

A Visual Transformation: Using Photography to Boost Tugu Jawa's Brand Visibility

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Abstrak

Sektor UMKM mampu memberikan kontribusi terhadap pertumbuhan ekonomi di Indonesia. Jawa Sehati Mulia merupakan UMKM yang bergerak di bidang produksi kecap berbahan dasar kedelai hitam lokal dengan beberapa varian produk antara lain kecap manis, kecap pedas, kecap barbeque, dll. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dampak fotografi sebagai alat utama dalam meningkatkan identitas merek dan meningkatkan visibilitas Tugu Jawa, merek lokal tradisional Indonesia. Di dunia yang semakin visual, citra yang efektif menjadi hal yang penting dalam membedakan merek di pasar yang kompetitif. Tugu Jawa, yang terkenal dengan kekayaan warisan budaya dan produk kerajinannya, mempunyai potensi untuk memperluas jangkauannya dengan mengadopsi strategi fotografi yang modern dan menarik secara visual. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana fotografi berkualitas tinggi dan selaras dengan budaya dapat secara efektif mengomunikasikan nilai-nilai merek, membangkitkan hubungan emosional, dan menciptakan kehadiran yang berkesan di media digital dan cetak. Melalui serangkaian studi kasus, analisis visual, dan masukan konsumen, penelitian ini menyelidiki bagaimana citra yang dikurasi dapat meningkatkan persepsi merek, meningkatkan keterlibatan, dan mendorong minat konsumen. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan visual yang terdefinisi dengan baik menggunakan fotografi dapat secara signifikan meningkatkan visibilitas pasar Tugu Jawa, menarik khalayak yang lebih luas, dan memperkuat hubungannya dengan konsumen lokal dan global. Pada akhirnya, penelitian ini memberikan rekomendasi yang dapat ditindaklanjuti bagi Tugu Jawa untuk memanfaatkan fotografi sebagai alat strategis untuk meningkatkan kesadaran merek dan menumbuhkan loyalitas merek dalam jangka panjang.

Kata Kunci: *kesadaran merek, identitas merek, nilai merek, visibilitas merek, fotografi produk, UMKM*

Abstract

The MSMEs sector is able to contribute to economic growth in Indonesia. Jawa Sehati Mulia is an MSMEs which operates in the field of producing soy sauce made from local black soybeans with several product variants including sweet soy sauce, spicy soy sauce, barbeque soy sauce, etc. This research explores the impact of photography as a key tool in enhancing brand identity and increasing visibility for Tugu Jawa, a traditional Indonesian local brand. In an increasingly visual world, effective imagery has become essential in distinguishing brands in competitive markets. Tugu Jawa, known for its rich cultural heritage and artisanal products, has the potential to expand its reach by adopting a modern, visually

appealing photography strategy. This study aims to analyze how high-quality, culturally resonant photography can effectively communicate the brand's values, evoke emotional connections, and create a memorable presence across digital and print media. Through a series of case studies, visual analysis, and consumer feedback, the research investigates how curated imagery can elevate brand perception, improve engagement, and drive consumer interest. The findings suggest that a well-defined visual approach using photography can significantly enhance Tugu Jawa's market visibility, attract a wider audience, and strengthen its connection with both local and global consumers. Ultimately, this study provides actionable recommendations for Tugu Jawa to leverage photography as a strategic tool to boost brand awareness and foster long-term brand loyalty.

Keywords: *brand awareness, brand identity, brand values, brand visibility, product photography, MSMEs*

1. INTRODUCTION

Jawa Sehati Mulia MSMEs is a soy sauce producer located in Jabung Village, Pakis District, Malang Regency. This MSMEs, which is managed by Mr. Dwi Prihartono, operates in the food sector and since 2017 has been producing soy sauce made from local black soybeans. This soy sauce product is known as the Tugu Jawa Soy Sauce Brand which provides various types of soy sauce produced including sweet soy sauce, spicy soy sauce, barbeque soy sauce, etc.

In the contemporary business landscape, the role of visual content has become paramount in establishing and enhancing a brand's identity. With the rise of digital platforms and social media, businesses are now faced with the challenge of capturing consumer attention in an oversaturated market [1]. Among the most effective tools in achieving this is photography. Through carefully curated images, brands can communicate their essence, attract potential customers, and differentiate themselves from competitors [2]. This research explores the potential of photography as a strategic asset in elevating Tugu Jawa's brand identity and improving its visibility both locally and internationally.

Tugu Jawa is a brand deeply rooted in Indonesian heritage, offering products that celebrate traditional craftsmanship and cultural authenticity. However, in today's fast-paced, image-driven world, the brand faces the challenge of standing out in a market flooded with modern and globalized alternatives. To address this challenge, the brand must explore innovative ways to present its offerings and

connect with a broader audience. This research aims to investigate how the power of visual storytelling through photography can help Tugu Jawa bridge the gap between its rich cultural heritage and the expectations of modern consumers.

