

Utilization of Website and Interface to Help Raise the Brand Identity of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Owners

Bryan Nicholas

bnicholas@student.ciputra.ac.id

Visual Communication Design, School of Creative Industry
Universitas Ciputra Surabaya

ABSTRACT

In today's modern era, a website serves as a key aspect of a brand's identity, with ownership often signifying credibility for a business. However, many individuals still struggle to market their brand through a website, often due to complex website designs or limited accessibility. With numerous businesses emerging every year, a brand's identity and uniqueness are essential in standing out from competitors. To address this challenge, a solution has been developed, which is a website builder company that enhances brand identity. This research aims to explore the importance of websites for MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) and identify how they can be designed to be effective, focusing on simple interfaces and clear communication of essential information. The data was gathered through quantitative interviews with expert, extreme, and non-expert users. The findings suggest that owning a website is crucial for MSMEs, significantly influencing consumer behavior and that the design should be well-organized, visually appealing, and engaging.

Keywords: website, MSMEs, interface

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and highly competitive business environment, innovation has become an important aspect of ensuring the sustainability and growth of companies, especially Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (Bakos et al., 2020). According to M. Raihan (Raihan et al., 2023), MSMEs have an important role in economic development in Indonesia, with 99.9% of existing businesses classified as MSMEs. With the rapid development of technology, as it is now, the simplicity in product design allows various businesses to utilize design to

boost the appearance and function of their products (Indriati, 2021). Given the number of industries and business sectors, as well as the growing number of competitors operating in similar fields, it is increasingly important for brands to find ways to stand out. A key factor in differentiating a business from its competitors is building a unique identity that sets the brand apart. This distinction, often referred to as brand identity, is critical to attracting and retaining customers. The main utility that having a brand identity can offer is to give consumers a positive perception of the brand (Oktavianingrum et al., 2023). Brand identity can come in many forms, including creative marketing approaches, innovative product development, or extensive relationships and networks within the industry (Shams et al., 2024). Having a page for the brand can enable the brand to update information for its customers while gaining wider exposure (Indriati, 2021). According to Upendra Kumar Maurya (Maurya et al., 2012) a deep understanding of a brand is very important and necessary for the process of designing, developing, and preserving a brand and company.

The concept of brand identity guides all the elements that make a company recognizable and memorable. It is a combination of visual cues, messages, and values that define how a company presents itself in the marketplace (Joy et al., 2022). This identity is a strategic asset that helps a business create a lasting impression on its target audience. Be it through logos, slogans, or interactions with customers, a strong brand identity helps consumers quickly associate certain qualities with a particular company. Whether we realize it or not, every successful company, both in Indonesia and globally, has its own identity that sets it apart from its competitors (Shaddiq et al., 2021). This unique identity is not just a byproduct of business operations but is often actively communicated and reinforced through various forms of media, with the company's official website being one of the most prominent and impactful platforms.

The website itself plays an important role in building and maintaining a company's brand identity in the digital era. A website is a collection of photos, animations, and written content designed to convey information about a company or its products and services (Rizki & Pasaribu, 2021). These web pages form a network of

text or writing that defines the objectives that are part of a company's strategy. More than just a tool for sharing information, a website serves as a virtual platform that gives visitors a first impression of a business. Having a website can show that a company is legitimate and has a credible presence in its industry (Permana, 2020). In fact, in many cases, consumers rely on a company's website to assess its professionalism and reputation.

Research shows that the combination of a well-designed, high-quality website and a strong company reputation can have a significant influence on consumer behavior, especially in terms of purchasing decisions (Jundrio & Keni, 2020). This indicates that a website not only functions as a promotional tool but also as a visual representation of a company's identity and credibility. Companies with professional and user-friendly websites tend to find it easier to build trust among potential customers. An attractive website design, intuitive navigation, and consistent appearance will give a positive first impression. Conversely, a website that is difficult to navigate or provides confusing information can give a negative impression of the quality of the product or service offered. Jundrio in his research also emphasizes the importance of website usability, where a website that is easy to use will increase user satisfaction.

A well-designed website can directly influence consumer purchasing decisions. When potential customers visit a website, they will form an initial perception of the company based on the appearance and content of the website. If the website provides a positive user experience, then it is likely that potential customers will be interested in making a transaction. Conversely, if the website is difficult to use or does not provide relevant information, then potential customers are likely to move to a competitor's website. Therefore, an attractive, informative, and easy-to-use website is key to maintaining consumer interest and trust. For Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), having a well-structured and attractive website can be a significant differentiator in business competition. A website serves as a comprehensive information center where potential customers, business partners, and other stakeholders can learn more about the business, the products or services offered, and the values of the company. A website that accurately reflects a

company's brand identity helps build a strong digital presence, which is increasingly important in today's digital-first world (Quan et al., 2020). For MSMEs that may have a limited budget for large-scale marketing campaigns, websites offer a more affordable and effective solution to reach a wider audience and increase brand awareness. With a website, MSMEs can deliver brand messages directly to their target market, anytime and anywhere.

