

Destination Branding Assistance for Surengede Tourism Village, Kejajar District, Wonosobo Regency

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ABSTRACT

The tourism sector is a strategic element that plays a vital role in enhancing the economy and regional assets in Indonesia. This assistance analyzes the situation of Bukit Gong Nature Tourism in Wonosobo Regency, which has great potential due to its location within the Dieng National Geopark. Nevertheless, it struggles with attracting a sufficient number of visitors. The main problem identified is weak competitiveness caused by limited infrastructure and the absence of a strong visual identity compared to nearby competitors. As a solution, destination branding was strengthened through the design of a logo and mascot using the design thinking methodology. This step aims to create a distinctive visual identity and build tourist trust through official representation. Testing results show that the visual design achieved a very high score on the System Usability Scale (SUS), which categorized as excellent. Thus, the visual identity design successfully became a strategic instrument to strengthen brand awareness and build a professional, unique, and trustworthy image for Bukit Gong Nature Tourism.

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INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector in Indonesia is a strategic industry with dual functions, encompassing both economic and non-economic dimensions. Economically, tourism plays a crucial role in generating employment opportunities and stimulating local entrepreneurial activities in services and transportation. Beyond its economic contributions, the sector also advances knowledge and education, while serving as a long-term investment instrument that strengthens regional assets daerah (Amanullah, 2021). Government support for tourism has remained consistent, manifested in strategic policies and flagship programs such as *Bangga Berwisata di Indonesia* (BBWI), *Bangga Buatan Indonesia* (BBI), and the initiative *Indonesia Care* (I Do Care), which specifically target tourism and hospitality. Through these programs, the tourism industry is expected to improve service standards and quality, thereby rebuilding the confidence of both domestic and international visitors (Farisa & Kriandi, 2021).

Aligned with this vision, community-based destination development initiatives have emerged, exemplified by Bukit Gong Nature Tourism, managed by Pokdarwis Sumber Lancar in Surengede Village. As part of the tourism village category, Bukit Gong was prioritized for quality enhancement

in 2025 to strengthen community-based tourism in Wonosobo Regency. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy set a strategic target of developing 244 tourism villages by 2024. In realizing the target, the government has established four feasibility indicators for villages to qualify as a tourism village. These indicators include: the readiness of human resources (HR) as local agent, administrative legitimacy through a Regent's Decree, integration with the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPARDA), and the existence of tangible outcomes that benefit the community (Ramadhan & Krisiandi, 2021).

Bukit Gong Nature Tourism was officially launched on December 1, 2024 (Harun, 2024). As a newly established destination, it faces the classic challenge as the low range of visitor numbers. Nevertheless, the tourism prospects of this site remain highly promising due to its location within the Dieng Plateau. On May 7, 2025, the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of the Republic of Indonesia, Bahlil Lahadalia, officially designated the Dieng Plateau as a National Geopark. This designation, ratified through Ministerial Decree No. 172.K/GL.01/MEM.G/2025, represents a significant achievement following nine years of preparation (disparbud.wonosobokab.go.id, 2025). Despite being situated in the strategic Dieng area with its captivating landscape, Bukit Gong Nature Tourism faces considerable challenges in competing with nearby attractions such as Pintu Langit Tourism. Its lagging position is attributed to limited infrastructure, underdeveloped photo spots, and difficult road access that requires passing through residential areas. In contrast, its competitors benefit from adequate facilities and locations along main roads. Furthermore, Bukit Gong suffers from weak destination branding, making it difficult to rival competitors that already possess strong destination images in the perception of tourists.

To overcome these competitive disadvantages, the proposed solution is assistance in strengthening destination branding. This strategy is considered as the most appropriate, as it enables the creation of a distinctive image that differentiates Bukit Gong from surrounding destinations. Blain et al. (2005), define destination branding as a series of marketing activities focused on establishing a unique visual identity such as names, logos, and mascots to distinguish a destination from its competitors. The purpose of this strategy is to convey a promise of unique travel experiences to potential tourists while reinforcing positive memories after their visit. Thus, the branding process functions as a strategic instrument to consolidate a lasting impression in the minds of tourists regarding the identity of a tourism destination. From the definition of destination branding, it can be concluded that logos and mascots serve as vital and fundamental elements in highlighting the image of a tourist site.

According to Rustan (2009), in his book *Mendesain Logo*, the primary function of a logo within brand strategy encompasses four crucial roles: self-distinction, authentication, quality assurance, and protection. On the other hand, the use of mascots that align with the characteristics of a destination can strengthen marketing efforts and serve as a unique hallmark, equivalent to logos, in enhancing the value of an entity (Haq & Nisa, 2023).

Based on the background, within the scope of the present assistance, the formulation of the problem is directed toward designing a logo that represents the characteristics of Bukit Gong nature tourism and creating a mascot design that is both appealing and appropriate to serve as a representative symbol of Bukit Gong nature tourism.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The assisting activity employed the Design Thinking methodology. According to Ansori et al. (2023), design thinking is a human-centered innovation approach that integrates user needs, technology, and business requirements. The method is solution-oriented, as it emphasizes problem-based approaches and involves direct collaboration with users to create innovative services. The stages of assistance within design thinking are divided into five stages: Empathize (understanding users), Define (formulating problems), Ideate (generating solutions), Prototype (developing initial designs), and Testing (evaluation and iteration).

