



## Mascot Design of Zara and Vano as a Marketing Strategy for Zabava Labs

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### ABSTRACT

The development of online games is in line with advances in computer and network technology, including Web3 which includes the use of Blockchain, smart contracts and decentralization. One company operating in this field is Zabava Labs, located in Singapore, with their flagship product, Sentinel Haven. Although Zabava Labs is active on social media, especially Instagram, the visual image of their feed does not represent the company effectively, which results in low audience engagement and interest. This research aims to design a character mascot that is attractive to young gamers in Indonesia to improve the image and interaction of Zabava Labs on social media. The designed mascot is expected to be able to build the company brand by providing a lasting impression, facilitating effective communication with the audience, and increasing brand recognition in the market. Through a creative and innovative design approach, this mascot will become a visual element that is not only attractive, but also reflects a strong and memorable brand.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The development of online games is greatly influenced by advances in computer and network technology, which initially were limited to small local networks and have now evolved into the global internet (Kustiawan & Utomo, 2019). Online games, which allow player interactions from different parts of the world, offer social and competitive experiences in various genres, including RPG, FPS, RTS, battle royale, and web3. Web3 technology has brought significant innovations to the gaming industry. Web3 games use Blockchain to record transactions publicly and permanently, smart contracts to automate processes, and decentralization to enhance security and eliminate the need for a single authority. Players can obtain digital assets in the form of NFTs, which have unique and irreplaceable value (Sugiharto et al., 2022). NFTs record important information such as the creator, price, and ownership history on the Blockchain, providing exclusive rights to digital assets (Alexander et al., 2022).

Zabava Labs, a Web3 gaming company based in Singapore, recently launched Sentinel Haven, a game integrating Blockchain technology with Algorand for transactions (Kemenparekraf.com). Support from the Indonesian government shows a commitment to creating an environment that supports technological innovation. Indonesia, as the third-largest mobile gaming market, shows great potential for Web3 games, with an average game usage of 8.54 hours per week (suarapalu.com).

To reach the young Indonesian generation active on social media, Zabava Labs needs to utilize platforms like Instagram. With Instagram being a popular social media in Indonesia (Ardiansah et al., 2020), using mascot characters can enhance brand appeal and interaction with the audience. Unique mascots can strengthen the brand, make it more memorable, and create more effective communication with the audience, increasing brand visibility and recognition in the market (Ariesta, 2020; Lury in Ardi & Wiratama, 2018).

Interactivity on social media is crucial. Engaging mascots can be used in various interactive content, such as stories, quizzes, and challenges that can boost audience engagement. This not only extends the brand's reach but also creates a more personal and enjoyable user experience. Mascots are not just visual elements but strong embodiments of the brand, providing effective means of communication with the audience. Mascots often evoke a stronger emotional response compared to traditional marketing strategies. Fun and relatable characters can create an emotional bond with the audience, enhancing brand loyalty and customer retention.

The use of popular mascots can be an effective tool for gathering feedback from the audience. Interactions with mascots on social media can provide valuable insights into audience preferences and needs, which can be used to adapt marketing strategies and product development in the future. This helps increase brand visibility on digital platforms, especially among young people, who tend to respond well to animated characters and mascots. Mascots are one of the points of communication between producers and consumers (Lury in Ardi & Wiratama, 2018). Mascot characters can be key elements in social media promotion, creating content that is easier to share and invites

interaction. By leveraging the full potential of mascots in their digital marketing strategy, Zabava Labs can enhance brand visibility and appeal in an increasingly competitive market, and build a strong and recognizable brand identity.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Visual Communication Design is the art of conveying information or messages using visual language delivered through design media. It aims to inform, influence, and even change the behavior of the target audience according to the intended objectives. The design process generally considers aspects of functionality, aesthetics, and various other factors, often derived from research, brainstorming, and existing designs (Anggraini and Nathalia, 2021, p. 15).

In this context, design development is the primary goal. This process involves creating new systems that can solve company problems by selecting the best alternative systems. The design phase includes output, input, and file design (Ladjamudin in Miranty, 2023).

An essential element in Visual Communication Design is the mascot. A mascot is a fictional figure that can build identity and express the personality of the brand it represents. It also helps the marketing target to identify, remember, and understand a brand (Mohanty in Ardi and Wiratama, 2018, p. 50).

