

Human Centered Design-Based Logo Design Strategy to Improve the Visual Identity of MSMEs in Pematang Serai Village


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ABSTRACT

This article examines the crucial role of Human-Centered Design (HCD) in logo development, particularly for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Pematang Serai Village. The study highlights the importance of building a strong brand image and explores how HCD principles influence the entire design process—from conceptualization to implementation. The iterative and user-centered nature of HCD ensures continuous refinement of the logo based on real user feedback. This article also discusses visual elements in logo design and their impact on audience perception, recognizing the logo as a significant visual cue in shaping consumer behavior. Furthermore, cultural considerations are emphasized through cross-cultural analysis, underlining the need to adapt logo designs to local contexts—especially relevant for MSMEs in Pematang Serai Village. The findings lead to actionable recommendations for MSMEs, including a user-centered design approach, emphasis on visual appeal, cultural sensitivity, iterative refinement, and strategic logo implementation. This study underscores that applying HCD principles can result in logo designs that are not only visually appealing but also emotionally resonant with the target audience, thereby contributing to sustainable business success.

Keyword : Logo Design, MSMEs, Human-Centered Design

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the midst of digital transformation and increasing global business competition, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in rural areas are facing new challenges that require rapid adaptation, both from the managerial and visual sides. Pematang Serai Village, as one of the areas with the potential for developing MSMEs, is a real reflection of how the local economy grows through the entrepreneurial spirit of its people. However, this spirit has not been fully balanced with the strategic ability to build a strong and professional business image, especially in terms of visual identity such as logos.

Logos are not just symbols; It is a representation of the unique values, vision, and character of a business. In the context of MSMEs, a properly designed logo can be an effective communication tool to reach customers, build trust, and create differentiation in the midst of dense competitors, including in the digital market. However, in reality, most rural MSMEs still rely on conventional approaches in building brands—without paying attention to aesthetics, visual messages, or consumer needs.

This problem is not only caused by technical limitations or resources, but also by a lack of understanding of the importance of user-oriented design. This is where the Human Centered Design (HCD) approach comes into play. HCD is a design method that places people—in this case, MSME actors and consumers—at the center of the entire design process. This approach not only results in a functional design, but also creates an emotional experience and connection between the brand and its audience.

Through the implementation of Human Centered Design, the logo creation process becomes more inclusive and participatory, allowing MSME actors to be directly involved in the design process and adapt it to the local socio-cultural context. In rural communities such as Pematang Serai, where social ties and community values are still very strong, this approach has become particularly relevant to explore distinctive identities that can be visually translated in the form of logos.

This research seeks to design a strong and meaningful logo for MSMEs in Pematang Serai Village using the Human Centered Design approach. The goal is to create a visual identity that is not only aesthetic, but also capable of representing local values and strengthening the position of MSMEs in increasingly complex market competition. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this research can be a model that can be replicated in other villages as part of the strategy to strengthen MSMEs based on human-centered design.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and quantitative approach, along with a case study method, to explore Human-Centered Design (HCD)-based logo design for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Pematang Serai village. MSME identification involves documentation and sample selection based on certain criteria, involving various sectors and characteristics. Data collection included interviews with MSME owners, environmental and local market observations, and questionnaires to understand consumer perceptions. Data analysis uses a qualitative approach with thematic methods for interview and observation data, while quantitative analysis uses descriptive and comparative statistics from questionnaire data. This methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of HCD-based logo design on the image and competitiveness of MSMEs in Pematang Serai Village.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Logo Design Development

Logo design development is a creative and strategic process that involves a series of important stages to create visual symbols that are not only aesthetically appealing, but also able to effectively represent a brand's identity and values. In the context of MSMEs, especially those in areas such as Pematang Serai Village, logo design is not just a visual element, but a representation of professionalism, trust, and business closeness with its consumers.