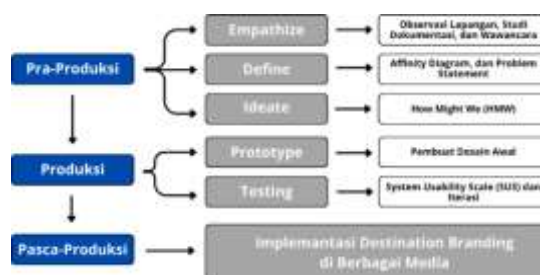


Figure 1. Logo and Mascot Design Procedure
(Source: The author, 2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Empathize stage

Interviews were conducted directly at Bukit Gong Nature Tourism involving two groups of respondents, namely visitors and the management. The first session targeted two visitors categorized as 'peer group' to explore impressions, experiences, and the impact of the absence of a logo as well as the urgency of a mascot as a destination identity. The second session was held with the Head of Management, who also serves as the Chair of Pokdarwis Sumber Lancar, to examine historical aspects, the origin of the name 'Bukit Gong,' unique attractions, and endemic flora and fauna that characterize the area.



Figure 2. Interviews with Visitors and Tourism Management Chair
(Source: The author, 2025)

The interview findings were utilized to construct user personas and identify pain points, serving as the strategic foundation for the design process. According to Harlim & Setiyawati (2022), user personas map user behavior, while pain points highlight the obstacles they encounter. In the case of Bukit Gong, this process was intended to address the limited availability of official information for visitors and the challenges faced by the management in producing media content. By classifying demographic data alongside visual preferences, the resulting logo and mascot concepts are expected to enhance credibility and provide an effective solution for digital communication.



Figure 3. User Personas
(Source: The author, 2025)



Figure 4. Pain Points
(Source: The author, 2025)

2. Define Stage

The Define stage employed the Affinity Diagram technique to simplify the complexity of observational and interview data into key themes, thereby mapping problem patterns. According to Adrian & Pramono (2024), the Affinity Diagram functions to group ideas, opinions, and issues derived from brainstorming based on their natural relationships, making them easier to interpret. This process produced a Problem Statement, which, as Kapkın & Joines (2021), emphasize, is a crucial written document within a design brief that presents the problem to designers. The problem statement serves as a design compass, articulating user needs and the urgency of design solutions, thereby forming the strategic foundation for the development of the logo and mascot to ensure the sustainability of Bukit Gong Nature Tourism.



Figure 5. Affinity Diagram
(Source: The author, 2025)



Figure 6. Problem Statement
(Source: The author, 2025)

3. Ideate Stage

The Ideate stage employed the How Might We (HMW) framework to explore creative solutions relevant to the needs of both visitors and managers of Bukit Gong Nature Tourism. According to Maharani & Alit (2024), the HMW approach sharpens problem focus in order to generate innovative ideas based on the constraints previously identified. Through this method, design opportunities were directed toward the development of strategic visual identities, specifically logos and mascots that could transform user aspirations into functional design concepts, thereby addressing communication challenges encountered in the field.



Figure 7. How Might We (HMW)
(Source: The author, 2025)

4. Prototype stage

The prototype stage in design thinking aims to transform ideas from the ideate stage into a tangible visual form.

Logo

The logo design process began with the preparation of a moodboard based on interviews with visitors and the head of Bukit Gong Nature Tourism management. As a structured visual guide, Brevi et al. (2019), define a moodboard as a visual tool consisting of collections of images, colors, and textures, with the primary purpose of representing specific emotions, feelings, or 'moods' derived from design research. Meanwhile, Silvia et al. (2025), emphasize that the function of a moodboard is to bridge preliminary research with concept development, while anticipating the emotional and sensory relationship between users and products yet to be realized.

The structured moodboard integrates a palette of deep bluish purple, light blue, and orange to reflect the natural character and energy of Bukit Gong. Typographically, the use of the Forte font conveys an organic impression for the tourism name, whereas Tw Cen MT Condensed Extra Bold provides a modern emphasis for the tagline. The visual identity is reinforced through key elements such as Mount Sindoro, flowers, Tuk Gong spring, the Javan hawk-eagle, and the sunrise, which collectively communicate the richness of flora and fauna, historical value, and scenic charm of the destination



Figure 8. Moodboard Logo
(Source: The author, 2025)

According to Zetira et al. (2025), the creation of initial sketches constitutes a crucial stage, serving as rough drafts or prototypes of the final logo. This step is essential as it facilitates intensive consultation with business owners to ensure that the design outcomes align with client expectations and product characteristics. Moreover, initial sketches clarify the aesthetic direction established in the moodboard before advancing to finalization through digital tools.

