

MARKETING COMMUNICATION USED BY YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS IN THE EASTERN PART OF INDONESIA: THE USE OF SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This research illustrates how the discipline of semiotics can be utilized to investigate the hidden meanings that lie beneath marketing communication. The study of symbols and the underlying meanings that are connected to them is referred to as semiotics. Symbols can be in the form of written words or visual representations, and the study of semiotics focuses on both types of symbols. For this reason, and due to the fact that digital marketing makes extensive use of symbols and other promotion attributes in order to influence both brand awareness and brand image, semiotics is a very effective and efficient tool for interpreting digital marketing. This study will investigate the ways in which language and/or symbol influence consumer behavior with the end goal of determining how those factors contribute to the success of entrepreneurial endeavors. The study will investigate the ways in which language and/or symbol influence consumer behavior. In addition, the purpose of this study is to determine how young businesspeople in the eastern part of Indonesia can use semiotics as a tool to deliver marketing communication efforts to the audience that they have in mind. Not only that, but also this study will fill the gap of knowledge regarding the use of digital marketing and how it influences consumer particularly in the eastern part of Indonesia.

Keywords: Marketing Communication, Young Entrepreneurs, Eastern Indonesia, Semiotic

INTRODUCTION

Competition in the business world in Indonesia is increasing. According to the Business Competition Index (IPU) in 2021, the accommodation and food and beverage sectors are the economic sectors with the highest levels of competition, scoring 5.10 (on a scale of 1-7) (KPPU, 2021). This drives entrepreneurs to engage in marketing efforts that capture the market's attention. Besides product introduction, companies also need to build a good perception in the minds of consumers to form and maintain a positive brand image. One of the efforts that can be made by entrepreneurs is to conduct effective marketing communication through innovation.

One way entrepreneurs can use branding is by innovating through designs that are attractive and positively perceived by the market. Essentially, humans are visual creatures. This is supported by data revealing that 80% of the human brain remembers what they see (Fine Report, 2020). The brain can identify an image seen by the eye in a fraction of a second. This ability helps humans focus on parts of an object they are looking at. Based on this, the role of visuals becomes important and encourages marketers to create attractive designs.

In this study, the authors focus on the design of product logos. The uniqueness of a brand is key to supporting branding strategies. Branding encompasses all marketing activities aimed at building a brand. The uniqueness of the brand can be communicated through the design of the brand's appearance, such as its logo or tagline. The logo is an important component of a company's image. Without a logo, it is difficult to identify a company to consumers. Logos can also influence consumer preferences among available market choices. Its role is as an important visual communication tool, especially

for brand identity promotion activities and marketing campaigns. Logos are also a means necessary for public information dissemination, making logos crucial in creating company advertising concepts and further promoting them in the market. Consumer perceptions are formed quickly with the knowledge of a logo in their minds.

The logo is part of brand identity. Brand identity is related to the efforts made by marketers in communicating their unique value to retain customers and distinguish themselves from competitors. There are several ways to build a strong brand identity, including marketers understanding their market share and target market. Then, the company needs to establish what value can represent its brand. Next, create an attractive brand design for the company logo, website, and all elements that can represent the company. Finally, create an appropriate strategy so that the brand identity process can reach all customers.

The alignment between brand identity and the company with its market share is a driving factor for the company's success in winning consumer choices. The more a brand and its company are perceived to match the targeted market, the easier it is for a brand to stick in the minds of consumers (Marketeers, 2023). According to the McKinsey Quarterly Report (2018), research shows that company and brand design has a positive influence on business performance, including company revenue.

The current trend of business players is largely driven by young entrepreneurs. This is in line with the Indonesian government program to increase the national entrepreneurship ratio. Young people are considered productive assets of a country; their involvement in business will strengthen the country's economy (Zimmermann et al., 2013). Young entrepreneurs are individuals who start their own businesses at a young age, typically between 15 to 25 years old (Chigunta, Schnurr, James-Wilson & Torres, 2005; Hulsink and Koek, 2014). The opportunity for young entrepreneurs lies in implementing digital marketing because they are a generation very close to digital use in their daily lives (Anwar & Daniel, 2016; Park, Sung and Im, 2017).

The purpose of this research is to analyze the visual appearance of a business unit that plays an important role in marketing communication used by young entrepreneurs in Eastern Indonesia. This research refers to a semiotic approach in observing the interpretation of the meanings behind the logos used in branding strategies

LITERATURE REVIEW

Semiotic

Basically, communication is crucial in building a marketing strategy. The quality of communication delivered to the audience will greatly affect the success of the marketing strategy. Changes in consumer behavior patterns also play a significant role in understanding the role of marketing communication. Nowadays, consumers do not only buy products to meet their needs but also buy products based on their desires. How a brand can provide brand awareness to consumers through the appearance of a product logo (sign).