Photography, when executed thoughtfully, has the power to transform a brand's identity by conveying emotions, stories, and values. The images associated with a brand become its visual language, influencing how consumers perceive and interact with it [3]. For Tugu Jawa, leveraging photography could mean capturing the intricacy and beauty of traditional Indonesian craftsmanship while making it appealing to contemporary tastes. The goal is not only to showcase the products but to tell a compelling story that connects with both local customers who appreciate the cultural authenticity of the brand and international customers looking for unique, handcrafted items with a story to tell.

In an era where social media platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and Facebook dominate the way consumers discover and engage with brands, photography plays a vital role in shaping first impressions. Stunning visuals are often the first point of interaction between a brand and potential customers [4]. Therefore, Tugu Jawa's success in the digital age depends on its ability to harness photography to its advantage. This research explores how the brand can use photography to boost its visibility on digital platforms and attract a wider, more diverse audience. By examining photography's role in digital marketing, the research aims to highlight key strategies that

can help Tugu Jawa improve its brand awareness and reach.

In the context of Tugu Jawa, the primary challenge lies in balancing the traditional with the modern. The brand's heritage products, which may appeal to a niche market, need to be presented in a way that resonates with contemporary consumer preferences. Through photography, Tugu Jawa has the opportunity to create a visual narrative that highlights the timeless beauty of its products while framing them within a modern, aspirational lifestyle. This dual approach ensures that the brand remains relevant in an increasingly globalized market while still celebrating its roots and authenticity.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research follows a human-centered approach, focusing on understanding the needs of both the brand and its consumers to create an effective visual identity that enhances brand visibility. The process is structured into five key stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. Each stage provides a critical step toward crafting a photography strategy that is both innovative and aligned with Tugu Jawa's cultural heritage and modern market needs. [5].

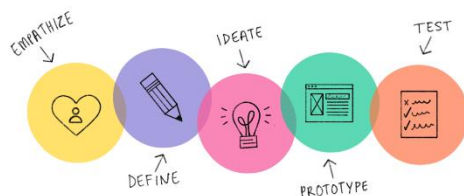


Fig 1. Design Thinking Framework

A. Empathize

The first stage of the design thinking process focuses on gaining a deep understanding of Tugu Jawa's target audience and the current challenges facing the brand's visual identity. This stage involves research and observation, engaging with both existing and potential customers to gather insights about their preferences, values, and emotional connections to the brand. Through interviews, surveys, and social media analysis, we gather qualitative data on how

Tugu Jawa's products are perceived in the market. This stage also involves studying the brand's current visual assets and identifying any gaps in representation or opportunities for improvement. By empathizing with both the brand and its audience, we can ensure that the visual transformation is driven by real user needs and expectations.

B. Define

In the Define stage, the research findings from the Empathize stage are synthesized into a clear problem statement. This stage focuses on pinpointing the core challenges that Tugu Jawa faces in terms of brand visibility and consumer engagement. For example, Tugu Jawa's current photography may not effectively communicate its heritage, craftsmanship, or appeal to modern, digital-first consumers. The goal is to define the key objectives of the visual transformation, such as creating a more cohesive brand narrative, enhancing the emotional appeal of the product through imagery, and expanding visibility across digital platforms. This stage sets the foundation for the creative direction and objectives of the photography strategy, ensuring that every decision made in the subsequent stages is aligned with these core goals.

C. Ideate

The Ideate stage encourages creative brainstorming and the generation of multiple ideas for how photography can be leveraged to boost Tugu Jawa's brand visibility. During this phase, the design team explores various visual styles, photography techniques, and storytelling approaches that align with the brand's core values of tradition, quality, and cultural authenticity. Ideas may include using lifestyle imagery to showcase the brand in real-life settings, featuring behind-the-scenes shots that highlight the craftsmanship of the products, or incorporating natural, earthy tones to convey the brand's commitment to sustainability. The Ideate stage is about pushing boundaries and experimenting with different visual elements to arrive at a concept that can elevate Tugu Jawa's

digital and physical presence. Collaboration with photographers, designers, and marketers ensures a diverse range of ideas that will resonate with the brand's audience.

D. Prototype

In the Prototype stage, selected ideas from the Ideate phase are turned into visual mock-ups and photography samples. This stage focuses on creating tangible examples of how the proposed photography will look in various contexts, such as on social media posts, product packaging, website imagery, or advertising campaigns. Multiple prototypes are created to explore different compositions, color schemes, and photography styles. For instance, the team might develop a series of product photos, lifestyle shots, and editorial-style images to see how they work together and how they can communicate Tugu Jawa's story. The goal is to experiment with these visual concepts to create a cohesive and compelling aesthetic that can be tested and refined in the next stage.

