



## Visual Expressions of Corporate Identity in the Office Spaces<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The relationship between corporate identity and interior design of institutional spaces is relatively a recent research field for Turkish debates. Turkish companies have underestimated the significance of corporate identity design. The architects and designers of corporate spaces also ignored its indispensability due to the diversity of design constraints restricted by corporate identity regulations. This paper aims to understand this mutual yet polemical relationship of designers with limitations and establish a set of guidelines for better cooperation by searching for the positive influences of corporate identity restrictions on office design through case studies. This paper analyzes the interior spaces of two rival companies in Turkey, designed by Habif architecture, and uncovers the design approaches behind creating office environments in line with corporate identity restrictions. Through an analytical matrix that aids in decoding the codes of corporate identity represented by logo design, character/concept, corporate colors, and shapes, this study compares and contrasts the reception areas and social spaces, such as gathering corners, meeting rooms, cafes, in terms of interior design, material, furniture, and lighting selections; and uncovers the role of creativity in solving design problems limited by corporate identity restrictions.

**Keywords:** corporate identity, corporate space design, creativity, designer's experience, office environment, visual language

### INTRODUCTION

Corporate identity classifies how a company or an institution gets realized/recognized/distinguished among its competitors. The corporate philosophy, culture, organizational behavior, strategic planning/coordination, and management mentality create its corporate identity. The visual identity or corporate design, on the other hand, is provoked by a set of visual and communicative stimuli, symbolizing and representing the company's image. Wim J.L Elving, Anette L.M. van den Bosch and Menno D.T. de Jong (2006) classify "corporate identity" as a conceptual approach and "corporate design" as the concept's transformation into the form.

Corporate design, on the one hand, implies the design of graphical elements such as the logo or emblems, the corporate fonts, and colors, as well as the design of printed documents, business cards, catalogs, and even the clothes of employees or the prints on the vehicles used. On the other hand, corporate design incorporates the architectural design of institutional spaces, office buildings, factories, shops, stores, or showrooms according to identity guidelines. While the originality and unity of corporate identity augment the public recognition of a brand or a company, the creativity and uniqueness of its corporate design embracing graphical representation, and 'space atmosphere' is equally decisive in getting recognized. (Perry, Wisnom, 2003; Colman et al., 1995). As the corporate identity guidelines standardize and specify various architectural and interior

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design solutions, the ultimate challenge for the designers of corporate spaces and their clients becomes the reification of these standards as unique architectural entities. Besides considering functional needs, spatial relations, cost-control, and space efficiency, the architects or designers of institutional spaces struggle to develop original and creative conceptual approaches and overcome the obstacles of corporate identity limitations. (Martens et.al, 2010, p.41).

It is significant to state that the relationship between corporate identity and corporate design of institutional spaces has been an over-studied research field for several decades. (Bonfanti et al. 2016; Melewar et.al, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2011; Colman et al., 1995; Foroudi et.al., 2019; Hills et.al. 2014; Gregersen et.al., 2018; Kaya, 2006; Perry et.al., 2003; Pfister, 2019; van den Bosch 2005, 2006; Stuart, 1998; van Meel et.al., 2010). In Turkish debates, however, it is still a prolific subject since the companies in the market recently started to define corporate identity design as a critical notion for the perceptual sense of company characteristics. The cause of this delay might be, on one side, the underestimation of corporate identity design as an effective marketing strategy by Turkish companies. On the other side, it might be the ignorance of its designers due to the diversity of design constraints, emblems/logos, corporate colors, forms of behavior, and communication tools, which pose obstacles to a unified space design. (Melewar, 2003, p. 196) Both options are correct to some extent; this study, however, focuses more on the latter option.

Designing an "identity" has been a perennial endeavor in Turkish history from the Ottoman Empire to the Republican era as a natural demand of governmental ideology. As Ali İhsan Gencer and Sabahattin Özel (2011) stated in their book *Turkish Revolution History* (Türk İnkılap Tarihi), for instance, the flags of the Turkish States were the emblematic and symbolic representations of diverse "identities" that distinguish one state from the others. Today, the star and crescent figures on the red-colored background of the Republic of Turkey's flag symbolize the bloody heroic saga of the Turkish people during the Turkish War of Independence (May 19, 1919 – July 24, 1923) (Okay, 2005, p.33). Our flag is the emblem of the new, idealist "identity," the transition of the state regime from monarchy to the parliamentary Republic of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The corporate identity of any governmental institution of that day reflected this Republican identity. The corporate identity of the first national bank, Türkiye İş Bankası, as an illustration, was envisioned to support the economic strategy of the Republic's new fund. Its logo was designed by İhap Hulusi Görey (1898-1986), a pioneer of graphic art in Turkey, at the request of Atatürk and is still in use today. [Fig. 1]



**Figure 1** Logo of Türkiye İş Bankası

Regardless of the corporate modernization project at governmental institutions, the institutionalization in private sectors, on the contrary, followed a business owner-oriented path until the 1980s. Large commercial companies in the Turkish market, just as Sabancı, Koç, and Eczacıbaşı, for instance, assigned the company owner's surname as the brand name. Following the appearance of several foreign design firms specialized in corporate identity design, in the 1980s, Turkish companies and institutions in the private sector realized the significance of corporate identity design for building recognition and started



renovating their identities according to contemporary management standards (Emiroğlu, 2002, pp.60-61). Today, nearly every Turkish company with professional management has a "corporate identity" booklet designed by professional graphic designers and advertisers. The company's appreciation of such graphical representations, reflecting corporate identity, prompted the augmented demand for their reflection in the architectural spaces they inhabit. Architects and designers of corporate spaces, affected by this increasing demand in return, preserve the instances of a visual language limited by identity booklets in their most concrete form. However, most Turkish companies' identity studies exclude architectural details regarding corporate identity patterns. Therefore, the architects and designers of corporate office spaces interpret the graphic design elements, mostly company logos, referring to color and font psychology. Creativity, then, becomes the most influential agent during their interpretation process.