This research aims to explore the crucial role of websites in the sustainability and growth of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The main focus of this research is on optimizing website design and content to improve brand identity and overall business performance. Specifically, this research will examine how website appearance and functionality can be customized to be effective for MSMEs. The approach taken is to prioritize a simple and easy-to-use interface so that the information to be conveyed can be clearly and accurately delivered to visitors. By focusing on essential website design elements such as ease of use, visual appeal, and effective communication, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for MSMEs. The insights gained from this research are expected to help MSMEs in optimally utilizing their websites. Not only to strengthen brand identity but also to attract and retain customers amidst increasingly fierce market competition.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research combines quantitative data collection methods with a literature review. The journal refers to sources published in the last five years that explore the basic principles and design of websites, as well as their impact on consumer purchase intention. Quantitative research involves a systematic scientific investigation of existing phenomena by collecting data, which is then analyzed using statistics, mathematics, or computing (Fischer et al., 2023). Meanwhile, a literature review is a description of the literature that is relevant to the appropriate field or topic of discussion. The literature review provides a detailed explanation of the results, supporting theories or hypotheses, issues, or methods and methodologies that have been done by previous authors or researchers (Oztemel & Gursev, 2020). In this study, a quantitative approach was implemented by

surveying 30 people from various backgrounds to broaden the scope of the research. A survey itself has the meaning of a research method to get an outline of a group of people represented by a sample (Maidiana, 2021). A survey is a research method that uses a questionnaire as the main medium for collecting data at the research location. The data collected from the survey is then analyzed to assess the findings.

Following data collection, a thorough review and analysis of the survey results was conducted. This step allowed the research team to assess the information collected, comparing it to existing literature to identify any consistencies, differences, or new trends in consumer responses to website presence and usage over the decades. Ultimately, this combination of quantitative methods and literature review allowed the research to provide a comprehensive understanding of how modern websites influence consumer interest and purchase behavior.

This research uses quantitative data collection methods combined with literature narratives. This journal uses literature sources published within the last 5 years regarding the basic principles and appearance of websites and the influence of websites on consumer buying interest. Quantitative research has the meaning of putting together a systematic scientific analysis of an existing phenomenon by collecting data (Rustamana et al., 2024). The quantitative method applied itself was carried out by surveying 30 people with different backgrounds to expand the reach of the research. The data obtained from the survey was then reviewed further to analyze the results of the research conducted.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to examine the important role of brand identity in supporting the sustainability and growth of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the digital era. Starting from the premise that innovation and brand identity are key factors in the increasingly fierce business competition, this research specifically analyzes how websites as one of the main digital assets can be utilized to build and strengthen the brand identity of MSMEs. The results of this study

generally show that brand identity has a significant influence on the performance of MSMEs. In line with previous literature, it was found that MSMEs with strong brand identities tend to have higher levels of brand awareness, better customer loyalty, and better financial performance. This indicates that investment in building brand identity is a strategic step that needs to be taken by MSMEs to achieve competitive advantage. The research was conducted on 30 respondents, who consisted of a teacher, and the rest came from various educational backgrounds like informatics, design and multimedia, medical, and accounting. All respondents stated that they recognize and know what a website is and have interacted with (used or designed) a website. About more than 90% of respondents agreed that a website plays an important role in the development of a company. According to survey participants, a website can show the tangible existence of a business.

Having a website can also symbolize the credibility of a company and can show the identity of an agency, not only that, having an online presence can help build awareness of the brand. Consumers are also often directly influenced by the website of a company (Jundrio & Keni, 2020). According to research from Jundrio, websites have a very significant impact on consumer behavior regarding decisions when making a transaction. Agencies with a combination of digital website presence, good reputation, and a display that is easy to understand and helps potential customers find the information they are looking for will get more traffic. This preference test was conducted by providing 5 (five) website display options from companies engaged in the same field.

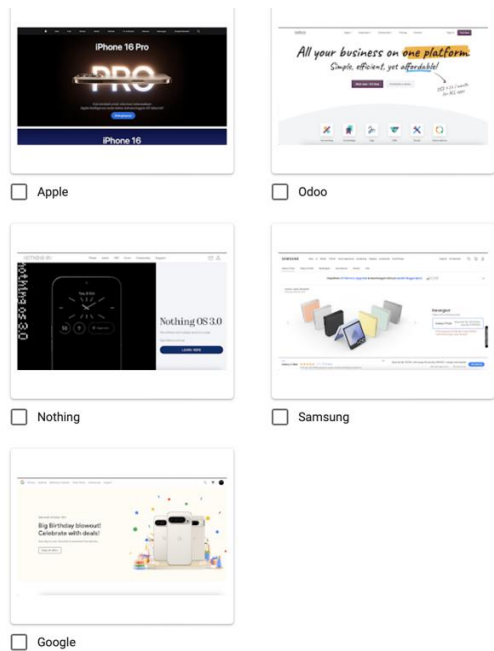


Figure 1. *Landing page view*
source: author's documentation, 2023

The image above shows the landing page of Apple, Odoo, Nothing, Samsung, and Google's websites. These five companies are engaged in relatively the same field, namely technology, where Apple, Odoo, Nothing, and Samsung are companies that make technological devices such as cell phones. Meanwhile, Odoo is engaged in providing digital promotional media creation services for companies.



