



## Lucky Chill Cafe Logo Design Using Roland Barthes' Visual Semiotics for Brand Image

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### Abstract

Logo design constitutes a critical stage in establishing a brand's visual identity, as it functions as a sign system that communicates brand values and character. This study aims to design the Lucky Chill Cafe logo using Roland Barthes' visual semiotics approach to build a brand image representing the relaxed lifestyle and togetherness of urban youth. A descriptive qualitative method was employed using Wheeler's visual identity design model, consisting of conduct research, design identity, and implement and manage, integrated with Barthes' semiotic analysis of denotation, connotation, and myth. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the cafe owner and manager, non-participant observation, and visual documentation. The resulting logo features an oval composition containing seven visual elements: the sun, waves, palm trees, cutlery, a coffee cup, the shaka hand gesture, and rounded typography. These elements represent a tropical atmosphere and culinary activity, convey friendliness and casualness, and construct a narrative of a laid-back urban youth lifestyle. The study contributes to the development of a meaning-driven logo design methodology by positioning Barthes' semiotics as a generative framework in the ideation process rather than solely as a post-design analytical tool.

Keywords: logo design, visual identity, Roland Barthes' semiotics, brand image, visual communication design.

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### 1. Introduction

In the culinary industry, especially cafes that target the younger generation, logos occupy a strategic position as the first meeting point between brands and consumers. The brand image that is formed in the minds of consumers is ultimately an accumulation of perceptions, impressions and associations built through visual and emotional experiences with the brand [1].

A problem that often arises in logo design practice is the dominance of an aesthetic approach without adequate consideration of symbolic meaning. As a result, the logo appears visually attractive but fails to substantively communicate the brand character [2]. This issue becomes increasingly relevant in the context of lifestyle cafes targeting the young urban generation, where brand success is determined not only by product quality, but also by the brand's ability to present a resonant lifestyle narrative. Studies on culinary UMKM logo design confirm that a semiotic approach produces more communicative and memorable brand identities than purely aesthetic methods [3].

Visual semiotics studies on logos have been carried out by a number of researchers, but the majority focus on

the analysis of existing logos (post-design analysis), such as the semiotic study of the Lumanjang Eksotik logo [4] and the PLN Persero logo [5], and the AZKO rebranding logo [6]. These studies place semiotics as a tool for interpreting final works. Meanwhile, studies such as [7] and [8] highlight the strategic aspects of logos in branding without discussing symbolic meaning in depth within the design process. The research gap that can be filled is the placement of Barthes' semiological theory as a generative framework that guides all design stages, starting from ideation, alternative exploration, to design finalization.

Based on this gap, this research aims to design the Lucky Chill Cafe logo using Roland Barthes' visual semiotics approach as a generative framework. Lucky Chill was chosen as the design object because it has a relaxed concept and youth segmentation that demand meaning-based visual representation, not just aesthetics. The research results are expected to provide a methodological contribution to the development of meaning-driven logo design practices in the academic and professional environment of Visual Communication Design.

The originality of this research lies in the methodological position of Roland Barthes' visual semiotics in the design process. Previous research generally places semiotics as a tool for analyzing finished logos [4], [5], [9], [10] or only discusses strategic aspects of logos without in-depth symbolic meaning [7], [8], [11]. This research is different because it places Barthes' three-level framework (denotation, connotation, and myth) as a guide for visual decisions from the early stages of design.

## 2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with the Visual Communication Design method. The design process was adapted from Wheeler's visual identity design model [12] which consists of three main stages, namely conduct research, design identity, and implement and manage. These three stages are combined with Roland Barthes' visual semiological analysis [4] as a generative framework for building the visual meaning of a logo through the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth.

### 2.1 Subjects, Location, and Time of Research

The research subject is Lucky Chill Cafe, a cafe with a relaxed concept and youth segmentation located in Lombok, Indonesia. The research was conducted during the period of January to April 2025, covering the stages of data collection, design development, and final design evaluation.

### 2.2 Informants and Data Collection Techniques

Data collection involved two key informants, namely the owner and manager of Lucky Chill Cafe. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on the criteria of direct involvement in the management and formation of brand character. Data were collected through three techniques. The first technique was semi-structured interviews, with a duration of approximately 60 minutes per session, to explore the vision, values, target audience, and brand character to be developed. The second technique was non-participant observation of the cafe atmosphere, visitor activities, and existing visual elements. The third technique was photographic documentation to support visual analysis and contextual references.

