brand Experience

Brand experience shapes consumer perceptions through direct interactions, reinforcing promises and emotional connections (Kumar & Kaushik 2020). Engagement influences trust, satisfaction, and loyalty (Granitz, & Forman, 2015). Schmitt's (1999) five experiential dimensions sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and relational guide consumer reactions (Brakus et al., 2015). Beyond functional benefits, memorable experiences strengthen trust, preference, and loyalty (Zha et al., 2020).

Brand experience influences consumer perceptions by reinforcing promises and building emotional ties through direct product interactions (Kumar & Kaushik 2020). This engagement enhances trust, satisfaction, and loyalty (Granitz & Forman, 2015). Schmitt's (1999) dimensions sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and relational show how these experiences create lasting memories that transcend functional benefits (Zha et al., 2020).

Brand stories drive consumer preference by creating emotional connections and engagement (Dessart & Pitardi, 2019). Narratives evoke sensory, emotional, and cognitive responses that shape perceptions and loyalty (Brakus et al., 2015). Nostalgic stories boost authenticity and word-of-mouth. Psychological factors influence how stories resonate, with promotion-focused consumers favoring atypical stories and affective consumers preferring underdog narratives (Kao & Wu, 2019).

Perceived brand authenticity enhances trust, emotional bonds, and loyalty, shaping preference and purchase intent. Globalization helps global brands stay relevant, while localness strengthens trust and sales (Hoskins & Griffin, 2021). In luxury markets, authenticity drives young adults' loyalty (Ligaraba et al., 2024). Genuine brand experiences mediate the link between authenticity and preference.

Brand package design shapes consumer perceptions and preferences (Liu & Zhao, 2024). Aesthetic elements like shape and graphics influence appeal and willingness to pay, sometimes surpassing brand name impact. Rounded edges enhance emotional



engagement, with men favoring X-axis curves (Michalski, 2024). Curved shapes evoke warmth (Zhang, 2014), while eye-tracking studies highlight contour and contrast in capturing attention. Therefore, based on the above literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H8: Brand experience positively influences brand preference.

H9: Brand experience mediates the relationship between brand story and brand preference.

H10: Brand experience mediates the relationship between perceived brand authenticity and brand preference.

H11: Brand experience mediates the relationship between brand package design and brand preference.

5. Brand Preference

Brand preference reflects how consumers prioritize brands based on perception, self-expression, and personal values (Byun et al., 2018). A strong brand builds equity and boosts repeat purchases (Chauhan, 2023), with consumer experiences, information search, and brand awareness enhancing recall and differentiation. Shaped by cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors (Ebrahi et al., 2016), brand preference drives purchase behavior and guides strategic marketing for stronger loyalty, engagement, and market positioning (Islami et al., 2024).

6. Symbolic Interactionism

This study is also grounded in Symbolic Interactionism, a social psychological theory that explains how people derive meaning from symbols through social interactions. Applied to branding, this theory suggests that consumers do not simply evaluate products based on their functional attributes but assign deeper symbolic meanings to them through cultural and interpersonal contexts (Solomon, 1983). In the case of Srichand, a heritage cosmetic brand, elements such as brand storytelling and package design function as symbolic cues that consumers interpret based on personal and social experiences. For instance, traditional motifs in packaging or culturally resonant narratives may trigger associations of trust, nostalgia, or self-expression. These symbolic meanings, formed and reinforced through social discourse and cultural identity, contribute to consumers' overall perception of authenticity and preference for the brand. Symbolic Interactionism thus provides a valuable lens for understanding how brand elements acquire emotional and cultural significance that shapes consumer-brand relationships.

Materials and Methods

This study uses a literature review methodology to examine the relationships between brand story, perceived brand authenticity, brand package design, brand experience, and brand preference. By synthesizing theoretical and empirical research in

branding and consumer behavior, it proposes a conceptual framework and related hypotheses.

To inform H1–H3, studies on brand storytelling were reviewed, showing its impact on emotional engagement, brand connection, and authenticity (Moin, 2024; Ahmed et al., 2024; Fitri et al., 2023). H4 draws on literature emphasizing the role of authenticity in building trust and emotional bonds (Morhart et al., 2015; Huang & Guo, 2021).

H5–H7 are supported by research on how design elements like color and shape influence perception, authenticity, and experience (Waheed et al., 2018; Zhang, 2014; Vinitha et al., 2021). H8–H11 are guided by studies on brand experience and its mediating role in shaping preference (Ghorbani & Westermann, (2025); Granitz & Forman, 2015).