### **OFFICE DESIGN AND CORPORATE IDENTITY**

Defined as "a room, or a set of rooms, or a building used as a place of business," an office is a working space that provides comfortable and ideal working conditions for its employees. The architectural design of office spaces, planned either cellular, group, or open-plan systems, or a mishmash of all, is considered to fulfill all corporate and functional requirements of a company, which constantly changes over time due to the progressive demands of business life. The cellular office systems, as an illustration, recall conventional office plan typology, composed of private rooms in various sizes determined by the user load or the user's hierarchical status. It was the preferred system due to several advantages concerning privacy, security, and noise control. However, they become unable to meet organizational developments over time since they reduce the instantaneous interaction and communication between employees and even increase the psychological pressure due to the fixed and immutable working environment. The open office plan typology, as designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in the Larkin Administration Building in 1903, transformed the stable office environments into flexible spaces at maximum interaction and had become the most appreciated office system for large-scale businesses (Pile, 1976; Duffy, 1976, 1997; İmal, 2009, pp.3-40). Eliminating the cell walls that separated management, staff, and workgroups, these systems allowed the demanded interaction among employees by the flexible use of space allocation for fulfilling all spatial requirements. Open plan systems enabled the companies to reduce the area needed, consequently, the construction costs, which provided a profit for the company. However, the lack of privacy, status quo, acoustic comfort, noise control, and sound pollution decreased its prevalence. Since the 1980s, numerous large-scale companies have started to prefer mixed-order options as office systems. A compound of both cellular and open-plan office systems offered the flexibility of open offices and the privacy/status-quo of cellular offices together. It allowed settling executive and meeting functions in enclosed rooms and the workstations in large and undivided free spaces.

Besides private and open workplaces, office space accommodates a multi-organized system, reinforced by staff's constant and complex relationship with management; with office equipment—such as copy centers and archives— and social services—such as gathering areas for meeting, dining, and recreation. Therefore, the design of this complex network not only shapes employers' and employees' daily itineraries between specific hubs in terms of labor but also characterizes how the so-called network supports a balanced work environment between labor and leisure. Such office designs fulfilling individual and social needs certainly increase employee satisfaction. Maintaining one's loyalty to the company, on the other hand, is a matter of attachment, accomplished only through transferring the corporate ideals and culture of the company to its employees by specific symbolic and semiological tools. As van Meel and Martens (2010) stated, designing a new office has always been challenging for the designers regarding the complex data under consideration. Resolving spatial needs, proximity relationships, and space efficiency gets even more complicated when the work environment's symbolic and representational values regarding its corporate identity become the most determining factor in the design matrix. The dilemma arises from striving to create a corporate atmosphere for a company devoid

of any identity principles adopted to the architectural language, which is often the case for Turkish companies. Such corporate identity studies, excluding architectural terminology, compel the architects and designers of office spaces to struggle decoding brand logos, referring to font and color associations. (Duane, 2002; Vardar, 2004; Öztürk, 2006; Usta, 2012; Uzoğlu Bayçu, Ustaoğlu, 2015) As the logo is the "graphic symbol of a company," or "a symbol or emblem that acts as a trademark or a means of identification," logo shapes, typographic characters, and colors signify the company's message. Analyzing these signifiers reveals the inherent clues regarding corporate identity notions to be translated into unique architectural interpretations. At first, a sole focus on logo design might seem a reductionist approach. However, one should remember that the target group communicates predominantly with the brand through its logo design and recognizes its shapes, colors, and fonts as distinctive features, assigning uniqueness, originality, and memorability. For instance, according to font and color associations, a toy company should represent its visual identity with a logo, embracing childish, fun fonts and vivid colors, such as the Lobster font and orange color, for enhanced communication with children. [Table 1&2] As the graphic elements in the logo design represent visual identity, assuring brand recognition, they transfer their duties to architectural elements in the office space to maintain a matching distinction.

**Table 1.** The Typeface, Fonts, and Associations

<b>Serif</b> ⇨	Times New Roman Bodini Georgia Garamond Baskerville	<b>ASSOCIATIONS</b>	Traditional Impressive Authority Respect
<b>Sans Serif</b> ⇨	Verdana Arial Century gothic Calibri		Clean Modern Stable Objective
<b>Slabe Serif</b> ⇨	Rockwell Courier Museo Clarendon Merriweather		Bold Strong Solid Modern
<b>Script</b> ⇨	<i>Lobster</i> <i>Zapfino</i> <i>Pacifico</i> <i>Lucida</i> <i>Brush script</i>		<i>Feminine</i> <i>Friendly</i> <i>Elegant</i> <i>Creative</i>



