The Effects of Logo Design toward Brand Personality Perception: A Study of Logo Elements in Real Estate Business

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ABSTRACT

Among diversified design practices, the topics of logo design perceptions have been examined among academic scholars recently. However, elements of logo as one aspect of logo designs were rarely studied and required to be investigated. This research aimed to measure the effects of logo elements comprising type font, graphic form, and color toward brand personality perceptions, as well as to explore the relationship between business stakeholders and brand personality. In addition, conceptual logo design and brand personality traits including sincerity, excitement, security, and up to date were evaluated toward logo elements. Two hundred and sixty-five samples were selected using convenience sampling from employees and residents of Thai property developers. The mix method approach was employed for the data collecting through interviewing and questionnaire survey and analyzed by Chi-square tests. The findings reveal that logo design communicates its initial design concepts to viewers, encompassing name, graphic, and color. Besides, there is a connection between logo elements and perception of brand personality, but in order to obtain one salient dimension of brand personality, exhibiting the whole logo was suggested for strategic design communication rather than individual element of logo. Furthermore, brand personality was considered vital among market sharing property industry which personality of sincerity was chiefly perceived when stakeholders appreciate a logo of their real estate brands.

Keywords: Brand Personality, Logo Design, Logo Elements, Logo Response, Real Estate.

INTRODUCTION

Communication's today has played an important role in all aspects of our everyday lives as it has been using to interpersonally convey and exchange information, news, ideas, and so forth. There are three main types of communication that are universally used including written, verbal, and non-verbal communication. These types of communication are usually applied among organizations, public institutions, non-profit sectors, private sectors, business units, and subsidiaries, etc. in communicating with their stakeholders, clients, and public. One of the non-verbal communications that enhances viewers' perceptions is visual communication. It underpins business plans and marketing strategies in engaging their concerned parties in various activities. Visual identity is one of the most basic tools that business firms use to communicate internally and externally which can be transmitted through visual communication. Recently, several scholars have insisted on the importance of visual communication that supports business firms in presenting their identities, as well as making them positively recognizable. In the past few decades, the issue of corporate identity, which

refers to the underlying attributes of a firm (Balmer, 2001), has been increasingly investigated by various scholars as it represents the distinction of a firm. Most business companies commonly utilize it as important design strategies to attract its customers' attentions (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997).

Corporate identity is a fundamental visual graphic identifying an organization as a whole. It is originated from a mixing of distinctive corporate features that distinguish a brand from others (Baker & Balmer, 1997; Balmer, 2001; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006; Schmitt & Simonson, 1997). One of the core elements of corporate identity is logo that operates through non-verbal or visual communication with the benefit of speeding transmission, preventing complication (Edell & Staelin, 1983) as well as extending memorizing (Henderson & Cote 1998) to viewers. With these design potentials, logo is always be chosen as a primary tool for marketing and publicizing purposes by corporate marketing of a company. Successful logo design is not only motivating customer relationship but also building a brand reputation. Understanding logo design benefits marketing strategy of a firm. Hence the design of logo was drawn to be the research focal point. As basic elements of logo consist of type font, graphic form, and color, it can be designed by using each element or combination of these components and following principle of design. The design of logo is normally created and developed by corporate marketing communication of an organization through corporate identity guidelines which is created under company's strategic design plan.

The topic of viewer response to logo has been examined among scholars (Hem & Iversen, 2004; Henderson & Cote, 1998; Van der Lans et al., 2009), and accompanying by several supportive theories such as, perception theory (Veryzer, 1993), arousal theory (Bloch, 1995), and evolutionary psychology (Buss, 1995), which insisted on the importance of design toward human preferences. Brand personality is one of the features that influences brand identity and brand image. Since customers view brands as individuals (Arora, et al., 2021), salient and remarkable brand personality connect to clients' personalities. Marketing team employs brand personality in approaching its customers (Stancu, et al., 2021) as it generates positive response (Geuens, Weijters & Wulf, 2009). Logo, as a key attribute of corporate identity, its design inevitably influences brand personality (Bajaj & Bond, 2018). Moreover, the efficient association between brand personality and logo design increases brand equity (Luffarelli, et al., 2019). Previously, logo concerned studies have been carried out on sample groups of student or consumer (Foroudi, Melewar & Gupta, 2014; Hynes, 2009; Lieven et al., 2015), this study attempted to explore the perceptions of stakeholders who tend to develop emotional connection with a brand logo design concepts.

