

Design Thinking Method: A Case Study of Tourism Logo Development for Perak Tengah District Council

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Abstract

Logo is one of the important visual corporate identities in any organization today. Travel and tourism sector is among the most affected sector caused by the COVID-19 crisis recently. Creation of a new logo is one of the proactive initiatives that can be taken to improve the reputation of a government agency and promote the tourism industry. Nevertheless, the process of designing a new logo is not a simple task to do. It is vital to carefully prepare and conduct systematic research to ensure that the logo can serve as an effective medium of positive communication, promotion, and attractiveness to tourists. In this study article, we explain how the design thinking method is employed in the process of developing a logo for the Perak Tengah District Council. The Design Thinking Method employs and discusses the following five stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. This research process significantly can be used as one of the reference sources for future tourism logo development projects.

Keywords: Logo, Design, Malaysia, Tourism, COVID-19

Introduction

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. Malaysian travel and tourism sector is among the most affected sector caused by the COVID-19 (Foo et al., 2021). Due to concerns about the virus, visitors from around the world are cancelling reservations and delaying trip plans to Malaysia. The disruption to Malaysia's tourism industry would undoubtedly last for months, if not years, putting the country's economic future in jeopardy (Hanafiah et al., 2021). The global pandemic affects tourism demand and supply, which must be understood and explored for recovery strategy (Litheko, 2021).

Logo is a crucial element for destination branding (Adamus-matuszynska et al., 2021). Furthermore, using graphic elements has been a key part of making tourism campaigns better (Ahmad et al., 2021). Thus, an attractive logo design for a tourism agency can be a starting point for the recovery strategy in this COVID-19 pandemic era. As mentioned by Ahmad et al (2021), the use of interactive graphic design as a tool to boost the profitability of tourism promotions is one such strategy and approach.

Designing a "good" destination logo is a difficult job (Hem & Iversen, 2004). The creative solution must be founded on a thorough analysis and a clear comprehension of the destination's strategic position. A logo design process with a specific method will produce a logo with more procedural and efficient (Jia et al., 2022). Ahmad et al (2021) emphasized that creating a logo that serves as a marketing tool for a nation or organisation must meet certain standards. In addition to conveying a message, a logo should also express cultural values, services, and engaging activities to the viewer. Other scholars also had mentioned that the success of logo and slogan on tourist perception is depends on the cultural conditions (Adamus-matuszynska et al., 2021).

Relevant research on the logo design process is a great significance in this new era (Jia et al., 2022). Therefore, based on a case study, this article explaining how a logo design for tourism destination is developed by using design thinking method. Each of design stages is elaborated to provide a clear design direction until the final design is determined.

The Impacts of Logo Design on Tourism

Previous studies had proved that a good logo design can be beneficial in many ways. As part of a company's visual identity, brand logos are essential for the identification, recognition, and attraction of customers (Airey, 2009). The design of a logo can be a trademark or an iconic symbol that expresses the power and uniqueness of a brand (Jia et al., 2022). Besides that, it was found recently that the shape, line, color, and font used in a logo design had a significant effect towards the purchase intention (Hao et al., 2021). In different studies, Bossel et al (2019) had found that a logo design has significant impact towards the behavioral consumption of a products.

In tourism market, a good logo is a key in enhancing the tourism campaigns (Ahmad et al., 2021). Generally, people choose to travel to destinations they like and about which they have favorable impressions. Therefore, destination identity element is important in a tourism logo. Lee et al (2012) had found that a tourism logo with the country identity significantly affect to the positive behavioral intention (willingness to visit). Utoyo (2018) has emphasized the significance of the logo in enhancing Jakarta's reputation as the capital of Indonesia. The logo should work as a brand identity that is sustainable, distinguishing, and attractive. The author also noted that a deliberate investment in the development of a city's logo has the potential to increase the city's international recognition. Tourism branding, enhancement, and management are critical components in presenting a country to the world via its national tourism logos (Tsaur et al., 2020).