E. Test

The final stage, Test, involves gathering feedback on the prototypes from real consumers, stakeholders, and industry experts. This feedback is collected through focus groups, social media polls, or A/B testing on digital platforms. Consumers' reactions to different photography styles, compositions, and messaging are assessed to understand which visuals resonate the most with the target audience. Based on this feedback, the design team refines the photography strategy, making adjustments to enhance clarity, emotional appeal, and overall brand alignment. The Test stage ensures that the final visual transformation will not only boost brand visibility but also create an authentic and engaging experience for Tugu Jawa's audience.

By following this design thinking process, Tugu Jawa can strategically leverage photography to enhance its brand identity, connect with consumers, and ultimately increase its visibility in a competitive market. Each stage builds upon the previous one, ensuring that the visual

transformation is grounded in real consumer insights, creative innovation, and continuous refinement. Through this approach, Tugu Jawa can establish a more compelling, cohesive, and visually impactful presence that resonates with both local and global audiences.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Product photography plays a pivotal role in showcasing the uniqueness of a local soy sauce brand, as it helps communicate the quality, authenticity, and cultural relevance of the product [6]. For a soy sauce brand, the key to effective product photography is to capture not just the packaging, but also the texture, richness, and versatility of the sauce itself. Close-up shots of the sauce being poured or drizzled can highlight its deep color and smooth consistency, emphasizing the premium nature of the product. In addition to highlighting the product's physical attributes, the photography should also focus on the ingredients—such as soybeans, wheat, and spices—giving consumers a glimpse into the artisanal process behind the brand. This type of imagery builds trust and appreciation by showing the quality and care involved in production, appealing to consumers who value authenticity in their food choices [7].



Fig 2. Product Photography Portrait
(Source: Author's Documentation, 2024)



Fig 3. Product Photography Landscape
(Source: Author's Documentation, 2024)

In addition to product-focused shots, storytelling through lifestyle photography can help bring a local soy sauce brand to life. Images that show the sauce being used in everyday cooking, such as in a family meal or a traditional dish, can create a connection with the consumer [8]. Such visuals emphasize the sauce's role in enhancing flavors and highlight its cultural relevance, especially for a local brand that may be rooted in tradition. By photographing the product in use, whether in a kitchen setting or at a dining table, the brand can convey its versatility and appeal to modern consumers who are looking for authentic, high-quality ingredients for their culinary experiences. These lifestyle images can evoke a sense of warmth and familiarity, making the product feel like an integral part of the consumer's own cooking rituals.

Moreover, consistency in visual branding across product photography can help a soy sauce brand establish a strong identity. Maintaining a consistent style—through color schemes, lighting, and composition—ensures that every image aligns with the brand's ethos [9]. For a local soy sauce brand, this consistency is crucial for creating a recognizable visual language that consumers can connect with across various touchpoints, including packaging, social media, and e-commerce platforms. Whether the brand opts for rustic, earthy tones that evoke tradition or sleek, modern aesthetics that suggest innovation, a cohesive visual identity allows the product to stand out in a competitive market. This uniformity helps reinforce the brand's values and builds trust with consumers, ultimately enhancing its visibility and desirability.

G. Testing

To evaluate the existing prototype, a semantic differential survey was conducted online via Google Form, consisting of 10 sets of adjectives where user targets may share their views regarding the design between 10 sets of adjectives. Semantic differential itself is a method to process the findings which could be used to set the hierarchy of criteria pertaining to the advantages of engaging in professional activity [10]. Users' view on the design can be seen in Table 1.

Adjective 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Adjective 2
Passive								Active
Inefficient								Efficient
Complicated								Easy to understand
Boring								Interesting
Cluttered								Organized
Confusing								Informative
Complex								Simple
Inconvenient								Convenient
Dull								Vivid
Varied								Consistent
Tiring								Engaging

The overall evaluation of product photography of Tugu Jawa Soy Sauce is deemed functional as it consistent and engaging. Most of the respondents agree that product photography of Tugu Jawa Soy Sauce is active, easy to understand, interesting, organized, informative, simple and convenient.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research demonstrates that photography is a crucial strategic asset for elevating Tugu Jawa's brand visibility and enhancing its overall identity. Photography can play a vital role in elevating Tugu Jawa's brand visibility and enhancing its overall identity by visually storytelling its unique heritage, products, and experiences. By adopting high-quality, concept-driven photography, the brand can effectively communicate its values of craftsmanship, authenticity, and cultural heritage to a broader and more diverse audience. Through storytelling, lifestyle imagery, and consistent visual themes, Tugu Jawa can not only improve its engagement on

digital platforms but also foster deeper emotional connections with consumers both locally and internationally. As the study shows, a well-executed photography strategy has the potential to significantly boost brand recognition, strengthen consumer trust, and drive long-term growth by positioning Tugu Jawa as a culturally rich yet modern brand in the competitive market.

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