Property business sector can be able to spend high investment on brand identity and personality building. Thai leading property brands were chosen as a case study, by targeting on two market sharing that incorporating No.1 top selling brand and one of a major selling brand. Their stakeholders involving organizational members and property clients were assigned as research samples in evaluating three research objectives that embraced 1) to investigate the relationships between conceptual logo design and brand personality perceptions, 2) to examine whether logo elements are connected with brand personality, and 3) to compare brand personality perception between two market sharing brands.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Logo Design

Logo is initially designed for presenting brand identification and brand personality purposes which represent a brand signature (Henderson & Cote, 1998). It can be called a universal language (Kohli, Suri & Thakor, 2002) since its distinctive characteristic is the ability to communicate visually. As logo is performed in various marketing activities, understanding perception of logo is the best benefit for marketing management in creating effective logo design.

Two general aspects of logo design have been explored in the last few decades. First, the design characteristics which involved numerous forms of logo i.e., representational, or biological form (Henderson et al., 2003), manufactural or artificial form (Lieven et al., 2015; Pittard, Ewing & Jevons, 2007) abstract form (Machado, de Carvalho, Torres, & Costa, 2015). Second, the design compositions which engaged design principles such as repetition, symmetry, elaboration, roundness, and proportion (Henderson et al., 2003; Lieven et al., 2015; Pittard, Ewing & Jevons, 2007; Van der Lans et al., 2009).

One of the basic underlying of logo design is its elements. Type font, graphic form, and color are considered necessary, however, they were rarely examined. Type font is created to represent brand name which can be constructed as an alphabet, a word, or a phrase. Brand name can be initiated by owner name, product name and so on which can be displayed in a full name or an abbreviation that either gives real meaning or only connotation. Graphic form is a composition of design elements such as dot, line, shape, color, texture, and so on, assembling followed by design guidelines. The outcome of graphic form is normally designed in association with a brand e.g., symbolizing, meaning, etc. Color or a set of colors is chosen to characterize a brand. The main function of these three visual elements of logo is to personify a brand which each component can affect viewers' perceptions directly.

1.2. Perception of Logo Design

The issue of logo design perception has been explored among marketing scholars. There are four areas that have been broadly investigated, incorporating affection, familiarity, recognition, and meaning (Henderson et al., 2003; Hem & Iversen 2004; Machado et al., 2015; Van der Lans et al., 2009). As corporate identity of real estate business aims to convey characteristics and personality of a brand, this study focused on conceptual logo design which associates the meaning of logo. Various interpretations among viewers toward brand personality attract the research attention.

1.3. Brand Personality

Brand personality is the established personality that connects to a product or a brand which links to human personality (Aaker, 1997; Japutra & Molinillo, 2019), as well as organizational personality (Dikcius, Seimiene & Zaliene, 2013). Brand personality performs cooperatively with brand identity in publicizing a company image. A strong and unique brand personality are not only supporting impressive characteristics but also bonding with customer's personality which stimulate brand favorite, brand equity (Geuens, Weijters & Wulf, 2009), brand commitment, and brand loyalty (Shiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). Aaker (1997) has proposed five dimensions of brand personality including sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness which have been widely exploited among marketing scholars.

This research developed and modified Aaker's five brand personality to meet with the real estate business situation in Thailand. Sincerity relates to honesty and harmonious feelings that personalized housing values. Excitement brings enthusiasm and joyfulness to household. Competence concerns security and involves sense of protectiveness. Sophistication links with up to date and classiness style. All four dimensions were considered as ideal personality for housing businesses. However, ruggedness reveals its connection with masculinity, rough and tough sentiments, has no connection to real estate characteristics. Subsequently, four personalities were assigned in this study encompassing sincerity, excitement, security, and up to date.
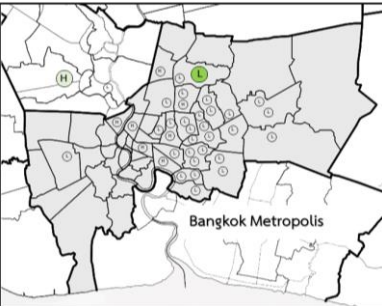
2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Stimuli