Design Thinking Method as An Approach

There are several method approaches in logo design process been conducted in past studies. Shaw Hong SER (2018) had introduced 5 stages framework specifically for logo design namely "Five-I Logo Design Process". The framework provide methodical steps for logo design consists of Identify, Ideate, Imagine, Improve, and Implementation. Meanwhile, Ahmad et al (2021) used eight steps in logo design process that namely Design Mind Map for Ideation, Design Storyboard for Sketches and Concept, Typeface, Colors, Main Logo Design, Secondary Logo Design, Design Refinement, and Final Logo Design. Liu et al (2018) emphasized that logo designers must complete two steps in order to achieve the best possible results. The first step consists of market research and projections, while the second stage involves graphic design. Hem and Iversen (2004) focus on four dimensions for tourism logo design: (i) A destination's vision should drive thoughts about its basic essence, which designers should employ as a brief, (ii) logo familiarity, (iii) A logo that shows the meaning of the destination, and (iv) Similarities between the logo and the destination. This demonstrates that the design of a logo is about more than just its graphic design; in order to achieve the greatest results, it also requires some preliminary strategic analysis.

Based on extensive literature review, this research chose five stages of Design Thinking Method (Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test) (Figure 1) that proposed by Hasso Plattner for the case study because of the popularity among scholars and high credibility as human-centered problem-solving methods in many design issues. Researchers and designers utilize design thinking to understand people, challenge assumptions, redefine challenges, produce creative prototypes, and tests. Design Thinking Method is widely used in business and education, such as for packaging design (Yang, 2018), engineering (Liu et al., 2011), healthcare management (Roberts et al., 2016), User Interface (UI), and User Experience (UX) design (Nasution & Nusa, 2021). In addition, designers may better understand what their clients want through the Design Thinking Method, and then provide solutions that are grounded in logic, creativity, and innovation.

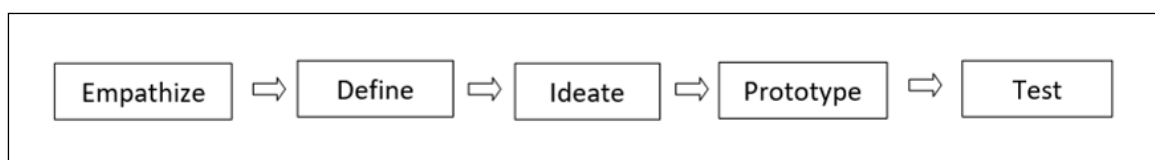


Figure 1. Five Stages of Design Thinking

Case Study: Tourism Logo for Perak Tengah District Council

According to the Development Strategy of The Local Plan, Perak Tengah District 2030 report (Majlis Daerah Perak Tengah, 2018), The Perak Tengah District Council (PTDC) was established on 1 December 1979 after its establishment was approved by the Government Meeting on 20 November 1979. The establishment of the PTDC is in line with the reorganization of Local Authorities throughout Malaysia. With the establishment of the PTDC, the two local authorities that existed before, namely the Parit Local Government Management Board (LPKT) and the Rural Local Government Management Board (LLB) is abolished. In general, there are twelve sub-districts in the Perak Tengah district that have different attractiveness as tourist destinations. In terms of topography, about 80% of the area of Perak Tengah District is a flat and low land area.



Figure 2. Perak Tengah District Council Official Logo

Previously, the PTDC had never issued a regional tourism logo other than their official logo as shown in figure 2. However, after the Covid-19 outbreak struck the country, the PTDC determined that a new effort is necessary to increase the entrance of tourists to the Central Perak Region in order to stimulate the local economy. Therefore, comprehensive research is necessary to develop a tourism logo in increasing the visibility and promoting PTDC as one of the interesting tourism spots in the Perak state.