### 2.3 Design Procedure

The design process follows Wheeler's three stages [9]. The first stage, conduct research, focuses on understanding brand character through field observations and informant interviews. The data were analyzed descriptively and semiotically to formulate the themes, visual concepts, and messages to be conveyed through the logo.

The second stage, design identity, is the process of transforming concepts into visual form. This stage begins with preparing a moodboard as a visual

direction guide, followed by the exploration of digital sketches to produce several design alternatives. At this stage, Barthes' semiological framework is primarily applied at the level of connotation in the selection of forms, symbols, typography, and illustration style.

The third stage, implement and manage, focuses on refining and evaluating the logo design. Several design alternatives were selected and refined in terms of composition, proportion, and style consistency. The final design was evaluated using Barthes' semiological analysis at the myth level to ensure the logo builds the image of Lucky Chill as a relaxed lifestyle space.

### 2.4 Semiotic Analysis Procedure

Semiotic analysis was carried out in three sequential stages for each visual element proposed for the logo, following the procedural framework established in prior semiotic studies of brand logos [13]. The first stage involved identifying denotative signs based on the literal form of the element, for example, the sun as a celestial body and waves as a form of water. The second stage involved connotative interpretation based on cultural associations of the elements within the context of Lomboknese and urban youth lifestyles, such as the sun representing warmth and a moment of respite. The third stage involved myth analysis based on ideologies naturalized within contemporary cafe lifestyle discourse, such as the sun symbolizing escape culture and coastal aesthetics among the younger generation.

Source triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and visual documentation to increase data validity. Method triangulation was conducted through peer debriefing with Visual Communication Design lecturers as expert reviewers during the design evaluation stage. A research flow diagram combining Wheeler's model and Barthes' semiological framework is presented in Figure 1.

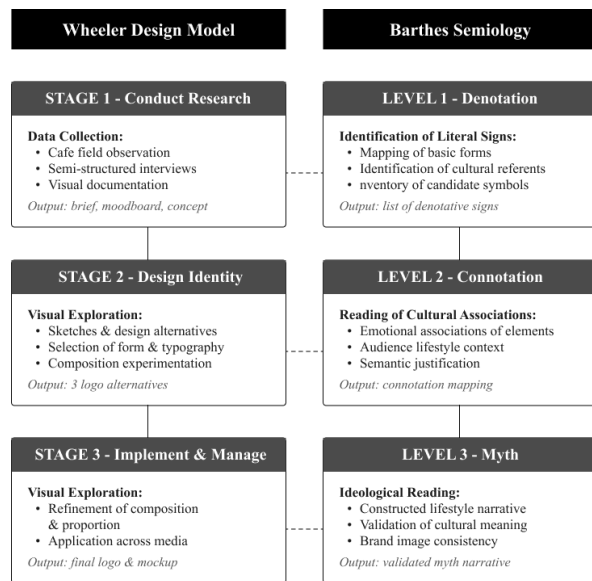


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram: Integration of Wheeler’s Model and Barthes’ Semiological Framework

### 3. Results and Discussions

#### 3.1 Logo Design Results

Based on the completed design stages, the final Lucky Chill Cafe logo was produced in an oval composition featuring seven main visual elements. The initial design stage resulted in a moodboard reflecting a relaxed, tropical, and modern character as the foundation of the visual direction, as shown in Figure 2. Subsequently, three initial design alternatives were developed, each exploring a different visual approach to the same concept (Figure 3). These alternatives were then analyzed semiotically and refined into the final design shown in Figure 4.



Figure 2. Design moodboard

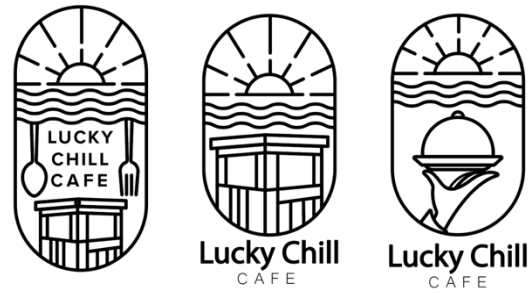


Figure 3. Alternative logo designs



Figure 4. Finalization of the Lucky Chill Cafe logo design

The final logo uses a line-based illustration approach with consistent line thickness, a black-and-white monochrome color scheme, and rounded typography arranged in a curved composition following an oval frame. This approach was chosen to ensure the flexibility of logo application across various media and settings.