Finally, H12 is based on literature examining how brand preference forms through emotional value, loyalty, and identity (Byun et al., 2018; Islami et al., 2024), reinforcing its role as the model’s outcome variable.

Given the conceptual nature of this study, the primary source of evidence is drawn from a systematic literature review (Carrera-Rivera et al., 2022). This method ensures a structured and comprehensive approach to identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing existing research related to brand story, perceived brand authenticity, brand package design, brand experience, and brand preference. By using clearly defined inclusion criteria and focusing on peer-reviewed academic articles, books, and conference proceedings, the study minimizes bias and enhances the reliability of its theoretical framework. The systematic review approach not only provides a durable foundation for hypothesis development but also identifies gaps in the existing literature, guiding future empirical research.

Results

This study synthesizes existing literature to develop a conceptual framework examining the relationships between brand story, perceived brand authenticity, brand package design, brand experience, and brand preference. The hypotheses were selected based on well-established branding research showing how emotional storytelling,

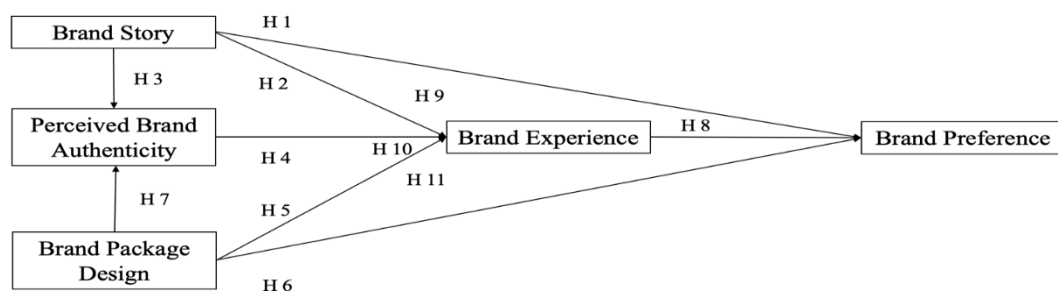


Figure 1: Research Framework



authentic brand signals, and impactful design shape consumer perceptions and behavior. These elements collectively reflect how consumers engage with brands on both emotional and experiential levels. The findings offer theoretical insights into the interplay of these factors, highlighting that brand preference emerges from a combination of narrative, authenticity, and sensory experiences. This integrated framework provides a clearer understanding of consumer-brand relationships and offers strategic direction for building stronger, more meaningful brand connections.

Through an analysis of prior studies, the research supports the following hypotheses:

- H1: Brand stories positively influence brand preference.
- H2: Brand stories positively influence brand experience.
- H3: Brand story positively influences perceived brand authenticity.
- H4: Perceived brand authenticity positively influences brand experience.
- H5: Brand package design positively influences brand experience.
- H6: Brand package design positively influences brand preference.
- H7: Brand package design positively influences perceived brand authenticity.
- H8: Brand experience positively influences brand preference.

H9: Brand experience mediates the relationship between brand story and brand preference.

H10: Brand experience mediates the relationship between perceived brand authenticity and brand preference.

H11: Brand experience mediates the relationship between brand package design and brand preference.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study proposes a conceptual framework to understand how brand preference the dependent variable is shaped by key branding elements. It identifies brand story, perceived authenticity, and package design as independent variables that influence consumer preference. These elements contribute to emotional engagement, trust, and visual appeal. Brand experience serves as a mediating variable, explaining how consumers internalize these brand cues through emotional, sensory, and behavioral responses. By synthesizing existing literature, the study highlights the role of experiential branding and emotional connections in shaping brand preference. Although conceptual, the study encourages future empirical research to assess the framework across unfamiliar cultures and product categories. It also recommends exploring digital branding and influencing marketing to better understand evolving consumer behavior in the cosmetics industry.



Recommendations

This study recommends future empirical research to validate the proposed conceptual framework and further examine the relationships between brand story, perceived brand authenticity, brand package design, brand experience, and brand preference. It would be valuable to explore how these relationships hold across different product categories and cultural contexts, especially in markets where heritage and digital transformation intersect. Moreover, future studies should investigate the impact of digital branding and sustainability on consumer preferences, as these factors are increasingly shaping modern brand perceptions and purchase decisions. Understanding how digital touch points and eco-conscious practices influence authenticity and preference will help refine branding strategies in both traditional and emerging sectors. The insights from this study contribute meaningfully to the branding literature and provide strategic guidance for marketers aiming to build stronger consumer connections and foster long-term brand success. By aligning brand storytelling, authenticity signals, and innovative packaging with evolving consumer values, brands can create more immersive and trustworthy experiences that drive loyalty and preference.

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