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# APPLICATION OF COLOR AND CHARACTER DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN AI-ASSISTED CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL SONG VISUAL CONTENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE ELS STUDIO YOUTUBE CHANNEL

**By:**
**I Gede Yudi Arsana[1], Si Ngurah Wahyu Saputra[2], I Putu Adi Saskara[3], Ulio[4]**
[1,3,4] Universitas Hindu Negeri I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar, Indonesia
[2] ITB STIKOM Bali, Indonesia

**e-mail:**
elswordredd@gmail.com

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## Abstract

This study examines the application of color and character design principles in children's educational song visuals on the Els Studio YouTube channel and their relationship to the channel logo as its primary visual identity. A descriptive qualitative visual content analysis was conducted using six purposively selected videos, their illustrated thumbnails, one documented frame showing indications of AI-assisted animation, and the channel logo. The analysis employed an observation matrix encompassing hue, brightness, perceived saturation, character morphology, typography, and visual identity continuity. The results indicate that the children's content combines yellow, orange, pink, and red accents with blue and green backgrounds; rounded, large-headed characters with expressive eyes; and bold, high-contrast lettering. In contrast, the logo features a black and red palette with cream-colored lettering and a sharp-edged ornamental face motif. Limited continuity is found in bold typography and occasional red accents, whereas dominant color and character shape exhibit weaker correspondence. The visible 'VidMuse AI' watermark suggests the involvement of an AI-labeled tool in one video but does not establish its complete production workflow. This study proposes a coherent subseries identity as a practical design response. It does not measure audience recognition, trust, or learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** Color Design, Character Design, Children's Educational Songs, AI-Assisted Animation, Visual Identity.

## INTRODUCTION

Children's educational songs on digital video platforms combine auditory and visual components that can introduce basic concepts such as counting, everyday objects, personal hygiene, and cultural practices. In this environment, a video is encountered not only as a moving audiovisual narrative but also through its thumbnail, title, and channel identity. These elements create a preliminary visual context before the viewer accesses the content. For designers of children's media, attention to color organization, character morphology, typographic hierarchy, and the relationship among these components is therefore important. However, visual appeal should not be equated automatically with educational effectiveness: the latter requires evidence about children's comprehension, experiences, or learning outcomes that cannot be obtained from images alone (Mayer & Moreno, 2002).

Color is a fundamental element of visual communication because it contributes to contrast, visual grouping, emphasis, and associative meaning. In design practice, the relationship among

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hue, brightness, saturation, and adjacent colors influences how a composition is organized and how its objects are differentiated (Darmaprawira, 2002; Sanyoto, 2009). Color psychology also recognizes that responses to color vary with context, task, and cultural interpretation; a single hue does not produce one universal psychological effect (Elliot & Maier, 2014). Consequently, descriptions such as 'cheerful,' 'safe,' or 'attractive' should be treated as possible interpretations of visual choices rather than demonstrated reactions of young viewers unless those reactions have been empirically tested.

Character design provides another layer of meaning in children's media. Simplified facial features, relatively large heads, rounded contours, and expressive eyes are frequently employed as visual conventions that foreground emotion and recognizable action. From the perspective of visual grammar, such representational and compositional decisions organize what is depicted and what appears salient within an image (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Research on emotional design in multimedia learning suggests that color and shape can influence affect and learning under specific experimental conditions (Plass et al., 2014). These findings offer a theoretical basis for examining visual forms, yet they cannot be used as direct proof that a particular YouTube channel improves children's attention, motivation, or learning.

Typography also contributes to the communicative structure of a thumbnail. The scale, weight, contour, and contrast of letterforms can establish a hierarchy between the title and surrounding illustrations (Lupton, 2010). Typeface choices may also communicate associations beyond the literal words they display, including impressions linked to the identity of a product or brand (Childers & Jass, 2002). In the context of a crowded digital interface, bold text and contrasting outlines can make titles more visually distinct from complex backgrounds. Whether those titles are actually readable by specific age groups, however, is a separate empirical question that requires audience-based assessment.

The visual identity of a channel functions across multiple interfaces: the logo, thumbnail templates, series markers, and in-video illustrations. A logo is not simply a decorative element; its shape, complexity, and recognizability are relevant to the communication of organizational identity (Henderson & Cote, 1998). Prior research shows that the relationship between logo color and the category or positioning of a product affects perceived appropriateness in branding contexts (Bottomley & Doyle, 2006), while color can serve as a cue for brand personality (Labrecque & Milne, 2012). These studies suggest that consistency deserves attention, but they do not establish that every channel should employ an identical palette across its logo and content. A multifunctional studio may reasonably use one umbrella identity and distinct visual styles for individual content categories.