The word semiotics comes from the Greek word "semeion," which means "sign," or "seme," which means "interpretation of signs." Semiotics focuses on all kinds of signs, from conventional language to visual arts and performances, and the behavioral responses they elicit from users of the signs. It tends towards positivistic research methods. A sign is something that represents something else in someone's mind. A sign can consist of an expression, such as a word, sound, or symbol, and content or something visible that complements the meaning of that expression.

Semiotics, known as the "linguistic turn," is a powerful tool for uncovering hidden meanings in digital marketing, due to the fact that online marketing involves symbols such

as written words and images. Additionally, semiotics examines how people form perceptions that are products of the surrounding culture in which respondents live and participate. Culture, as far as semiotics is concerned, is the way people communicate, both consciously and unconsciously, through cultural aspects such as visual images and language. Understanding the implicit meanings of these elements allows Internet marketers to make "decisions" and communicate more efficiently with potential consumers (Lawes, 2002).

This is achieved by examining elements such as background, color, and shape to gain an understanding and creation of reality within the limited setting, such as a computer screen. We demonstrate that semiotics can be effectively applied to both traditional and Internet marketing and can benefit designers who want to create aesthetically pleasing and effective advertising promotions.

Words and images have denotative and connotative meanings. Analysis based on denotation and connotation meanings is grounded in Barthes' theory. Barthes' theory is an advancement of semiotic science in relation to the analysis of image objects. Consumer perception plays a crucial role in interpreting the visualization of a brand. This meaning can be viewed from two aspects: denotation and connotation. Denotative meaning is the basic meaning inherent in the image without associating it with the socio-cultural values it contains. In contrast, connotative meaning is the subjective meaning that emerges when we associate it with the socio-cultural values they possess.

Semiotics focuses on the representation of symbols (signs), such as language, images, and objects. The application of semiotics expanded when Barthes developed it from linguistics to visual imagery, such as photography, advertising, and film (Isfandiyary, 2017). Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is the foundation of this research. The emphasis on verbal text and changes in typographic elements have their own meaning to trigger emotions from consumers. Umberto Eco (1976) stated that "semiotics concerns everything that can be perceived as a sign." Signs include printed and spoken words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects. Individuals interpret signs as "signifying something."

Good design is not only judged by its aesthetics but also needs to contain the purpose and character of a business unit. This is done to instill a positive perception in the eyes of consumers. Visual brand identity includes logos, products, product packaging, brand colors, typography, and communication styles. A brand is a character; without a strong character, a business unit will easily be ignored by its consumers. The quality of a product cannot only be measured by its taste but design also plays an important role in determining brand character. Although the scope of design is quite broad, in this research, the authors will focus on the appearance of logo designs and taglines used by young entrepreneurs to support their marketing communication. Each advertising sign has its own form, whether it is large, small, round, or angular, and by changing the shape, size, or color. Colors have functions that can be categorized in various ways, especially for people who see them from different perspectives. The function of color on the psychology of the observer can be referred to as color association (symbol).

Marketing Communication

In addition to logos, the use of taglines in a brand's presentation is designed to evoke the emotional side of the audience who see or read the text. Taglines also represent the company's values, so placing the right phrase can shape the perception that entrepreneurs hope to achieve. Therefore, the appearance of a brand can support the company's positioning.

The company's positioning heavily relies on consumer perception. Perception can be

defined as the process of receiving, selecting, organizing, interpreting, testing, and reacting to sensory stimuli or data (John, et al., 2022). Building consumer perception is the main goal of marketing communication activities. Companies use logos in all advertising materials, events, and communication channels. Logos are one of the first elements that play a role in developing a company's identity. A logo can be something symbolic, letters, emblems, abstract signs, and so on. The use of color, its combinations, shape, and meaning can help a company stand out from its competitors.

Advertising is defined as a form of communication, where the author or sponsor sends a message to the receiver (consumer) with the explicit intent to sell a product (or idea) to customers. The purpose of advertising is to persuade, acquire, evaluate, influence, in other words, to shape the receiver's awareness, reinforce their need to purchase a particular product or service. As a form of persuasion, advertising is influenced by verbal, nonverbal, word formation, syntactic, and lexical factors, whose effects are individual and vary from person to person. It also uses many persuasive techniques. One of the most effective marketing communication media today is digital marketing.