**Table 2.** The Effects of Color

<b>White</b> Clean Simplicity Innocence Honest	As the color of absolute purity, cleanliness, and care, white plays a role in separating the other color groups, a neutralizer, enlightenment, and stimulant in the color regulation of the room. (Ladau et al., 1989, Şenyapılı, 1996).	<b>Purple</b> Royalty Luxury Spirituality Ambition	As the color of nobility and empire, it evokes history. In the past years, purple had become a color that only the rich people used because it was difficult to obtain the paint material. For this reason, it represents power and authority. (Ladau et al., 1989).
<b>Red</b> Excitement Strength Love Energy	As the color of excitement and strength, red raises blood pressure, accelerates blood flow, and is associated with concepts such as energy, temperature, love, danger, attention (Craig, 1970, Güner, 1990). Dark Red expresses mystery, exotic, seriousness (Pahlmann, 1968, Ladau et al., 1989).	<b>Orange</b> Confidence Success Bravery Sociability	As the color of encouragement, orange is the combination of red and yellow. It conveys excitement, warmth, and enthusiasm. It is the color of an extrovert, exuding happiness and joy. Orange is a motivating and encouraging color that appeals to young people.
<b>Green</b> Nature Healing Freshness Quality	As the color of nature, the relaxing, peaceful, balanced, and reassuring color green increases creativity. (Bervin, 1984, Madden, Hewett & Roht, 2000, Şenyapılı, 1996). The light green color evokes vitality like nature, peace, freshness, youth, life, restoration, growth (Bevlin, 1984).	<b>Yellow</b> Creativity Happiness Warmth Cheer	As the color of creativity and happiness, yellow is a distinctive color used in traffic lights and warning signs. It also symbolizes danger. It represents temporality. This color is perceptually related to the sun, maturity, light, and holiday (Bervin, 1984, Pahlmann, 1968, Şenyapılı, 1996).
<b>Black</b> Formality Dramatic Sophistication Security	As the color of formality and sophistication, black represents power, luxury, and passion. If used in the background, it evokes pessimism. It destroys the light. It provides concentration. Einstein preferred black, daylight-free rooms to concentrate (Madden et al., 2000).	<b>Brown</b> Dependable Rugged Trustworthy Simple	As the color of trustworthiness, brown speeds up human movements. Fast-food restaurants use brown in their interiors to speed up users. Scientific research has proven that brown affects humans negatively. Brown evokes history (Kalinkara, 2001, Ladau et al., 1989).
<b>Blue</b> Trust Peace Loyalty Competence	As the color of immensity and deepness, blue helps think, make decisions, and have creative ideas. Light colors evoke unlimited and infinite feelings. The blue has associations such as sky, eternity, coldness, night, passivity, femininity. (Domnielen, 1965; Pahlmann, 1968).	<b>Pink</b> Compassion Sincerity Sophistication Sweet	As the color of compassion and sincerity, pink evokes femininity. Light blue, pink, pale red, and other pastel tones evoke motherhood, femininity, child, and tenderness (Ladau et al., 1989).

This paper claims that interior design is the most suitable domain for exploring this transfer, engendering the mutual interaction between the graphical elements signifying corporate identity ideas and architectural elements functioning beyond symbolic or representational purposes. The interior design elements, forms, colors, lights, materials, and furniture, are determined by the corporate identity constraints and define the space atmosphere. Thus, one can claim that the logo shapes and corporate font/color associations circumscribe the corporate atmosphere decisions, which consolidate human-object-environment interaction. For instance, color and light, the stimulating phenomena of our physical, physiological, and psychological systems, is an environmental factor that affects space-human experience and spatial atmosphere perception.

As the proper correlation between colors, light, and actions increases visual comfort and user performance, for fulfilling functional and ergonomic requirements, the designers should acquire the appropriate value/tone/saturation of the corporate color in the workplace by balancing it with adequate degree/amount/intensity of light sources. The material decisions are as significant as color and light for atmosphere design. Besides their contribution of visual, sensory, and tactile properties to space perception, as mentioned by Ballast, "aesthetically, [they] can convey meaning, denote status, create style, symbolize ideals, and generally add to the overall look of the space" (Ballast, 1992). Therefore, in the interior design of corporate office spaces, color, light, and material selections are the most formative phenomena of user-space interaction.

The heterogeneity of design constraints emanating from corporate identity rules, limitations, and restrictions on one side and complex architectural programs and ergonomic factors on the other complicate corporate offices' design process. Exploring the positive influences or negative constraints of the corporate identity restrictions on such heterogeneous design problems by analyzing specific cases, this study aims to disclose the limits of corporate language's polemical stipulation or obstruction on the designer's creativity and project concept creation. As particular cases may reveal the degree of positive and negative impacts, this study focuses on two selected office interiors— Trendyol



and Markafoni offices —designed by the same Turkish design group specializing in architecture and interior design. These companies in the same business sector, fashionable e-commerce goods, have similar ideals yet unique corporate identity patterns. This study first analyzes the symbolic representations of the firms' corporate identity over the companies' logo designs, character/concepts, shapes, and corporate colors, then asks specific queries for decoding corporate identity patterns through an analytical matrix. Second, it critically analyzes two rival companies' reception/welcoming areas and social/recreational hubs, focusing on symbolic and semiological messages, signified with material, furniture, and lighting preferences. The aim is to examine how the designers concretize the annotations and connotations of a visual language through creative decoding of logo forms, corporate fonts, and colors into unique architectural concepts, then into architectural forms and interior 'space atmosphere.'

### **DESIGNING WITH SPECIFIC LIMITS: THE ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS OF MARKAFONI AND TRENDYOL**

Habif Architecture is a Turkish design company specializing in institutional spaces' architecture and interior design. As a young, dynamic, highly experienced architectural office, they designed several corporate companies such as Trendyol, Markafoni, Pronet, Nezih, L'oreal, and Flormar. Founded by Hakan Habif (İzmir, 1972) in Istanbul in 2005, Habif architecture aims to design "spiritual" office spaces with a particular interest in the firm's "corporate identity." Introducing themselves as a highly motivated and democratic team, Hakan Habif and his colleagues develop fresh and innovative design approaches. According to Hakan Habif, a thorough analysis of the user demands and functional needs ensures establishing a well-designed concept project from the beginning of the process. Rather than employing aesthetic fantasies, they pay prior attention to the functionalism and effectiveness of office space, which for them starts "on plan level first." Then, the architectural treatment of sole material variety and the rejection of any decorative ornamentation create the aesthetic value of institutional space. For Hakan Habif and Çağrı Kaan Çetin, the senior architect, the creation of life experience primarily requires a condensed study on plan organization first. Çetin claimed that "[a]n office may have a great visual impact. Suppose the designers incorrectly resolved the functional relationships, circulation networks, and volumes. In that case, it is impossible to say that the office is an 'office' in a real sense" (Çetin, Ç.K., 2017, personal communication). The logo, corporate color, and corporate font, thus any graphic, verbal, or typographical techniques representing the corporate identity, graphically create this visual impact and therefore constitute the primary references for the interior design of institutional spaces. The firm first asks "who/what?" that company or brand is and describes its corporate identity with adjectives that identify people, such as young, dynamic, traditional, innovative, moving, static, healthy, or ambitious. Then, they seek the appropriate answer to the following question: "What are the characteristics of this company and the main features of its identity?" They recommend that the concept of "Institutional Space" deserves "more" than simple and shallow spatial solutions if the main aim is to create a "spiritual" office environment. They define this "more" as the epitome of corporate identity (Ibid). As an illustration, the plan organization and visual concept of a conservative company, compared to that of a liberal company, completely differs for Çetin. The former requires a closed-plan organization that preserves the privacy of office space. The latter, on the contrary, necessitates an open-plan type that displays the entire office space and boasts transparency. According to Çetin, these decisions affect the third dimension directly. The company's corporate identity reflections, such as the logo used on the walls, corporate color application, the corporate font, and graphical work as decorative elements, also affect the third dimension. Çetin, therefore, considers corporate identity design and architectural design as two distinct yet correlated practices. For Çetin, the less implicit corporate identity files classify identity and design guidelines, the more these guidelines improve interior space quality (Ibid). For Çetin (2019), institutional firms determine their spatial needs and explicitly understand the architect's role in the project process. As the designer-client relationship primarily determines the progress of project conception, Çetin refers to the obstacles posed by more straightforward but formal guidelines, which lead the client to