The logo development process usually starts from the conceptualization stage, where the basic idea and core values of the brand are formulated. This stage includes market research, understanding the cultural context, and identifying the preferences of the target audience. Next, the process continues to the design creation stage, where initial ideas are transformed into testable visual forms. Finally, at the refinement stage, revisions and iterations of the design are carried out based on feedback from related parties, including business owners and potential users.

In the entire process, the Human-Centered Design (HCD) approach is the main key. HCD emphasizes the importance of understanding end-users' needs, habits, and expectations, as well as actively involving them in the design process. Lyon et al. (2020) affirm that HCD has now become a design approach that is not only methodologically robust, but also increasingly accepted in popular culture and professional practice. The research of Bazzano et al. (2017) also underlines the integration between design thinking and participatory research, which provides depth in understanding the dynamics between designers and users.

In addition, the visual elements of the logo have a great influence on the perception of the audience. A study by Mahmood et al. (2019) shows that visual complexity in a logo can affect how a brand is perceived by consumers, both from a cognitive and emotional aspect. Therefore, it is important to design a logo that is not only visually consistent and attractive, but also easy to recognize and remember by the target audience.

The logo design process is iterative, meaning that evaluation and improvement are carried out on an ongoing basis. Waisnawa and Yupardhi (2023) emphasize the importance of repeated evaluation in each design phase to ensure alignment between design results and the expectations of business owners and end users. In line with

that, Lyon and Koerner (2016) explain that prototypes and rapid iterations are important elements in the development of HCD-based products, including in logo design.

Thus, the stages of logo design development for MSMEs do not only include the creative process alone, but also require a systematic and participatory approach. The implementation of the HCD principle ensures that the resulting logo is not just a visual symbol, but also a reflection of values, identity, and emotional closeness between MSMEs and their consumers.

B. Logo Design Implementation

After the development process is completed, the logo design implementation stage is an important step in the visual communication and branding strategy of MSMEs. This is where logos come into real use—whether in product packaging, promotional materials, digital media, to physical identities such as signage and uniforms. In the context of MSMEs, the proper implementation of logo design can increase competitiveness, strengthen brand identity, and influence consumer perception and loyalty.

Various studies have shown how logo design elements affect consumer behavior. Machado et al. (2015), for example, emphasize the importance of naturalness in logo design, which has been shown to elicit a positive affective response from consumers. Logos that contain natural elements or organic representations are preferred over abstract logos, especially in the context of MSMEs that often offer local, traditional, or environmentally friendly products.

On the other hand, a study by Hagtvedt (2011) shows that incompleteness of letters in logos—such as the use of incomplete or symbolic letters—can lead to negative perceptions of trust, especially in consumers who have a tendency to focus on risk. These findings confirm the importance of clear, intact, and communicative logo design, especially for MSMEs that are building credibility in the market.

Furthermore, Cian et al. (2014) in their systematic study identified several key visual characteristics that influence logo evaluation, including color, shape, and readability. These characteristics affect the extent to which the logo can be recognized, liked, and connected to the brand message it carries. This shows that each element in logo design has an important role and needs to be adjusted to the context and values of the MSME concerned.

For MSMEs that are oriented towards cross-border market expansion, research by Lans et al. (2009) shows that the strategy of adapting logo design based on local cultural nuances can increase brand acceptance. In the context of Pematang Serai Village, this kind of adaptation also applies, considering that the richness of local culture can be a source of strong and authentic design inspiration.

In addition to the visual aspect, the evaluation of logo implementation in certain sectors also provides important lessons. A study by Straten and Roodenburg (2013) that examined the implementation of health logos, showed that the presence of the right logo can influence consumer behavior and decision-making. Although the focus of the research is not on MSMEs, the implication is still relevant—namely that logos have a significant impact on shaping customer perceptions and decisions.

The entire process of implementing logo design in MSMEs must be carried out strategically, integrated, and consistently. By understanding consumer behavior, cultural context, and market dynamics, logos can be a branding instrument that not only beautifies the visual appearance of the business, but also strengthens values, trust, and emotional connection with consumers.