Strengthening brand identity can be achieved through digital marketing, which is part of the promotional mix. Additionally, entrepreneurs use integrated marketing communication, where a brand's message can be delivered to the audience through one of the marketing media, namely digital channels (social media platforms). This message delivery is done as a branding effort. According to Pawar (2014), the implementation of digital marketing can be seen in six aspects: a) digital marketing is used as a way to increase consumer awareness and reach new customers; b) the use of digital marketing is aimed at showcasing the product/business gallery; c) digital marketing is used as an advertising medium; d) digital marketing is a means of promotion (related to discounts, cashback, and other promo packages); e) digital marketing as an analytical tool to measure market reach periodically; and f) digital marketing as a means of maintaining good communication with customers. Digital marketing is considered the most effective marketing communication today for reaching the target market and conveying company information

METHODS

In this research, the author uses a qualitative method focusing on logo design as part of marketing communication. Through a semiotic approach, the author interprets the meaning behind the company's logo design. The research subjects are young entrepreneurs with business units in the eastern region of Indonesia. The criteria for selecting the research subjects are based on the position of the business unit as a market leader in the food and beverage industry within their respective company categories. The selected business units represent three types of business categories: brownies cake business, contemporary beverage business, and crispy geprek chicken fast food business. The next criterion is that the business location must be in Makassar city and its surroundings. Makassar is chosen because it is the largest city in Eastern Indonesia and serves as the economic gateway to Eastern Indonesia.

The samples in this research are Browcyl (Banana Brownies), Lazuna Crispy Geprek, and Yotta. These three business units already have a high level of brand awareness in Makassar city and its surroundings. The data collection techniques used by the author include, first, conducting market research for local brands with high awareness and a good brand image. Second, gathering company logo design data from online sources. Next, observing the logos of each company and their relation to their strong positioning in their respective business categories. After that, the author interprets the logos of each business unit, looking at elements attached to the logos, such as color, font type, and others.

A semiotic approach is used in the data analysis process. The author collects relevant information sources about the research subjects. Data analysis is conducted in three stages: grouping, coding, and text analysis. Referring to Barthes' theory of semiotics, the author analyzes using three codes: Cultural, Connotative, and Symbolic.

RESULTS



**Figure 1. Yotta
Logo Source:**

<https://yotta.co.id>

Figure 1 shows the Yotta logo, Yotta is a beverage brand that positions itself in the contemporary drink category. Yotta has been the market leader for the past few years in Makassar. The target market for Yotta is young people, often referred to as millennials.

The Yotta logo features an animated cat icon raising one of its paws as if greeting the audience viewing the logo. The cat icon is illustrated with a cheerful expression, with the cat's mouth appearing to exclaim the word "Yotta." The use of the word "Yatta" as the brand's philosophy includes a connotative meaning according to Barthes' theory. Additionally, cats are popular pets that are widely loved by many people. The author interprets that the use of a cat in the Yotta logo signifies the brand's desire to be as liked by many people as cats are as pets.

The word "Yotta" is inspired by the Japanese word "Yatta," which means "hooray" or an expression of success or happiness. The owner modified it to "Yotta," inspired by the Makassarese slang "sotta'," which is a colloquial term meaning "know-it-all." This term is frequently used by teenagers in Makassar in their everyday communication. The use of "Yotta" sounds more familiar to the people of Makassar, especially among the youth. According to Barthes' theory, this relates to cultural (culture) aspects.

Furthermore, the Yotta logo features illustrations of milk and fruits, suggesting that the product contains milk and fruit ingredients. This background, together with the Yotta

logo, strengthens Yotta's brand identity as a milk and fruit-based beverage. This design refers to symbolic meaning (symbolic) in Barthes' theory. Yotta's brand identity is also reinforced by the tagline used in the logo, "segarnya bikin hepi" (refreshing and makes you happy). This phrase is written in a style relevant to the casual language used among peers. Additionally, the choice of this phrase aims to influence the emotional side of the audience when they see the logo.

Color is also a crucial element in appealing to the sensitivity of sight to affect feelings, attention, and interest (Kusrianto, 2007:46). The use of green, white, yellow, and red colors is significant. Yellow is seen as a base color from which other colors stem and is associated with gold and the sun. According to Goethe's Color Psychology Table (Goethe, 2015), the positive impression of yellow is quick and cheerful, potentially evoking joy in someone's emotional side. White symbolizes cleanliness and purity. The use of green, according to Molly E. Holzschlag, indicates natural qualities and is associated with health. The choice of red for the background is derived from the color of strawberries, which is also one of the flavor options on Yotta's menu. Overall, the color scheme in the Yotta logo represents bright and vibrant colors, resonating well with its target market, the youth.