Methodology

The Design Thinking Method uses an iterative process with several steps to find and understand users, user problems, and solutions (Nasution & Nusa, 2021). This helps researchers define the problem from a certain point of view. So, in the end, the Design Thinking Method will allow researchers come up with as many logo ideas as they can and come up with new ways to solve problems by making the design process more open to everyone. As recommended by previous studies (Liu et al., 2011; Nasution & Nusa, 2021; Roberts et al., 2016; Yang, 2018), the method of design thinking is divided up into the following steps:

Empathize

In this first stage, a deeper understanding of our client (PTDC) is carried out to understand the challenges and client needs. Five meetings with PTDC were held to acquire as much information as possible for the logo creation. To ensure that we have a clear understanding of what is expected of PTDC, a detailed plan of action is laid out in a creative brief. Each discussion revolves around the creative brief, which provides an overview of the project including the logo design, major milestones, audience, outcomes, and objectives.

Define

The objective of define step of the Design Thinking Method is to have a better understanding of the actual challenge that has to be addressed. The primary challenge faced by the PTDC is that the organization does not have a distinct identity and sufficient appeal to persuade visitors to come. Therefore, we went on a field trip to several attraction place in Perak Tengah in an effort to determine what sets the region apart from the rest of the state. Among the places visited are:

Table 1

Tourist Attraction Spot in Perak Tengah District

	Tourist Attraction Spot	Attraction
1	Pulau Misa Melayu	Cultural Center
2	Pusat Konservasi Hidupan Liar Tuntung	Wildlife Sanctuary
3	Kompleks Sejarah Pasir Salak	History Museum
4	Seri Iskandar Town	Shopping Mall, Foods, Cycling, Kapal Lorek, Al-Biruni art Gallery
5	Padang Koba Telok Bakong	Riverside View, Picnic, Food Stall
6	Kampung Gajah	Durian, Paddy, Kutai Traditional House
7	Litar Dato Sagor	Racing Track, Leisure Activity
8	Kota Setia	Fishing Pier
9	Pulau Tiga	Black Pottery, Durian, Cultural
10	Jaya Baru	Industry and Agriculture
11	Titi Gantung	Local Fruits, Perak's porridge
12	Parit	Classic Town, Historical Monument

Ideate

At this 'Ideate' stage, the researchers brainstorming the art direction of the logo based on the field trip observation and the PTDC expectation from the creative brief (Figure 3). In the empathize stage, the PTDC expected a logo with attractive color, cheerful mood, and acceptable by everyone. According to the findings of our investigation, the majority of the attractions in the Perak Tengah district are oriented toward historical and tangible cultural assets such as museum and historical buildings. However, there are also several locations that offer facilities and opportunities for recreation activities, such as cycling, fishing, and activities at river settings. On the basis of these data, we came to the conclusion that the best way to represent the PTDC tourism was with a logo that had vibrant colors, a lively and energetic atmosphere, and an image that primarily represented leisure activities.

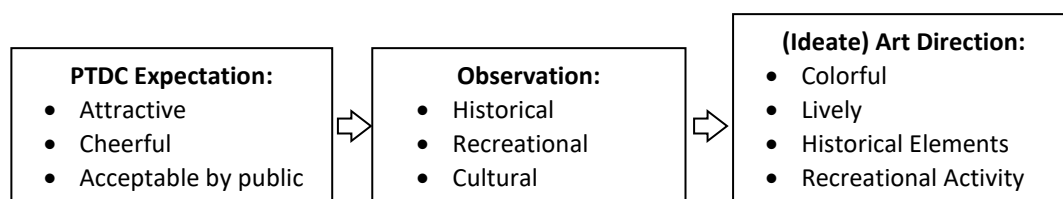


Figure 3. Ideation Process

Prototype

The implementation of the chosen idea is taking place at this stage. The chosen concept is developed into a set of logo prototype through the process of manual sketching up to digital (Figure 4). To make sure the logo follows the latest logo design trend, a large number of established tourism logo examples are collected for use as reference. In total, ten optional logos as shows in Figure 5 were designed and proposed to the PTDC for the test-stage. All the logos are presented to the PTDC with the details and justification on logo description and color selection.