#### 3.2 Visual Semiological Analysis of Logos

Visual semiotics analysis was conducted to understand how the visual elements of the logo construct meaning progressively. This approach refers to Roland Barthes' semiological framework [4], which divides meaning into three levels: denotation, connotation, and myth.

At the denotative level, the Lucky Chill logo presents visual elements in the form of an oval frame, a sun with radial rays, water waves depicted as curved lines, a palm tree, a spoon and fork, a coffee cup, a shaka hand gesture, and curved brand-name typography. Each element literally refers to recognizable objects, such as the sun as a celestial body and palm trees as tropical plants. At this level, the constructed meaning is referential and openly accepted by audiences across cultural backgrounds.

At the connotative level, the combination of visual elements activates more complex cultural and emotional associations. The sun, waves, and palm trees collectively create a tropical atmosphere and a sense of

relaxation, evoking associations with vacations and respite from daily routines. The cutlery and coffee cup represent dining activities and social gathering rituals, both closely related to contemporary cafe culture among younger generations. The shaka hand gesture, originating from Hawaiian surf culture and widely adopted in Lombok, emphasizes friendliness, casualness, and inclusivity. Rounded typography further strengthens the approachable and friendly impression, distancing the logo from a formal or rigid appearance [14].

At the myth level, the Lucky Chill logo constructs a deeper lifestyle narrative in which the cafe functions as a social space representing urban youth's cultural escape from the rhythm of city life. This myth is rooted in coastal aesthetics and island-vibe discourse that dominates the pop-culture visuals of Generation Z in Lombok and major cities in Indonesia. The sun and waves are no longer merely tropical elements, but symbols of freedom and slow living. The coffee cup and cutlery no longer function solely as markers of culinary activity, but also as symbols of social rituals representing closeness and togetherness. The shaka gesture becomes an expression of a relaxed, friendly, and unhurried lifestyle. In mythological reading, the oval frame functions as a metaphor for a safe and open space, resembling a window or portal into that experience. The results of the three-level analysis are summarized in Table 1.

Cutlery	Functional dining utensils	Communal dining and the shared ritual of eating together	Togetherness through food is naturalized as the most authentic marker of genuine human connection
Coffee cup	Container for a hot or cold beverage	Social gathering, unhurried conversation, and leisure time	Coffee culture is naturalized as the defining lifestyle ritual of the educated, relaxed urban youth class
Shaka gesture	Open-hand gesture with thumb and little finger extended	Casual friendliness, welcoming attitude, and cultural inclusivity	A relaxed and open demeanor is naturalized as the core identity value the social currency of youth subculture
Oval frame	Enclosed curved geometric shape	A sense of safety, warmth, and comfortable enclosure	The cafe is naturalized as a legitimate third place, a social space distinct from both home and workplace

Table 1. Semiotic Analysis of Lucky Chill Cafe Logo

Visual Elements	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Sun	Celestial body depicted with radial rays	Warmth, leisure, and a moment of respite from daily routines	Freedom from routine is naturalized as a universal aspiration the sun as an ideological emblem of slow living
Water Waves	Curved lines representing ocean or sea waves	Calm, freshness, and a coastal or seaside atmosphere	Coastal aesthetics are naturalized as the defining visual marker of an ideal, desirable youth lifestyle
Palm trees	Tropical vegetation with a characteristic elongated trunk	Tropical getaway and vacation associations beyond the everyday	Escape from urban routine is naturalized as a fundamental need the cafe as a legitimate lifestyle sanctuary

### 3.3 Discussion: Logo as a Sign System that Forms Brand Image

The results of the semiological analysis show that the Lucky Chill logo functions not only as a visual signifier, but also as a sign system that carries an ideological narrative about a relaxed lifestyle. These findings expand upon previous research [5], which positioned Barthes' semiotics as a post-design analytical tool in the study of the PLN Persero logo, and the AZKO rebranding logo [6]. In this research, semiotics is instead positioned as a generative framework that guides every visual decision from the ideation phase onwards. This shift in methodological position, from interpretive to generative, constitutes the main contribution of this research.

