A study on the use of visual stereotypes in logo designs by Sri Lankan freelance logo designers

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Most of the freelance and microwork community in the creative industry of Sri Lanka consists of logo designers, who utilize social media platforms such as Facebook for their promotional activities. These logo designers often showcase a collection of logo designs in the form of an online portfolio to convince potential clients to acquire their services. These portfolios often consist of personal projects done by the designers to exhibit their technical skills and creativity. However, it is evident that many of these portfolios consist of a considerable number of logo designs that are either highly influenced by or completely imitated from existing logo designs which can be found in a web image search. Apparently, these logo designs contain visual stereotypes or clichés associated with logo design. The present study attempts to examine, identify, and categorize the visual stereotypes used in the above-mentioned context, focusing on conducting an empirical inquiry that relies on personal experience as a graphic designer as well as an educator. A sample of sixty Facebook pages with a collection of logo designs, representing logo designers in Sri Lanka was used in this study. The Facebook pages were selected based on their audience using the number of followers as the main factor. The logo designs were examined considering their context, visual representation, and how the logo is presented as a final product. The identified stereotypes were categorized into three main groups namely, visual elements, stylistic representations, and visual presentations. Moreover, the identified visual elements were categorized according to their relevant industry and context. It was evident that a higher number of designers haven't paid attention to the originality, intended meaning, and pragmatic concerns of the design, in terms of visual and stylistic representation as well as the final output of the design. Even though many designers showcased a high level of technical skill in executing the design using digital applications, the results imply the application of a low level of skills in the conceptualization of original visual and aesthetic quality.

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