Property developer industry that tends to concentrate on their corporate identity design for the purposes of brand recognition and reputation was served as research case study. Samples of property brands were selected based on annual sales during 2017-2018 (Tednok, 2018) divided into No.1 top selling brand and one of a major selling brand. Therefore, research logo stimuli consisted of 1) Pruksa Holding Public Company Limited or Pruksa (No.1 selling brand) and 2) LPN Development Public Company Limited or LPN (a major selling brand). Table 1 presents Pruksa and LPN logo elements which contain their three main components of logo involving type font, graphic form, and color.

2.2. Unit of Analysis

Research samples were business stakeholders encompass two groups of participants including organizational members who work at the headquarter office of the selected cases and clients who inhabit in low-rise and high-rise residential projects located in Bangkok metropolitan region (Table 1). Two hundred and sixty-five samples were selected using convenience sampling and further details will be discussing in the results section.

Table 1: Pruksa and LPN Logos and Locations of Residential Projects

	Pruksa: No.1 Selling Brand	LPN: A Major Brand
Logo		
Location Map		

Note: Original logos can be seen at www.pruksa.com; www.lpn.co.th

2.3.Procedure

Since there were three main objectives in this research, mixed method was utilized. Three analyses were conducted, beginning with the examination of the relationships between conceptual logo design and brand personality attitudes. This first analysis employed both qualitative and quantitative approach in acquiring the data. The second analysis exploring the connection between logo design and brand personality, and the third analysis evaluating two market sharing brands which were examined through quantitative approach. The results of the three analyses were discovered and discussed in the end.

3. RESULTS

3.1. First Analysis: Conceptual Logo Design (Meaning)

Two brand logo creators were interviewed in the first part of the first analysis. In the case of No.1 selling brand (Pruksa), head of corporate marketing team who is responsible for corporate branding, public relation, graphic, project launch, and consumer inside was appointed as a research informant. The acquired data from the interviewing can be described as follow: the design of Pruksa logo was initially inspired by the vision of its owner. Pruksa logo is utilized to deliver brand purpose to its stakeholders through its visual composition that consists of 1) letter "P" which stands for the name of the company (Pruksa), it means "tree, plant, and flora", 2) the graphic form that represents a green leave with a small gray leave (can also be seen as letter "P") inside means "caring from inside out", 3) the small gray leave and/or letter "P" represents Pruksa heart which means "gentle caring" (Table 2).

In term of Pruksa logo colors, light green signifies "new prospect of life and/or future", and gray characterized "calmness and peacefulness", and "new facilitated technology". In the matter of brand personality, Pruksa brand tries to offer the impression of respectful carefulness. With reference to the above data, "caring and calmness" could be found in the aspect of "sincerity" brand personality while new life/future could be categorized in the dimension of "excitement". Thus, it could be concluded that Pruksa brand offered two possibilities of brand personality dimensions including sincerity and excitement through its logo to viewer (Table 2).

Regarding LPN as one of major brands, its brand manager of corporate brand management team who is responsible for internal and external communication was a key informant. The concept of this new logo design was originally derived from brand strategy management. It was designed for rebranding purpose which reflects LPN's principal idea of new generation or "up to date". The collected data revealed that LPN logo comprises of 1) letter "LPN" which stands for "Lumpini", the name of a brand. Letter "P" in the middle suggests that there are two of "P" letters. The bigger white "P" embracing the smaller dark blue "P" which means "human centric"; LPN brand pays attention not only to its customer but also its shareholder, and employee. 2) The light blue graphic shows form of a building as well as a rocket form implying a road leading to the building. The meaning of this form signifies that LPN as a developer, is expanding to wider real estate business that offers condominium, townhome, and detached house products. Moreover, there is a dot shape on top of this building/rocket forms which also stands for "human centric" (Table 2).