Recent developments in generative artificial intelligence (AI) have added another dimension to the production of digital educational media. AI-assisted tools may be involved in generating, modifying, or animating visual material, while conventional illustration and manual editing may continue to play significant roles. UNESCO's guidance on generative AI in education emphasizes the need for careful attention to human oversight, transparency, and the contextual use of AI technologies (Miao & Holmes, 2023). In visual analysis, the appearance of an AI-tool watermark may be a relevant production clue, but it does not by itself reveal the complete workflow, the origin of each visual asset, or the extent of automated generation. The present study accordingly distinguishes observable image characteristics from claims about production processes that have not been independently documented.

Els Studio provides a focused case for exploring these issues. The supplied research archive contains a channel logo, a screenshot presenting different types of thumbnails, and a frame from the video 'Ayo Bermain!' ('Let's Play!') showing the watermark 'VidMuse AI.' The children's educational materials represented in the archive address numeracy, vegetables, personal hygiene, batik, motivation to learn, and play. Across several thumbnails, brightly colored backgrounds and rounded cartoon-like characters can be observed; the studio logo, by

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comparison, combines a predominantly black and red composition, an angular ornamental face motif, and cream-colored 'ELS' lettering. This visible contrast poses a specific design question about the relationship between an umbrella channel identity and the visual presentation of its children's series. The analysis is restricted to the visual documentation available in the source manuscript rather than all videos uploaded by the channel.

Studies of visual grammar, color, emotional multimedia design, and branding provide useful conceptual perspectives, but they address different levels of analysis. Visual grammar examines how images construct representations and visual relationships; experimental studies examine responses under controlled conditions; branding research considers recognition and image associations. What is needed in this case is a transparent, artifact-based comparison that connects the logo, thumbnails, and a documented video frame without transferring audience or learning-effect claims from other studies to an untested case. This is the analytical gap addressed by the article, rather than a claim that no previous research has examined children's YouTube content in Indonesia.

Accordingly, this study aims (1) to describe how color design principles are expressed in the sampled children's educational song visuals; (2) to identify prominent characteristics of character design and typography; and (3) to assess the degree and form of visual continuity between those materials and the Els Studio logo. Its contribution lies in a structured visual reading of logo–thumbnail–frame relationships within a channel that presents different media formats, including one example with indications of AI-assisted animation. The findings are intended to support design evaluation and future testing, not to measure brand trust, viewers' preferences, or children's learning outcomes.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using visual content analysis within a single-channel case study. Content analysis was applied as a structured interpretation of communication artifacts based on explicitly defined units and categories (Krippendorff, 2018). The approach was complemented by attention to composition and representation in visual grammar (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and visual research methodologies (Rose, 2016). The object of analysis was the relationship between the Els Studio logo and the visual content of its children's educational song materials, rather than an evaluation of the overall quality of the channel.

The units were purposively selected based on the descriptions and screenshots retained in the original research archive. Six children's content units could be identified: counting from one to five, spinach/vegetables, personal hygiene/bathing, batik, motivation to learn, and 'Ayo Bermain!' ('Let's Play!'). The last item was counted within the six units, rather than as a seventh unit, to resolve an inconsistency in the earlier manuscript. The first five units were primarily represented by illustrated thumbnails, whereas the final item had additional evidence in the form of a video frame bearing a 'VidMuse AI' watermark. Exact uploaded titles, URLs, posting dates, and screenshot capture dates were not supplied and should be verified against primary records before publication.

The analysis distinguished three artifact types: (a) the channel logo, used as the primary reference for visual identity; (b) thumbnails, which combine titles, characters, and backgrounds as content packaging; and (c) a selected frame from 'Ayo Bermain!' ('Let's Play!'), used as an example of the image composition inside a video. The logo was examined first to identify its dominant palette, shapes, lines, motif, and lettering. Those features were then compared with the thumbnails and video frame to identify continuity, variation, and divergence. The logo was therefore an initial analytic reference, rather than merely an item introduced at the end of the comparison.

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A visual observation matrix covered four categories: (1) color, including visible hues, warm–cool relationships, relative brightness, and contrast; (2) character design, including apparent head-to-body proportions, facial geometry, eye prominence, expressions, and stylization; (3) typography, including type category, weight, outlining, and apparent separation from its background; and (4) visual identity, including the recurrence of colors, forms, symbols, and letterform characteristics between logo and content. The categories were informed by design principles (Darmaprawira, 2002; Sanyoto, 2009), visual grammar (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), and research on logo characteristics (Henderson & Cote, 1998).