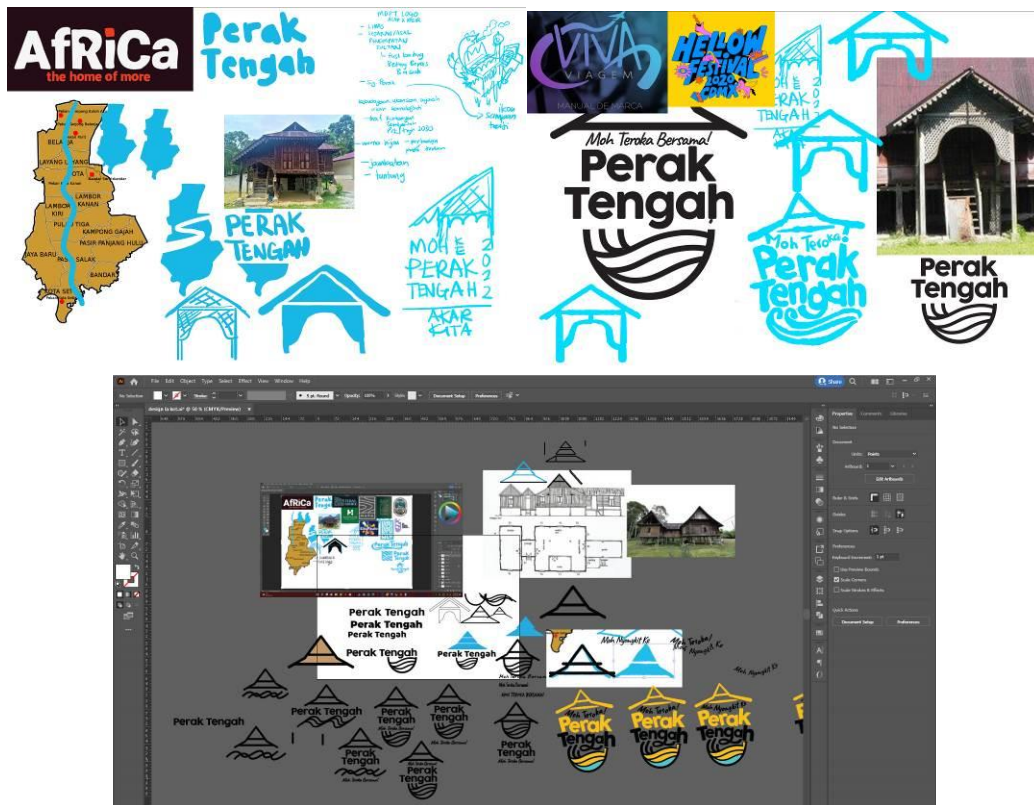


Figure 4. Manual and Digital Logo Design Process



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Test

The logos prototype that has been created in the previous stage is tested for the final logo selection. An online survey is conducted among residents and administrators of Perak Tengah to choose the best logo based on their preference. In total, 1483 of respondents has participated in the survey. As a result, the Logo 4 has been selected as the final logo after received the most votes (273 total), while the Logo 2 has received the lowest votes (33 total).