According to LPN logo colors, both dark and light blue offer the feeling of "tranquillity and serenity". These senses could be discovered in the aspect of "sincerity" brand personality while the idea of "up to date" could be categorized in the dimension of "up to date" itself. Hence,

this study reviewed that LPN brand proposed two prospected brand personality aspects including sincerity and up to date through its logo to public (Table 2).

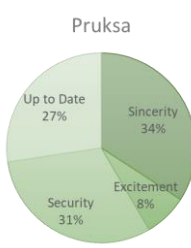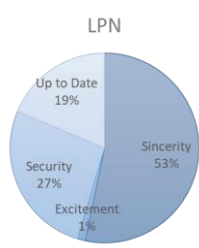Table 2: Logo Design Elements of Pruksa and LPN Brands

	Pruksa: No.1 Selling Brand	LPN: A Major Brand
The Whole Logo		
Type Font		
Graphic Form		
Color		
Possibility Dimensions of Brand Personality	Sincerity and Excitement	Sincerity and Up to Date

Note: Original logos can be seen at www.pruksa.com; www.lpn.co.th

3.2. First Analysis: Brand Personality Perception

The investigation of viewers' brand personality perceptions was the second part of the first analysis. The results of brand personality perceptions of Pruksa's stakeholders showed that sincerity (34.2%) was the most captivated personality by its employee and client, followed by security (31.1%), up to date (27.4%), and excitement (7.4%) respectively. Regarding LPN, brand personality perceptions of its stakeholders indicated that sincerity (53.3%) was most attracted, following by security (26.7%), up to date (18.7%), and excitement (1.3%) accordingly (Table 3).

Table 3: The Results of Brand Personality Perceptions of Pruksa and LPN Brands

	Pruksa: No.1 Selling Brand	LPN: A Major Brand
Brand Personality Perceptions		

3.3. Second Analysis

The second analysis investigated how logo elements—type font, graphic form, and color—affect brand personality perceptions. All participants were asked to evaluate their brand personality attributes that consisted of sincerity, excitement, security, and up to date through questionnaire surveys by using Chi-square test analysis for calculation. A total of two hundred and sixty-five applicants were involved in this study. Convenient sampling method was applied which Pruksa, No.1 selling brands incorporated 190 samples (71.7%) while LPN as one of a major selling brand contained 75 samples (28.3%). The respondents comprising 55

samples (20.8%) of corporate employees along with 210 samples (79.2%) of inhabitants in residential projects were chosen.

A Pearson Chi-Square test was calculated to investigate the connection between logo elements and brand personality. The results of a test with 265 samples indicated that logo elements had influences on brand personality at $p < .05$ level. The significant relationship on viewers' attitudes toward brand personality was found, λ^2 (9, $N=265$) = 29.914, p = .000, Cramer's V = .194. In addition, Sincerity (34.2%) aspect was the most personality perceived by the majority of all participants (Table 4 and Table 5).

Table 4: Distribution of Viewers' Responses by Logo Elements and Brand Personality

Logo Elements		Sincerity	Excitement	Security	Up to Date	Total
The Whole Logo	Count	70	7	35	44	156
	%	26.4	2.6	13.2	16.6	58.9
Type Font	Count	8	2	11	4	25
	%	3.0	0.8	4.2	1.5	9.4
Graphic Form	Count	7	2	25	12	46
	%	2.6	0.8	9.4	4.5	17.4
Color	Count	20	4	8	6	38
	%	7.5	1.5	3.0	2.3	14.3
Total	Count	105	15	79	66	265
	%	39.6	5.7	29.8	24.9	100.0

Table 5: Summary of The Relationship Between Logo Elements and Brand Personality

Total Cases	*Pearson λ^2* value	*p* - value	Cramer's *V*
265	29.914	000[*]	.194

Note: [*] Significant at the 5%

3.4. Third Analysis

The effects of two brands' sentiments toward brand personality were measured by utilizing Chi-square test analysis. All participants were asked to choose the strongest brand personality attributes of their brand logos that consisted of sincerity, excitement, security, and up to date through questionnaire surveys. A Pearson Chi-Square test was calculated to explore the association between two market sharing sentiments and brand personality perception. The results of a test with 265 samples indicated that brand differences had influences on brand personality at $p < .05$ level. The significant relationship on viewers' attitudes toward brand personality was found, λ^2 (4, $N=265$) = 12.312, p = .015, Cramer's V = .216. In addition, Sincerity (39.6%) aspect was the most personality perceived by most participants (Table 6 and Table 7).