The procedure consisted of sequentially identifying logo features, inventorying recurring visual features in the six thumbnails, examining the documented animation frame, compiling a matrix of similarities and differences, and interpreting the observations in relation to existing theory. Terms such as 'dominant,' 'bright,' and 'relatively saturated' refer to descriptive visual judgments rather than measured RGB/HSV values. The archive did not contain numerical color-frequency analysis, experimental observations of children, or inter-coder reliability estimates. Accordingly, the analysis does not assign numerical consistency scores.

To cross-check interpretations, the analysis compared evidence obtained from thumbnails, a selected video frame, and the documented logo. This procedure is best understood as a limited cross-technique check of visual interpretation rather than triangulation among independent sources, because all materials originate from the same channel and no creator interviews or audience responses were available. This distinction, alongside the missing date and URL metadata, is explicitly acknowledged to maintain the traceability and appropriate scope of the findings.

*Table 1. Children's content units identifiable in the available visual archive*

| Code | Content visible in the thumbnail (translated) | Educational theme | Principal visual evidence |
|---|---|---|---|
| V1 | "Learning to Count from 1 to 5 through Song" | Numeracy | Multicolored numbers and child figures |
| V2 | "Spinach Song: Learning about Vegetables" | Vegetables | Green spinach and child characters |
| V3 | "Fun Bath Time: Brushing Teeth and Staying Clean" | Personal hygiene | Children, hygiene objects, and blue elements |
| V4 | "Children's Song: Let's Wear Batik!" | Batik/culture | Patterned clothing and ornamentation |
| V5 | "Learning Is Fun!" | Learning motivation | Child figures and learning objects |
| V6 | "Let's Play!" ("Ayo Bermain!") | Play/animation | Thumbnail and a documented 3D-style frame |

Note. The English titles are descriptive translations of labels visible in the supplied archive; they are not independently verified official video metadata.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are organized according to the methodological sequence: first, the logo as the visual identity reference; second, the application of color, character design, and typography to the children's content; third, the differences in production formats; and finally, the continuity among logo, thumbnails, and frame. Figures 1–3 reproduce the three images embedded in the

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source manuscript. The year 2026 refers to the manuscript archive; individual screenshot dates and video publication dates could not be established from the supplied material.

**The Logo as a Visual Identity Reference**

Figure 1 shows the Els Studio logo on a black background. A red, approximately triangular, play-button-like field contains an ornamental face or mask with acute lines and densely arranged decorative motifs. On the right, the word "ELS" appears in large, bold, cream-colored sans-serif lettering. Accordingly, the logo is best characterized as black and red with a cream typographic accent, rather than as an exclusively red-and-black mark. Black provides a dark field for the composition, red emphasizes the symbol, and cream contrasts with the dark background to make the lettering visually distinct.

In formal terms, the logo emphasizes angles, diagonal direction, and detailed ornamentation rather than predominantly rounded forms. Descriptors such as "strong" or "dramatic" constitute interpretations of these formal characteristics. It would not be methodologically justified to conclude that children find the logo "frightening" or "untrustworthy" without gathering audience evidence. In line with Henderson and Cote (1998), a logo may be analyzed as a device for establishing recognition and communicating identity. In the present case, its role as an analytic reference raises a concrete visual question: which colors, shapes, and motifs are repeated, simplified, or absent from the children's thumbnails and video frame?




*Figure 1. The Els Studio logo as the primary visual identity reference.*
*Source: Els Studio YouTube channel, image reproduced from the supplied manuscript archive (2026); screenshot date unverified.*

**Application of Color Design Principles to Children's Educational Content**

The children's educational thumbnails display yellow in titles, numerals, and selected character elements; orange and red as accents; pink in title details and accessories; light blue in skies and background fields; and green in grass, trees, and vegetables. The counting thumbnail uses differently colored numerals, the spinach-themed material emphasizes green to represent the vegetable, the hygiene-related item contains blue together with other bright accents, and the batik-themed material combines patterned clothing with a more decorative background. These descriptions are based on the objects visible in Figure 2; they should not be interpreted as claims that all frames across the videos share the same palette.