Moreover, branding is a series of processes aimed at leaving an idea in the consumer's mind and increasing loyalty to a product or service (Susanti et al., 2023). Character design in this context involves creating fictional characters for various media, including films, animations, video games, comics, mascots, and other products. This process includes depicting the character in all its aspects, such as physical appearance, personality, background, and relationships with other characters in the story.

Furthermore, archetypes play an important role in creating works or brands by providing an emotional and symbolic framework that can be used to create a deep and resonant connection with the audience. This ensures that character and mascot designs are not only visually appealing but also have a strong emotional appeal, supporting the overall goals of Visual Communication Design.

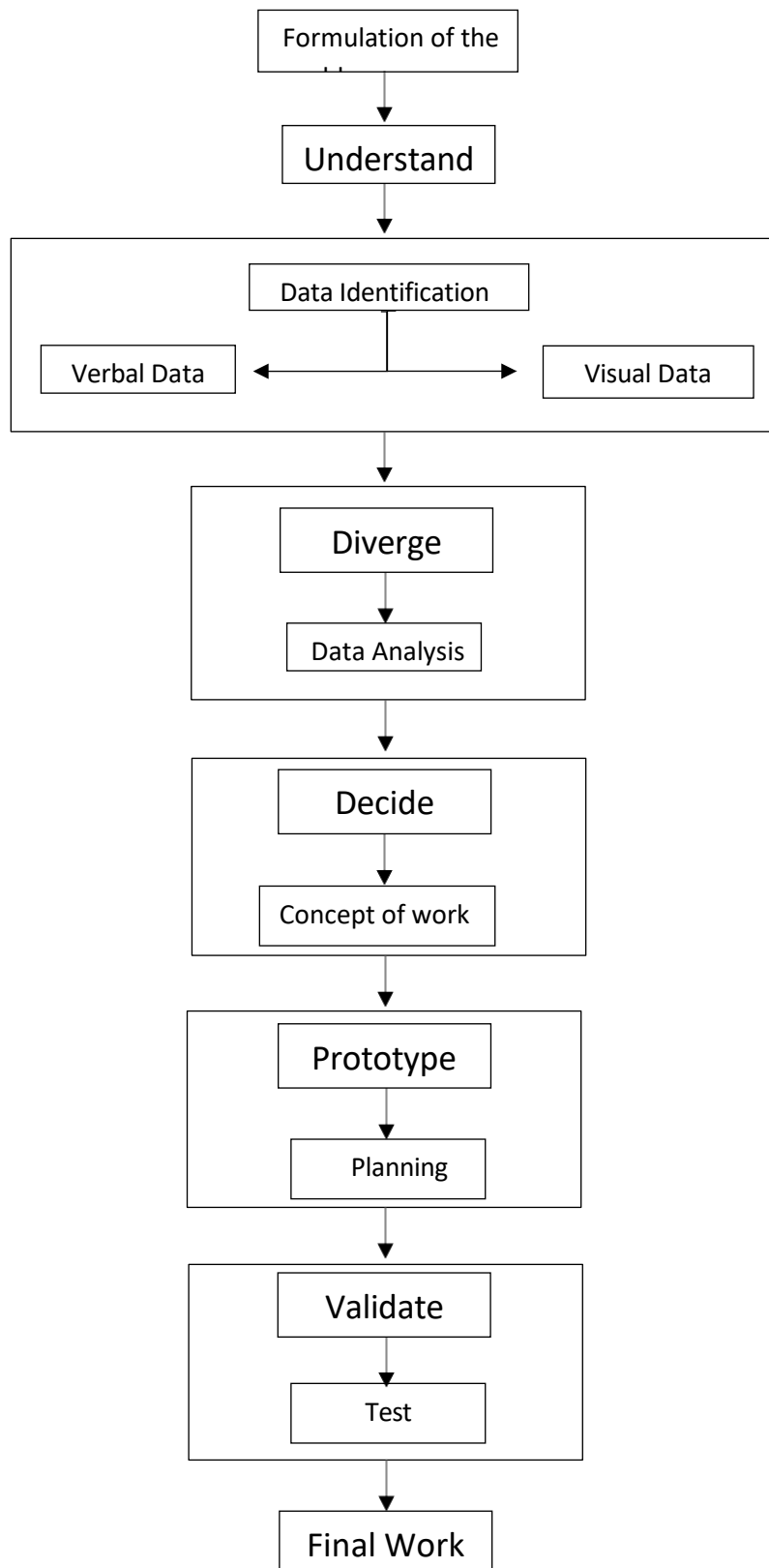


Figure 1. Framework

## METHODOLOGY

The design method used by the author is the Design Sprint, Design Sprint is a design methodology developed by Google to solve problems by involving users through design, prototyping, and quickly testing ideas. A design sprint typically spans five days, with stages as outlined below:

### 1. Understand

On the first day, the focus is on identifying and understanding the existing problem by conducting observations, interviews, and documentation.

### 2. Diverge

On the second day, various solutions or ideas are gathered to address the problems identified in the previous stage. It is crucial to stay focused on the core issue by assessing the urgency of the problem.

### 3. Decide

On the third day, it is important to narrow down the ideas from the previous stage by voting on the best solution ideas to be implemented.

### 4. Prototype

On the fourth day, a prototype is created based on the findings from the previous stages. This prototype is developed using all the data and feedback collected.

### 5. Validate

On the fifth day, validation of the created prototype is conducted. This involves testing with the target audience, allowing them to understand the designed concept.

This method ensures a structured and efficient approach to problem-solving by rapidly moving from understanding the problem to testing potential solutions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The design sprint method is a systematic approach used to solve problems through design, prototyping, and testing of ideas in a short period. Here are the steps taken in the design process for the Zara and Vano mascot character concepts and interactive media:

### 1. Understand

The designer gathers relevant information about the problem to be solved. Basic data comes from the Brand Standard Manual, obtained in PDF form during an in-depth interview with Muhammad Bin Ahmad Dahlan, a manager at Zabava Labs. The media concept is derived from interviews with respondents who enjoy playing online games to understand the problem and target audience needs.

## 2. Define

The main issue is defining how to design effective mascot characters and interactive media to increase audience interaction and build Zabava Labs' brand identity. Design decisions are based on Visual Questionnaires filled out by respondents, including Muhammad Bin Ahmad Dahlan and several teenagers in Lombok.

## 3. Sketch

This stage involves creating mind mapping and initial sketches for mascot characters. The process begins with brainstorming to identify the main concepts, visual elements, and messages to be conveyed through the mascots. Once the main ideas are identified, the designer begins to construct mind mapping to visualize the relationships between these concepts and how they can be applied in the mascot design.

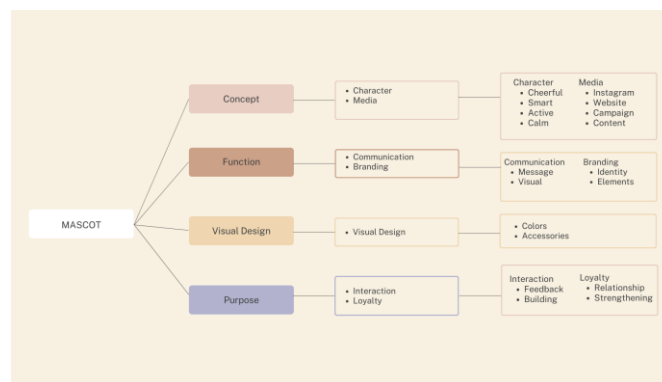


Figure 2. Mind Mapping

Then, the initial sketches are made, encompassing various poses, expressions, and visual details that will help visualize how the mascots will look and interact with the audience. This process allows the designer to explore various alternatives and ensure that the final mascot design will effectively convey the messages and values that Zabava Labs wants to communicate.



Figure 3. Mascot Sketch

#### 4. Decide

The designer selects the concept that best aligns with Zabava Labs' goals and target audience based on the design's suitability with the brand identity and audience preferences, as well as the Visual Questionnaire results.