higher expectations and more solid demands as a "positive constraint." For the team, "although designing without specific limits seems easier at first glance, it is a much more challenging situation for the architect. (Çetin, Ç.K., July 29, 2019, personal interview by email, translated by the author).

As Habif architecture welcomes boundaries as essential pauses for a better definition of the design problem, this study conducts an architectural analysis of the office buildings of two rival companies in Istanbul, Markafoni, and Trendyol, the selective members of the same business sector. Both Markafoni and Trendyol are website companies; their relationship with customers is through their websites. For the users, the employer, and the employees, on the other hand, the spatial experience of office interiors conveys the corporate image. The design team describes both projects as the outcomes of identical concepts: being on the move, young, and dynamic. However, they both represent it in different ways. (Çetin, Ç.K., July 29, 2019, Personal interview by email, translated by the author). Therefore, their architectural analysis reveals the designers' agenda while interpreting corporate identity ideals in several functions besides offices, such as reception areas, meeting rooms, and cafes.

One should have brief information about the company's corporate history for such analysis. Markafoni, first established in 2008, has a young, dynamic, and modern character which gives virtual shopping services for several branded clothes and accessories through the website "markafoni.com." Since it set up the first Turkish fashion e-commerce website, which stands idle today, we recognize Markafoni as an energetic company with continuous commercial standing. When the company of Markafoni first consulted Habif Architecture for the interior design of their new office space, they did not provide a professional corporate identity file. The incompetence of Markafoni towards a professional corporate identity design for Çetin obstructed their architectural design process. They analyzed Markafoni's logo design and type-form decisions in its website to uncover the symbolic features of its corporate identity. [Fig. 2]