The content palette is therefore not uniformly "warm." Yellow, orange, red, and pink operate as relatively warm accents, whereas blue and green appear as cooler balancing fields. Contrasting hues, lighter areas, and the distinction between subjects and backgrounds

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contribute to a lively overall composition. Within the visual design principles discussed by Sanyoto (2009), colors can organize attention, grouping, and unity. In this research, "relatively high saturation" denotes a descriptive appearance of vividness rather than instrument-based measurement. Elliot and Maier (2014) additionally caution against treating color–psychology associations as fixed independently of context.

In the documented "Ayo Bermain!" ("Let's Play!") frame (Figure 3), a blue sky and green grass occupy much of the image. Yellow marks clothing and a chick figure, red appears in a cap, pink is present in a bow and shoes, and a rainbow provides additional hues in the background. Cool colors thus create broad environmental areas, while warmer accents distinguish characters and selected objects. In visual grammar, this arrangement can be read through the relative salience of different elements (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Claims about the resulting effects on children's attention or learning remain outside the available evidence.

Relative to the logo, color continuity is partial: red reappears in some clothing and title details, yet black, which dominates the logo background, does not function as the main color of the children's content. Such divergence may be a reasonable context-specific choice if a channel uses a studio-wide identity alongside a visually distinct educational series. Research on color in branding demonstrates that color choices may influence brand meaning and appropriateness under particular conditions (Bottomley & Doyle, 2006; Labrecque & Milne, 2012), but these studies do not demonstrate that the observed palette differences in Els Studio directly reduce brand recognition.

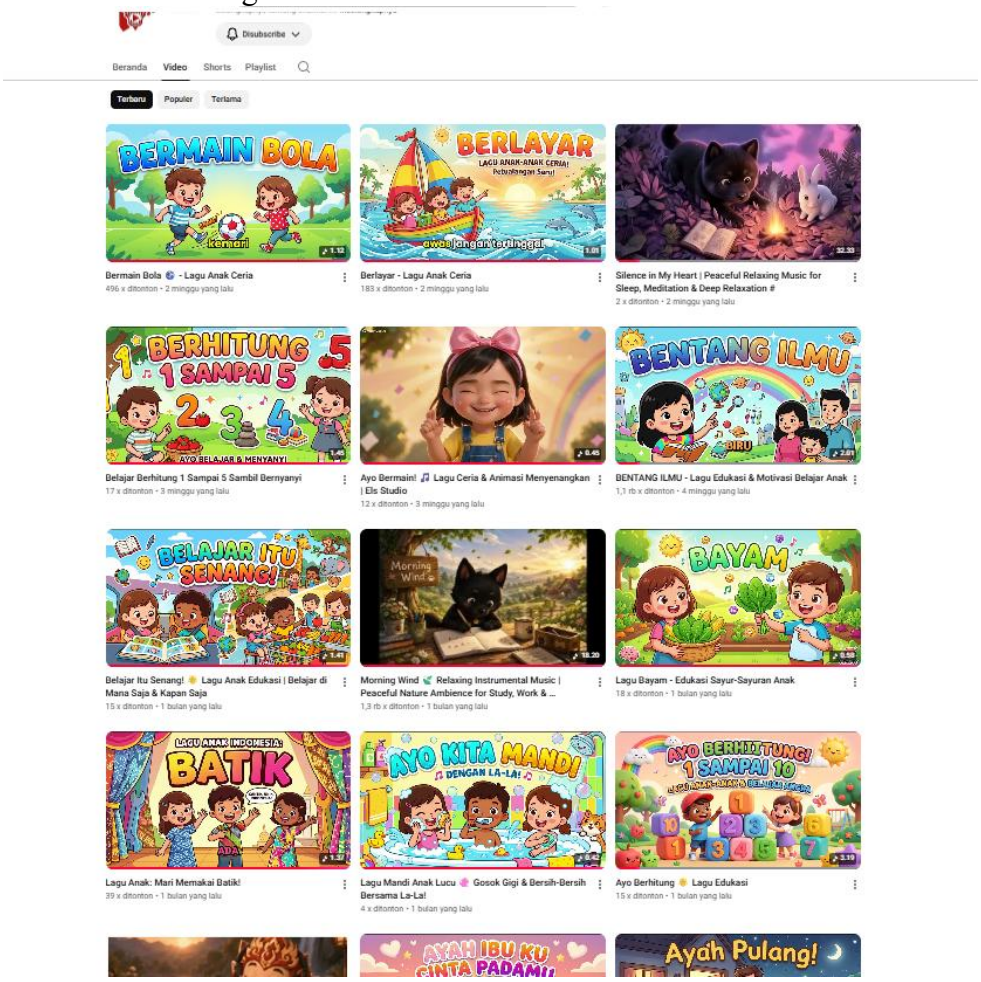


*Figure 2. Screenshot of Els Studio thumbnails, including children's educational song visuals. Source: Els Studio YouTube channel, image reproduced from the supplied manuscript archive (2026); screenshot date unverified.*