C. Logo Design Impact Analysis

a. Evaluation of the Impact of Logo Design on the Image of MSMEs

Evaluating the impact of logo design on the image of MSMEs is a crucial step in assessing the effectiveness of the visual branding strategy adopted. Logos as a visual symbol of the brand play an important role in creating first impressions and shaping consumers' long-term perception of a business's identity.

Research by Machado et al. (2015) shows that logo designs that feature natural elements such as organic shapes, natural colors, or symbols related to nature tend to elicit a more positive affective response from consumers. Therefore, logos that utilize natural elements can strengthen the emotional closeness between brands and consumers, especially in the MSME sector which often emphasizes authentic values and locality.

On the other hand, Hagtvedt (2011) revealed that logos with incomplete letters or shapes can interfere with the perception of trust, especially for consumers who have a tendency to focus on prevention. In the context of MSMEs, where trust is a fundamental aspect in building consumer loyalty, it is very important to ensure that the logo design has visual cohesiveness and does not confuse the audience.

Furthermore, Cian et al.'s (2014) research identified three main elements that affect the effectiveness of logos: *recognizability*, *affect*, and *meaning*. The evaluation of MSME logos should include an analysis of these three dimensions to ensure that the logo is not only aesthetically appealing, but also serves as an effective communication medium to convey the brand's message.

Evaluation indicators that can be used include:

- Emotional Associations: Whether the logo evokes positive emotions such as warmth, trust, or inspiration.
- Brand Identity Clarity: The extent to which the logo conveys the identity and core values of the MSME brand.
- Visual Uniformity and Cohesiveness: Whether design elements align with each other and form a whole visual.
- Recall: The ability of consumers to recognize and remember the logo after initial exposure.
- Cultural Context Appropriateness: Whether the logo is relevant to the target audience's social and cultural values.

b. Comparison of MSME Performance Before and After the Implementation of Logo Design

The analysis of the impact of logo design is not only subjective or aesthetic, but can also be evaluated through quantitative and qualitative indicators on business performance. By comparing the performance of MSMEs before and after the implementation of the new logo, a more objective insight can be obtained regarding the influence of visual design on business success.

Some of the main indicators that can be used include:

1. Increased Brand Awareness. It can be measured through brand awareness surveys, the number of brand searches on digital media, or consumer engagement in visual campaigns. An effective logo usually increases the level of brand recognition and recall significantly.
2. Changes in Consumer Perception. Includes perceptions of quality, professionalism, and trust in MSMEs. Consumer perception surveys can be used to measure these changes directly.
3. Impact on Sales and Profits. An increase in sales figures, turnover growth, or the number of new customers can indicate the positive impact of the visual rebranding being done. This analysis can be reinforced with monthly sales data before and after the logo launch.
4. Market Feedback. Consumer reviews, customer testimonials, and social media responses to new logos are important sources of information. Sentiment analysis can be used to find out whether a logo gets a positive response or vice versa.
5. Integration of Values and Brand Identity. Evaluate whether the visual elements of the logo reflect the basic values of MSMEs, such as authenticity, affordability, or sustainability. This can be assessed through interviews with business owners, customers, and other stakeholders.

4. CONCLUSION

1. Iterative Design Process:

The iterative nature of logo design, which is based on the principles of Human-Centered Design (HCD), ensures continuous improvement through user feedback. This approach plays an important role in creating a logo that is able to convey the brand message effectively and relevant to the target audience.

2. Impact of Visual Elements:

The study emphasizes the importance of visual elements in logo design, highlighting the role of logos as significant visual cues in shaping audience perception. Understanding how these elements are perceived and interpreted by users is key to producing an engaging and communicative design.

3. Cultural Considerations:

Through a cross-border logo evaluation analysis, insights were gained that the adaptation of logo design to a specific cultural context is essential. This is very relevant for MSMEs in Pematang Serai Village, to ensure that the logo made can be aligned with the values and identity of the local community.

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