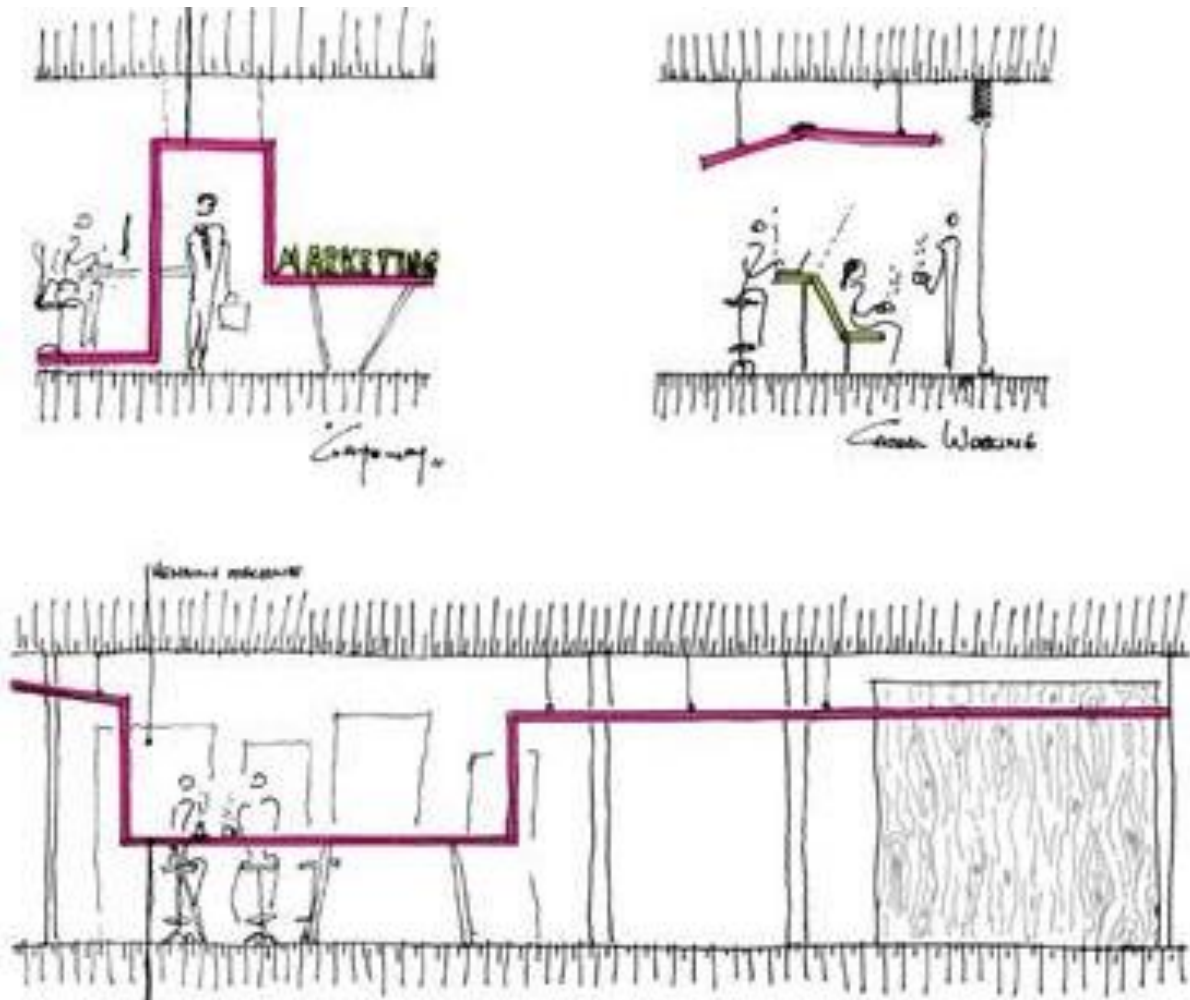


**Figure 2** Logo of Markafoni

Specific determinations regarding the psychology of font and color decisions in the logo may initially sound reductionist. Nevertheless, as accepted by a majority, the "geometric sans serif" font type used for Markafoni generally refers to the candid, trendy, and bold character. The energetic and dynamic connotation of pink and green colors in the logo reinforces the Sans-serif font's associations. Referring to "Color Psychology in Logo Design," one can claim that the dual color preference of pink and green aid in emphasizing the binary feature of the company. While pink refers to the company's feminine and romantic character, the green color intensifies the first impression with a vivid and fresh look.

Those adjectives derived from the logo also constituted the conceptual themes of the project proposed by Habif Architecture. The "ribbons" circulating the office space are the epic representations of those adjectives in architectural space. As the office space of Markafoni Company was 3500 sqm. a single-story building with a linear plan type, Habif architecture adapted the architectural program as sequential open-office departments,

collocated linearly alongside facades. The offices for managers and the meeting rooms, on the contrary, were organized as private and closed office areas. The remaining central axis contained the social zone for cafe or meeting functions for easy access. Posterior to the study of functional relationships in plan organization, the design team proposed two conceptual "stripes" in the corporate colors of Markafoni that circulated all office space, representing the energy and dynamism of the company. [Fig. 3]



**Figure 3** Markafoni Office Sketches

The other office building, designed by Habif Architecture, is the Trendyol Headquarters in Istanbul. Constructed in 2013, two years before Markafoni Headquarters, Habif architecture designed the Trendyol office building with a different mentality. Identical to Markafoni, Trendyol is also a Turkish fashion e-commerce website, still used today. It has provided virtual shopping services for fashion goods through the website "trendyol.com" since its establishment in March 2010. After the American investment company, Tiger Global, supported the company financially, Trendyol became an international enterprise. Çetin describes the corporate identity of Trendyol with analogous terminology he used for the former: "dynamic, interactive, rapid and self-renewing." Its logo unveils this youthful, fun, and enthusiastic character with its sans serif font-type selection and the preference for orange as corporate color. [Fig.4]





**Figure 4** The logo of Trendyol.com

As Çetin states, Trendyol also ignored providing a professional corporate identity file for Habif architecture. The design team analyzed Trendyol's website and unveiled the significant features of the company's corporate identity. They interpreted the logo and corporate color; however, their architectural interpretation in Trendyol, affected mainly by the functional solutions, is complexified by a massive architectural program. Analogous to the Markafoni office building, the office of Trendyol was a single-story building with a linear plan type, covering 6.000 sqm. They requested the re-functioning of a workplace for 400 employees with multiple departments such as production, good-receiving, and logistics.

As the architectural program involved a full range of services, Habif architecture divided the plan into three horizontal zones and placed the departments along elongated lateral facades as open offices collocated linearly. They provided easy access to public functions by locating cafés, meeting rooms, and recreation areas on the central axis. As extensive distances between departments created a transportation problem inside the office for its inhabitants, Habif Architecture suggested a railway system for easy internal transport in the initial concept projects. The team designed the social areas like train stations or stops on the central axis. The design team had symbolized the company's "dynamic, interactive, rapid and self-renewing" nature with the railway system and the stations, presented as the most significant elements of their conceptual approach. The bike lane arranged in zigzag terraces moreover provides other activity zones for the "dynamic" and "active" office habitats and offers alternative spatial solutions for them to abandon physical and mental fatigue during office hours (Habif Architecture Company Catalog, 2014). However, due to budget restrictions, the designers dispensed with constructing the inner rail system during the project's application. Instead, they created a paradox between the social areas on the central axis and the working spaces by material selections in contrasting natures, which resulted in dual consequences: a psychologically dynamic yet tranquil and balanced space. The dialectics of conflicts and balance in the architectural space appeared as the most distinctive feature of the project [Fig 5].



**Figure 5** Trendyol Office Building- Recreational Stations

Both companies are young and modern institutions with similar identity goals; both projects have analogical plan layouts yet different project concepts, corporate color decisions, and architectural forms. The spatial analysis of both Markafoni and Trendyol office buildings reveals that the difference between the two designs originates from the diversity of architectural concepts suggested by Habif architecture. In the Trendyol project, Habif architecture represented the young and self-renewing character of the company by a series of autonomous recreational zones in station shape, located on the central axis of the architectural plan, and a train-rail system, which connects those independent stations. They utilized the corporate color as an accent color to highlight specific furniture. In the Markafoni project, the team assigned the dynamic and energetic connotations of the company's character to two ribbon forms in green and pink colors that fluctuate freely in space. The aim seems to establish an underscored perception of the main idea by utilizing the figure-ground relationship between these ribbons and the dark background.

As one can realize, Habif architecture developed diverse and unique conceptual solutions for each company according to its corporate identity ideals and user profile, yet preferred to reflect the corporate terminology in the social spaces rather than private office or work station zones. For an objective analysis of the corporate design in Markafoni and Trendyol offices, from decoding logo forms and fonts to transforming decoded corporate identity patterns into architectural forms, specific queries might help us to uncover the similarities and variations in reflecting their concepts: “being on the move, being young, being dynamic”—particularly in social areas: welcoming/reception areas and social services, such as gathering areas for meeting, dining, and recreation [Table 3].

