

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**REBRANDING STRATEGIES AND
VISUAL IDENTITY DESIGN FOR
CHINESE ONLINE CASUAL
MENSWEAR BRANDS**

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ABSTRACT

The Chinese online casual menswear market is experiencing critical challenges, including visual homogenization, a lack of culturally resonant identity, and limited strategic frameworks for rebranding. This research investigates how visual identity design—particularly through the lens of super symbols—can enhance brand distinctiveness and consumer engagement in this highly saturated sector. The study aims to analyse the visual characteristics of Chinese online casual menswear brands, identify key elements of effective branding, explore the role of super symbols, and develop a strategic model for visual rebranding. A qualitative research approach was adopted, involving in-depth interviews with 19 purposively selected industry experts and practitioners. The data were thematically analysed using NVivo to ensure analytical rigour and reliability. Results reveal that many Chinese brands continue to rely on Western visual aesthetics while neglecting their own cultural symbolism, leading to weak brand narratives and low consumer recall. The study identifies colour schemes, typography, and logos as core components of visual identity that can be transformed through the integration of culturally meaningful super symbols. The research contributes theoretically by expanding existing branding literature to include the underexplored concept of super symbols in the context of Chinese digital fashion. Practically, it offers a rebranding framework that integrates cultural symbolism and strategic design, providing actionable insights for brand practitioners. The study finds that super symbols enhance brand differentiation and consumer engagement in Chinese fashion branding, strengthening emotional connections and long-term loyalty. The final outcome is a strategic visual rebranding model tailored to the needs of Chinese online casual menswear brands, offering guidance on how to embed culture-driven super symbols into brand design. This research addresses critical industry gaps and lays a foundation for future studies across other fashion segments and regional markets.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The rapid development of China's digital economy, particularly in the realm of e-commerce, has significantly transformed the landscape of various industries, including fashion. As emphasized in the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, digital transformation is a national strategic priority (Hong, 2023). Online platforms such as Taobao and Tmall have facilitated the rise of numerous local fashion labels, especially in the casual menswear sector. However, despite this growth, many of these brands suffer from indistinct visual identities and a lack of effective differentiation in an increasingly saturated market (Chen, 2023).

Visual identity plays a vital role in shaping brand recognition and consumer perception. Yet many Chinese online menswear brands face the problem of visual homogenization—logos, colour schemes, and overall aesthetics often converge into indistinct patterns, undermining consumer recall and loyalty (Yi, 2017). These challenges are further complicated by the demands of cultural relevance and the pace of digital innovation, which require brands to be both adaptive and expressive (Zhou & Ren, 2023).

In this context, super symbols have emerged as potential solutions. When integrated strategically into brand visuals, super symbols can enhance recognition, foster deeper engagement, and build emotional connections with consumers (Jingxin Zhong, 2019). This study aims to explore the application of super symbols in the visual rebranding of Chinese online casual menswear brands, addressing the issue of visual sameness while enhancing cultural resonance and competitive positioning.

As traditional branding approaches become increasingly outdated in the digital age, brands must move beyond aesthetic surface design and incorporate symbolic depth and emotional meaning into their visual systems (Li et al., 2022). Furthermore, the rapid evolution of digital platforms and technologies necessitates reimagining visual identity to meet the expectations of culturally-aware and digitally native audiences (Xu & Yan, 2023).

To address these challenges, this study is structured around five core research objectives and five corresponding research questions. This first chapter establishes the