Table 6: Distribution of Viewers' Responses by Brand Differences and Brand Personality

Brand Differences		Brand Personality Dimensions				
		Sincerity	Excitement	Security	Up to Date	Total
Pruksa	Count	65	14	59	52	190
	%	24.5	5.3	22.3	19.6	71.7
LPN	Count	40	1	20	14	75
	%	15.1	0.4	7.5	5.3	28.3
Total	Count	105	15	79	66	265
	%	39.6	5.7	29.8	24.9	100.0

Table 7: Summary of The Relationship Between Brand Differences and Brand Personality

Total Cases	*Pearson λ^2* value	*p* - value	Cramer's *V*
265	12.312	.015[*]	.216

Note: [*] Significant at the 5%

4. DISCUSSION

Referring to the first research objective, the findings suggested that there were some congruences between conceptual logo design of the two corporate marketing brands and the results of their stakeholders' brand personality perceptions. These support previous studies that meaning obtained from the design concepts influences viewers' interpretations (Henderson et al., 2003; Hem & Iversen, 2004; Machado et al., 2015; Van der Lans et al., 2009). As Pruksa's possibility aspects of brand personality could be both sincerity and excitement, sincerity (34.2%) facet of brand personality was primarily found by its stakeholders' perception. Regarding LPN's, its logo meaning offered the dimensions of sincerity and/or up to date which sincerity (53.3%) feature was predominantly found by its stakeholders' perceptions. Hence, these findings exposed that the design of logos could satisfactorily convey their messages or meaning to viewers, encompassing type font, graphic form, and color interpretation. Both brand stakeholders could understand, interpret, and appreciate brand personality through their logos sensibly.

Regarding the design communication of a firm, in order to achieve Pruksa's corporate marketing plan on delivering not only sincerity personality but also excitement facet to its clients, its logo should be redesigned by adding excitement and/or pleasure features to its logo. Along with the case of LPN's corporate brand management plan, attributes that express new and/or modern sensations can be modified for its logo design.

In addition to logo design characteristics and design compositions that have been examined among scholars (Henderson et al., 2003; Lieven et al., 2015; Machado et al., 2015; Pittard, Ewing & Jevons, 2007; Van der Lans et al., 2009), logo elements were investigated in this study. The results of the second research objective indicated that the whole logo (58.9%) influenced brand personality perceptions principally, comparison to each logo element, which sincerity (26.4%) dimension was the most attractive. In term of individual logo elements, they were affected by spectators differently, graphic form (17.4%) received higher perception from viewers than color (14.3%), and type font (9.4%) respectively. Consequently, brand personality perception could be dissimilarly perceived by viewing either the whole logo itself,

or each individual element of logo alternatively. In order to receive one remarkable brand personality feature, presenting the whole logo in all marketing activities is encouraged.

Furthermore, as stakeholders of the two different property brands perceived brand personality in the same aspects that of sincerity and security respectively. Marketing and strategic design teams should pay high attention on color of logo design when sincerity personality is concerned while graphic form and type font affect security aspect. Thus, these ideas can be added to companies' design guidelines to urge strategic communication design for Pruksa and LPN.

According to the third research objective, the results revealed that brand personality was affected by two market sharing of real estate brands. The personality of a brand could reflect by both No.1 brand and a major brand which sincerity aspect was perceived by most participants of the two brands. Thus, brand personality is considered vital issue among property industry that identity and personality of business is highly concerned.

5. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The scope of this research was limited in term of investigating single category of business—real estate. Notwithstanding this limitation, results from this study have led to a deeper understanding about how logo design effectively express and transfer attractive personality of the brand to their stakeholders. Future studies should be carried out applying these analyses to other relatively long-lasting businesses such as automobile, financial institute, and so on in order to cross-examine with the results obtained from this study, predominantly on the topic of brand personality. The insight on such issue could satisfy psychological needs of stakeholders by bonding their character with the personality created by the brand.

6. CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has no conflicts of interests to disclose.

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