**Table 3.** Analytical Matrix on the decoding and analysis of corporate identity patterns

	MARKAFONI	TRENDYOL	QUERIES ON COMPANY'S IDENTITY PATTERN
<b>LOGO DESIGN</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the psychological associations of the typeface selected for the company's logo?</li> <li>● Do the logo shapes or fonts connote any architectural concept or keyword regarding the company's character?</li> </ul>
<b>CHARACTER / CONCEPT</b>	Young, Dynamic, Energetic	Self-Renewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Which interior design elements reflect the company's concept in its most concrete form?</li> </ul>



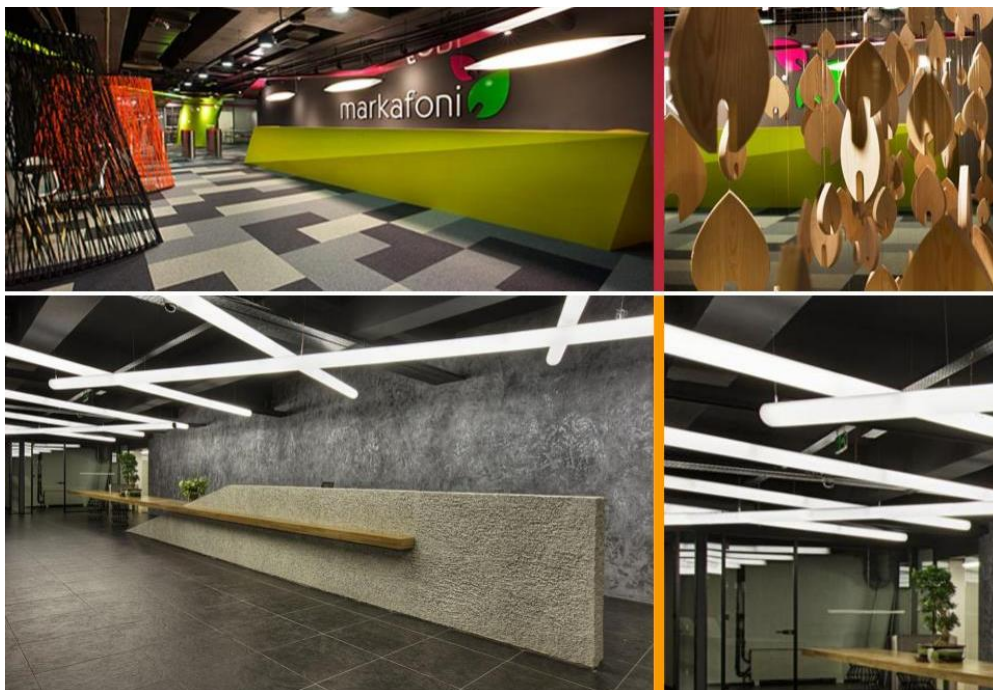
<b>CORPORATE COLOR</b>	Pink and green	Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do color associations signify the companies' character?</li> <li>● What are the appropriate limits of utilizing corporate colors in interior design?</li> </ul>
<b>SHAPE</b>	Multi-functional Ribbons	Recreational Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the correlation of form and shapes with the companies' corporate identity messages?</li> </ul>
<b>MATERIALS</b>	Glass, steel, and treated timber.	Glass, steel, and treated timber.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the correlation of material selection with the companies' corporate identity messages?</li> </ul>
<b>FURNITURE</b>	Furniture in white, multifunctional 'stripes' in the corporate colors	Furniture in white and orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the correlation of furniture selection with the companies' corporate identity messages?</li> <li>● How much do furniture's color and material affect space atmosphere and project concept?</li> </ul>
<b>LIGHTNING</b>	Natural and artificial lighting with modern lighting accessories	No natural lighting, artificial lighting with modern lighting accessories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the correlation of lighting fixture decisions with the overall conceptual approach?</li> <li>● How do lighting fixture preferences support ergonomic needs if artificial lighting is necessary?</li> </ul>

In both projects, one might claim that logo design, concepts/keywords about the company's character, and the corporate colors assigned are the principal factors affecting design criteria and project conception. The psychological associations of typeface and color selections connote several concepts about the company's character that inspire project conceptualization. Nevertheless, the shapes and forms used in the logos affected form creation. When analyzed, one can see that both company logos have sans-serif typeface, which connotes a relatively clean, modern, stable, and objective character, and have vivid colors for a modern and dynamic look. Markafoni benefits from pink and green, the colors of femininity and vitality, provoking young, dynamic, and energetic psychology. Trendyol office, on the other hand, implements orange as an accent color, as is used in its logo, to convey excitement, warmth, and enthusiasm for representing its self-renewing character. Therefore, we can claim that the design concepts created by Habif architecture are compatible with the semiological messages associated with corporate font/color selections. The shapes in the interior space, created by the design team, also represent the decoded corporate terminology, yet in Markafoni literally, in the other conceptually. For instance, the designers attempted to represent 'dynamism' with fluctuating stripes throughout the whole office space in Markafoni. In Trendyol, they proposed a railway system between static stations and created movement by mechanical means. As connotative form selections and corporate color applications appear to be the prevalent design features behind the two cases' diversification, the designers' black or dull color applications on other planar surfaces reinforce their impact yet create a dark and oppressive office atmosphere.