Among several sketch alternatives, sketch number six was selected as the most accurate representation of Bukit Gong's characteristics. This sketch intelligently integrates elements of mountains, sunrise, and springs into a unified silhouette of the Javan hawk-eagle. The result is a harmonious logo encapsulating nature, culture, and conservation spirit within a compact visual form.

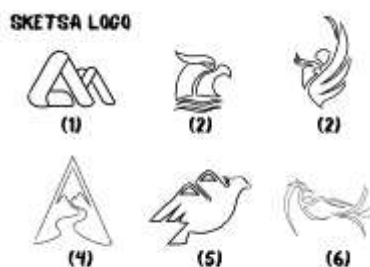


Figure 9. Preliminary Logo Sketch
(Source: The author, 2025)

Following sketch selection, the next stage involved digitalization using design software, specifically Adobe Illustrator. During this phase, attention was devoted to refining details, proportions, and graphic elements to ensure that the logo appeared professional and adaptable for diverse branding applications.

As Wheeler (2018, cited in Rafli et al., 2025) explains, the digitalization process typically begins with scanning or photographing the chosen sketch, which is then uploaded into graphic design applications such as Adobe Illustrator or CorelDRAW. These applications serve as references for reconstructing the logo in vector format. The use of vector graphics is crucial in logo design, as it guarantees scalability without compromising visual quality.



Figure 10. Final Design of the Logo
(Source: The author, 2025)

Mascot

Similar to the logo design, the mascot development process began with the preparation of a moodboard as a visual reference. According to Hadiprawiro (2018), a moodboard for mascots functions as a strategic instrument to generate key visuals that serve as the foundational basis for the overall development of mascot elements and design style.

The mascot moodboard focused on two primary aspects: color and visual elements. Five variations of brown were applied to the body to replicate the feathers of the Javan hawk-eagle, symbolizing endemic protection, while four additional colors were used for robe-style clothing to convey a sense of adventure. This combination of fauna characteristics with costume modification aimed to create a strong, recognizable, and unique icon that represents the appeal of Bukit Gong.



Figure 11. Mascot Moodboard
(Source: The author, 2025)

As noted by Adi et al., (2025), the creation of initial sketches is a crucial stage in mascot design, enabling exploration of various possible forms, expressions, and character attributes before advancing to digital finalization.

Among several alternatives, sketch number two was selected for its authentic representation of the Javan hawk-eagle, combined with a calm expression reflecting the hospitality of Surengede villagers. The mascot was designed in the form of a teenager to ensure relevance to the target market, while remaining iconic and memorable. For inclusivity, the mascot was developed in paired versions (male and female) as a symbol of synergy and diversity.



Figure 12. Preliminary Sketches of the Mascot
(Source: The author, 2025)

The subsequent stage involved mascot digitalization, namely the transfer of manual sketches into computer software such as Adobe Illustrator. According to Alia et al. (2025), this step aims to refine rough drafts into ready-to-use digital formats, thereby optimizing the mascot's detail and visual quality for professional purposes. During this digitalization process, the researchers designed multiple alternative poses to enhance versatility and adaptability.



Figure 13. Final Mascot Design
(Source: The author, 2025)

Implementation of Logo and Mascot

The visual identity in the form of a logo and mascot has been implemented by the management of Bukit Gong Nature Tourism on their official social media platforms. At present, these visual assets are actively utilized to strengthen branding on Instagram and TikTok under the username @pesonabukitgong.



Figure 14. Implementation of Logo and Mascot
(Source: The author, 2025)

Use of the Logo and Mascot in Various Media



Figure 15. Ticket Design
(Source: The author, 2025)



Figure 16. Promotional Media Design
(Source: The author, 2025)



Figure 17. Stationery Design
(Source: The author, 2025)



Figure 18. Operational Crew Design
(Source: The author, 2025)



Figure 19. Environmental Graphic Design
(Source: The author, 2025)



Figure 20. Merchandise Design
(Source: The author, 2025)

5. Testing Stage

The Testing stage was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the design through user feedback. Using the System Usability Scale (SUS) instrument with 32 respondents, the evaluation produced an average score of 90. This score placed the design in Grade A (Excellent) and Acceptable categories, indicating that the logo and mascot were assessed as highly feasible, satisfactory, and easily comprehensible. These results demonstrate that the visual designs successfully meet aspects of originality and strong relevance for visitors of Bukit Gong Nature Tourism.

Iteration

The iteration stage refers to the continuous refinement of the design. Feedback from respondents was essential in optimizing the design. Based on critiques and suggestions derived from the System Usability Scale (SUS), the author implemented improvements focusing on two main aspects: adjustments to the logo's color scheme and modification of the mascot's arms into wings.

Table 1. Criticism and Suggestions for the Bukit Gong Nature Tourism Mascot

	Before	After
Logo		
Mascot		

CONCLUSION

Through the application of Design Thinking, this assistance has successfully designed destination branding comprising a logo and mascot for Bukit Gong Nature Tourism. The visual identity functions as a solution to the challenges of digital information verification previously encountered by visitors. It is recommended that the management consistently apply the logo and mascot across all digital channels to strengthen credibility, facilitate destination recognition, and build emotional connections with tourists through the mascot character that has been developed.

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