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## Application of Character Design Principles

Children's figures in the thumbnails (Figure 2) exhibit stylized rounded faces, heads that appear large in relation to their bodies, emphasized eyes, wide smiles, and poses suggesting learning, playing, or movement. The expression "chibi-like" is used here as a morphological description of simplified forms and enlarged head proportions, not as evidence that all characters follow a single formal character model. In the counting and learning-themed images, figures are arranged alongside numerals, books, or educational objects; in the spinach-themed thumbnail, the children are visually associated with the vegetable depicted.

The frame from "*Ayo Bermain!*" ("Let's Play!") uses a three-dimensional-looking illustration featuring rounded heads, large eyes, colored cheeks, happy expressions, and a yellow chick positioned between two child figures. Despite differences in rendering from the predominantly two-dimensional thumbnail illustrations, the enlargement of facial features and simplification of forms remains visible. It is therefore more accurate to describe the materials as having a family resemblance than to claim the channel follows a documented character style guide that was not supplied. Experimental work by Plass et al. (2014) suggests that rounded form and color choices in learning multimedia can relate to affect and comprehension under certain conditions; it does not establish a learning effect for these particular Els Studio materials.

In contrast, the logo displays an ornamental face symbol with sharp lines and compact decorative gaps rather than a rounded child figure. Correspondence at the level of character silhouette and geometry is therefore weak. This observation does not mean that either visual form is categorically superior. The logo may represent a broader creative studio identity, while the children's material uses a more specialized character language appropriate to its genre. A practical design issue is consequently how to create an identifiable link between the studio's umbrella brand and the children's subseries, rather than assuming the umbrella logo must be replaced.

## Typography and Information Hierarchy

The thumbnail titles use bold display sans-serif lettering, large letterforms, and frequent outlines or shadows that separate text from colorful backgrounds. In titles visible in the archive including "*BERHITUNG 1 SAMPAI 5*" (counting from one to five), "*BAYAM*" (spinach), "*BATIK*," and "*AYO KITA MANDI*" (let's take a bath)—bright text and contrasting borders serve as prominent visual cues. "Apparent readability" in the present analysis refers to the contrast and visual separation of lettering from the background; no testing of children's actual reading performance was conducted. Lupton (2010) identifies scale, hierarchy, and relationships among typographic and spatial elements as central to design organization. Childers and Jass (2002) further indicate that typeface characteristics can communicate associations in branding contexts, supporting the relevance of analyzing letterform shape as well as text size.

The "ELS" lettering in the logo is also a bold sans-serif form, creating continuity in typographic weight. Its appearance is more restrained, with cream lettering and no brightly colored outline, whereas the children's thumbnail titles use variable colors and expressive treatments that reflect each topic. Thus, a shared typographic quality is observable, although a uniform typographic system cannot be inferred. A guideline that maintains consistent weight, placement, and minimum contrast while allowing topic-specific color could reconcile visual identity with the diversity of song themes (Sanyoto, 2009).

## Static Illustration and Animation Showing Indications of AI Use

The documented "*Ayo Bermain*!" ("Let's Play!") frame displays a visible "VidMuse AI" watermark near its upper-left corner (Figure 3), while the image itself resembles a three-

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dimensional animated scene. The watermark is evidence of an association with a tool labeled as AI, but is insufficient to establish whether every asset was generated automatically, whether manually created assets were involved, or the degree of AI-assisted production across the complete video. For this reason, the research describes the frame as showing indications of AI involvement rather than classifying every channel upload as AI-generated. This evidentiary distinction is consistent with the need for transparency surrounding generative AI use discussed by Miao and Holmes (2023).

Despite different visual formats, the frame shares several features with illustrated thumbnails: vivid colors, large-headed characters, expressive eyes, and familiar environmental objects. These resemblances suggest that a channel can use multiple production methods while retaining certain aspects of its visual language. Yet the pedagogical contribution of these visuals also depends on their relationship with words, songs, and timing. Mayer and Moreno (2002) discuss design considerations for multimedia learning, but the archive contains neither song transcripts nor synchronization analysis. The overall instructional effectiveness of the videos therefore cannot be inferred from this study.