Figure 2. Browcyl Logo
Source: Facebook Account Browcyl

Figure 2. shows the Browcyl logo, Browcyl is a leading business in the cake or dessert category in Makassar and its surrounding areas. Browcyl holds the market leader position for similar products and is a brand originating from Makassar. The use of yellow in the Browcyl logo conveys a lively impression and high passion according to Goethe's Color Psychology Table. Thus, yellow can evoke feelings of joy. Additionally, yellow is optimistic and symbolizes hope based on Molly's color properties. In some cultures, yellow is also considered a symbol of luck. In the Browcyl logo, brown is chosen for the brand name text. Brown indicates trustworthiness and is categorized as an earth tone color.

The seemingly simple design of the logo implies that the business owner wants the audience to focus when viewing the Browcyl logo. The logo only uses text, with the letter "C" designed to resemble a banana. The banana design in the Browcyl logo emphasizes that bananas are the main ingredient in their products. Browcyl also adds the phrase

"banana brownies" below the word "Browcyl" to support their positioning. The choice of bananas is made as an innovative product combined with brownies since bananas are a favorite fruit among the residents of Makassar and its surroundings. This element refers to local cultural adaptation (culture). The font used is curved, symbolizing elegance.

The curved design with the chosen font type represents the exclusivity of the Browcyl brand. This brand wants to be perceived as a premium brand. Overall, the Browcyl logo represents its identity in line with its target market, which is people who want to try brownies made with premium ingredients and bananas as their innovative element. Despite its simplicity, Browcyl, through its logo, conveys distinctive brand values with yellow being synonymous with the Browcyl brand, banana brownies.



Figure 3. Lazuna Logo
Source: Instagram Account @lazunachicken

Figure 3. shows the Lazuna logo, Lazuna is a brand established in 2018 and has become a market leader in the crispy geprek chicken fast food category. Lazuna boldly claims to be the No.1 crispy geprek chicken in Makassar on its packaging design and in its marketing campaign designs.

The Lazuna logo is characterized by the use of red and yellow colors. There is a symbol of a fork and spoon accompanying the words "food" and "drink." Below the Lazuna logo, the word "Chicken" is written, reinforcing Lazuna's brand identity by encouraging the audience to recognize its product as fast food chicken. The logo design features a circular shape that frames the text and symbols within the logo design. The word "Lazuna" is highlighted to make it more prominent and easily recognizable by the audience.

According to the color psychology table, the use of red and yellow is associated with warmth and high passion. Additionally, the author interprets the choice of red and yellow as symbols of courage and triumph. The Lazuna logo, with its distinctive red and yellow colors, can be perceived as attracting the audience's attention quickly.

Moreover, the brand name "Lazuna" sounds similar to a word in the Bugis-Makassar language that refers to a basic kitchen ingredient, namely garlic. The role of garlic in creating flavor significantly influences the quality of a product, especially the processed

chicken products offered by the Lazuna brand. The use of this brand name can also be quickly absorbed by the audience because the majority of the audience is familiar with the word "lasuna" from the Bugis-Makassar language, which means garlic. The choice of this word is also considered to have a positive impact on the perception received by Lazuna because it is easy to remember and can remain long in the minds of consumers by associating the word "Lazuna" with crispy geprek chicken products.

CONCLUSION

Logo as Part of Brand Identity The logo plays a crucial role in the success of a business unit. Its existence is not merely a sign of ownership but also contains meanings and values that showcase the unique characteristics of each business. The logo is consistently featured and involved in every marketing communication activity, particularly through digital marketing, which is the most effective platform for reaching target markets. Strengthening brand identity can be achieved through creative and innovative design. In this research, young entrepreneurs are the subjects due to their ability and success in running businesses. This is also based on the increasing trend of young entrepreneurs. It is hoped that the results of this study can inspire and motivate other young entrepreneurs and young people interested in starting a business.

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the three brands selected as research objects have similarities in general. The brands Yotta, Browcyl, and Lazuna are local Makassar brands whose founders and owners are young people. Thus, the spirit of the three owners can be felt by the audience when they get to know these products. All three brands show relevance in linking the brand and the company to their market segment. The role of logo design is highly influential in creating a positive perception in consumers' minds. Therefore, young entrepreneurs need to provide a strong brand identity through logo design and other elements symbolized by their brand.

If there is an acknowledgment, it is conveyed in the next paragraph.

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