Figure 2. *Optimal display preference test for a webs*
source: author's documentation, 2023

The image above presents the results of the optimal display preference test for a website. The appearance of Apple's website received 90% of the votes from all respondents, followed by Google with a significant difference at 43.3% of the votes, and then 3 (three) other competitors with a fairly small ratio of votes between one another. Upon further inspection, Apple's visuals provide the most concise information compared to its competitors. For the initial experience, Apple presents the audience with its flagship product, the iPhone 16 Pro Series, which helps customers understand what they are trying to sell quickly and efficiently. Survey respondents stated that the reason why they chose this tech giant over others was the convenience the brand offers consumers in navigating the entire web. The choice of a simple design style is very fitting because it aims to make the website look elegant and when people enter the website, they will not be confused and feel at home in the website (Albertsen & Anggrianto, 2023).

In addition, the color palette of their website enhances the appeal of their products by combining dark and light colors, creating a high contrast on the spectrum, this maximizes readability while maintaining a luxurious, clean, and elegant feel. The right use of color on a website can have a significant impact on user experience. Colors can influence visitors' emotions, perceptions, and even behavior. In this context, the use of high-contrast colors, such as a combination of dark and light colors, can provide several benefits to a website. High contrast between text and background colors can improve the readability of website content (Elahi et al., 2022). This is very important to ensure that visitors can easily read and understand the information presented. The use of high-contrast colors can make a website more visually appealing. This can help attract visitors' attention and make them more interested in exploring the website. Color can be used to differentiate important elements on a website, such as navigation menus, buttons, and links. This can help visitors easily find the information they need (Vu et al., 2021).

When presented with a question about respondents' perspectives on the important aspects of a website, specifically their website, more than 60% stated that the way information is conveyed about the brand and products sold is the

biggest key in designing an optimal website for a business. This intersects with the theory of visual hierarchy. Visual Hierarchy is an order that is used as a guide for the human eye in recognizing what is being observed, this is assisted by the field of perception and visual contrast between the shapes or objects involved in a display to bring up the intended order (Zhen et al., 2020). Visual Hierarchy can also be interpreted as a principle of design order that sequences information starting from the most important to the one that will be seen last by the audience (Iswanto, 2023).

This process starts in the human mind, the object that has the most significant contrast difference compared to its surroundings will be identified as the main highlight of the visual being observed. This is usually done by companies to market their products and to direct the first glance of the audience's eyes to what the agency wants to emphasize, such as product names, brand names, and information updates. This process will continue until the audience's eyes reach the last point that a company wants to convey. In the end, the creation of visual pathways and the use of focal points will greatly help in creating a visual hierarchy and give a boost to mindset, especially in the design aspect (D'Souza et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The research consistently shows that websites play a crucial role in the success of a business. Respondents widely recognize that a website is not just a digital presence, but also a tangible representation of a company, enhancing credibility and building brand awareness. Effective website design, as demonstrated by Apple's success, can significantly influence consumer behavior, encouraging them to make transactions. The key to successful website design lies in its ability to convey information clearly and effectively and create a pleasant user experience.

The concept of visual hierarchy proves to be crucial in this regard, where visual elements are organized in such a way that the user's attention is focused on the most relevant information. By understanding the principles of visual hierarchy,

designers can create websites that are not only visually appealing but also effective in achieving business goals.

Further analysis of the research findings underscores the importance of website appearance in shaping customer perceptions of a brand. A website design that is attractive, easy to navigate, and consistent with the overall brand identity proves effective in building customer trust and loyalty. Visual elements such as harmonious colors, typography, and layout play an important role in creating a positive first impression. In addition, website content that is relevant, informative, and easily accessible also contributes significantly to increasing customer engagement. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that investing in the development of a quality website is a strategic step that needs to be taken by MSMEs. A well-designed website serves not only as a promotional tool but also as a visual representation of brand identity. Thus, MSMEs can utilize the website as a tool to differentiate themselves from competitors, build a good reputation, and ultimately achieve greater business goals.

A well-designed website serves as a platform for MSMEs to market their products or services, share important information, and interact directly with customers. Websites allow businesses to provide real-time updates on offers, promotions, or changes in information that can increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, research shows that an attractive and easy-to-use website can positively influence consumer buying interest, making it a powerful tool to drive sales and promote company growth. By designing a website that meets user needs and expectations, businesses can increase engagement, build trust, and ultimately, drive business growth.

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