The practical implications of these findings are significant. First, Visual Communication Design practitioners can use Barthes' three-level framework as a semantic checklist during the exploration phase, ensuring that each selected visual element carries a justified meaning. This is particularly relevant for culinary businesses where logo design directly shapes consumer associations before any service experience occurs [3]. Second, this approach helps bridge the longstanding gap between aesthetic and strategic

aspects in logo design, which has been frequently discussed in previous studies [1], [2].

These findings also enrich the study of responsive logos [7] by adding a semantic dimension. While prior studies have demonstrated Barthes' effectiveness as a post-design interpretive tool [13], the present research repositions this framework as a generative guide embedded in the design process itself. A well-designed logo should not only be technically flexible across different media, but also maintain consistency of meaning across various contexts of interpretation. This consistency of meaning ultimately contributes to long-term brand formation and sustainability. For Lucky Chill, the resulting logo successfully constructs a social-space lifestyle narrative relevant to its urban youth target audience, while also maintaining readability and flexibility across various media applications.

### 3.4 Implementation in Visual Identity Media

The logo was designed with consideration for flexible application across various visual identity media, both physical and digital. The line-based illustration approach and monochrome color scheme provide ease of adaptation across different backgrounds without losing clarity of form or visual character. The structured logo composition allows implementation in both primary and alternative formats, such as the use of the full logo or supporting symbol elements. The implementation of the logo on signage, social media profiles, and digital promotional media is shown in Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7.



Figure 5. Logo application on cafe signage



Figure 6. Logo application on social media profiles



Figure 7. Logo application in digital promotional media

### 3.5 Research Limitations

This study has two main limitations. First, the evaluation of the logo's effectiveness on audiences has not been conducted empirically through quantitative methods, so claims regarding brand image formation still rely on semiotic analysis and expert judgment. Second, the research is limited to a single case study, namely Lucky Chill Cafe, therefore the generalization of findings to other cafes with different characteristics should be approached cautiously. Future research is recommended to integrate quantitative methods such as eye-tracking [14], consumer perception surveys, or A/B testing to validate the effectiveness of symbolic meaning on audiences.

## 4. Conclusions

This research produced three main findings that address the research problem. First, Roland Barthes' visual semiotics functions effectively as a generative framework for logo design, rather than merely as a

post-design analytical tool. The application of Barthes' three-level framework from the ideation stage provides semantic justification for every visual decision, making the design process more structured and academically accountable.

Second, the seven visual elements of the Lucky Chill logo, consisting of an oval frame, sun, water waves, palm trees, cutlery, coffee cup, shaka gesture, and rounded typography, construct consistent layers of meaning at the levels of denotation (tropical and culinary objects), connotation (warmth, casualness, and togetherness), and myth (a relaxed lifestyle and escape culture among urban youth).

Third, the resulting logo supports the formation of Lucky Chill's brand image as a lifestyle-oriented social space relevant to its younger target audience. The application of Visual Communication Design principles such as balance, simplicity, and consistency strengthens the logo's readability as well as its flexibility across various media applications.

The main contribution of this research lies in the shift of Barthes' semiological position from an interpretive approach to a generative approach within the practice of Visual Communication Design. Future research is recommended to integrate quantitative methods to validate the effectiveness of symbolic meaning on audiences, as well as to conduct comparative studies involving cafes with different brand characteristics in order to enrich understanding of general patterns and variations in the application of Barthes' generative framework.

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**Author Contributions Statement**

The author's contributions to this research are described using the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Author Contributions (CRediT)

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	W
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I Gede		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓

Wiryama Nandana Putra									
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- C : Conceptualization
- M : Methodology
- So : Software
- Va : Validation
- Fo : Formal analysis
- I : Investigation
- R : Resources
- D : Data Curation
- W : Writing - Review

**Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The authors state that they have no financial or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the work reported in this article.

**Informed Consent**

The author obtained informed consent from the owner and manager of Lucky Chill Cafe regarding the use of interview data, visual documentation, and the final logo for scientific publication purposes.

**Data Availability**





The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Primary data in the form of interview transcripts and visual documentation may be obtained from the corresponding author, while still considering the confidentiality of brand-related information.

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