### **Welcoming/Reception area:**

The architectural analysis of welcoming/reception areas should primarily answer queries such as how representative the welcoming act is designed, which spatial elements reflect the corporate identity and the extent to which the logo and corporate color implementation dominate the companies' first impression. As mentioned before, in Markafoni offices, Habif architecture configured the logo and the corporate colors, pink and green, as operative graphic tools to transfer the company's corporate identity into interior space. The designers transformed the multifunctional green stripe into the reception desk and the pink strip into a suspended ceiling element that defined the desk to install lighting fixtures in the reception area. The straightforward installation of the signboard of the Markafoni logo on the back wall of the reception desk and the decorative panel, composed of multiple logo forms, facilitated Habif architecture to perpetuate the graphical terminology as an architectural element. One can claim they are for promotional purposes and specify the company image directly to its visitors [Fig 6]. As the monochromatic use of gray on the floor and the selection of dark colors for the ceiling and back wall eliminates the boundaries of the

reception area, the corporate identity messages transferred by the green reception desk, the signboard of Markafoni's logo, and the pink stripe has an amplified impact on the users as the first impression. In contrast with the Markafoni project, which has literal corporate identity messages, the reception area of the Trendyol project was handled differently. The designers preferred to design a neutral and tranquil reception area to avoid the direct utilization of the company logo for neither functional nor promotional purposes. Unlike Markafoni's colorful and welcoming entrance, Trendyol's reception area had a modest and minimal atmosphere, which hardly transferred any identity messages [Fig. 6]. Neither the plain and neutral character of the reception desk, made of natural stone and wood, nor its unornamented back wall in gray color conveys the energetic nature of Trendyol. The only noticeable aspect of the overall space is the lighting fixtures with a dynamic arrangement, which might imitate the company energy, the youth, and modernity of Trendyol conceptually.



**Figure 6** Markafoni Office Building- Reception area and the use of the logo for promotional purposes on the top, Trendyol Office Building- Reception area and the dynamic lighting elements on the bottom.

As a criticism, one might claim that both reception areas seem dark, infinite welcoming spaces due to the lack of natural light and the overall color and lighting decisions which are dull and dark. Nevertheless, Markafoni's direct transfer of company identity by installing the logo signboard and applying the corporate colors on the architectural elements, furniture items, and space dividers seems more comprehensible than Trendyol's conceptual approach. Trendyol's later office, designed by Çalışlar and Erginoğlu architecture in 2020, proves our claim because they preferred a rather colorful and modern reception area, transferring the corporate messages by green walls, digital boards, logo signboards, and corporate color applications.

([www.https://www.arkiv.com.tr/proje/trendyol-kampus-ofis/11689](https://www.arkiv.com.tr/proje/trendyol-kampus-ofis/11689))

### **Social Areas—Gathering areas for meeting, dining, and recreation:**

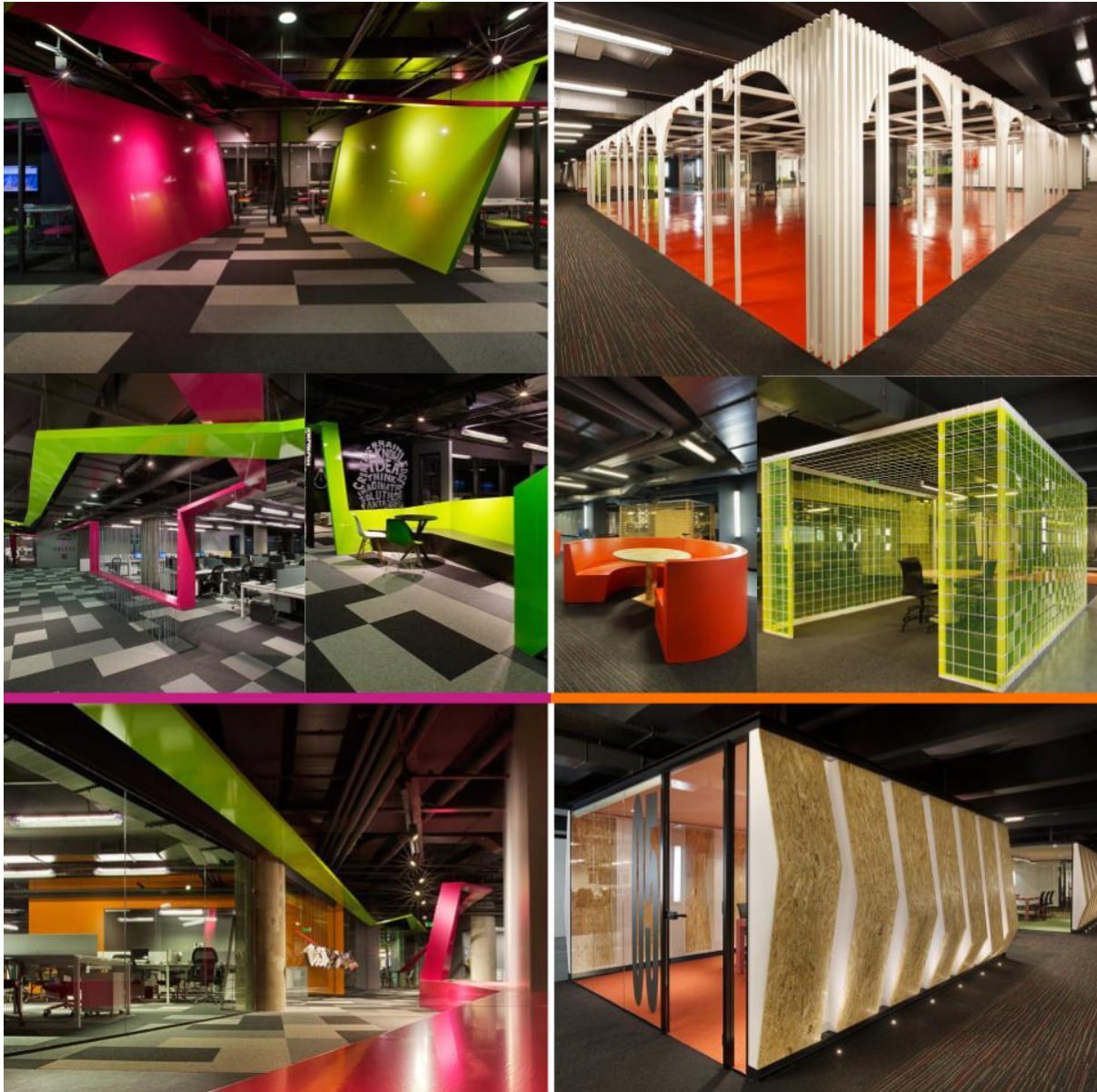
The architectural analysis of social areas depends on the activities or social services offered to the employees, yet they hold most corporate identity messages for being perceived during leisure hours. As both projects contain gathering areas for meeting, dining, and recreation functions, the designers elaborated those spaces with maximum creativity and joy. The spatial analysis of social areas reveals the level of transfer of the corporate identity





ideals to employees; therefore, for objective analysis, one should search to what extent the symbolic values of the form and color convey corporate messages to its employees. In addition, in this transfer, one should search for the role of color, material, and lighting decisions in supporting the primary conceptual approach of the designers and how much they satisfy the users in terms of ergonomic needs.