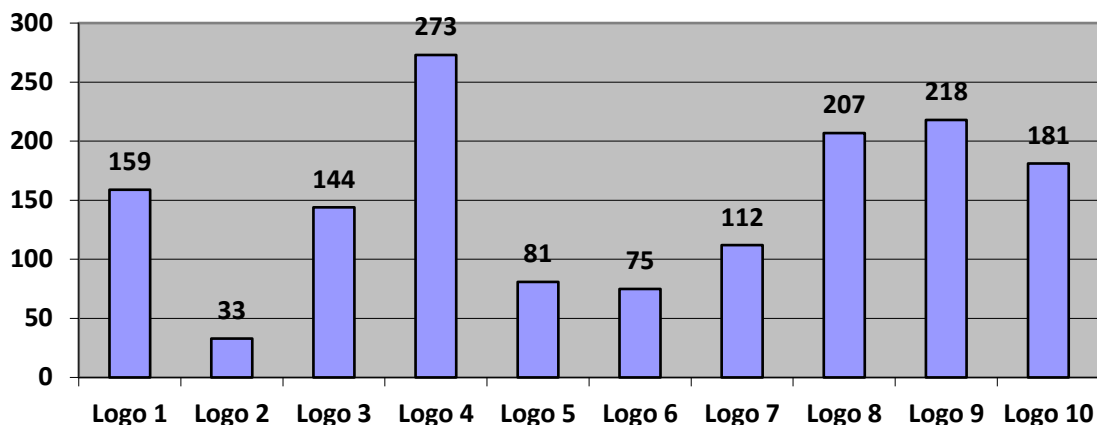


Figure 6. The Survey Results

Results and Discussion

Five steps of Design Thinking Method were helped PTDC's tourism logo design process run strategically and smoothly. In the beginning of 'Empathize' stage, several meetings and critical discussion on the creative brief is conducted to understand the challenges and client needs. Then, in the 'Define' phase, we did a field trip to gain a deeper understanding of the region and to establish what distinguishes it from the rest of the state. At the 'Ideate' stage, we brainstorm the logo's art direction based on their field trip observation results and the PTDC's creative brief requirements. The chosen concept is then implemented during the 'Prototype' stage. The selected concept is transformed into a set of logo prototypes through a manual drawing to digital process. Finally, the 'Test' phase conducted with an online survey of residents and administrators of Perak Tengah to determine the best logo based on their preferences.

The majority of representatives from PTDC are satisfied with the final logo (Figure 6) from this project because it has met their expectations very well. The logo that has been produced looks simple but clearly depicts the identity of Perak Tengah. Based on the PTDC feedback also, this logo was found to be complete with elements of cheerfulness, culture, nationalism, and suitable for use on any platform for the purpose of tourism promotion. As mentioned by the previous studies, the identity of destinations in tourism logo plays important role to increase the willingness to visit (Lee et al., 2012), subsequently become a key in enhancing the tourism campaign (Ahmad et al., 2021).

In addition to the logo, the slogan or tagline also contributes to the brand identification. A strong and impactful slogan with positive logo element can evoke emotional appeal and attract foreign and local tourist effectively (Utoyo, 2018). After the voting results were acquired, the PTDC requested modifications to the logo slogan. Therefore, the proposed slogan "*Moh Teroka Perak Tengah*" was changed to "*Moh Kome ke Perak Tengah*" which means "Let's go to the Perak Tengah" in the Perak people's dialect. With this slogan, it is hoped that the identity of Perak Tengah will be better known not only as a tourist spot for attractive activities, but also as a destination that full of its own cultural elements.



Figure 6. The Final Tourism Logo for Perak Tengah District Council

Conclusion

Logo is a crucial element for destination branding in order to improve the tourism campaign, particularly for the COVID-19 pandemic era's recovery strategy. Because of this, the general public needs to be made aware that the procedure of designing a logo is not a simple task. Various considerations must be made in research and creative graphic work to ensure the logo to have a favorable impact on its application.

The major finding of the study is that the 'Design Thinking Method' is highly significant to the graphic design field, especially for the logo design process. Unlike the typical creative design process, the phases and loops of design thinking method can be adjusted to suit a variety of situations, and each step can have multiple stages that lead to new ideas.

After completing the five steps of the 'Design Thinking Method,' it was discovered that the logo design process had become more methodical and well-defined. Based on the case study, we can conclude that the majority of respondents preferred a tourism logo that was minimalist, bold, contrasted, and cheerful. The use of cultural elements within the logo significantly increased the destination's identity.

Therefore, we recommend that a successful logo for the tourism industry be simple, immediately recognisable, memorable, and original. A good slogan should also be selected to ensure that the real message of the tourist promotion is attractive, unique, and clear. It is hoped that the logo design process presented in this article contributes to a better understanding of design thinking method, especially for researchers and design practitioners.

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