#### 5. Prototype

The designer creates prototypes of the chosen concept, including visual representations of Zara and Vano with colors, accessories, and character descriptions. Instagram content design aligns with the company's brand logo colors to maintain visual consistency. Here are the character details:

- **Zara:**
  - Main Colors: Pink and White
  - Accessories: Pink hair tie and explorer goggles
  - Description: Zara, the cheerful and enthusiastic adventurer, always explores new things.
- **Vano:**
  - Main Colors: Light Yellow and Blue
  - Accessories: Light yellow beret and thin round glasses
  - Description: Vano, the intelligent and gentle introvert, loves learning new things and sharing his knowledge.

the results are as follows:



Figure 4. Images of the Prototype Results

#### 6. Validate

The prototype is tested by creating promotional designs featuring Zara and Vano on Instagram and observing audience responses. By using a simple design, emphasizing colours that align with the brand logo, and adding accessories that enhance each mascot's characteristics, the Instagram content becomes more engaging and easier for the audience to understand. The designer monitors audience interactions and feedback through comments, likes, and shares. The results show that the design successfully attracted attention, increased interaction with the

Zabava Labs brand, and helped build a strong and recognizable brand identity.

## **7. Implementation and Evaluation**

The designer makes improvements and adjustments based on feedback and implements the final design as part of Zabava Labs' communication strategy. The evaluation process is ongoing to ensure the design remains relevant and effective.

By using the design sprint method, the designer successfully developed the mascot character concepts of Zara and Vano and effective interactive media to increase audience interaction and build Zabava Labs' brand identity. This iterative process ensures each design step is based on accurate data and feedback, resulting in an effective solution.

Based on the research conducted, the "Zara and Vano" mascot was designed to strengthen the Zabava Labs brand and enhance interaction with the audience. The mascot design utilizes colours that align with the company logo to maintain visual consistency and brand identity. Zara, with primary colours of pink and white, is depicted as a cheerful adventurer who is always eager to explore new things every day. Meanwhile, Vano, with primary colours of light yellow and blue, is an introverted, intelligent, and gentle character who enjoys learning new things and sharing his knowledge with others.

The research also highlights the importance of a strong visual concept in mascot design. By utilizing colours and accessories that support the unique characteristics of each mascot, Zabava Labs' Instagram content is expected to become more engaging and easily understandable for the audience. Additionally, the names Zara and Vano were derived from letters in the Zabava Labs company name to ensure that the audience remains familiar with the company when reading the mascot names.

The design process involved interviews with Zabava Labs, including the company founder, Muhammad Bin Ahmad Dahlan, who provided insights into the characteristics of Zabava Labs, the concepts to be emphasized, and new promotional media expected to reach a broader target audience. The anticipated solution is a renewal of the design concept and the introduction of new promotional media such as character mascots, which are expected to help Zabava Labs address promotional challenges and continue to grow.

Overall, this research demonstrates that the Zara and Vano mascots can strengthen the Zabava Labs brand, enhance audience interaction, and provide a new style in content presentation and marketing for Zabava Labs.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the research and discussions conducted in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that the mascots Zara and Vano serve effectively as a new promotional medium for Zabava Labs and strengthen the company's brand. The characters Zara and Vano also successfully enhance interaction with the audience. However, creating an effective mascot requires in-depth study and analysis to develop the right character.

To improve the effectiveness of the mascot, several recommendations can be considered. First, it is important to thoroughly understand the target audience by exploring their demographics, preferences, and values, so that the mascot can be well-received. Second, the mascot's design should feature unique and memorable elements to stand out among other characters. Third, testing with the target audience is crucial to gather feedback that can be used to refine the design before the official launch.

With the design of this mascot, it is hoped that significant changes can be made to Zabava Labs' branding. The mascots Zara and Vano are expected to strengthen the Zabava Labs brand, increase interaction with the audience, and provide a new style in content presentation and marketing for the company.

### **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

This design focuses on developing the mascots Zara and Vano as promotional tools for Zabava Labs, with the main goal of enhancing brand visibility and appeal to the target audience. The mascots must reflect the company's identity and values in all promotional materials, strengthening brand recognition without losing essential elements. The objectives of this design include improving promotion effectiveness, reinforcing brand identity, and expanding audience reach, while also providing an understanding of the mascot-based promotional media design process to students and related parties. The benefits include conveying information about Zabava Labs' products, meeting the audience's information needs, and offering practical experience in mascot design. The method used is Design Sprint, a Google-developed approach that includes observation and interviews on the first day, solution gathering on the second day, selecting the best ideas on the third day, creating prototypes on the fourth day, and testing the prototypes with the audience on the fifth day to ensure the effectiveness of the promotional materials

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