In the social areas of Markafoni's office, the pink and green stripes of Habif architecture dominates; moreover, they configure the overall office setup, circulation, and orientation since their form and direction evolve ceaselessly due to changing functional demands. As they mostly follow and partly conflict with the linearity of the plan layout, one might interpret them as sculptural elements that function both conceptually and pragmatically. Conceptually, they express the characteristic features of Markafoni's corporate identity through colors and their dynamic movement. Pragmatically, they transform into various architectural elements, such as space boundaries, entrances, furniture, a sitting/working unit, a lighting fixture, or an art installation. For instance, twisted stripes become the walls of the waiting and open meeting areas in the Department of Human Resources; then they turn into semi-transparent partitions that ascend from ceiling to floor, then form a stage in the café space. The designers also create a fun wall in the cafe to enhance the user satisfaction of young employees. The chic material selection of multifunctional stripes, the direct adaptation of corporate colors in the interior space, and colorful furniture preferences reflect the young and dynamic character of Markafoni, and the message is easy to comprehend by the users. In Trendyol offices, on the contrary, Habif architecture develops a different conceptual approach based on contrasting natures of material preference between recreational stations for a dynamic atmosphere. While the neutral materials, such as treated timber coverings, of the semi-private meeting rooms connote austerity, rather "chic" materials of the recreational cages, containing a cafe and gathering areas, contradicted the modesty of the meeting rooms. Locating the cafe in a white-cage form, covered with orange carpets, at the last station of the conceptual rail system, naively transfers the young and energetic character of the company without the railway system, canceled during the construction phase. The only element that refers to the company's corporate identity is the color orange occasionally applied on the floor, on the walls, or as the color of the furniture in the coffee corner and seminar hall. The dark color application on flooring and ceiling and the selection of white-colored furniture are also a result of designers' aim to eliminate their appearance by exposing the corporate color applications as an accent.



**Figure 7** Markafoni Office Building- Meeting rooms, gathering corners, corridors on the left, Trendyol Office Building- Cafe, meeting rooms, gathering areas on the right

As a criticism, one might claim that the pastoral decisions about furniture, lighting, color, and materials in Markafoni amplify the impact of two conceptual stripes. However, in the Trendyol office, after eliminating the rail system, there remained no architectural element that directly represented the company concepts to the users. The aimed conflict between stations hardly creates that dynamic atmosphere. The lack of natural light and the dark color transitions of the ceiling and floor that eliminate space boundaries create a somewhat claustrophobic interior, which lacks to transfer the company concepts.

The architectural analysis of Markafoni and Trendyol offices designed by Habif Architecture reveals that the extent to which corporate identity constraints affect the decision of interior design elements is closely related to the extent to which designers develop creative approaches. A modern or traditional office life, determined by the corporate ideals of the company, can be realized with architectural solutions that offer appropriate plan typology, functional diversity, and a large variety of social service suggestions. Habif architecture, with user-oriented agendas for both companies, created well-coordinated interior designs for each office space that incorporate social services and recreational areas into the



architectural program, such as cafés, cozy places for gathering and resting, or sports corners, for a liberal working environment enhancing the users' motivation. Nevertheless, transferring corporate identity ideals to space users is a unique concern that transcends sole user satisfaction. Two cases' comparison reveals that: Symbolizing the company's corporate identity with graphic elements and transferring codes embedded with logo forms and corporate colors by the interior architectural elements better communicate with the space users and competently disseminate corporate messages of the visual identity through psychological associations. Creative interior architectural solutions of Habif architecture, especially their unique interpretations of corporate colors, for instance, surpass the logo's impact—the so-called primary graphic tool for the literal perception of the corporate identity in architectural spaces—in transferring corporate identity. The creative strategy of Habif architecture, therefore, accentuates the corporate color applications in interior space by customizing floor coverings and wall designs in monochromatic gradations of black and gray. The selection of furniture, either in white color or subtle tones of corporate colors, also multiplies this creative strategy.

## CONCLUSION

Today, as the goal of every company is to attain a privileged and progressive position in competitive market conditions, corporate identity design plays a significant role within this scope. Developing unique visual identities for businesses, companies, or brands becomes obligatory for recognizing their vision, mission, and values, registered according to their corporate ideals. Its lack precludes the publicity of the company. Regardless of the business sector or industry, the main feature of the company's visual presentation in aesthetic norms is to create a memorable visual perception by using appropriate graphic elements such as colors, images, shapes, forms, and typography to convey the ideals of the company or brand to its customer portfolio. The task of designers in designing institutional spaces is to develop and embody this visual language in interior design.

Today, the modern office trend, preferred by modern Turkish companies, is user-oriented, rating employee performance and socialization. Contemporary office interiors reserve the brand indications of companies as determining design guidelines. The designers, therefore, have to construe the patterns of corporate identity and company image on the market in a distinguished manner. As corporate identity files are rigid identifications of the company's unique personality, reduced to colors, fonts, furniture, or material selections, the architects and interior designers sometimes recognize these files as an obstacle that limits creativity and sometimes as a benefit facilitating the design concept positively. This study affirms that Habif architecture benefits from these principles. Claiming such boundaries as essential determinants of design processes, the design approach of Habif architecture might seem realistic and functionalistic but at the same time succeeds in conceptualizing the corporate identity of the companies in its most creative way.

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