*Figure 3. Frame from "Ayo Bermain!" ("Let's Play!"), with a visible "VidMuse AI" watermark.*
*Source: Els Studio YouTube channel, image reproduced from the supplied manuscript archive (2026); video URL and capture date unverified.*

**Visual Continuity Across the Logo, Thumbnails, and Video Frame**

*Table 2. Matrix of visual continuity with the logo used as the reference*

| Visual element | Logo (reference) | Children's content | Interpretation of continuity |
|---|---|---|---|
| Color palette | Black, red, cream accent | Yellow, orange, pink, blue, green; red as an accent | Partial continuity; dominant colors differ |
| Lines and shapes | Angular, pointed, ornamental | Rounded faces, smooth contours, simplified figures | Weak morphological continuity |

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| Visual element | Logo (reference) | Children's content | Interpretation of continuity |
|---|---|---|---|
| Symbolic character | Ornamental face/mask on a play-like field | Cartoon children and animals | Characters are not directly derived from the logo |
| Typography | Bold cream "ELS" sans-serif | Bold display sans-serif, contrasting outlines | Shared weight; different treatments |
| Composition | Dark field and one dominant symbol | Multiple objects, natural environments, large titles | Different visual functions and priorities |
| Media context | Umbrella channel/studio identity | Theme-specific educational song series | A linking subseries identity may be useful |

Table 2 reveals three patterns. First, the dominant colors differ: black and red define the studio logo, while yellow, blue, green, orange, and pink characterize much of the children's visual content. Second, the form language shifts from the logo's pointed ornamental motif to rounded character contours. Third, limited continuity persists through bold sans-serif lettering and some red accents. Describing these distinct relationships is more precise than applying the single label "inconsistent," which would obscure areas where the identity does remain connected.

The broader channel screenshot in Figure 2 also contains uploads other than children's songs, including cat-themed relaxation or music imagery. This visible context matters because the Els Studio logo may have been intended as an umbrella identity across content categories rather than as an exclusive identity for preschool songs. Under such circumstances, directly redesigning the entire logo would require careful consideration of the broader studio identity. A more proportionate option would be to define a children's educational song subseries with a stable marker, an anchor color linked to the parent logo, and a consistent thumbnail composition system.

In relation to Henderson and Cote (1998), a logo system can be considered in terms of its capacity to convey and maintain identity, while appropriateness of color relationships can be explored through the branding perspective of Bottomley and Doyle (2006). Practical implications can be structured in stages. In the short term, the channel could position an "ELS" badge or children's series mark consistently on each thumbnail and use one carefully chosen parent-logo color, such as red, as a recurring but limited accent. In the medium term, a visual style guide could document character proportions, typographic weight, title contrast, and layout conventions. In the long term, alternative subseries identities could be assessed with children and caregivers through structured recognition and impression tests. These are proposed design and research steps, not interventions already conducted as part of the present study.

## CONCLUSION

The six sampled children's educational song visuals associated with Els Studio use yellow, orange, red, and pink as relatively warm accents, complemented by blue and green in backgrounds and environmental objects. These arrangements visibly differentiate characters, educational items, and titles. Character design favors relatively large heads, rounded faces, expressive eyes, and simplified facial features across the illustrated thumbnails and the documented three-dimensional-looking "Ayo Bermain!" ("Let's Play!") frame. Thumbnail

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typography commonly uses bold sans-serif letters with strong outlines or shadows. These are findings from visual observation; they do not demonstrate enhanced attention, motivation, or learning outcomes among children.

Using the logo as the starting point of comparison, the channel's parent visual identity is characterized by a black and red palette, an angular ornamental face motif, and cream-colored "ELS" lettering. Continuity with the children's visuals is identifiable in the substantial typographic weight and occasional red accents, whereas dominant color distribution and character morphology show weaker correspondence. These formal differences do not establish that audiences fail to recognize or trust the channel. A more appropriate design recommendation is to develop a distinct but connected children's song subseries identity through consistent placement of a series marker, controlled reuse of a parent-brand accent, and documented typography and character guidelines. Any decision to redesign the parent logo should be informed by subsequent audience-based evaluation.

The principal contribution of the study is its structured comparison of logo, thumbnails, and frame-level visual evidence in a digital content setting where illustrative formats coexist with indications of AI-assisted animation. Further work should verify the six video records, collect complete production documentation, measure palette characteristics using reproducible methods, and test visual recognition, perceived appropriateness, and educational usability with relevant audience groups. Such studies would extend the present descriptive findings without confusing aesthetic interpretation with evidence of behavioral effects.

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